Micro-Regionalism in West Africa

Evidence from Two Case Studies

Edited by Fredrik Söderbaum and Ian Taylor

Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala 2007
Contents

Introduction:
Fredrik Söderbaum and Ian Taylor
Thinking about Micro-Regionalism in West Africa.................................5

Chapter 1:
Marie Trémolières
Regionalisms in the Sahel: The Mopti-Ouahigouya Cross-Border Area........8

Chapter 2:
Mohamadou Abdoul and Marie Trémolières
Cross-Border Cooperation between Niger and Nigeria:
The Case of the Maradi Micro-Region ......................................................23

List of Abbreviations.............................................................................32

Notes on the authors.............................................................................33
Introduction: Thinking about Micro-Regionalism in West Africa

Fredrik Söderbaum and Ian Taylor

Regionalist processes are occurring all over the world, not least the formation of micro-regions which are more and more cross-border in nature rather than being contained within the boundaries of a particular nation-state. Notably, micro-regions exist between the “national” and the “local” level, and are distinguishable from larger macro-regions. The African continent has not missed out on the growth in the number of such micro-regions, appearing in various guises such as sub-national and/or cross-border, formal or informal, economic, political, administrative, cultural and so forth.

The two case studies examined here seek to focus on the various types of micro-regions that are developing within the West African Sahel. It is clear that the type of regionalism observed is both formal and informal—and often both at the same time. Furthermore, the informalisation of politics in the broader macro-region (and the wider continent for that matter) inevitably impacts upon the type and varieties of regionalism in West Africa. Indeed, the nature of personal rule in Africa has acted to erode any sense of broad public accountability in favour of narrow privatised networks of influence and an informalisation of politics. In order for us to evaluate the type of regionalism developing in places like the Sahel it is necessary to contextualise and unpack the nature of the state and also critically weigh up how state-society complexes and the diverse governance modalities on the continent influence and shape the formation of micro-regions. Empirically speaking, as the case studies show quite clearly, formal borders either essentially do not exist in the Westphalian sense, being ignored by actors such as local populations and traders, or they are strategically used by (often self-styled) representatives of the state to extract resources and rents. In either case, the Eurocentric notion of fixed boundaries and bordered delineations has little purchase in the Sahel.

The two case studies being examined seek to complement and advance recent studies on regionalism in Africa and the implications that this has for the continent’s development. One problem with the considerable number of studies on regionalism in Africa is that many of these analyses are state-centric, formalistic and concentrate either on inter-state (macro-regionalism) or intra-state (micro-regionalism) developments. The two studies, in contrast, aim to be an advance in our understanding of regionalism in Africa by drawing on regional and cross-border issues and processes, situating the two micro-regions being discussed within their national (or actually, cross-national) and regional context. In addition, they also explicitly recognise that there does not exist a tidy separation between the state (in all its myriad forms) and the broader society. Just as individuals straddle this conceptual divide
on a day-to-day basis, when talking of regionalisation in Africa it is apparent that processes straddle both the formal and informal (which for all practical purposes merge together) but also between the micro and macro levels mentioned above. All such processes however impact upon social relations and the day-to-day lives of Africans, as well as having far-reaching implications for regionalisation and the sense of community within the two micro-regions. Furthermore, what occurs at the micro-regional level is invariably reflective of what is happening at higher levels. In other words, micro-regional processes are not only about micro-regions but also reflect greater processes which can be perhaps easier seen at the micro-level. Thus, we argue that there is great heuristic value in studying micro-regions, in order to gain meaningful insights into regionalising processes across the continent, as well as good insights into the ways in which governance modalities work (or not) within Africa. In short, micro-regions act as a microcosm and an entry point to the study of regionalism in Africa.

Following on from this, the study of micro-regions is important as there exists a variety of studies on regionalism in Africa, but in general, this research is mainly focused on macro-regions and inter-state frameworks, such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern African (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Organisation of African Unity/African Union (OAU/AU) and so forth. Much of this work is decidedly state-centric and, in general, somewhat ignorant of what is actually happening, in favour of often optimistic and unrealistic accounts about what state actors say they are going to do to build regions. In fact, there are too many studies on the rhetorics of regionalism in Africa, which have little to do with the reality of regionalism. In short, the two case studies actually reflect what is happening in West Africa, rather than what ECOWAS says is occurring.

