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**The Agro-Pastoral Economy and the Development of British
Southern Cameroons, 1922-1945**



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The Agro-Pastoral Economy and the Development of British Southern Cameroons, 1922-1945

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This paper critically examines how the British colonial administration, operating through the indirect rule system, structured the agro-pastoral economy of British Southern Cameroons between 1922 and 1945 within the framework of the League of Nations Class "B" Mandate, and assesses whether these efforts genuinely promoted indigenous welfare or served the structural interests of colonial extraction.

Methodology: The study employs a qualitative historical methodology, drawing on primary sources, colonial administrative reports, veterinary records, Native Authority correspondence, and League of Nations visiting mission reports, alongside secondary literature in African colonial history and agrarian economics. Analysis is conducted within a dual theoretical framework combining Dependency Theory and Historical Institutionalism.

Findings: The study reveals that colonial agro-pastoral institutions, including experimental farms at Barombi-Kang and Bambui, and veterinary centres at Jakiri and Nkambe, were not designed to ensure indigenous food sovereignty but to protect cattle as taxable, exportable assets. The njangali tax, constituting over fifty percent of Native Authority revenue, functioned primarily as a fiscal extraction mechanism. The institutionalization of Fulani grazing rights alongside fixed farming allocations created path-dependent conditions for farmer-grazier conflicts, land use disputes, and inter-ethnic tensions that persist into the twenty-first century.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study deploys Dependency Theory and Historical Institutionalism as mutually reinforcing analytical lenses, the former explaining the structural orientation of the economy toward metropolitan extraction, the latter illuminating the precise institutional mechanisms of layering, path dependence, and critical junctures through which that dependency was constructed and made durable. This dual-theoretical approach offers a replicable model for analyzing colonial economic legacies across sub-Saharan African mandate and trust territories.

Keywords: *Agro-pastoral Economy, British Southern Cameroons, Dependency Theory, Farmer-Grazier Conflicts, Historical Institutionalism Mandate, Njangali Tax.*

Introduction

Cameroon became a German protectorate in July 1884. After the Berlin West African conference of 1884-85, the Germans secured the diplomatic transfer of the coastline from Rio del Rey to Campo from the British and French (Aka, 2002). The Germans adopted peaceful and forceful methods expanding from the coastline to the interior. The indigenous population reacted to the German imperial rule by resistance and collaboration. By 1906, the German rule was consolidated. The various German governors promoted political, economic and social developments in the territory until 1916, when the Germans were defeated and ousted from Cameroon by the Allied Powers (Aka, 2002).

In spite of the predominant role of the British along the coast, in 1884 the Germans claimed the region as Kamerun. The explorer Gustav Nachtigal arrived in July 1884 to annex the Douala coast (Epalle, 1985). The Germans moved inland over the years, extending their control and their claims. Initially, their major dealings were with African traders, but direct trade with the interior promised greater profits, and colonial power break the African monopoly. Plantation agriculture was another major German economic activity. Large estates were established in southwestern Kamerun to provide tropical produce for Germany. Traders, plantation owners, and government officials competed for labour, and force was used to obtain it. The system established was harsh, and many workers died serving German interests (Njung, 2019).

Theoretical underpinnings

This study anchors on two theories namely, the Dependency theory and Historical Institutionalism. Dependency Theory emerged in the late 1950s and gained full theoretical articulation through the 1960s and 1970s, primarily within Latin American intellectual circles before spreading to Africa and Asia. The theory arose as a direct intellectual challenge to the dominant Modernization Theory of the post-World War II era, which argued that developing nations needed only to follow the Western model of industrial capitalism to achieve economic growth. The origins of Dependency Theory are most firmly rooted in the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA), led by Argentine economist *Raúl Prebisch*, whose 1950 report, *The Economic Development of Latin America and Its Principal Problems*, argued that global trade was structurally biased against peripheral nations. Prebisch demonstrated through empirical data that the terms of trade systematically deteriorated for commodity-exporting nations, enriching the industrialized "core" at the expense of the underdeveloped "periphery" (Prebisch, 1950). This foundational insight gave Dependency Theory its structural and systemic character, distinguishing it from explanations that blamed underdevelopment on internal cultural or institutional deficiencies.

