Impact of British Currency In Colonial Annang Society, Calabar Province, Nigeria, 1900-1960

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Abstract
The major task of this paper is to examine the introduction of British currency in colonial Annang society and how the currency was used to exploit the resources of the people during the said period. The introduction of modern currency during the colonial period helped to transformed the economy of Annang from subsistence level to a market oriented one, Trade between the Annangs and European in palm produce such as palm oil and palm kernel would not have been possible, but for improvement in the pre-colonial currency by the colonial authorities. The study interrogated how the currency was used to promote British economic exploitation of Annang during the colonial period. It adopted the historical method, relying extensively on primary information obtained from oral interviews and archival sources. The study finds that the introduction of British currency in Annang was a means to an end contrary to the colonial belief that the introduction of the British currency was meant to develop the Annang economy. The machinery of the colonial government was used to create modern currency facilities considered essential to the successful and profitable of British economic interest in Annang.

Keywords: Impact, British, Currency, Colonial, Annang, Society, Calabar, Province

Introduction
Annang people occupy the North-Western part of Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria which lies within the Cross River Basin, between latitudes $40^{0}.25'$ and 70^{0} North and longitudes $70^{0}.15'$ and $90^{0}.30'$ East (Messenger, 1959). Pre-colonial Annang was made up of thirty-five clans (*Aduk*) (Ekong, 1983). Each of these had its own independent political institutions headed by a clan head (*Okuku*). Therefore, there were thirty five clan heads in Annang. During the colonial period, the Annang were majorly found in Ikot Ekpene and Abak Division in Calabar Province, with some other sub-set occupying 150 square miles in the north of Opobo Division in Rivers Province. These communities had a cultural bond and they all looked up to Afaha Obong where the Annang supreme deity was situated as their place of origin and traditional headquarters (Essien, 2013).To the North, Annang is bounded by lni and Ikono Local Government Areas and to the South by Ikot Abasi Local Government Area of Akwa

Ibom State. To the West, Annang is bounded by Ngwa and Azumini communities of Abiastate and Ndoki community of Rivers State, and to the East, by Uyo and Mkpatenin Local Government Areas of Akwa Ibom State.

Geographically, Annang lies almost entirely in the rain forest belt of Southern Nigeria. The area has a level landscape, covered by relatively low vegetation and myriad of palms. There is a mean annual rainfall of 2.030-2,540mm. Annang has a tropical climate with wet and dry seasons (Udo, 1970). The wet season spans from March to October when the monsoon winds blow from the South-West, while the dry season spans from November to February when the harmattan (*ekarika*) blows from the North-East. The landscape is generally flat and low-lying, with no point rising above 300ft and no part less than 100ft feet above sea level. It has a level landscape covered by relatively low vegetation and numerous palm trees.

At present, Annang with a population of more than one million people is the second largest ethnic group in Akwa Ibom State. The Annangs are found in eight of the present thirty-one Local Government Areas in Akwa Ibom State, namely; Abak, Essien Udim, Etim Ekpo, Ika, Ikot Ekpene, Obot Akara, Oruk Anam and Ukanafun; yet they are culturally homogenous.

Means of Exchange in Pre-Colonial Period

The economic exchange among human groups across the world is the function of the necessities of the insatiability of human wants, subjecting man to numerous forms of exchanges and trade. These exchanges and trade across the history are the factors, which informed the adoption of money of different kinds as means of exchange (Odior and Banuso, 2012; Achor and Robert, 2013). Various medium of exchanged were used in various Annang markets and trade centres before the imposition of colonial rule in the area. They helped to facilitate trade and exchange of goods and services in various forms and dimensions. The first major means of exchange among the Annang people was the barter system which involved the exchange of some quantities of one type of commodity with an acceptable quantity of another commodity. It is a form of exchange in which goods are exchanged for goods making it imperative, that exchange will only take place when the commodities to be exchanged had been accepted by the individuals involved (Ikuseedun, 2006). Conducting an economic transaction in barter economies involved high transaction costs as considerable time and effort were required in finding a suitable partner (Odior and Banuso, 2012). However, with the increased in the volume of trade and expansion of the Annang economy due to the exchange rate and this made the barter system obsolete (Ikpe, 1992). With the major weakness of the barter system, particularly the double coincidence of wants (Afigbo, 1987), there was the need for a new means of exchange of goods which could enhance trade among the people. Beyond resolving problems of a barter system, another aspect in the evolution of money was the need for divisibility (Ajayi and Ojo, 2006).

