

REVISITING STATE FORMATION IN LAKE NYASA REGION

by

Eginald P.A.N. MIHANJO*

Introduction

The Nineteenth century is regarded as an important historical period in the transformation of Societies in Lake Nyasa region. State formation is one of the transformations attributed to this period. Although the process of political centralization started earlier than the 19th century, the proliferation of states from late 18th century make it easier to trace. In this context various historical studies have tried to systematise and provide accounts of the rise of states in this area. It is the aim of this paper to examine historical explanations attributed to the process of state formation in Lake Nyasa region. And finally on the basis of weaknesses identified provide case studies to evaluate the process of state formation in relation to socio-political and economic processes inherent in the Lake Nyasa societies.

1. Theories of State Formation in Lake Nyasa area

a. *Definition*

In this paper Lake Nyasa region is defined as a socio-historical and geographical unit. Namely, the area and people living around Lake Nyasa basin. It encompasses the whole of Malawi, north-western Mozambique and south-west Tanzania.

* Department of History, University of Dar-es-Salaam.

In defining the concept of state it is important to note that it presupposes the existence of a centralized political system and authority in a defined socio-economic, geographical and historical territory. It is therefore a centre of configuration, giving rise to unifying and conflicting tendencies inherent in the social formation. It is these processes which culminate into the institutionalization of a territorial political authority or power fundamentally for the purposes of a historical function of socio-political and economic mobilisation. Furthermore, it implies a historical emergence of a key social group, namely the ruling class or centre of the political power. It therefore presupposes social differentiations or division of society as necessary for state formation. This ruling social group utilizes the political authority for the historically determined territorial socio-economic and political mobilization and domination.

The success of the mobilization and control is determined by the presence of legal ideological and coercive-functional institutions, which are always regarded as the essence of state. In view of this it can be seen that state formation involves a combination of all these complex historical processes, and thus no single formula/model or pattern is capable of explaining the evolution of all states.

b. Theories

Migration, conquest and trade theories dominate the historiography of state formation in Lake Nyasa region. Migration theory holds that territorial centralization of the political, economic and social system was based on immigrant group which exerted itself over indigenous people. The history of state formation among the Cewa for example is attributed to immigrants of the Congolese origin led by a chief whose title was Kalonga¹. At the same time for northern Malawi, this process is attributed to small groups from Tanzania who had already evolved the practice of chiefs i.e. Ntemi². This is extended further that the northern Malawi state was founded by immigrant traders, the "Balowoka" led by (first immigrants) Kakalala Musaiwila, a hunter originally from Usaiwila in Souther Unyamwezi in Central Tanzania³. Monica Wilson⁴ too indicates the origin of Ngonde chiefs as from Bukinga in Tanzania. In the eastern shore it is also argued that immigrants increased political pressures for groups consolidation especially among the Makua and Makonde⁵.

1. A.J. Wills, 1967, pp. 48-51 ; E. Alpers in T. Ranger, 1970, pp. 18-19 ; B. Davidson, 1967, p. 241.

2. B. Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

3. O.J. Kalinga in Ahmed I. Salim, 1984, pp. 36-39 ; H.L. Vail in B. Pachai (ed.), 1972, pp. 148-155).

4. B. Pachai, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-142.

5. Redmond, 1985, pp. 22-23.

The conquest theory maintains that the local inhabitants as a weaker group are conquered by a militarily, politically and culturally superior and highly organized alien group which finally and forcibly imposes its political-economic institutions and authority. It implies unequal form of contact or relationship, whereby the stronger predominates. In Lake Nyasa region, it is demonstrated as a positive/progressive side of the Ngoni invasion, namely that they created new and larger states in areas where previously the peoples had been politically fragmented. They inspired the growth of new states by people who also wanted to resist them effectively. A good example is the Kingdom created by the Chewa in Central Malawi under Mwase Kasungu, Swahili traders such as Jumbe Kisutu at Kotakota and many other Ngoni States formed on the west of Lake Nyasa⁶. The Ngoni are also said to have caused political centralization in eastern side through the pacification process and imposition of a centralized Ngoni state in Songea⁷.