Dependency Theory holds that underdevelopment is not a natural or original condition of peripheral societies, but rather a historically produced outcome of the integration of these societies into the global capitalist system under exploitative terms. The major architects who developed this argument beyond Prebisch include *André Gunder Frank*, whose landmark 1967 work *Capitalism*

and Underdevelopment in Latin America introduced the influential "development of underdevelopment" thesis. Frank argued that contact with capitalism actively underdeveloped peripheral regions by extracting their surplus and subordinating their economies to metropolitan needs (Frank, 1967). *Immanuel Wallerstein* later expanded this into World Systems Theory in *The Modern World-System I* (1974), categorizing nations as core, semi-periphery, and periphery within an integrated capitalist world-system. In the African context, *Walter Rodney's* seminal 1972 work *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* remains the most direct application of dependency thinking to colonial Africa, arguing that European colonialism deliberately dismantled African economic systems and restructured them to serve European accumulation (Rodney, 1972).

The main arguments of Dependency Theory can be summarized around several interlocking propositions. First, the theory argues that the relationship between developed (core) and underdeveloped (peripheral) nations is not coincidental or benign but is structurally determined and inherently exploitative. Core nations use their political, economic, and military dominance to maintain favorable terms of exchange. Second, Dependency theorists contend that colonial and neo-colonial policies were specifically designed to create mono-cultural or mono-product economies in peripheral territories, making them structurally dependent on the export of raw materials and the import of manufactured goods from the core. This dynamic prevented the growth of diversified, self-sustaining economies. Third, the theory argues that local elites in peripheral societies often acted as agents of core interests, facilitating the transfer of surplus wealth outward (Cardoso & Faletto, 1979). In the colonial context, Native Authorities and local chiefs who collaborated with British administrators played precisely this role. Fourth, and most critically, Dependency Theory posits that underdevelopment and development are two sides of the same coin — that the prosperity of core nations was built upon and sustained by the impoverishment of peripheral nations (Frank, 1967).

Despite its powerful explanatory force, Dependency Theory has attracted substantial criticism from scholars across the ideological spectrum. The first major line of criticism concerns its tendency toward economic determinism and structural rigidity. Critics such as *Tony Killick* (1978) and *Bill Warren* argued that Dependency Theory underestimated the agency of peripheral nations and the possibility of capitalist development even within an unequal global system, pointing to the East Asian "tiger economies" as evidence that integration into global capitalism could produce development rather than underdevelopment (Warren, 1980). A second criticism concerns the theory's tendency to portray peripheral societies as passive victims of external forces, neglecting internal class dynamics, political structures, and indigenous agency. *Cardoso and Faletto* (1979) themselves acknowledged this shortcoming and proposed a more nuanced "associated-dependent development" model. A third criticism is methodological: Dependency Theory is often accused of being unfalsifiable because it explains both underdevelopment and limited development as products of dependency, leaving little room for empirical refutation. Critics such as *Sanjaya Lall* (1975) argued that the theory lacked sufficient precision and predictive power to serve as a rigorous

analytical framework. Despite these criticisms, the theory remains indispensable for analyzing colonial economic histories in Africa.

Dependency Theory provides a highly illuminating framework for understanding the agro-pastoral economy of British Southern Cameroons between 1922 and 1945. The colonial restructuring of the territory's agricultural and livestock sector was not oriented toward the food security, economic autonomy, or sustainable development of the indigenous population. Rather, the British administration used the mandate framework to transform Southern Cameroons into a supplier of cash crops, cocoa, rubber, oil palm, coffee, and a source of cattle and hides destined for export markets. As Rodney (1972) observed regarding colonial Africa broadly, the agricultural systems imposed were designed to serve metropolitan economies, and this study confirms that dynamic in the specific Southern Cameroons context. The njangali (jangali) tax levied on Fulani cattle herders served not as a development mechanism but primarily as a revenue extraction instrument, with the Native Authority capturing over 50 percent of its revenues from this source alone. The establishment of veterinary services at Jakiri, Nkambe, and Barombi-Kang, while appearing developmental, was fundamentally motivated by protecting cattle, a commodity asset, from disease in order to sustain taxable and exportable livestock populations. The dependency framework thus helps explain why, despite several decades of British administration, the agro-pastoral economy of Southern Cameroons remained structurally underdeveloped and dependent, never evolving into a self-sustaining, diversified economic sector (Aka, 2002; Amaazee, 1998).

The Dependency thesis compliments the historical institutionalism theory.

Historical Institutionalism emerged as a distinct theoretical approach within comparative politics and sociology during the 1980s and 1990s, as a reaction against both rational choice theories, which privileged individual utility maximization, and behavioral approaches, which focused on observable actions without structural context. The foundational work in establishing Historical Institutionalism as a coherent framework is generally attributed to scholars such as *Theda Skocpol*, whose 1979 book *States and Social Revolutions* demonstrated how political and institutional structures shaped revolutionary outcomes independently of individual intentions. *Peter Hall* and *Rosemary Taylor's* 1996 article "Political Science and the Three New Institutionalisms" is widely regarded as the landmark theoretical statement formally identifying and naming Historical Institutionalism as a distinct approach (Hall & Taylor, 1996). Other major contributors include *Paul Pierson*, whose work on "path dependence" and "increasing returns" in *Politics in Time* (2004) showed how early institutional choices become self-reinforcing over time, making alternative paths increasingly costly and unlikely. *Sven Steinmo*, *Kathleen Thelen*, and *Frank Longstreth's* edited volume *Structuring Politics* (1992) further consolidated the approach by applying it to comparative tax policy, labor relations, and economic governance across Western nations.