This development led to the introduction of commodities currencies such as a piece of cloth or salt among the people of Annang. Due to the necessity of money to the economic activities of every society, all societies across the history have used one form of trade currency or another, which was acceptable to the society in particular and perhaps other societies that may have accepted such object for economic exchange. For example, during the contact era between Nigeria and Europeans the traditional currencies such as copper wire, iron money before the introduction of cowry shells from Indian Ocean were used for economic exchange (Kirk-Greene, 1960). But by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, as a result of the contact of the people of Annang with European, most especially through Aro, Andoni and Ibibio, commodities currencies such as pieces of cloth and salt became out-dated. Cowries, copper rod, and brass came into use in Annang as a means of exchange between the various communities in Annang on one hand, and between Annang and their neighbours on the other hand. So, from the sixteenth century onward, the volume of trade in the area increased as a result of the introduction of these commodity currencies such as salt or piece of cloth as there were able to perform various functions of modern money as they facilitated exchange between buyers and sellers.

Manilla was a major currency used by the people of Annang for exchange of goods before the introduction of British currency. It was brought into the area by the Portuguese from the second half of the 19th century. Due to its dominance as a mean of exchange, Annang was grouped as a Manilla currency area by the colonial authorities (Chapman, 1935).The introduction and the use of Manilla systematically eliminated salt and pieces of cloth as a means of exchange among the Annang people. It is important to note that the means of exchange adopted by the Annangs in pre-colonial period met their needs and aspiration.

Emergence of Morden Currency in Colonial Period

British adventure in Annang land was basically an enterprise of exploitation. When the British imperialists infiltrated into the present day Nigeria, there was a deliberate attempt to demonetize the existing trade currencies in order to facilitate their exploitation of the people (Aghalino and Eyinla, 2008) As early in the days of British imposition of colonial rule on the people, economic policies, particularly in the field of banking and currency were crafted for the benefit of European imperial adventure in Nigeria. Among the results of British adventurism in Nigeria was the successful undermining of the indigenous exchange system and the de-monetization of traditional currencies in the 19th century (Chukwu, 2010). With the increase in volume of exchange during the colonial dispensation, Manilla currency was seen as obstacle to free flow of trade by the colonial government. Like in other colonies in Nigeria, soon after establishing political control, the colonial authorities in Annang attempted to replace the existing currencies of the country (Ofonagoro, 1979). In this regard, efforts were made by the Regional Treasurer, Enugu to replace the Manilla currency with a more acceptable one that would enhance free flow of trade between the people and the various European firms and payment of taxes to the colonial government (Curwen, 1932). Since the overriding desire of the colonial government in the area was economic, official opinion regarded the existing means of exchange as not only anachronistic but also as a hindrance to steady and profitable growth of British trade. For this reason a committee of three was appointed on the 10th of September, 1948 to formulate proposals for the withdrawal of Manilla in Eastern Province.

The committee met with Mr. J. S. Smith, a Resident of Owerri Province, Mr. C. J. Mayne, a Resident of Calabar Province, Mr. A. T. E. Marsh, Resident of Rivers Province, and the District Officers of the Divisions in which Manilla was in circulation. The committee submitted recommendations based on the unanimous views of the officers who were consulted. Four proposals were recommended by the committee to replace existing manila currency which the British opinions believed to be unstable for trade with Britain. One of such proposal was that government should buy up the Manilla in these areas (Dewhurst, 1949).This was however, turned down by the colonial secretary when it was discovered that it would cost over a million pounds sterling to do so.

