

## Historical Context of the Transformation of the Nyamwezi Migrant Labourers: From Slave Labour to Wage Labour, 1890s–1960s



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**ABSTRACT:** This research critically examines the evolution of labor among the Nyamwezi people spanning the period from the 1890s to the 1960s, with a primary focus on the transformation from slave labor to wage labor. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study utilized methods such as focus group discussions (FGD) and interviews, supplemented by documentary reviews and archival materials. The analytical framework drew upon Social Exclusion and Conflict Theory, culminating in an innovative perspective termed the "development of capitalism over labor shift-question." This framework posits that the progression of capitalism played a pivotal role in transitioning the Nyamwezi labor system from slave labour to wage labour. The findings of the study illuminate the Nyamwezi's adaptation to the colonial labor system, providing insights into the motives behind their involvement in migrant labor. Additionally, the research presents statistical data detailing Nyamwezi migration from Tabora to Zanzibar. The paper concludes by underscoring the integration of the Nyamwezi into capitalist relations, asserting that labor migration, particularly during the colonial era, was intricately linked to the capitalist transformation occurring in the Nyamwezi region. This transformation resulted from the introduction and consolidation of capitalist relations within the Nyamwezi area.

**KEYWORDS:** Nyamwezi, Migrant labor, Evolution of labour, capitalism, Wage labour, Slave labour

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The utilization of slave labor was not a novel occurrence among European nations before their encounters with the coast of Africa and its interior. This practice had been observed in various regions prior to the European involvement. Rossum et al. (2015) articulated a significant perspective by highlighting that slave labor and its associated obligations existed in Asia before Europeans ventured into Africa. The Western Powers, influenced by the experiences of Asians, imposed a system of slave labor in Africa, particularly during the mercantilist era (McGrath, 2005). This imposition was orchestrated not only by the Portuguese but also by private European traders, constituting a significant historical development.

From the mid-18th century onward, the nature of slave labor underwent a transformation within the trajectory of capitalist development (McGrath, 2005). This era marked the shift from mercantilism to industrial capitalism, with the initial manifestations occurring in England from the 1750s. Concurrently, campaigns advocating for the abolition of the slave trade gained momentum in Africa during this period. The historical significance of this epoch had a profound impact on the evolution of labor (Berger, 2021). Importantly, the rise of the industrial revolution in England and Europe at large resulted in the integration of the African economy into the capitalist economic system. This integration meant that Africans, through their labor, assumed roles as producers of raw materials and purchasers of manufactured goods from established industries in Europe (Settles, 1996). Rodney (2018), in his work "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa," further expounded on these historical dynamics:

*African economies are integrated into the very structure of the developed capitalist economies; and they are integrated in a manner that is unfavorable to Africa and insures that Africa is dependent on the big capitalist countries. Indeed, structural dependence is one of the characteristics of underdevelopment (Rodney, 2018).*

Considering the aforementioned quote, the assertion is made that the industrial system exerted a direct influence on labor, leaving no alternative but to discontinue the slave trade and its associated labor system. This shift integrated indigenous economies in favor of industrial production relations. Scholars such as Berger (2021) and McGrath (2005) argued that the slave labor system had more drawbacks than advantages when compared to the wage labor system during the era of industrial capitalism. They emphasized that the slave labor system hindered the improvement of productive forces, as slaves utilized tools owned by their masters. Additionally, the system did not support effective marketing strategies, given that slaves were not remunerated, resulting in their lack of purchasing power for commodities from industries. Furthermore, the supervision of the slave labor system was deemed challenging. These

## **Historical Context of the Transformation of the Nyamwezi Migrant Labourers: From Slave Labour to Wage Labour, 1890s–1960s**

factors collectively prompted the transformation from the slave labor system to the wage labor system (Berger, 2021; McGrath, 2005).

Rodney (2018) asserted that while slavery was beneficial for the early accumulation of capital, its rigidity posed challenges for industrial development. This implies that slavery exhibited an anachronistic tendency incompatible with industrial production in the 18th century. This leads to crucial questions: Why did changes occur in the mid-18th century? How did wage labor coexist with capitalism? To what extent was this form of labor viable in an African economy?