Historical Institutionalism holds that institutions, defined broadly as formal rules, compliance procedures, standard operating practices, and informal norms embedded within organizational structures, shape political and economic outcomes by constraining and enabling the choices of

actors over time (Hall & Taylor, 1996). The central concept animating this framework is *path dependence*: the idea that once an institutional path is established, it creates increasing returns and feedback mechanisms that make it very difficult to deviate from, even when alternative paths might be objectively superior. Pierson (2004) argued that political institutions are especially prone to path dependence because of the high costs of coordination, the benefits of institutional predictability, and the power of vested interests that develop around existing arrangements. A second major argument within Historical Institutionalism concerns *critical junctures*, those rare moments of structural rupture or openness when institutional paths are chosen or substantially redirected. Scholars such as *Mahoney and Thelen* (2010) have also developed a theory of gradual institutional change, arguing that institutions rarely transform through sudden ruptures but more commonly through processes of layering, conversion, drift, and displacement. Critics of Historical Institutionalism point to its tendency toward post-hoc explanations it is often better at explaining why existing institutions persist than at predicting institutional change. *Rational choice institutionalists* criticize it for insufficient micro-foundations and for vagueness in specifying causal mechanisms. *Margaret Levi* (1997) argued that without clearer specification of actor preferences and strategic interaction, Historical Institutionalism risks becoming a residual category that explains everything without predicting anything precisely.

Historical Institutionalism provides a powerful complementary lens for analyzing the agro-pastoral economy of British Southern Cameroons because the British did not build an economic system from scratch. They inherited, adapted, and layered new institutional arrangements upon a pre-existing German colonial institutional foundation. The critical juncture was the period between 1916 and 1922, when the transition from German Kamerun to British mandate territory forced new institutional choices. Rather than dismantling the German plantation system, the British converted it into the Cameroon Development Corporation, institutionalizing a plantation-centered economic model that would persist well beyond the mandate period (Njung, 2019). The establishment of experimental farms at Barombi-Kang and Bambui, the creation of veterinary centers at Jakiri and Nkambe, and the formalization of the jangali tax system were all institutional layering processes new mechanisms built upon the existing agro-pastoral infrastructure without fundamentally transforming the underlying power relations (Ngoh, 2002). Path dependence is visible in the persistence of the farmer-grazier conflict: once Fulani herders were institutionally recognized as the primary cattle owners taxable under jangali, and sedentary farmers were assigned to fixed land holdings, the structural conditions for land use conflict were institutionalized and have persisted in the region into the twenty-first century (Kimah, 2017). Thus, combining Dependency Theory with Historical Institutionalism allows this study to show not only that the agro-pastoral economy was structured to exploit Southern Cameroons as Dependency Theory argues, but also precisely how the institutional mechanisms through which that exploitation was sustained were constructed, layered, and made durable across time.

Background: German Protectorate and the Foundation of Colonial Agro-pastoral Economy

The economy of British Southern Cameroons was in many respects founded on what the Germans initiated. In this light, the dominant colonial legacy in Cameroon was the work of the more than thirty years of German colonial rule in their erstwhile Kamerun territory. This legacy was evident in the agro-pastoral sector. The Germans took some 120,000 hectares of land for plantations from which they produced coffee, tobacco, cocoa, bananas, oil palm and rubber. By 1913, there were about fifty-eight plantations in German Kamerun (Fanso, 1988). Most of them were owned by companies registered and based in Germany, a few were owned by individuals and some by missions. They introduced new farming methods and techniques which improved the quality and quantity of produce.