It is clear that an approach that looks at African regions as they actually are, and how they are being constructed, is necessary. In doing so, students of regionalism in Africa must follow Chabal and Daloz’s (1999) attempts to look at Africa as it really is, rather than how pre-conceived ideas tell us how it should be. This is important within the context of regional studies, given the inherently Western origins and genesis of most previous “mainstream” investigations, where regionalism in Africa continues to be assessed in relation to the European example. Indeed, we would argue that the manner by which African political structures operate—and by extension, how regionalisation in Africa proceeds—needs to be explored and scrutinised at face value, rather than as a degenerated example of what happens when states go bad, as it were. It is surely axiomatic that now in the fourth decade of African independence it is somewhat naïve to think that the modern, Westphalian and Weberian state is somehow going to emerge in many (most?) parts of Africa, least of all the Sahel.
Concrete studies of regional interactions on the continent are perhaps the most fruitful in lifting the veil of obscurity over much of what is “really” occurring and identifying the interface between elite-derived agendas and popular reactions to such processes; between the formal and the informal; and whether this analytical distinction holds much water within the micro-regions. We believe it does not.

The two studies presented here are part of the work of the West Africa Borders and Integration (WABI). WABI is a research institute that looks at cross-border developments in West Africa, particularly at the convergence between political will and actual regionalising initiatives in the field. The two studies are an attempt to look at how regionalisation exists on the ground in specific empirical micro-regions. In doing so, the reality of micro-regionalism in the Sahel is analysed and examined and the dynamics debated, contributing to our further knowledge about what exactly constitutes micro-regionalism in Africa.

Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz *Africa Works: Disorder as Political Instrument* James Currey, 1999.
Regionalisms in the Sahel: The Mopti-Ouahigouya Cross-Border Area

Marie Trémolières

West Africa is a patchwork of regional, sub-regional and micro-regional structures. Some of these are formal and dominated by states: the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), and the Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS). Others are evolving and changing continuously, depending on networks, urban centres, cross-border dynamics and economic activities.

This paper analyses cross-border activities in a micro-region located in the borderlands of Mali and Burkina Faso, connecting the cities of Mopti and Ouahigouya. The micro-region is characterised by both formal and informal relations, motivated by economic purposes and created through local level dynamics “from below”. The Mopti-Ouahigouya area can be classified as an ‘active cross border area’ (Igue and Sole, 1993). This typology refers to “traffic and passage corridors” with activities insufficiently developed to “structure” the area. This is the most common type of micro-region in Africa, regrouping areas that share the same colonial and political traditions of economic development, for example Francophone Sahelian countries. The weak dynamism of these border areas can be explained by their coinciding with settlement areas that are limited by environmental factors and/or geographic obstacles that cannot be overcome, despite the existence of complementarities. A third characteristic of the Mopti-Ouahigouya micro-region is its low population density and distance from urban centres.

The cultural, social and economic dimensions defining the relations in the Mopti-Ouahigouya cross-border area highlight the role played by the presence of a major urban centre (Ouagadougou) in the organisation and the hierarchy of micro-regional relations. Its cohesion and dynamism is based on geographical and commercial realities in combination with impulses stimulated by the dense links between communities within the micro-region, as there are many inter-group marriages and relations between people which stretch far back into the past. Contemporary cross-border activities are marked first and foremost by the fact that Mopti is closer to Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, than it is to Bamako, capital of Mali. Twinned to Ouahigouya, there is extensive cooperation between the two cities due to their proximity, social and cultural linkages, and the fact that their populations visit the same markets, share the same education and health structures, deal with similar customs problems and the heterogeneity of their administrative systems.

---

1. This chapter synthesises three studies conducted on behalf of the SWAC’s Local Development and Regional Integration Unit, by Sanou (2004), Kamate (2004) and Arnaud (2003).
Mopti: The Nerve Centre of an Ancient Transport Corridor

The Mopti-Ouahigouya micro-region extends from the internal delta of the Niger to the centre of the Mossi plateau. To the east of Mopti, the border region is dominated by a sandstone plateau (the Dogon plateau) and small river tributaries, which form narrow beds and dunes by the steep slopes. Some irrigated crops can be cultivated in the bottom of these rivers. Due to its agro-pastoral potential, the area located on the borders of the desert is home to an ancient civilisation. It is the cradle of the medieval empires of Sudan, the Bambara kingdoms of Ségou and Kaarta, and the Peul (Fulani) and Toucouleur theocratic states. Control over these areas is marked by the continuous coming and going of people. Groups from Mali (Sarakolé, Songhai and Dogon) and Burkina Faso (Mossi, Sénoufo, Bobo, Minianka) mix with groups that are in the minority (Toucouleur, Wolof, etc.). The Bambara, Peul, Bozo or even Somon groups that are increasingly nomadic can be added to this list of sedentary groups.