It is important to recognize that capitalism is a dynamic system. For instance, as it progressed into the monopoly stage, it resulted in global colonial dominance, with specific implications for Africa. Rodney (2018) offered insightful perspectives, suggesting that in the 1890s, the German government asserted direct political control over German East Africa. During this period, Germany initiated various infrastructure projects such as railways and roads, necessitating labor from diverse communities. Kaniki (1980) supports Rodney's observations, noting that communities like the Nyamwezi, accustomed to portage labor since the pre-colonial era, were often willing to either persist in this occupation or transition to hired labor during the colonial period (Kaniki, 1980).

This transformation influenced ethical norms during the colonial era, shaped by international connections and interactions between imperial powers and colonized populations. It was through these changes that waged labor underwent further development and expansion. Notably, it was observed that the colonial state assumed the responsibility of establishing means and mechanisms to ensure the availability of labor for colonial projects (Kaniki, op cit.).

In light of the shifting global dynamics and the evolution of capitalism, it was noted that various ethnic groups in Africa underwent migration to different regions in pursuit of employment opportunities. Additionally, some groups were compelled to engage in labor for colonial projects. The Nyamwezi were among the ethnic communities participating in labor migration to various locations, particularly starting from the 1890s (Rockel, 2000).

The Nyamwezi ethnic group in Africa actively pursued a migration process as a means of securing their livelihood, a practice that gained prominence since the pre-colonial era. Their significance was primarily derived from engagement in portage professions and participation in the slave caravan trade (Rockel, 2000). Nyamwezi porters and traders developed a distinctive form of labor organization, which later served as a model for coastal and foreign-led caravans. This organizational model persisted as the foundation for caravans until the early colonial period. Over time, the Nyamwezi people recognized the increasing demand for labor and skills, particularly with the expansion of the ivory trade. Consequently, their skills and labor became increasingly commodified. The Nyamwezi's migration endeavors were driven by the pursuit of survival, leading them to explore opportunities in Zanzibar. The abolition of slavery presented them with a chance to engage in labor in Zanzibar.

Hence, this study is centered on the timeframe spanning from the 1890s to the 1960s. It was during this period that the Nyamwezi community provided labor to Zanzibar, engaging as wage laborers in the clove plantations. At that time, Zanzibar was under British imperialism. The contention is that the abolition of slavery in 1897 resulted in a labor shortage on the plantations (Ferguson, 1991). Initially, the British collaborated with Resident Indian merchants who brought in labor from India for clove harvesting. However, this source of labor was not sustained for an extended period, leading to the replacement of workers from mainland Tanzania (then known as Tanganyika).

Having reviewed various literature on the subject, it is evident that scholars such as Ferguson (1991), Rockel (2000), and Kaniki (1980), among others, have primarily focused on the impacts of development projects like colonial initiatives and the migration of the Nyamwezi to various regions within the country. However, these studies have not extensively explored the extent to which the Nyamwezi community underwent a transformation in labor practices in response to the development of capitalism. It is within this identified gap that the author has critically examined the evolution of wage labor among the Nyamwezi, particularly within the context of transitioning from slave labor to wage labor during the period from the 1890s to the 1960s.

### **2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research encompassed Tabora and Zanzibar. Within Tabora, the investigation focused on the Nzega District, specifically covering Kantu, Mwakarundi, and Usongo. In Zanzibar, the study concentrated on the Magharibi B District, with visits to streets such as Kiembe samaki, Buyu, Shakani, and Chukwani. The selection of Nzega District was based on its significance as the Nyamwezi migrants' place of origin, and it appeared to have a substantial number of emigrants (TNA, Nzega District Annual Report, 1924-1934). Conversely, Magharibi B District was chosen as the destination where migrants integrated into the capitalist system, undergoing a transformation in their customs and living systems. Upon entering the new economic systems, they devised strategies for survival.

This article primarily adopts a qualitative methodology, employing interpretive and naturalistic approaches in its examination of the subject matter. Qualitative techniques involve investigating phenomena within their natural contexts, aiming to comprehend and interpret them based on the meanings attributed by individuals. The research utilizes various empirical materials, including case studies, personal experiences, introspection, life stories, interviews, observations, histories, interactions, and visual texts. Additionally, archival materials are incorporated, serving as informational artifacts that provide evidence of past events. These