During German colonial rule, efforts were made to improve agriculture and livestock production. The improvement was borne largely by the Basel missionaries who opened a station at Bombe, Bakundu by 1897 (Epalle, 1985). At this station, an all-boys school was established in which those who attended became the pioneers of the agricultural changes that came along with the missionaries. At the Bombe station, the missionaries opened gardens to produce food so as to cater for the boarding students (Epalle, 1985). In these gardens, they improved on the local crops and equally introduced new ones like paw paws and lemons, among others, which were solicited by the German fruit company that was situated in Bombe. The yields from these gardens were sold to the company and the proceeds were used for the development of the missionary station (Epalle, 1985). The children who attended the mission schools gained experience from their German instructors and took the experience back to their respective villages. Most of them opened large farms and used the techniques they acquired at the mission station. They also left the mission station with seedlings to cultivate in their villages. Furthermore, the school curriculum during the German era laid more emphasis on manual work (Amaazee, 1998). Through this, agricultural techniques were taught to the pupils. Apart from crafts, the pupils also spent time in the gardens, where they were taught how to mulch, prepare composed manure and how to till the soil. This arrangement served as botanical experimentation and the training of the local inhabitants in agriculture (Amaazee, 1998).

The establishment of the Botanical Gardens in Victoria was a laudable effort by the German colonial administration to develop agriculture in Cameroon. The garden was founded for the experimentation of tropical plants so as to discover the more valuable ones that could be exploited. After successful experiments, seeds or cuttings were distributed to Cameroonian farmers. Though much was done to improve agriculture in the coastal area of Cameroon by the Germans, it can be realised that the main motive was to orientate the agricultural system to suit their economic needs. This led to a shift from a wholly subsistence economy to a comparatively stabilized system of stratification, a dynamic money-based economy, a cash nexus, individual profit, and wage economy (Amaazee, 1998). This is evident from the fact that more emphasis was laid on cash crop production. Cash crop production here refers to those crops which were grown mainly for export

and which earn foreign cash in the international market like cocoa, coffee, rubber, oil palm, and others.

In 1903, the Basel missionaries opened a cocoa plantation in Bombe, and by 1910, traces of cocoa introduced by the missionaries were available since it was a crop that needs a good deal of moisture and heat. When cocoa was planted in Cameroon, it was considered in Germany to be of a superior quality to the central and South American varieties, so it had no difficulty in finding a market (Epalle, 1985). The cultivation of cocoa was also promoted by the indigenous people of the area who worked on the German plantations. They took along with them seeds when they left the plantation for their villages, and they opened farms. The individual cocoa farms varied in sizes. Other cash crops that the Germans encouraged the people to plant were rubber and oil palms. The proceeds were used to send their children to the modern schools and cater for other family needs, therefore empowering the indigenous people economically (Amaazee, 1998). However, this has remained till today as the country produces thousands of tons of cocoa, palm oil and other cash crops contributing greatly to nation building and more especially, bringing personal and local development within the respective areas (Ngoh, 2002). The recruitment of labour for the plantations and colonial tasks contributed to the economic development in that the people were removed from their homes to work with people from other areas and learn new farming methods and gain other experiences, which contributed to their personal and general development. In as much as the Germans encouraged agriculture during their stay in Cameroon, it would not have had any impact if trade was not also encouraged.

Besides cash crop plantation, the Germans through the activities of the Basel Mission also encouraged the keeping of livestock and other small ruminants such as pigs, goats, fowls, rabbits and cattle. This came as a result of the fact that they took into consideration the need of improving the nutritive values and well-being of the indigenous population. It is important to mention that all of these was destined for immediate consumption and to take care of the proximate family. The British inherited these economic set up and labored to render it sustainable.

Brief History of British Cameroons (1916–1961) and French Cameroun (1916–1960)

During World War I in 1914 British, French, and Belgian troops drove the Germans into exile, beginning a period of British rule in two small portions (1/4) and French rule in the remainder of the territory (4/5) (Njung, 2019). These League of Nations mandates (later United Nations [UN] trusts) were referred to as French Cameroun and British Cameroons. The British trust territory consisted of a strip of land bisected by the Benue River along the eastern border of Nigeria (Aka, 2002). British rule was a period of neglect, and this, coupled with the influx of numerous Nigerians, caused great resentment (Awasom, 1998). The old German plantations were eventually united into a single parastatal (government-owned enterprise), the Cameroon Development Corporation, and were the mainstay of the economy. Development also occurred in agriculture and livestock, especially in the latter years of British rule. The production of cacao, coffee, and bananas grew rapidly and the production of cattle and other small ruminants destined for immediate consumption was predominant (Amaazee, 1998).

The French territory had an administration based on that of the other territories of French Equatorial Africa. Greater agricultural and livestock development took place in French Cameroun (Ngoh, 2002). Limited industrial and infrastructural growth also occurred, largely after World War II. At independence, French Cameroun had a much higher gross national product per capita, higher education levels, better health care and better infrastructure than British Cameroons (Aka, 2002).