Furthermore, there are states which have been attributed to trade, both long-distance and slave trade. For example the so-called Balowoka states are said to have been formed not only by immigrants, but also for the purpose of trade. That is the pull factor was the commercial opportunities, specifically the availability of ivory, rhinoceros horns and a variety of valuable skins⁸. The expansion of long-distance trade and slave trade in the 19th century contributed highly to not only political development but also political disintegration in some cases⁹. Both Mlozi at Karonga and Jumbe Kisutu of Kotakota through control and influence of trade were able to establish states in north-west shore of Lake Nyasa¹⁰. In the context of Yao states, this constitutes the major explanation as Phiri underscores :

*"The argument then is that the need to centralize the direction of these highly remunerative commercial activities led to the emergence of territorial chieftaincies among the Yao. In support of this thesis, it may be noted that successful involvement in trade with the east coast became prerequisite of political success among the Yao. Given the changes which occurred in the organization of trade with the coast in the nineteenth century, the successful trader was in turn forced to be social or political broker as well... It was traders who rose to the status of territorial chiefs among the Yao in the nineteenth century. In particular, the growth of a slave economy during the period must have had a bearing on the ability of commercial leaders to engineer political change"*¹¹

6. M. Tidy & D. Leeming, 1980, pp. 16-19 ; K.M. Phiri in A.I. Salim, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-64.

7. Redmond, *op. cit.*, p. 24 ; Fr. E. Ebner, 1959, pp. 45-48 ; Ndunguru, 1972, pp. 11-20.

8. Kalinga, *op. cit.*, p.38 ; Vail, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

9. Tidy & Leeming, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

11. K.M. Phiri, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

2. Limitations

These views constitute major explanations on state formation in Lake Nyasa region. The other minor theories which sporadically appear include ecological-environmental factors such as population pressure which is also related to migration process ; and the control over natural resources such as mining sites (salt iron ore), and cattle. However, concerning the described dominant theories on state formation in Lake Nyasa region four limitations can be delineated. That is these conventional theories face the problem of externalization of historical processes ; lack of historical unity between the eastern and western shores ; lack of problematization of historical events and emphasis on royal histories¹².

Externalization of historical processes in relation to state formation in Lake Nyasa area, refer to the dominance of the historiography which attributes to major socio-economic and political achievements to the immigrants, namely Congolese (Luba), later Nyamwezi, Ngoni, Bisa, Arabs or Swahilis. Although it is historically acceptable that these foreigners arrived in Lake Nyasa region, it is not objective to wholly attribute the socio-economic and political centralization to the success of alien political architects.

Secondly in the process of externalising, the treatment of the region as a historical unit is neglected. The region is graped in separate parts which, except for the immigrants, are not seriously unified in a historical socio-economic and political processes. Thus a lot of events are demonstrated on the western shore and south-eastern part, but not into the eastern shore (especially the Tanzanian side). There are historical and non-historical interrelated parts in Lake Nyasa region. On the basis of this fact, the limitations of the concept of Balowoka states are easily problematised.

The term 'balowoka', although refers to those who crossed over¹³, poses a historical problem. It should not be confused to firstly those who settled in Malawi (northern and central Malawi) only ; secondly it should not be limited to a number of families which crossed Lake Malawi between C.1720 and C.1800¹⁴.

The Balowoka should be regarded as a phenomenon which has existed over a long historical period pre-dating 18th century. It can probably be dated to the discovery of dug out canoes hence the event of crossing the lake east to west and vice versa. It therefore refers to generalized movements and contacts which have existed among the Lake Nyasa societies since pre-colonial period¹⁵.

12. Vail, *op. cit.*, p.149.

13. Vail, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

14. Kalinga, *op. cit.*, p.36.

15. Mihanjo, 1989, pp. 99-100 ; Johnson, 1922, p. 96.

And these movements were brought by many factors ; political (e.g. stability or instability) ; economic (e.g. barter trade), ecological (climatic-drought, famine and food shortages) and social (intermarriage) changes. Historical evidence, both oral and written, seems to support this assertion, for example the famous story of Mkisi crossing the lake. Furthermore the term 'Balowoka' as currently used in state formation in Malawi is very confusing. In the eastern shore it also refers to someone who came from the west by crossing the lake, but it is of no serious significance because there are no states associated with them. It is therefore misleading to consider the 'Balowoka' as a special historical group of state builders from Tanzania crossing Lake Nyasa to settle and control trade in Malawi. Rather it refers to constant and confusing pattern of movements and contact (in 19th century based on trade and political movements) across Lake Nyasa which involved eastern, western, northern and southern sides, as corroborated by W.P. Johnson (1922), and in similarity of names of people and places by Fr. Ebner (1959).

In relation to the east-west Link, lies a central issues of problematisation of major historical events/problems discussed in state formation. Is it enough for a historian to chronologize the material provided i.e. to arrange events in a chronological 'historical' sequence¹⁶ ? Why are state-builders immigrant hunters or traders ?¹⁷ Why immigrant state-builders marry among local clans in the process of state formation ? How did trading states e.g. Yao, Swahili states maintain themselves ? How did the transition to centralized state take place within the social formation ? What were the socio-economic and political processes involved ? These are some of key questions to be tackled in a process of tackling state formation especially in relation to the centrality of trade.