## Historical Context of the Transformation of the Nyamwezi Migrant Labourers: From Slave Labour to Wage Labour, 1890s–1960s

materials serve as records containing information about previous activities, functioning as memory aids that enable users to recall and revisit events or to convey information about them in different temporal and spatial contexts (TNA, Archival Material 2007). In this paper, the researcher relies on a combination of written archival documents and oral recollections as the evidential foundation for understanding the evolution of labor among the Nyamwezi and its transformation over time. Despite the diverse sources of these materials, the researcher views them as complementary, as none of them is sufficient on its own. Recognizing that all evidence reflects the subjectivity or perspectives of its creators, interpreting them as complementary allows for a nuanced reading and evaluation of their contents in relation to each other. This approach also acknowledges that the social actors behind these materials, such as government officials crafting archival documents or Nyamwezi communities sharing reminiscences through their descendants, were not living in isolation. Instead, they interacted, influenced, and shaped one another within the constraints imposed by colonialism. By considering these sources as complementary evidence, the paper aims to uncover the negotiations and relationships between the various actors responsible for producing the mentioned materials.

This paper relies on a diverse range of written documents as a crucial evidential foundation, including archival records authored by colonial government officials. The author obtained these documents from the Tanzania National Archives in Dar es Salaam, the largest repository of historical documents in Tanzania. Additionally, oral recollections play a significant role in providing evidence for this paper, employing biographical and unstructured interviews. The biographical interview involves the collection and analysis of a comprehensive account of an entire life or a specific period, typically through an in-depth, unstructured interview. This account may be supplemented by semi-structured interviews or personal documents. Instead of focusing on a mere 'snapshot' of an individual's current situation, the biographical approach underscores situating the individual within a network of social connections, historical events, and life experiences (Denzin and Lincoln 1994).

This paper utilized biographical and unstructured interviews due to their advantages over questionnaires and documentary reviews, offering flexibility to both the researcher and the respondents. These interview types provided the researcher with the ability to manage the research process by adjusting questions as needed and generating new questions based on the informants' responses. In this context, open-ended questions were employed to prompt comprehensive and meaningful answers, leveraging the subject's own knowledge and emotions. Unlike closed-ended questions that elicit brief or single-word responses, open-ended questions are more objective and less likely to be leading in nature. According to this investigation, oral interviews predominantly employed open-ended questions to provide ample opportunity for participants to share additional information related to the study's theme.

The Nyamwezi local language was utilized in this study. However, as the researcher was not proficient in Nyamwezi, assistance was sought from research collaborators familiar with the language. The collaboration with these assistants facilitated cooperation from interviewees, whose recollections provided valuable insights into how their predecessors understood and navigated migration and labor processes in the past. The researcher interpreted these oral recollections as a cumulative body of knowledge passed down through generations, acquired from their parents and grandparents, and subsequently reinterpreted in their contemporary context to comprehend the historical narrative. The central concepts encompassing how earlier generations addressed the challenges of migration processes, their evolution across generations, and the infusion of contextual meanings by each subsequent generation to make them pertinent in their respective times hold immense significance.

Hence, oral recollections preserve remnants of historical events, current experiences, and the dynamic interaction between the two (Denzin and Lincoln, *op cit.*). By emphasizing oral recollections, the paper has prioritized comprehending the perspectives and rationales of individuals regarding changes in labor and the motives behind migration. This cumulative aspect has empowered the author to examine contemporary oral recollections as a lens into the environment where migrant laborers operated and evolved in the bygone era (*ibid.*).

As an accumulated body of knowledge shaping the identities of individuals and social communities, each generation transmits this knowledge to the succeeding one. The transfer of memories from one generation to the next involves alterations and consistencies in the essence and character of these memories. According to Jan Shetler, this process of change and continuity arises from the fact that new generations tend to reinterpret and contextualize these memories in accordance with their own contemporary times, social surroundings, and historical experiences. Through this reinterpretation, they no longer uphold the received facts that have lost relevance in the new contexts, leading to the potential disappearance of such facts from the contemporary recollections of the past (Shetler 2007).

Ultimately, oral recollections encapsulate the personal interests and individual motivations of the interviewees. By recalling and narrating their past experiences, as well as organizing the roles their parents played in migrant labor, oral interviewees take on the responsibility of being custodians of the social processes that have molded the development of their communities from the past to the present. For instance, elders confidently shared stories about their grandfathers who migrated from Tabora to Zanzibar, sometimes presenting these narratives as objective reality or truth. However, the author interprets these oral recollections as subjective and interpretive constructs used by individuals to comprehend the historical Nyamwezi migration. These recollections are just as subjective as any other form of evidence employed by historians, both Africanists and non-Africanists, in the construction of historical knowledge (Shetler, *op cit.*).