Trade, in particular caravan trade, has stemmed from several ancient riverside urban centres: Djenné, Mopti, Ségou (Mali), and Ouahigouya and Djibo in Burkina Faso. Over and above their administrative functions, these localities have been involved in cross-border trading. Significant flows of persons and goods cross in both directions, leave from these points and arrive here, from and to nearby hinterlands and neighbouring countries such as Burkina Faso, Ghana, Togo and Nigeria. More recent roads have followed these ancient trade routes: Mopti-Kouri-Bobo Dioulasso or Sikasso towards Côte d’Ivoire or Mopti-Ouahigouya-Ouagadougou or Tenkorogo towards Ghana and Togo.

Ouahigouya-Mopti Border Markets
Mopti is closer to Ouagadougou than Bamako (450 km against 600 km), which explains its tendency to steer trade towards Burkina. Furthermore, compared to the Mopti-Bamako-Dakar route, which passes through the same climatic zone, the Mopti-Ouagadougou route offers several complementarities. Ghanaian trucks load fish at the Mopti port in exchange for cereals and products manufactured, imported or produced in Nigeria. Indeed, Nigeria is a major urban market for West Africa (more than 50 million city-dwellers between Benin City and Accra), on which major regional economic operators have depended. On this scale, the “cross-border” concept includes the notion of a “transport corridor”, relies on it and even goes beyond it.

Examples of Family and Social Cross-Border Relations

**Ethnic reference points**

There are strong links between the people of the Sollé department (Burkina) and those in Mali’s Yoro commune. Thus, the former Mayor of Yoro was an “Ouedraogo”, of Burkina Faso origin. The current First Deputy to the Mayor is from Tibou, south-west of Sollé in Burkina. Thus, Fulsé and Mossé groups can be found on both sides of the border, as illustrated by common patronymics, such as “Nacanabo”, “Belem”, and “Ganame”.

More to the west, around Banh (Burkina), the former Fulani kingdom of “Foy” (whence the Fulani title “foynabè”) stretches into Malian territory, beyond the current border. In fact, the Foynabè came from the Sari area, east of Dioungani (Mali). They settled down in Banh after transiting through Delga, further east. The Fulani Gondobè in the Dioungani-Douna area would be their relatives. Beyond these family ties, these cattle-breeding people often visit and use pastures on both sides of the border.

Further west, the Kain and Thiou departments are populated by the Dogons who also maintain relations on both sides of the border. Thus, the customary Chief of the “Gourou” (Dogon sub-group) lives in Kain. His intervention is solicited for any problems concerning the sub-group’s cultural area, i.e. the Burkina Faso and Malian localities of Kain, Ombo, Bondo, Koro, Kani-Bonzon and Bankass.

Communities living in villages separated by the border share a special relationship. This is particularly the case with the Dogon families of Koro in Mali and Kain in Burkina Faso; Lorouga in Burkina and Wòl (Koprona commune), Tiroli (in the Koro commune) and Guimiini (in the Bandiagara circle) in Mali; Madougou in Mali and Madougou in Burkina. As regards dispute settlement, the Niangaly families of Koro and Kain claim to have the same Koro founder-ancestor, Anaye...
Niangaly. The elders of the family live in Kain (Burkina) and no serious problem can be resolved in their absence. Malian authorities (mayor, circle prefect, etc.) still solicit their verdict, which is widely accepted by the people.

Similar examples exist within the Mossi ethnic group. Tougourou, a former Sobangoma hamlet in the Dioungani commune, now upgraded to a village, is shown as a Mossi village in Dogon territory, where the “Sawadogo”, “Ouédraogo”, “Zébré” and “Belem” live, recently joined by the Fulani breeders of Dioungani. These family relations and marriage ties create and perpetuate different forms of social participation on both sides of the border: sharing of customs, celebration of traditional festivals\(^2\), participation in social events (marriages, baptisms, funerals), and so on. Cross-border social relations can go beyond the family framework, extending to the community during traditional festivals or even public events, in which case these relationships extend to the village, commune, locality (at the circle level) or even the region.