The colonial authorities promulgated the Manilla Prohibition Ordinance in 1919 (Lawal, 1999).The Ordinance of 1919 banned the use of Manilla currency between Annang and the European in their dealings. This development was also in line with the Native Revenue Ordinance of 1917 which had earlier decreed that the native's contributions to the cost of administration shall be paid in British West Africa currency and not by the use of Manilla yam or goats as these was not useful to colonial authorities (Hanitsch, 1919).

By the Ordinances, payments of tax, court fines and buying of European goods by the Annang were to be by British West Africa Currency. The consequent of this was gradual replacement of Manilla currency in the Division. For this purpose collecting agents were approved as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Manilla Collecting Agents

S/N	Firm Name	Identification Mark
1.	The United Africa Company Limited	U.
2.	Messre John Holt and Company (Liverpool) Limited	H.
3.	Messre G. B. Ollivant Limited	O
4.	Messre Paterson Zochonia and Company Limited	P.
5.	Messre Societe Commercial de L'Quest Africain	S
6.	Messre Compagnie Franaise de L'Afrique Occidentale.	P

Source: N. A. E. (A. B.) ABAKDIST 1/3/5

The property in the manila tokens will pass to Government immediately the exchange transaction was completed, that is on the premise of the collecting agents and before delivery to the Central Government collecting depot (Aston-Smith, 1919).The collecting agent were given the following instructions:

i. Arrange uniform packing of the Manilla received by them, but is, Manilla will be packed in groundnut bags and each bag will contain 600 Manilla (1 cwt.) of the same type. Different types of Manilla must not be mixed together in the same bag. This was essential for weighing and test checking at the reception depots. It is considered double bagging and can be avoided.

ii. Collecting agents will arrange for each bag to be marked to indicate its origin and contents on arrival at the Central Government collecting depots (Johnson, 1939).

In other to carry out the replacing of Manilla policy successfully, the Ikot Ekpene Native Council makes the following regulations:

I. Any person refusing to accept payment for goods bought in English or Native Currency at the agree rates of exchange shall be liable to a fine not exceeding five shillings, or, in default of payment, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding seven days with hard labour

ii. Any person found trying to cheat the natives as regards to the value of the English coins shall be liable to a fine not exceeding ten shillings, or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two weeks with hard labour (Marshall, 1913).

In order to achieve the policy of replacing the Manilla currency with that of the British currency, the Native Council Rules establish the value of Manilla against the British shilling. This is shown in the corresponding values of shilling to the manila in the table below:

Table 2: The Corresponding Values of Recognised currencies to the Manilla

Manilla	Values
5 Manilla	One silver shilling
3.5 Manilla	One brass shilling
3.5 Manilla	One shilling note
1 Manilla plus 1d.	One silver 3d.
1 manilla	Three Nickel Pennies

Source: N. A. E. (C. P.) CALPROF 4/9/63, Silver Currency supply to Ikot Ekpene District, 1920

From the table, it is evident that the value of Manilla was stable against the British currencies which leaves the Annang with no choice but accept these new currencies as a means of trade relations with the European. The implication of this was that, the people began to transact their businesses with British West Africa Currency rather than with manilas that was used before the imposition of colonial rule on the people. This was to enable them pay their taxes, court fines and buy European goods such as gin, cloths and tobacco for which they have developed taste for. Through these processes, the British currency began to circulate to all parts of the Annang particularly in Ikot Ekpene and Abak as indigenous colonial employees were now being paid with the British West Africa currency with the aim to promote the wide spread of the new currency (Spence, 1921).

In spite of these efforts by the colonial authorities to promote British West Africa Currency (Pound Sterling) in Annang, the Manilla still remained popular among the rural people in the ordinary transaction of village economic life until the late 1940 (Thompson, 1934). Even though the British authorities had outlawed the use of Manillas as early as 1891 in Southern Nigeria (Lawal, 1999). It was a daunting task for the British to withdraw 32 million Manilla from circulation in the Manillas areas in 1949 and sent them to Europe (Lawal, 1999). Yet more were still in circulation in the villages for market transaction and small scale purchase till 1952 (Lawal, 1999).The persistence of the use of Manilla currency in these villages before 1940s was due to a number of factors among which were: First, the palm oil trade was a significant source of wealth and much of it had been retained in Manilla. Second, the people appreciated the manila on the account of its unique quality and value.