# Historical Context of the Transformation of the Nyamwezi Migrant Labourers: From Slave Labour to Wage Labour, 1890s–1960s

## 3.0 THEORETICAL DISCOURSE

### 3.1 Introduction

According to this paper, the author has applied pertinent theories, namely Conflict Theory and Social Exclusion Theory.

### 3.2 Social Exclusion Theory

Social Exclusion Theory, developed by Lenoir in 1974, was initially tailored to suit the French context of 1974, where people lacked access to the country's social insurance system (Hayes, Gray & Edwards 2008). The socially excluded groups identified included religious minorities, single parents, drug users, and individuals with physical or mental disabilities. These groups shared a common characteristic of being perceived as social misfits and marginalized individuals (Saith 2001). By the 1980s, the theory of social exclusion gained global prominence and was incorporated into public policy programs in numerous countries worldwide. It found adoption by prominent organizations such as the European Union, the United Nations (UNESCO), and the World Bank (Levitas 2006). These entities applied the theory to address issues related to poverty alleviation across a diverse range of social groups (Sen 2000; Levitas 2006).

Papillion (2002), Omidvar & Richmond (2005) shared a similar perspective when applying the theory to illuminate the integration of migrants. In their respective studies, social inclusion is depicted as a process leading to a situation where migrants progressively gain access to public education, healthcare, social security systems, affordable housing, the labor and marriage markets, as well as cultural and political activities. It was argued that social inclusion reduces inequalities between migrants and native populations across various aspects of life (Sen 2000; Papillon 2002). In this context, social inclusion enhances social cohesion in society by narrowing the gap between natives and migrants, thereby reducing the risk of tensions between these social groups (Papillion 2002; Omidvar & Richmond 2003). In this regard, Omidvar and Richmond (2003) were cited as follows:

*Social inclusion extends beyond bringing the 'outsiders' in [...]. It is about closing physical, social and economic distances separating people, rather than only about eliminating boundaries or barriers between us and them" (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003).*

This paper aligns with this theory when examining the survival strategies of the Nyamwezi in Zanzibar, noting the differential treatment they received compared to other social groups in the region. Drawing from this experience, Chakravarty and D'Ambrosio (2006) echoed a similar notion, asserting that socially excluded migrants are isolated from the mainstream society and encounter various social, economic, political, and cultural disadvantages.

### 3.3 Conflict Theory

According to the Conflict Theory, it is argued that the roots of the theory can be traced back to the concepts of Karl Marx (Pryor, 1983). This theory prioritizes a materialist interpretation of history, employs a dialectical method of analysis, maintains a critical perspective toward the current social structures, and advocates for a political agenda involving revolution or, at the very least, reform (Pryor, 1983).

The claim was made that the conflict theory is applicable to the migration phenomenon. For example, the displacement of individuals is driven by forces generated by individuals seeking new places to live or work (Pryor, 1983). Additionally, it was asserted that the theory emphasizes that people decide to relocate due to coercive economic and political pressures. This theory holds relevance to the present study, as indicated by various literature sources demonstrating how the Nyamwezi departed from their native land and migrated to other regions, including Zanzibar, driven by the pursuit of financial gain and improved social status (Rockel, 1998).

Moreover, the theory follows the consequences of migration at the destinations, highlighting that individuals face competition, segregation, and discrimination. However, it overlooks additional factors such as economic and ecological changes. The theory posits that contradiction is the primary force driving migration. The applicability of the theory is supported by considering that following the migration of the Nyamwezi to Zanzibar, they might have encountered competition and segregation. In Zanzibar, the Nyamwezi encountered various ethnic groups from the mainland, along with others who were indigenous to Zanzibar (Rockel, 1998).

### 3.4 Interrelationships between the Theories and Approach Formation

It is essential to recognize the symbiotic relationship between theories and research. The theories play a crucial role in shaping the objectives of the paper. The formulated theories or approaches not only guide the research but also contribute to the refinement of existing theories (David, 2003). This study observes an interconnectedness among the theories employed. It is evident that not all theories can universally apply to every aspect or address every research question. For instance, Conflict Theory is apt for understanding the transformation of Nyamwezi migrant labor from slave to wage labor and their survival strategies. On the other hand, Social Exclusion Theory, with some modifications, proves valuable in analyzing the coping strategies employed by the Nyamwezi in Zanzibar. Therefore, these theories complement each other, providing support to the objective, either partially or comprehensively.