Understanding the Terms of the Mandate Agreement within the Context of Agro-Pastoralism

After the defeat and ousting of the Germans by the British and the French after the First World War of 1918, Cameroon was partitioned between these two European powers under the Mandate "B" territories supervised by the League of Nations. According to the terms of the mandate agreement, the mandatory shall ensure freedom of movements, security, well-being and food sufficiency of its citizens by improving the agricultural and livestock sectors (Field, 1961). Besides this, the British administration with the help of Native Authorities instituted the policies through the Department of Agriculture and livestock which had as obligations to develop a system of agro-pastoral agenda that will not only keep the population self-sufficient in food but will also provide a surplus of food for sale, thereby enabling farmers to raise their living standards (Berill, 1968). Also, the Department ensured a variety of foodstuffs were grown in order to ascertain that the people will improved their diet. In addition, the Department ensured the possibility of bringing into use land regarded as unsuitable for cultivation. Attention will also be given to the livestock industry whereby small ruminants such as goats, sheep, pigs, fowl, rabbit, guinea pigs and cattle were necessary to a balanced system of agriculture. The prevalence of diseases and pests such as trypanosomiasis were controlled and plant-breeding programmes carried out to improve better crops suitable to the country.

In order to effectively implement this policy, the Department in collaboration with the Native Authorities established experimental farms at Barombi-Kang near Kumba and at Bambui near Bamenda (Kimah, 2017). At these stations the best methods of animal production, animal health maintenance, training of veterinary personnel, soil conservation and the maintenance of soil fertility, the introduction and testing of new crops and animal specie, and methods of improving and protecting the existing ones will be investigated. By extension, the Department continued to maintain and extend throughout the country suitable demonstration farms and nurseries to improve on agricultural and livestock products. The demonstration farms served as a training center to the farmers, the latest and best-proved practices which have been discovered and which he can practise himself (Field, 1961). The nurseries will provide the farmers and the breeders with a source of new or improved livestock and planting material for his own use (Field, 1961). Farmers were expected to pay for the planting material they received, although in order to encourage them to develop their holdings, the price paid may be nominal and may not reflect the full cost of production. Therefore, active propaganda were carried out by the Department through the institution of agro-pastoral shows and field days to draw the farmer's attention to improvements possible in his farming methods and livestock production skills. A Board of Agriculture, on which producers will be

represented will be set up to advise the Government on all matters affecting sector. In order to achieve this end, a law was enacted by the Southern Cameroons Legislature to advise the Government to reflect not only the opinion of the experts but also that of the producers and consumers especially at the grass roots levels (Awasom, 1998).

The Evolution of British Southern Cameroon's Veterinary Services and the Agro-pastoral Economy

Next in importance to agriculture in the economy of the Trust Territory comes the keeping of livestock, primarily cattle. Cattle were almost exclusively owned by the Fulani, who breed and keep their cattle under range conditions. On the high grasslands of the Bamenda area, for example, Fulanis who have worked their way down from the north graze large herds of native cattle. In 1954, the British administration estimated that there were 220,000 head in the Bamenda, Wum and Nkambe Divisions as well as 150,000 in the Mambila plateau (Kimah, 2017). Due to the importance of this livestock industry, the administration was interested to know what percentage of work was carried on in the veterinary centres. In the Bamenda area, the Livestock Investigation Centre at Jakiri operated by the Veterinary Department where, some 2,000 acres of land, breeding improvement, basic research in indigenous and imported livestock and their diseases and pasture improvement were carried out (Kimah, 2017). The Fulani were frequent visitors and showed great interest in the work. The Centre also provided training in animal husbandry. It is important to mention that the Jakiri veterinary Centre went operational in 1947 with enough grass specie for the feeding of 630 head of cattle (Kimah, 2017).

The British administration was also interested in setting up and following up the Veterinary Centre at Nkambe which was established with Native Authority funds, supplemented by a £500 grant from the Government for the purchase of dairy machinery (Field, 1961). The Centre aims at improving cattle and pasture and is making an effort to give the Fulanis some remunerations in return from the jangali tax which they pay on their cattle. This tax constituted over 50 per cent of the Native Authority's revenue (Berill, 1968). By 1949, the administration also visited the Native Authority Veterinary Office at Yola (Nigeria), which also provided services for the part of the Trust Territory administered with Adamawa Province (Field, 1961). This Office operated eight control posts, four of which were in the Trust Territory, chiefly along the border of the French Cameroons namely Mubi, Nguroje, Ganye and Soran (Field, 1961). The following diseases such as rinderpest, foot-and-mouth disease, contagious bovine pleuro-pneumonia, black quarter, anthrax and trypanosomiasis affected cattle rearing activities during the mandate period in British Cameroons (Kimah, 2017). However, much was done to control the spread of bovine pleuro-pneumonia which, according to the Veterinary Officer, comes in from the north and from the French Cameroons (Field, 1961). This was a very insidious disease since it took a year before symptoms sufficient to diagnose it were identified. In the meantime, through coughing, it was spread to other members of the herds. It was controlled by quarantine and slaughter, with compensation paid to the owner of the afflicted.