Finally, one of the most fundamental weakness which although H.L. Vail explains but is not able to comprehend is the dominance of the ruling class history. Most of the information is derived from oral sources and it is always very tempting for historians to interview the rulers of specific places because they are the first to be mentioned by the local people and current political leaders (especially nationalists). In this context history produced is mainly chronology of the ruling dynasties ; a political history of individual rulers about their ancestors and where they came from and extension or perpetuation of their rule (as is the case of Vail, Kalinga and Phiri).

The history of the people or the actual historical processes remain unknown. This is one of the limitation of our work¹⁸ on the Wampoto in eastern Lake Nyasa. Thus the histories of the Yao, Cewa, Balowoka, Swahili, Arabs and

16. J. Depelchin, p. 2.

17. Kalinga, *op. cit.*, p. 38 ; Vail, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-154 ; M. Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 139-141 ; Phiri, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-60.

18. Mihanjo, 1989.

the Ngoni are based on this type of history. They are compilation or chronology of history (or histories) of the ruling dynasties/cliq̄ue. The History of state formation in Lake Nyasa is therefore reduced to the stories about kings, queens, hunters, immigrants, warlords or individualized principal actors. As such the thrust of historical analysis is narrow and limited as most historical processes inherent in the social formation are either confused or altogether missed.

3. The transformation and character of Lake Nyasa societies in the nineteenth century : selected cases

Given the limitations of the dominant historiography on state formation in this region, it is therefore necessary to systematise this process. Fundamentally the starting point in tracing the origin of state should not be based on the founding act whether by immigrants or conquest. The difficulty lies not in locating the precise moment of such act, but rather on the precise historical conditions which make a particular structure of centralized political institutions possible and necessary as a form of existence of a developing ruling class¹⁹. In this context, it is important to trace developments and transformations in Lake Nyasa societies to locate the socio-economic and political basis of state formation especially in the 19th century.

An Overview of Lake Nyasa societies by late 18th century

A critical examination of Lake Nyasa Societies by late 18th century is a rather difficult task. However, a general overview in order to systematise the economic activities socio-political relations and organizations is possible. The selection of late 18th century is precisely done on the basis of the historiographical emphasis to state formation in Lake Nyasa region between 1770s-1885²⁰.

Generally up to early 18th century although the Lake Nyasa societies participated in long-distance trade, it was generally peripheral to the socio-economic organization. Although this trade reached the Indian Ocean it was neither highly organized, coordinated nor were Lake Nyasa societies directly connected to east coast. Little evidence in 1616 indicated an active long-distance trade except between Kilwa and the Ruvuma²¹. Furthermore although the French trader, Morice indicates that trade contacts had been forged between Kilwa on Lake Nyasa by the 1770s he specifies that the trade was

19. T. Asad, in *Critique of Anthropology*, 1985, p. 30.

20. Tidy & Leeming, *op. cit.*, p. 29 ; Kalinga, *op. cit.*, p. 36 ; Phiri, *op. cit.*, p. 53 ; Pachai, *op. cit.*, pp. XXII-XXV ; J.M. Cracken in T. Ranger, *op. cit.*, p.97-107.

21. A. Sheriff, 1987, p. 79 ; G. Bocarro in G.S.P. Freeman-Grenville (ed.), 1975, pp. 165-168.

conducted through a relay system and no single tribe dominated the whole length of the trade route. He nevertheless makes no reference to the Yao²². The other trade contacts were with Bisa and Kazembe in central Africa²³ and Mozambique coast.

Thus it is historically correct to assume that although trade, specifically local-barter trade, existed in Lake Nyasa region, it was still peripheral to the economy. The economy of these societies were basically for production for use and not specialized economies for exchange. The major economic activities were agriculture²⁴, fishing, hunting especially among the Yao, Makua and Makonde²⁵. Other activities included manufacturing and trading of the various products such as salt, iron tools, cattle food, cloth and smoked fish. The Chewa for example were gifted iron-workers, weavers of cotton cloth and manufacturers of salt²⁶. The Kisi of the mountainous eastern shore specialized in fishing and pottery²⁷. By the 16th and 17th century agriculture (maize 18th century) and animal domestication appears to have been well consolidated in Lake Nyasa region²⁸. And this presupposes systematic evolution from hunting-gathering economy to settled agricultural economy which therefore accounted for population growth and social differentiation in the area from late 16th century²⁹. It was the transformation which took place within this complex set up of settled agricultural communities that Lake Nyasa societies experienced radical changes. Transformations which brought about unequal levels of developments among not only societies but also among members of a specific social formation(s).