Having thoroughly examined and critically assessed the aforementioned theories in relation to the paper, the author has introduced a new approach. In doing so, the author aligns with David's assertion (2003) that existing theories, when scrutinized in conjunction



## **Historical Context of the Transformation of the Nyamwezi Migrant Labourers: From Slave Labour to Wage Labour, 1890s–1960s**

with their associated research objectives, can serve as a basis for generating novel approaches. Consequently, the approach derived from the above theories is labeled as the "development of capitalism over labor shift-question." This perspective elucidates how the progression of capitalism resulted in a shift from slave labor to wage labor. It also clarifies how capitalism, synonymous with colonialism, dismantled pre-capitalist relations. For instance, colonialism introduced measures and policies that impacted the Nyamwezi in both Tabora and Zanzibar. This concept is extensively discussed in the introduction section of the paper, where the author traces the evolution of labor in the context of capitalist development.

Given the devised approach, it is clear that the creation of plantations and the construction of railways had a significant impact, compelling numerous individuals to offer their labor to capitalists. While the migration process stemmed from a blend of economic, social, and political factors, the economic aspect overwhelmingly influenced people's lives and mobility. For instance, starting in the 1890s, a considerable number of individuals from the mainland were compelled to migrate to Zanzibar and other coastal regions, engaging as wage laborers on plantations cultivating clove, sisal, and coconut (Rockel, 1997).

### **4.0 THE EVOLUTION OF LABOUR AMONG THE NYAMWEZI IN THE CONTEXT OF TRANSITION FROM SLAVE LABOUR TO WAGE LABOUR, 1890S TO 1960**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

Prior to their migration to Zanzibar, the Nyamwezi initiated contacts with Arabs and, subsequently, with Germans around the 1890s. This period, particularly the 1890s, marked the onset of colonial rule, coinciding with the time when the Nyamwezi relinquished their control in trade and portage. The paper's aim was to trace the evolution of labor among the Nyamwezi, illustrating its shift from slave labor to wage labor from the 1890s to the 1960s. To achieve this objective, the author first examined the abolition of slavery and its impact on creating a labor shortage in Zanzibar, leading to the transformation from slave labor to wage labor. Second, the causes behind the migration of the Nyamwezi from Tabora to Zanzibar were discussed. Finally, the author presented statistical data illustrating the migration of the Nyamwezi to Zanzibar.

#### **4.2 The Abolition of Slavery and Labour Shortage in Zanzibar**

The issue of abolishing slavery and the slave trade affected everyone involved, including slave masters, middlemen, and all comprador classes (Depelchin, 1991). The decree of 1897 disrupted their social and economic existence, leading to a disturbance in class relations and impacting other classes, particularly the non-producing class (*ibid*).

The primary rationale behind the abolition of slavery was based on the understanding that wage labor would prove more efficient than slave labor (Depelchin, *op. cit* p. 11, also refer to the introductory section). A crucial factor contributing to the significant labor shortage that ensued after the abolition of slavery was the nature of the relationships established over the years between masters and slaves (*ibid*). In numerous instances, masters permitted their slaves to cultivate small plots for their sustenance. Some were even granted two days to work independently, without reliance on their masters, thereby contributing to a severe labor shortage (*ibid*).

Cooper (1981) further emphasizes that the abolition of slavery was a component of an endeavor to articulate and advocate for the social and moral values required by the evolving economic system (Cooper, 1980). In this context, he is quoted as stating, "Slaves could be converted into sober, self-disciplined workers." This quotation implies that the conversion aimed to transform slaves into automatic or wage laborers (Cooper, 1981).

It is important to note that the slave population on the islands was not uniform; rather, it was divided into three distinct groups. The first group comprised those who worked for wages outside the household, including skilled individuals such as carpenters, food vendors, daily laborers at coal godowns, house boys, and water girls (Depelchin, *op cit*). These individuals worked outside in exchange for pay, and in return for this relatively greater freedom of movement, they were obligated to give their masters five days' worth of their earnings, retaining the rest for themselves (*ibid*). With the abolition of slavery, the relationship between ex-slaves and their former masters had deteriorated to the extent that many masters were content if they could receive only half of what their ex-slaves earned (*ibid*).

The second group comprised masuria or concubines along with general working slaves. For this category, the abolition might have been met with hostility as they enjoyed significant advantages over other slaves. While they did not have days designated as their own, they were provided with meaningful work, as well as food and clothing (Depelchin, *op cit*). The third category included laborers, specifically shamba laborers, who worked five days a week. In exchange for their labor, these ex-slaves were allocated a piece of land to construct a house and a plot sufficient to produce the necessary food and clothing for themselves (*ibid*).