In the Northern Cameroons, the Mission visited the Native Authority Veterinary Clinic at Bama in the Dikwa Division where it was estimated that there were 112,000 herds of cattle (Kimah, 2017). The Mission was informed that the most common diseases in this area were rinderpest and black quarter, with 25,000 inoculations against rinderpest and 20,000 against black quarter were given annually. The Clinic also operated five immunization camps to administer such inoculations. The Veterinary Officer stated that in the area, since the visit of the 1952 Mission, the Clinic had made great progress against contagious bovine pleuro-pneumonia which was practically eliminated (Kimah, 2017). Nevertheless, the Trusteeship Council appreciated the Administering Authority on the excellent measures taken to protect and develop the cattle industry and to improve pasturage, which was an important economic activity alongside agriculture in the Trust Territory's economy (Field, 1961).

In the meantime, the exchanges of visits between the veterinary and agricultural authorities concerned in the two Cameroons were seen as mutually beneficial. According to report from the Mission, the Trusteeship Council requested the Administering Authority to include in its annual reports more factual information and statistics of cattle slaughtered. This was intended to keep at the disposal of the authority to better assess the contribution of stock-breeding and the quality of meat and hide geared towards raising income for the population and to improve their diets and nutritional values. According to report from the visiting mission, the conservation and preservation of hides was not satisfactory because hides were still dried in the sun, whereas hides dried in the shade brought better prices (Kimah, 2017). However, the local authorities studied the situation and came out with the possibility of installing community drying areas where a well-trained attendant will see and follow up the processing. During the mandate period, this was the first giant step toward the establishment of a tanning industry which later on led to the manufacturing of leather goods (Amaazee, 1998).

Recommendations

Based on the analysis presented in this study, the following recommendations are advanced for policymakers, development practitioners, historians, and institutional planners engaged with the agro-pastoral sector and the broader developmental challenges of the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon.

The most urgent policy recommendation arising from this study is the comprehensive reform of the legal and institutional frameworks governing land use, grazing rights, and territorial boundaries between farming and pastoral communities in the former British Southern Cameroons. The study has demonstrated that the farmer-grazier conflicts currently afflicting the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon are not merely contemporary political or ethnic disputes, they are the direct institutional legacy of colonial-era property rights allocations that assigned Fulani herders mobile grazing rights across fixed agricultural land holdings without establishing clear boundary mechanisms, conflict resolution protocols, or equitable compensation systems. These colonial institutional arrangements were layered upon pre-existing land tenure systems without transforming their underlying power relations, and the resulting ambiguities have been inherited

and compounded by post-colonial administrations. The government of Cameroon, in collaboration with traditional authorities, civil society organizations, and international development partners, must therefore undertake a comprehensive land use mapping exercise that formally delineates grazing corridors, agricultural zones, and buffer areas in regions where pastoral and farming communities coexist. This process must be participatory, ensuring that both Fulani herders and sedentary farming communities are genuine stakeholders in the design and implementation of new land governance frameworks, rather than passive recipients of top-down administrative decisions that historically excluded indigenous voices. Without such reform, the path-dependent cycle of institutional conflict identified in this study will continue to generate violence, displacement, and economic disruption in the region for generations to come.

This study has revealed that the British colonial administration's investment in veterinary infrastructure, including the Livestock Investigation Centre at Jakiri, the veterinary centre at Nkambe, and the research station at Barombi-Kang — was primarily oriented toward protecting cattle as a taxable and exportable commodity rather than toward building the long-term livestock production capacities of indigenous communities. The njangali tax system, which extracted over fifty percent of Native Authority revenues from Fulani cattle owners, further reinforced the extractive character of colonial livestock governance. Post-colonial governments and development agencies must consciously break from this legacy by reorienting livestock development investments toward community-centred, needs-driven models that prioritize indigenous food security, nutritional improvement, veterinary access, and animal husbandry training for smallholder herders and farmers alike. Specifically, the government should substantially increase budgetary allocations to veterinary extension services in the North West and Adamawa regions, ensuring that disease prevention programmes, particularly for rinderpest, foot-and-mouth disease, and bovine pleuro-pneumonia, which devastated herds during the Mandate period, are accessible to small-scale herders without prohibitive costs. Regional livestock cooperatives should be formally established and legally supported to enable collective bargaining for market access, shared veterinary services, and coordinated pasture management. The colonial model of centralised, bureaucratic livestock governance that served administrative revenue interests must be replaced by decentralised, participatory frameworks that treat herders and farmers as development agents rather than tax subjects.