The character and transformation of Lake Nyasa societies

The most important factor which determined variation in levels of development and therefore in paths of state formation was the dominant mode of production characteristic of a specific social formation. By the 19th century communal, clan domestic, tribute paying and mercantilist trade based modes of production were dominant in Lake Nyasa region. historically it was among the later modes namely the tribute paying and mercantilist modes that the social formations evolved state based system.

22. Sheriff, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

23. *Ibidem*, p. 82.

24. J. McCracken, *op. cit.*, p. 97 ; A.K. Smith in D. Birmingham & P. Martin, 1983, pp. 209-213).

25. *Ibidem*, p. 212.

26. *Ibidem*, p. 213).

27. M. Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

28. A. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

29. *Ibidem*, pp. 218-219.

Primitive Communal mode : A case of the Kisi

It is difficult to identify precisely societies under this mode by the end of 18th century. Most of Lake Nyasa societies were already in the transition process to a higher level increasingly experiencing social differentiation. However, at the lowest level of the ladder was the Kisi who for lack of proper characterization could be located in this mode although at a higher level than the crude hunting-gathering level.

The Kisi occupying a mountainous area between Manda (Amelia Bay) and Mwaya were unable to practice agriculture. They specialized in fishing, selling smoked fish to the western shore (Malawi, at the time a crossing point between east and west) ; the Nyakyusa (north), Kinga (east) and Mpoto (south). Furthermore, 'pottery' was important and they exchanged pottery for grain with the same people³⁰. Furthermore, given the character of production which was dependent on nature, and also the geographical limitations, the Kisi experienced low population growth. They lived in small family groups of fishing family bands/units in few scattered habitable hilly sites of the Livingstone ranges. Thus the Kisi social formation remained historically backward (not static) with the mode of production unable to sustain an aristocratic ruling class capable of territorial economic, social and political centralization. It is this character of production process which also led to stagnation in Kisi population growth and accounts for their current extremely low population compared to other societies in eastern Lake Nyasa shore.

Clan domestic mode of production : A case of the Mpoto

Most of Lake Nyasa societies such as the Mpoto, Yao before mid 19th century ; Tonga, Chewa and Tumbuka prior to late 18th century were organized under this character³¹. The clan-villages became the basic socio-economic and political units. Various economic activities were carried out, namely, agriculture, animal husbandry, fishing, trade mining and manufacturing. The explosion of economic activities led to more specialization of duties and division of labour which led to social differentiation among people. At first it took the form of natural-biological lines i.e. age and sex. Up to the colonial conquest at least among the Mpoto, duties were assigned according to sex (male-female) or age (seniority). Unlike the Kisi where the fishing industry was done by both males and females among the Wampoto fishing was principally a male affair (specifically young-middle ages). Females took the domestic and agricultural responsibility³². Secondly, the differentiation took place at the

30. M. Milson, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

31. Mihanjo, 1989, pp. 100-126 ; Tidy & Leeming, *op. cit.*, p. 52, McCracken, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-97, Kalinga, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-38.

32. Mihanjo, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-114.

social level i.e. clan level between the "core" and "client" clans. The dominance of 'immigrants' in oral traditions and state formation possibly refers to this process of transformation. That is the "balowoka" and "vahika" (late comers) are related to a historical relationship. It implies some relationship in the control of land and the evolution of land ownership, the names "mwenendima" (owner of land) ; "namalango" (someone old ; with great respect) in eastern shore indicates this process of differentiation³³. This transformation was supported by the clan based ideological structures such as monopoly of knowledge, control of religious-ritual practices under the guise of "Luhuna" (clan territory/compound), "Mpenga utuno" (the one who performs clan rituals) and Luhungu i.e. clan rituals or medicines³⁴.

The clan constituted an independent socio-economic and political unit having within it producers based on family units, sex and age. And also low and high status clans whose relationship were determined not ideologically as indicated by differences in period of occupation, but rather on the control of means of production, namely land, cattle, some natural resources, and command over actual producers (men and women). The head of core clan had historical-absolute role/control and by this virtue he inevitably became the centre of political socio-economic power.