Landowners in Zanzibar confronted a significant labor shortage due to the abolition of the slave trade and slavery. This coincided with the introduction of wage labor in the late 19th century during British colonial rule in Zanzibar (Chachage, 2004). Consequently, the landlords experienced a decline in economic power following the abolition of slavery by the end of the 19th century. In an effort to maintain their connection with ex-slaves, landlords allowed them to become squatters on their plantations, permitting them to cultivate annual crops and construct houses. However, the squatters were obligated to work for the landlord as a form of rent. This arrangement proved beneficial to the landlord as the squatters produced cash crops. Alternatively, squatters had to provide the

## Historical Context of the Transformation of the Nyamwezi Migrant Labourers: From Slave Labour to Wage Labour, 1890s–1960s

landlord with a share of rice, bananas, and other crops (*jazia*). This system persisted until 1964 when the Zanzibar Revolution took place (Chachage, *op. cit.*).

In Zanzibar, the overall labor shortage prompted diverse responses. Some advocated for the recruitment of labor from the mainland, while many plantation owners transitioned from clove to coconut plantations, as the latter required less labor for upkeep and harvesting (Depelchin, *op. cit.*). Starting from the 1900s, there was a necessity to enlist laborers from the mainland. Mainlanders also arrived voluntarily, settled in substantial numbers, and currently constitute the primary source of labor for plantation cultivation (Depelchin, *op. cit.*).

Former slaves were evolving into self-sustaining peasants focused on subsistence farming rather than engaging in wage labor, as originally anticipated (Chachage, *op. cit.*). These peasants encountered challenges in securing land outside plantations, leading many to become squatters on the estates of their former masters (*ibid.*). As labor was increasingly imported from Tanganyika, the plantation economy experienced a significant decline during this period. The revitalization of the plantation sector occurred in the 1920s through the acquisition of property by peasant entrepreneurs. This revitalization was mainly fueled by the exploitation of kinship ties, which involved unpaid labor. Members of this class progressively gained more clove trees and eventually began hiring wage labor (*ibid.*).

In the 1890s, when the British gained effective control over Zanzibar, nearly half of the Arab-owned plantations were confiscated, falling into the hands of merchants and usurers to whom the Arab owners were indebted (Chachage, *op. cit.*). The labor shortage further worsened their situation. Despite the imposition of taxation aimed at compelling people to cultivate cash crops, the British colonial government found itself obliged to import labor from Tanganyika (*ibid.*). Tanganyika emerged as the primary source of labor (*ibid.*). Government policies had to support middle peasants, notably among the Wapemba, Wahadimu, and Watumbatu. Within Zanzibar, those providing labor included impoverished peasants and squatters. Additionally, some people from Tanganyika had also become squatters in the Isles (Cooper, *op. cit.*).

The cessation of slavery added to the labor predicament. Zanzibar traditionally supplied caravan porters for mainland expeditions into the continent's interior. Consequently, the labor force was depleted through a recruitment system that utilized Zanzibar and the mainland as reservoirs for labor (Depelchin, *op. cit.*).

### 4.2.1 Causes of the Nyamwezi Migration from Tabora to Zanzibar

Various scholars and interviewees have presented diverse viewpoints regarding the factors driving the migration of the Nyamwezi from their native land to Zanzibar. Some respondents underscored economic motives. For instance, during an interview with Kututwa's son (Kututwa being the leader of the Nyamwezi in Zanzibar), he asserted that his father relocated to Zanzibar in 1921 primarily due to economic considerations. He further mentioned that there were other Nyamwezi individuals who had arrived before his father. The interviewee indicated that his father and other Nyamwezi migrated to Zanzibar in pursuit of employment opportunities in the clove plantations (Kututwa, 2019).

Likewise, the 1929 Nzega District Annual Report indicates that individuals from Unyamwezi voluntarily departed from their homeland to seek employment on the coast or participate in clove picking on the Islands of Pemba and Zanzibar (TNA Nzega District Annual Report of 1929).