A central finding of this study, grounded in the Dependency Theory framework, is that the British colonial administration deliberately structured the agro-pastoral economy of Southern Cameroons as a mono-product, export-oriented sector, producing cocoa, rubber, oil palm, coffee, and cattle hides for metropolitan markets rather than building diversified, self-sustaining local food systems. This structural orientation was not incidental but was embedded through institutional choices, plantation agriculture, export crop prioritization, and the subordination of subsistence farming that created deep structural dependencies persisting long after formal independence. Contemporary development policy in Cameroon and across the Anglophone regions must therefore deliberately prioritize agro-pastoral diversification as a strategic economic and food security imperative. This

means investing in the development of value-added agro-processing industries, tanneries, dairy processing, cocoa manufacturing, and rubber fabrication, that transform raw commodities into finished goods within the national economy, thereby capturing greater economic value locally rather than exporting it to foreign processors. Agricultural extension services must be redesigned to actively promote crop diversification, integrating food crops, cash crops, and livestock production within mixed farming systems that reduce vulnerability to market price fluctuations and climate variability. The colonial experimental farm model established at Barombi-Kang and Bambui should be revitalized and modernized as genuine centres of applied agricultural research serving smallholder farmers, with research agendas driven by community needs rather than by export market demands. Such a transformation would require sustained political will, international partnerships, and the deliberate institutional break from the colonial commodity export logic that Dependency Theory identifies as the structural root of persistent underdevelopment

This study has relied heavily on colonial administrative records, veterinary department reports, and League of Nations visiting mission documentation to reconstruct the history of the agro-pastoral economy in British Southern Cameroons. The research process has highlighted a critical institutional gap: many of the primary archival sources documenting colonial agricultural and livestock policies in Cameroon are either deteriorating, inadequately catalogued, or inaccessible to researchers due to the lack of systematic preservation, digitization, and archival infrastructure. This represents not merely an academic loss but a significant governance deficit, because understanding the institutional origins of current land conflicts, livestock management challenges, and agricultural underdevelopment requires access to the historical records that document how these conditions were created. The government of Cameroon, in partnership with universities, the African Union, and international archival institutions, should urgently fund a comprehensive programme to identify, preserve, and digitize colonial-era agricultural and veterinary records held in the National Archives of Cameroon, the Buea Archives, the Public Records Office in the United Kingdom, and relevant repositories in France and Germany. These archives should be made freely accessible to Cameroonian researchers, graduate students, and policymakers, enabling evidence-based historical analysis to inform contemporary agricultural policy. Furthermore, universities in Cameroon, particularly the University of Bamenda, the University of Buea, and the University of Yaoundé I, should be supported to establish dedicated research centres in agrarian and colonial economic history that can produce sustained, high-quality scholarship on the institutional roots of contemporary development challenges. Without such investment in historical knowledge infrastructure, policymakers will continue to address the symptoms of colonial underdevelopment without understanding their institutional causes.

This study has demonstrated the analytical power of deploying Dependency Theory and Historical Institutionalism as complementary rather than competing theoretical frameworks for understanding colonial agro-pastoral economies in Africa. This methodological recommendation is directed primarily at historians, social scientists, and development economists working on colonial and post-colonial Africa. Dependency Theory, as developed by Rodney (1972), Frank

(1967), and Wallerstein (1974), provides the macro-structural explanation for why colonial economies were oriented toward underdevelopment, the extraction of surplus from peripheral territories to enrich metropolitan cores. However, this macro-structural lens, used in isolation, risks producing overly deterministic and insufficiently granular analyses that cannot explain the specific institutional mechanisms through which dependency was constructed and sustained over time, nor the moments of contingency and agency that occasionally disrupted colonial economic control. Historical Institutionalism fills this analytical gap by focusing attention on path dependence, critical junctures, and institutional layering, concepts that explain precisely how colonial administrators, working within constrained political and economic contexts made specific institutional choices that created self-reinforcing economic structures. Future research on colonial agro-pastoral economies whether in Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, Kenya, or other former mandate and trust territories should adopt this dual theoretical framework as a methodological model, combining structural analysis with institutional history to produce richer, more causally rigorous accounts of colonial economic legacies. Such research should also be attentive to the voices, strategies, and resistance of indigenous communities, ensuring that the agency of African farmers, herders, and local authorities is fully incorporated into theoretical frameworks that risk privileging structural forces over human historical action. The combination of these theoretical tools with robust archival research offers the most promising path toward a genuinely comprehensive understanding of how colonial economic institutions shaped and continue to shape the development trajectories of African nations