It was the head of the clan who also became the head of the historical locality (territory, village). He organized almost every economic activity and had monopoly over almost all social processes, production (reproduction), exchange, consumption pattern and distribution of social products³⁵. In the case of the Wampoto, fishing industry was precisely under the clan head in any specific village (clan village - including the client clans). One big fishing net ("Mkwawu") was the basic fishing instrument. And this was under the control of the clan head (asisted by senior members). All junior - middle aged males participated in the fishing industry. The fishing products were distributed to all members of the clan including female members married away. Other non-core clans were also given fish. This system of free distribution of fish known as "kivambiko" performed an ideological function, and therefore was firstly regarded as a free-gift. Secondly, it was used to maintain clan unity ; and finally it signified collective community responsibility toward community reproduction.

It was the head of clan who was consulted and had monopoly of knowledge especially on the lake, weather, fishing, medicine, agriculture and rain. The clan head also decided (or was consulted) on marriage and payment of bride price ; principally ruling out on which clan to marry or not.

33. Mihanjo, 1989, pp. 114-116.

34. *Ibidem*, pp. 115-117.

35. *Ibidem*, pp. 100-114.

Although the clan mode of production meant a fragmented political system, it marked the beginning of systematic centralization process ; and it was easier for such societies to transform into state based structures. This happened especially in a situation of population growth (as the case of Yao later) leading to competition over scarce resources or means of production especially land. The weaker clans were defeated and incorporated into stronger clans ; or sometimes the weaker clan voluntarily submitted to the stronger e.g. the "vahika". This explains the importance attached to bigger population (especially male population) in the agricultural clan - domestic mode for both defensive and production purposes. It also accounts for the acceptance and incorporation of the immigrants ("vahika Balowoka") easily and intermarriage as part of the process of increasing the number of clan members. And therefore it also explains the process of transformation to centralized states from late 18 th century e.g. the 'Balowoka' states.

Conditions of social differentiation, division of labour, organized economic activities and the evolution of the centre of authority (political ideological, religions) were already there in clan-based societies³⁶. These societies were transitory, already in a process of historical movement to a higher level of organization. It was only the historical situation which brought differences resulting in some societies moving fast to state system e.g. Yao and others not (Mpotu). The historical moments were related to the mode of production, i.e. while the Mpotu remained predominantly dependent on clan based agricultural - fishing production, the people of north-western (Malawi) and Yao became dependent on mercantilist practices.

Mercantilist-trading mode : Yao and the so called "Balowoka" States

The transformation of clan fishing-agriculture mode (north-western Malawi societies) ; clan hunting-agriculture mode (Yao) toward predominance of mercantilist trading mode started from late 18 th century and by mid 19th century this system was at its height³⁷. Fundamentally, this change was brought by a number of factors affecting the whole region in general, however, because of specific historical situations, they had serious impact on some societies such as the Yao and the north-western "Balowoka states".

The general changes affecting the whole region were related to transformation of mode of production central to the societies socio-economic and political life. By 18th century, societies along Lake Nyasa region were experiencing (as mentioned on clan domestic mode) economic and population growth³⁸. Increasingly, specialization and division of labour were taking place.

36. Mihanjo, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-140.

37. Phiri, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

38. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-220.

Diversification of economic activities i.e. fishing, hunting, agriculture, animal domestication, manufacturing (iron smelting, making of cloth), mining (salt, copper), trade and pot-making, made exchange specialized activity. Long-distance trade not only became predominant, but was also associated with lucrative prestigious articles. In this context the clan heads not only wanted to control it but also participate and collaborate with the middlemen.

As foreign goods percolated into the clan based system, the clan heads systematically were transformed into organizers of system of production based on exchange/trading requirements. The dominance of the immigrant hunters as principal actors in the formation of "Balowoka states" was based on this transformation. It basically implies there was shift in the dominant principle of organizing production process, from agricultural - fishing in clan based mode, to hunting - elephants and trading "ivory" i.e. into mercantilist mode related to international commerce. This led to the rise of specialized groups, middlemen and hunters, organized by the clan - political leaders (who too would be hunters cum traders). These organized hunting groups with the expansion of international trade were transformed into tightly organized chiefdoms evolving finally into states for example the Yao³⁹.

The changes occurred from late 18th century because, as Sheriff⁴⁰ observes, by the 1770 the southern hinterland, as a result primarily of demand of slaves from the French and Arabs, had extended beyond Lake Nyasa. The Lake Region became central to the Indian Ocean slave trade centred at Zanzibar passing through Kilwa⁴¹; the Yao, Swahili, Arabs joined seriously this lucrative trade causing collapse of earlier ivory trade in Mozambique which also brought the collapse or peripheralisation of the dominance of the Bisa - Kazembe in Lake Nyasa region politics.