The aforementioned observation is supported by an interview conducted with Bahati Maganga in Tabora-Nzega, who stated, "Some of our relatives migrated to Zanzibar because there was a lot of money." Maganga further mentioned that other Nyamwezi individuals were influenced by relatives who had returned to Nzega bearing gifts and items from Zanzibar (Maganga, 2023). Cooper (1980) corroborates this perspective, revealing that certain Nyamwezi weeders could return home with substantial amounts ranging from Rs300 to 500, a sum that enticed many Nyamwezi to migrate to Zanzibar (Cooper, *op. cit.*). Another respondent added, "Our grandmother was struggling for life; she had no husband, and actually, she faced economic difficulties, which was the main reason that brought her to Zanzibar" (Ally, 2023).

Likewise, in the Focus Group Discussion, participants mentioned that certain relatives migrated from Nzega to Zanzibar during the 1950s. They conveyed that these relatives were motivated by the economic opportunities in Zanzibar. The participants further explained that their relatives initially worked as domestic workers but eventually transitioned to cultivation (FGD in Nzega, 2023). Similarly, Sheriff's article titled "Involvement of Nyamwezi in long-distance trade" in *Historical Association of Tanzania*, No.11, 1973, reported that in Tabora, authorities burned houses and transported men to the coast to provide labor for plantations (Sheriff, 1974). Kenneth (1990) contends that the labor shortage in Zanzibar was the primary reason for recruiting laborers from the mainland. By 1901, Nyamwezi migrants and others had addressed the issue of labor shortage in Zanzibar (Kenneth, 1990). Consequently, migrant workers from the mainland filled the gap in weeding labor on the plantations.

Cooper (1980), in his examination, delineates the reasons behind the Nyamwezi migration from Tanganyika to Zanzibar. He emphasizes that colonial imposition stood as the primary catalyst for the Nyamwezi migration. The mainland economy suffered disruptions due to the upheavals resulting from colonial conquest. For instance, the colonial laws and regulations of German East Africa undermined the ivory and slave-trading network that had been advantageous to the Nyamwezi (Cooper, *op. cit.*).

## Historical Context of the Transformation of the Nyamwezi Migrant Labourers: From Slave Labour to Wage Labour, 1890s–1960s

Mlekwa concurs with Cooper (1980) by asserting that labor migration within the Nyamwezi community was instigated by the evolution of the colonial economy (Mlekwa, 2007). He goes on to highlight that the region experienced exploitation through the utilization of inexpensive labor and taxation, which adversely impacted traditional cultivation methods and led to a scarcity of food. Consequently, the Nyamwezi migrated to the coast in search of supplementary income (ibid).

Mlekwa further notes that the inadequacy of the local administrative system had repercussions on the economic framework of the Nyamwezi. Specifically, local administrators functioned as agents of colonial authorities, involved in the collection and recruitment of laborers (Mlekwa, op cit). As a result, certain Nyamwezi individuals opted to migrate to alternative regions in search of new employment opportunities (ibid).

Following a similar line of reasoning, Jabir (1997) contends that mainland migrants were motivated to move to Zanzibar by the unfavorable working conditions in their homeland, coupled with the expectation of higher wages in Zanzibar (Jabir, 1997). However, Jabir's analysis is likened to an incomplete jigsaw puzzle, lacking some crucial pieces. It is argued that Jabir's analysis fails to illustrate how the German colonial conquest disrupted the Nyamwezi's involvement in caravan trade and portage. Consequently, the Nyamwezi sought additional income from various areas, including Zanzibar.

### 4.2.2 The Number of Nyamwezi who migrated to Zanzibar

This section presents statistical information regarding the influx of Nyamwezi individuals into Zanzibar. The Annual Report of Nzega District 1929-1934 reveals that laborers autonomously left the Nzega District in pursuit of employment, with many engaging in clove picking on the Islands of Pemba and Zanzibar. It is approximated that around 500 laborers migrated to Zanzibar in 1929 (TNA, Nzega District Annual Report 1929-1934). However, the Nzega District Annual Report notes that the number of emigrants and immigrants varied across different chiefdoms (ibid) (as illustrated in Table 1).

**Table 1: Immigration and Emigration Statistics for the Entire District of Nzega**

Chiefdoms	Emigration	Immigration
Kantu	316	20
Ndala	46	36
Unyambiu	107	7
Mwakarundi	210	89
Puge	99	84
Usongo	216	217
Maungoi	65	73
Nyawa	11	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,070</b>	<b>1,289</b>

**Source:** Nzega District Annual Report, 1929-1934.

Table 1 illustrates that certain chiefdoms, such as Kantu, Mwakarundi, and Usongo, experienced substantial emigration, with individuals consistently departing from these regions. Additionally, the table indicates that these same chiefdoms recorded a significant number of immigrants.