Conclusion

This study has examined the agro-pastoral economy of British Southern Cameroons between 1922 and 1945, tracing its structural evolution from the German colonial foundation through the institutionalization of British mandate administration. Prior to the advent of European colonialism, the population of the region sustained themselves through diverse agro-pastoral activities, crop cultivation, small ruminant keeping, and cattle herding, organized around communal land tenure systems, subsistence logic, and locally determined rhythms of production. These indigenous economic arrangements were not primitive aberrations awaiting colonial modernization; they were functional, historically evolved systems adapted to local ecological and social realities. The intervention of German colonialism from 1884, followed by British administration from 1916, did not merely supplement these systems; it fundamentally restructured them in ways that serve as the historical starting point for understanding the underdevelopment of the region. Viewed through the lens of Dependency Theory, as theorized by Rodney (1972), Frank (1967), Wallerstein (1974), and Prebisch (1950), this restructuring was not accidental. It was the logical outcome of the integration of Southern Cameroons into a global capitalist system designed to extract agricultural and pastoral surpluses, cocoa, rubber, oil palm, coffee, cattle, and hides, from a peripheral territory for the benefit of a metropolitan core, a process that systematically dismantled the conditions necessary for autonomous, diversified economic development.

The British mandate administration, operating under the ostensible obligations of Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant to promote the welfare and development of its administered population, established a range of agro-pastoral institutions, experimental farms at Barombi-Kang and Bambui, veterinary centres at Jakiri and Nkambe, livestock research at the Tropical Institute in Barombi-Kang, and an elaborate system of agricultural extension and demonstration farms. On the surface, these measures appeared consistent with a developmental mandate. However, when subjected to the analytical scrutiny of both Dependency Theory and Historical Institutionalism, their true structural character becomes apparent. The veterinary infrastructure was not primarily designed to improve the nutritional welfare or economic autonomy of Fulani herders and sedentary farmers; it was designed to protect cattle as taxable, exportable commodity assets. The njangali tax, which accounted for over fifty percent of Native Authority revenues, was an instrument of colonial fiscal extraction that compelled Fulani herders to maintain and expand their herds not for community welfare but to sustain a revenue stream for the colonial administration. The Department of Agriculture's promotion of cash crop production, cocoa, rubber, and oil palm, further embedded a mono-product export logic that prevented the emergence of diversified, self-sustaining food systems. Dependency Theory thus explains the structural why of Southern Cameroons' agro-pastoral underdevelopment: the colonial economy was never designed to develop the territory for its own inhabitants, but to serve the economic needs of Britain and the global capitalist system it anchored.

Historical Institutionalism, as developed by Hall and Taylor (1996), Pierson (2004), Skocpol (1979), and Mahoney and Thelen (2010), provides the indispensable complementary explanation for how this dependent economic structure was constructed and made durable over time. The critical juncture of 1916–1922, the transition from German Kamerun to British mandate administration, was the pivotal institutional moment when the economic path of Southern Cameroons was chosen and locked in. Rather than dismantling the exploitative German plantation system and constructing a genuinely development-oriented economy, the British layered new administrative and fiscal institutions, Native Authorities, jangali taxation, veterinary departments, demonstration farms, upon the existing German agro-pastoral infrastructure, adapting rather than transforming the underlying logic of colonial extraction. This process of institutional layering created powerful path dependencies: once Fulani herders were institutionally recognized as taxable cattle owners operating across fixed agricultural boundaries, and once sedentary farmers were assigned to defined land parcels without legal grazing easements, the structural conditions for enduring farmer-grazier conflict, land use disputes, and inter-ethnic tensions were institutionalized. These conditions, rooted in mandate-era administrative choices, have persisted well into the twenty-first century, demonstrating precisely the self-reinforcing character of colonial institutions that Historical Institutionalism foregrounds. Together, the two theories reveal that the underdevelopment of the agro-pastoral economy of British Southern Cameroons was simultaneously a structural outcome of global capitalist peripheralization, as Dependency Theory argues, and a historically specific product of identifiable institutional choices made at a critical juncture that foreclosed more equitable alternatives and embedded exploitation as a durable

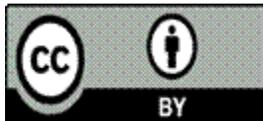
institutional reality as Historical Institutionalism demonstrates. This dual-theoretical synthesis constitutes the study's most significant analytical contribution, offering a model for understanding colonial economic legacies in Africa that is at once structurally informed and institutionally precise, historically grounded and theoretically rigorous.

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