Thus trade in Lake Nyasa region at this period became dominant because of the needs of Zanzibar economy developed by Seyyid Said, increase in demand of ivory in international market (as opposed to abolitionist movement of Atlantic slave trade). And also increased demand of commodities e.g. salt, iron, copper related to the growth of population leading to expansion of long-distance trade. Finally, increased agricultural production especially food production related to the dominance of maize and cassava⁴². Consequently, the control of trade as the principal economic activity and therefore production of articles of trade was central to socio-economic and political power. The basis of political authority therefore became less ritual or religious

39. Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 219.

40. Sheriff, 1987, pp. 159-160.

41. *Ibidem*, pp. 81-82.

42. Tidy & Leeming, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-31.

authority and more military and economic⁴³. The "elephant hunters" (hunter clans ?)" and "slave hunters" not only in Malawi and Mozambique, but also Tanzania became central to the existence of society. Thus the predominance of the oral traditions in all countries explaining the coming of immigrant hunters who later marry and become rulers tries to explain this transformation ; and their socio-economic dominance furthermore given competition and commercial rivalry inherent in trade, political centralization and militarization became absolutely necessary as means to capture more economic territory and (trading) resources for accumulation purpose. This accounts for the dominance of firearms and gunpowder trade during the period. The arrival of traders e.g. Swahilis, Arabs, Yaos, and Islamic faith into the interior of Lake Nyasa region in this period is directly related to the process of mercantilist states accumulation. Islam was directly related to the rich rulers it was an ideology of the affluent people. The Yao once elephant totemic lost this culture during this period basically for accumulation purpose (an elaborate cleansing ritual was developed) ⁴⁴. The whole process of state formation in these Societies is therefore a complex process which requires a systematic description of various historical transformation taking place within the Lake Nyasa societies, and not imply banking on trade alone.

Tribute based system : The Ngoni

Explanations on the Ngoni are mainly simplified on the conquest and military supremacy of the Ngoni. However, this demand a thorough observation on how this process is related to the reproduction of the Ngoni ruling class ; because although the Mpoto, and Manda people were conquered, no state formation took place in this part of Lake Nyasa. The most convincing view is therefore that state formation was immaterial to the Ngoni conquest. Their military conquest was a simple process of subordination of the local people into tribute obligation, to the mobile centralised Ngoni state. For example the Ngoni states (Njelu and Mshope) in Songea were not "local" but alien/superimposed states dependent on tribute system for its reproduction.

The tribute system imposed forcefully over local inhabitants provided the material basis for the existence of this type of state. The Ngoni states were inherently alien class-based society. Furthermore given the inherent split-tendencies due to ruling class conflicts, and because of the struggles and quest for accumulation process (mainly articles obtained from wars, cattle, women, land) the problem of state territory and not state - class and state institutions, become central. In this context migration and institutionalisation of their state over local people become crucial, i.e. for the socio-economic and political

43. *Ibidem*, p. 31.

44. The Society of Malawi Journal, 1979, p. 27.

territory. But this does not imply that the local societies e.g. Manda, Mpotu, Ngindo, Ndendeuli, and Matengo (except in areas under Makita who also were under tribute obligation) evolved state system. What basically was the practice was that the local inhabitants retained the clan domestic system, but with obligation to pay tribute (in form of cattle, smoked fish, grain, etc...). That is, these territories became blood vessels for the plunder/provision of slaves or women for the continual reproduction of the Ngoni ruling class at the centre. These were transformed into producers of food (actual labourers) ; producers of slaves and war captives (those integrated into military machinery) and finally producers of Ngoni human population (i.e. captured women who were married by the Ngoni ruling class).

Written history and oral traditions are rich in providing examples of resistances by local societies against the tribute obligation and subordination by aliens superimposed complex state structure which appeared or was experienced periodically in the context of forcible removal of women, men, cattle, prestigious articles and food. The responses were in the form of a historically determined centralisation or state formation i.e. defensive states as was the case of some Yao states and the Hehe to match with the Ngoni political military capability. For some, such as the Mpotu and Matengo the response was to pay tribute at the same time passively or sometimes escape from other tasks whenever possible. For example frequently the Mpotu, and Manda ran away using dug-out canoes when Ngoni army was sighted. They put up into some of the river and Lake Islands e.g. Lundo, Mbamba Bay and Hongi. Also, the term Matengo, unlike the conventional meaning that it simply referred to people of the forest⁴⁵, it is our view that it probably had a historical significance in terms of people who ran away to hide in caves or forest to escape the Ngoni attacks and Yao, Swahili-Arabs Slave raiders in late nineteenth century. The German colonial officials too indicated that during the period of colonial occupation still some Matengo people were hiding in caves in fear of the Ngoni and slave raiders.