**Access to services**

The education and health sectors illustrate the organisation of a cross-border life, initiated at the instigation of the people: Koro schools (Abiré Goro secondary school) regularly admit Burkina Faso children, because of an educational system deemed to be less selective and less costly than Malian studies. Similarly, children from both countries attend the Ramanpanga primary school (a village on the border of Burkina). Administrative and school authorities do not create any problems. However, at the moment, there are no harmonised policies between the two educational systems or the establishments on either side of the border.

At the health level, there is a referral health centre (centre de santé de référence, CSR) in Koro and community health centres (centres de santé communautaire, CSCOM) in other communes of the circle. For the management of patients in an emergency, the Malian administration has set up a CSCOM mutual association, which, however, does not apply to all the dispensaries. Thus, the Dinangourou CSCOM, 120 km from Koro, is no longer a member, since its patients, like those of Yoro (Mali), prefer to go to the Djibo (Burkina) health centre, about 100 km away. Likewise, when the Koro CSR Chief Medical Officer issues an evacuation certificate for patients to the Mopti hospital, the latter prefer to go to the one in Ouahigouya.

The table below indicates how often Malian patients visited the Ouahigouya Regional Hospital Centre (Centre Hospitalier Régional, CHR) in 2003. The figures collected show that the emergency and ophthalmology departments are the most sought after. For instance, as far as the ophthalmology department is concerned, the Ouahigouya CHR is a centre of excellence today. Both consultations and access to

---

\(^2\) On 19 January 2004, Dioungani commune leaders participated in a traditional wrestling match in Ban, at the invitation of local authorities. Conversely, neighbouring prefectures in Burkina are invited to Dioungani on Mali’s Independence Day.
Malian patients at the Ouahigouya CHR in 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departments</th>
<th>No. of patients</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gastro-enteritis and urinary infection associated with inguinal hernia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Malaria, anaemia, occlusion, TB, hydrocele hernia, mental illnesses, gastric ulcer, appendicitis (1) Prostatitis, intestinal parasitic disease, urinary infection, traumatism (2) Cardiopathy (3) Peripheral neuropathy (4) Pneumopathy (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maternity</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sterility (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ophthalmology</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Vision, trauma (1) Disease of the cornea, conjunctivitis, trachoma, optical neuropathy (2) Glaucoma, others (3) Cataract (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paediatrics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Malnutrition anaemia (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surgery</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Vesicle callus, strangulated right inguinal hernia (1) Prostate adenoma (2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 74

spectacles are available at affordable prices, given the hospital’s relations with external partners (e.g. in Chambéry, Ouahigouya’s twin city).

However, reimbursement conditions differ between nationals and foreigners: Malians visiting the Ouahigouya CHR pay a price equivalent to that paid by French nationals. These practices do not apply to all of Burkina Faso. Thus, at Kain’s Health and Social Promotion Centre (Centre de Santé et de Promotion sociale, CSPS), payment conditions are the same, irrespective of whether the patients are from Mali or Burkina Faso.

These medical consultations differ at the regional level. In fact, the Centre’s Malian patients come from Ombo, Tongoré and Dééro (Koro and Dioungani circles in Mali). It is true that the patient rate is not intense but they do come regularly all the same.

Continuity of the Agro-Pastoral System

The border between Mali and Burkina Faso crosses a vast area with a Sudano-Saharan climate, which is traditionally a dry grain farming area with sorghum in the south, millet in the north. For the most part, cattle-breeding is sedentary in the south, migratory in the north and nomadic in the eastern extremity of the common border. In Mali, the Bandiagara cliff is a much harsher obstacle than the border between the two countries, which crosses through the Gondo plain. The northern

3. The rate for foreigners is simply double the rate applicable in Burkina Faso. General consultation costs between F 1,000 and 2,000; speciality consultation costs between F 1,500 and 3,000.
boundary of cotton cultivation, below Ouagadougou, is the other boundary of agro-pastoral homogeneity. An effort to establish farming-livestock raising association could be of interest for the region as a whole and the people living in the area. In the east-west direction, the eastern boundary is associated with the growing precariousness of agriculture and a transformation to pastoralism – or even nomadism (Dori, in Burkina Faso is already a nomadic area). To the west, the improvement in climatic conditions favours the extension of cotton cultivation. The increase in quantities exported has provided the southern portion of this area with a relatively significant source of monetary revenue and has favoured the use of fertilizers and animal draught cultivation. These innovations are prevalent today in almost the entire arable area. Animal draught cultivation and the extension of cropped areas has enabled this region to produce an increasing volume of cereals in the face of a growing rural, but mostly urban demand, which has therefore made it possible to fund fertilizers.