The Annual Report of the Tanganyika Territory provides evidence of a continuous depletion of the territory's workforce due to the emigration of natives, primarily from the western (Tabora) and Lake Provinces, to Zanzibar (Nzega Annual Report, op cit). While this had traditionally been a seasonal phenomenon, efforts to discourage this exodus proved insufficient, and the number of natives leaving the territory for Zanzibar saw a significant increase. For instance, in 1944, approximately 1,300 Nyamwezi were reported to have departed from Dar es Salaam to Zanzibar. Emigrants were required to obtain exit permits as a measure to control migration (Tanganyika Territory Annual Report of the Labour Department 1944).

Starting from the 1950s, the colonial administrations of both Tanganyika and Zanzibar implemented restrictions on migrants by introducing identity documents for Africans. In Zanzibar, these documents were referred to as "Cheti cha Safari kwa Waafrika" (Exit permit for Africans), while in Tanganyika, they were known as "Cheti cha Njia (Exit permit)." These documents not only indicated the destination of a person but also confirmed whether a person had permanent residence (Annual Report, op cit). Figures 1a and 1b visually depict this situation:



Historical Context of the Transformation of the Nyamwezi Migrant Labourers: From Slave Labour to Wage Labour, 1890s–1960s

Plate1 (a) above: Sample of Identity Document for Zanzibar



Plate 1(b) below: Sample of Identify Document for Tanganyika's.



Even post-independence, immigration restrictions persisted in the territories. In Zanzibar, for instance, passports were issued, particularly from the 1960s onward. These new passports included various details, such as the individual's date and place of birth, gender, occupation, nationality, and information about children (Tanganyika Territory Annual Report, op cit). Similarly, the labor office in Dar es Salaam was cognizant of the labor migration to Zanzibar. In October 1951 alone, more than 400 individuals applied for passports to travel to Zanzibar. The issue is elucidated through the copies of two letters from the labor office, referenced as Dar/154/94 (reproduced as Plate 2) and No. 202/11/490 (reproduced as Plate 3). The first letter conveyed information about the issue to all District Commissioners, and the second letter, written by the District Commissioner, informed chiefs in Nzega about the same problem (labor movement) (ibid). These two letters, as depicted in Plate 2 and Plate 3, illustrate the indirect rule system.





## Historical Context of the Transformation of the Nyamwezi Migrant Labourers: From Slave Labour to Wage Labour, 1890s–1960s

Protectorate period (Jabir op cit). By 1958, approximately 17,500 mainlanders, including those from rural districts like Nzega, had migrated to Unguja alone (ibid).

### 5.0 CONCLUSION

In summary, this paper has delineated the causes behind the Nyamwezi migration to Zanzibar and elucidated the shift in labor dynamics from slave labor to wage labor. Scholars largely attribute the primary cause of migrant labor to economic factors intertwined with colonial imposition. The discussion has also presented significant data on the influx of Nyamwezi individuals to Zanzibar, highlighting their arrival's association with various challenges and the formulation of diverse coping strategies for survival. Future research may delve into exploring the specific challenges faced by Nyamwezi immigrants and their strategies for adapting to life in Zanzibar.

It is crucial to acknowledge that the labor migration observed among the Nyamwezi during the colonial era was closely tied to the capitalist transformation occurring in the region. The emergence and consolidation of capitalist relations within the Nyamwezi area were key factors in driving this phenomenon. However, it is important to note that the mere presence of capitalism did not automatically compel the Nyamwezi to migrate. Instead, capitalism exerted its influence on the internal structures of the social framework, causing vulnerabilities and disruptions in the economic foundation. An example of such disruption is evident in the shortcomings of the Nyamwezi ruling class in effectively managing labor utilization to align with the interests of colonial authorities. Despite serving as administrators of the new colonial orders, such as tax collection, these rulers struggled to meet the requirements of the ongoing economic transformation.

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- 4) Interview with Mr. Ngasa, in Tabora-Nzega August, 2023
- 5) Interview with Ally Sawasawa in Nzega-Tabora August, 2023
- 6) A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with Asha kurwa, Bahati Maganga, Flora Mabura, and Kashinde Athumani, in Nzega-Tabora August, 2023

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## Historical Context of the Transformation of the Nyamwezi Migrant Labourers: From Slave Labour to Wage Labour, 1890s–1960s

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