Fundamentally the Ngoni states, were related to their production and reproduction needs. That is, being a superimposed aristocratic state, it required subordination and tribute extraction from the village - clan based community to provide not only food and cattle but also women and men to reproduce both biologically the Ngonis, and militarily soldiers to perform the politico-military, socio-cultural and economic function of bringing/conquering an economic-demographic-biological and political territory.

45. Ndunguru, 1972, p. 6 ; Ebner, 1959).

Conclusion

State formation is therefore a complex phenomenon which requires a systematic understanding of not only events and chronology but also the meaning and interpretation of the historical processes. It basically requires a broader grasp of what is taking place within the framework of the international and societal situation. In the context of Lake Nyasa societies, the emergence of various states especially from late 18th century can not be successfully explained by conventional theories alone. The fluid and dynamic historical changes which appeared from that century were too complex to be explained simply on the basis of migration, trade and conquest wisdom. To explain this historical dynamism the starting point should therefore focus on the transformation in the actual socio-political and political processes i.e. social formation(s).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BIRMINGHAM D. & MARTIN P.M. (ed.), *History of Central Africa*, vol. 1, London & New York, Longman, 1983.
- BIRMINGHAM D. & MARTIN P.M. (ed.), *Critique of Anthropology*, 1985, vol. 5, no 2, pp. 21-33.
- BIRMINGHAM D. & MARTIN P.M. (ed.), *Critique of Anthropology*, 1980, vol. 4, no 15, pp. 75-76.
- DEPELCHIN J., "Notes on production of pre-colonial Central African History", Department of History, Univ. of Dar-es-Salaam.
- EBNER Fr. E.O.S.B., *The History of the Ngoni*, 1959.
- FREEMAN-GRENVILLE G.S.P., (Ed.), *The East African Coast*, London, Rex Collings, 1975.
- GERSTEIN I., "Restructuring Structural Marxism", Norton, Dept. of Sociology, 1988.
- JAFFE H., *A History of Africa*, London, Ud Books, 1985.
- JOHNSON W.P., *Nyasa, the Great Water*, London, OUP, 1922.

- KOPONEN J., *People and Production in late Precolonial Tanzania*, Uppsala
 Finish Society for Development Studies, 1988.
- KOPONEN J., "Famine, Flies, People and Capitalism in Tanzania History",
Occasional Paper, 8, Univ. of Helsinki, Institute of Development Studies.
- LONG J.H., "The Religion of the Mbuti Pygmies and the religion of the
 Bushmen of the Kalahary", Ph.D. Dissertation, Chicago, Illinois, 1973.
- LUGARD F.D., *The Rise of our East African Empire : Early efforts on
 Nyasaland and Uganda*, vol. 1, Edinburgh & London, William Blackwood
 & Sons, 1893.
- MBEYA C.K., "A History of Labour Migration in Ludewa District Tanzania 1920-
 1980", M.A. Dissertation, Univ. of Dar-es-Salaam, 1983.
- MIHANJO E.P., "Capital, Social Formation and Labour Migration : A Case
 Study of the Wampoto in Mbinga District 1900-1960", M.A. Dissertation,
 Dept. of History, Univ. of Dar-es-Salaam, 1989.
- NDUNGURU E., *Historia, Mila na Destruri za Wamatengo*, Nairobi, East
 African Literature Bureau, 1972.
- NEEDHAM D.E. et al., *From Iron Age to Independence : A History of Central
 Africa*, Essex, Longman, 1984.
- NYAGAVA S.I., "A History of the Bena to 1908", PhD. Thesis, Dept of History,
 University of Dar-es-Salaam, 1988.
- NYIRENDA H.D., "Indirect Rule in Colonial Ungoni 1897-1955", M.A.
 Dissertation, Dept. of History, Univ. of Dar-es-Salaam, 1986.
- PACHAI B. (Ed.), *The Early History of Malawi*, London, Longman, 1972.
- RANGER T.O. (Ed.), *Aspects of Central African History*, Evanston,
 Northwestern University Press, 1968.
- REDMOND P.M., *The Politics of Power in Songea Ngoni Society 1860-1862*,
 Chicago, Adam Press, 1985.
- SALIM A.I. (Ed.), *State Formation in Eastern Africa*, Nairobi, Heinemann, 1985.