When damaged, it was useful for making bullets and meted it into knives and other household wares (Ofonagoro, 1979, Olanrewaju, 1987). Third, the manila exchange rate against pounds sterling was relatively stable during the twentieth century and had therefore become a safe legal tender for the people in the rural communities. Commenting on the difficulty the colonial authorities faced in Ikot Ekpene in making the people to accept the new currency, the Assistant Treasurer in his memo to the Resident Calabar Province stated that:

> The Divisional Officer has pointed out to me the difficulty in regard to the acceptance of notes in the markets at Ikot Ekpene station and has become of so serious a nature that he is in considerable a raid on the markets by the troops station there. They are unable to obtain food supplies at reasonable cost with either notes or new currency coins, and as their pay is given to them with the new currencies, their difficulty is understood (Spence, 1932).

The table below shows the rate of manila against British West Africa Currency in relation to tax rate.

Table 3: The Value of the Manillas and Tax Rate

Year	Manilla per Shilling	Tax-rate in British West Africa Currency (Shillings)	Tax-rate in Manillias
1928	7	7/-	49
1929	7	7/-	49
1930	8	7/-	56
1931	12	4/-	48

Source: N. A. E. "Intelligence Report on the Ukana Group, Ikot Ekpene Division" CSO 30/28/565, 1931, p.10

The table above shows relative stability and value of manila currency against the British West Africa currency. Although, before now, Manilla had helped to facilitate trade between the people and the European firms. However, the reckless oversupply of the currency caused its depreciation and eroded the confidence in its exchange rate with the other currencies (Olanrewaju, 1987).This created negative impression about the Manilla as a viable means of exchange (Fry, 1976).With this, the colonial authorities and firms in Annang overemphasized the weaknesses, limitations and other demerits of the Manilla currency. Thus, as the trade relationship between them developed further, the colonial government evolved a new currency which is the British Pound Sterling in an attempt to avert what they believed to be obstacle of free trade in the area. Lack of stability in the Manilla currency was used by the colonial authorities in Annang to therefore justify the introduction of the Pound Sterling in Annang.

The merits of the Pound Sterling were vehemently extolled thus: they were convenient to handle, freely convertible, afforded a flexible system of standard multiples, and were not under the control of particular firms but imperial institution, and hence, the fear of easy depreciation by particular firms was non-existent (Ake, 1981). With the new currency introduced, Annang economics were tied to the economy and monetary system of Britain, where a master-servant relationship was established. Thus, Annang was enmeshed in a relationship of unequal exchange, exploitation and under-development.

Conclusion

The paper has shown that pre-colonial production was mostly aimed at satisfying personal needs. However, the idea of production for absolute subsistence is not very correct as evidence abound in favour of a surplus in production for exchange. The various currencies in the pre-colonial period facilitated the exchange of goods and services in pre-colonial Annang. The first means of exchange among the people was the barter system where, for example, some quantities of goods were exchanged for some other quantities of other items. But the problem of the double coincidence of wants which was a major weakness of trade by barter naturally led to the evolution of other means of exchange such as the piece of cloth and salt. Again, with increased in trade among the people and their neighbours, the commodity currency was not capable of coping with the volume of transaction between the people. Consequently, there was the need for the introduction of other means of exchange such as cowries, manila, brass rods, copper and iron money that would suffice for the level of the transaction of trade.

This paper has focussed on the changes and evolution of modern currency during the colonial period which helped to transform the economy of Annang. The advent of British Pound Sterling marked a watershed in the economic history of Annang during the colonial period. It marked the transition of the area from a pre-colonial subsistence economy to monetised and a dynamic market-oriented one.

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