SHERIFF A., *Slaves, Spices and Ivory in Zanzibar*, London, Nairobi, Dar-es-Salaam, Athens, James Currey, Heinemann, T.P.H. Ohio University Press, 1987.

SHERIFF A., *The Society of Malawi Journal*, 1978, vol. XXXI, no 1.

SHERIFF A., *The Society of Malawi Journal*, 1979, vol. XXXII, no 2.

TIDY M. & LEEMING D., *A History of Africa 1840-1914*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 1980.

WILLS A.J., *Introduction to the History of Central Africa*, London, OUP, 1967.

FAMINTINANA

Ny foto-kevitra manindrahindra ny fampandriantany, ny fifindramonina ary ny varotra no fototra nenti-nanazava ny fiforonan'ny Fanjakana tamin'ny faritry ny farihy Nyasa. Niray volo tamin'ny mpiavy ny ankamaroan'ny Fanjakana tamin'ny alalan'ny fomba samihafa, ohatra ny fifindra-monina avy ao Katanga, ny varotra taon'ny mpifindra monina (avy amin'ny fanjakana Yao sy Balowoka), ny fampandrian-tany, izany hoe ny Fanjakana niforona noho ny fananiham-bohitra nataon'ny Ngaoni. Fanampin'izany dia voalaza koa fa nivangongo tamin'ny morony andrefana sy ny faritra atsimo andrefan'ny Yao tamin'ny faritry ny farihy Nyasa ireo fanjakana ireo.

Ny tena zava-dehibe dia ny hoe tsy mba voatonona tao amin'ny tantaran'ny fiforonam-panjakana ny morony atsinanan'i Nyasa, kanefa izy be velarana kokoa ary nanan-danja kokoa sady nifandray mivantana tamin'ny varotra taty amin'ny Ranomasimbe Indiana sy ny fananiham-bohitra nataon'ny Ngoni. Manomboka eo amin'io fomba famaritana io no manjary tsy azo ekena ny foto-kevitra manindrahindra ny fampandrian-tany, ny fifindramonina ary ny varotra. Raha tiana ny hahazo tsara ny hery nitarika fiovana tamin'io faritra io dia tsy maintsy dimina ny fiantraikan'ny rafi-pamokarana sy ny fomba fitomboan'ny mponina amin'ny fiforonan'ny fanjakana.

Ny tanjon'ity asa ity ny hanao profo fa niantehitra tamin'ny rafi-pamokarana isan-karazany ny faritry ny farihy Nyasa, dia ny rafi-pamokarana mifototra amin'ny fianakaviambe (clan) izany, ny rafi-pamokarana mivelona amin'ny varotra, ka ny varotra andevo no fotony. Hanaporofa ihany koa ity asa ity fa ny rafi-pamokarana miankina amin'ny varotra andevo sy ny rafi-pamokarana miankina amin'ny fampandoavan-ketra no nampivoitra ny fanjakana mangorom-pahefana noho ny zavatra ilain'ny famokarana sy ny fitomboan'ny mponina izay zary tandra vadin-koditra ho azy.

RESUME

La formation de l'Etat dans la région du Lac Nyasa a été essentiellement expliquée sur la base des théories de la conquête, de la migration et du commerce. La plupart des Etats ont été assimilés d'une manière ou d'une autre aux immigrants, par exemple, du Katanga, des commerçants immigrants (Etat Yao, Etats Balowoka) et aux conquêtes, i.e. les Etats formés en conséquence de l'invasion Ngaoni. Bien plus, la concentration de tels Etats est décrite comme étant sur la rive ouest et la section sud-ouest Yao de la région du Lac Nyasa.

D'une manière fondamentale, une rive orientale du Nyasa, plus étendue et plus importante, est omise de l'histoire de la formation d'Etat bien que cette région ait été directement reliée au commerce de l'Océan indien et à l'invasion

ngoni. C'est à partir de cette limitation que les théories de la conquête, des migrations et du commerce deviennent contestables, et que, pour comprendre la dynamique du changement dans la région, les conditions de production et de reproduction deviennent absolument nécessaires pour comprendre la dynamique de la formation d'Etat.

Cette contribution démontrera que les sociétés de la région du lac Nyasa étaient basées sur différents modes de production, à savoir le mode de clan domestique, le mode de paiement de tribut et le mode mercantiliste basé sur l'esclavage. Elle démontrera également que les Etats centralisés ont émergé dans les modes de production mercantilistes basés sur l'esclavage et les modes de production basés sur le paiement de tribut, précisément en raison des exigences de la production et de la reproduction qui leur sont inhérents.