From the foot of the cliff to Ouagadougou, the continuity of the agro-pastoral system is manifest, despite the degradation of agro-climatic conditions towards the north. Thus, a strategy for cross-border agro-pastoral development is possible – not necessarily the standardisation of national or sectoral policies, but a pooling of experiences at all levels (seed quality, training of players, market information, joint reflection on social change, which is indispensable for the spread of innovations). The pursuit of local development further requires a transformation of the agro-pastoral system, where voluntary and continuous fertilisation of soils would replace natural regeneration, especially around cities. It would be based on an exchange of experiences between the area’s farmers and cattle-breeders on both sides of the Mali-Burkina Faso border.

Development of Natural Resources: Proximity Management

In the Dioungani (Mali) commune, Burkina Faso farmers cultivate the land in the Sobangoma, Tongourou, Gourty, and Yorou villages. The authorities of these villages and their inhabitants do not oppose the farming of unoccupied land by Burkina Faso nationals from the Bani, Miyeti and Sabéré villages, with whom they share a common cultural heritage. A similar situation exists in the Bondo commune in Mali, where the Ombo village transferred land to farmers from the neighbouring village of Kain, located within Burkina Faso.

Some areas along the border between the Koro commune and Burkina Faso have been the subject of disputes. For example, 60 km to the south of Koro, the village of Soyema is inhabited by Malians and that of Damane Fanga is occupied by Burkinabés. These villages overlap a disputed territorial area, claimed by each village. Mali’s territorial government and Burkina Faso’s authorities settled the issue by recognizing Burkina’s right over the Soyema site. The results of the proceed-
ings were explained to Soyema’s inhabitants in the presence of those from Damane Fanga, with the former being given the right to remain at the location on the condition that they would agree to be governed by Burkina Faso’s laws, while retaining Malian nationality. However, the Soyema population preferred to settle in the new Soyema village, built in Mali.

There is also the case of pastoral areas and watering holes for herds. The Dinangourou and Dioungani (Mali) communes are above all livestock areas within the Koro circle. On the Burkina Faso side, departments with a similar vocation are Ban, Koumbiri and Titao to the north and north-east of Ouahigouya. Herds from villages in Burkina Faso spend the winter with native herds in the pastures to the east and north of Dioungani, far from the cropped areas, due to the fact that space is limited. Once harvesting is over, Malian and Burkina Faso herds cross the border to make the most of residues. In return, farmers receive organic manure. A formula for the balanced management of animals, adapted to different land capacities, was developed a long time ago.

Cattle-breeders and animals of both countries use water resources with no restrictions, irrespective of whether they are in Mali or Burkina (examples being the Yehi watering point, about 45 km to the north of Dioungani, Darakène-bouro and Alahoni-bouro watering points in Sobangoma territory, and Miyeti watering point on the other side of the border in the department of Ban). The co-existence of farming and cattle breeding has long led to friction, and amicable solutions are always sought, to the extent this is possible. Relations between the two countries have shown that they are already at an advanced stage of consultations, both at the local as well as national level. This only needs to be further encouraged by regional measures in which border cooperation would take its due place as a path to a certain form of regional integration.

Asymmetry of the Border Areas and Trade

Commercial traffic has long remained restricted due to the lack of means of transport and the area’s hostile geography. High-value products (gold, salt, kola nuts, etc.) are involved where trade has essentially been in the north-south direction, through the Sahara and up to the boundaries of the equatorial forest and, later, in the aftermath of colonisation, up to the coastal areas.

The Mopti-Ouagadougou route through Ouahigouya is not the only route from the Mopti region and the Niger’s internal delta to the Gulf of Benin’s coast. Mopti is connected via San to Sikasso and Bobo Dioulasso, and then to Abidjan. The Mopti-Ouagadougou line, while also connecting Mopti to the railroad track, puts Mopti at a distance that is barely more than that to Lomé port (1,295 km), and a little more than that to the ports of Accra (1,476 km) and Cotonou. For Mopti, passing through Ouagadougou is also a normal route to southern Nigeria, which
produces a significant portion of the goods manufactured in West Africa and whose products are distributed all the way to Guinea and Mauritania by land. Although less important than Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana is a significant trade partner for Mali. The Mopti region in particular trades in rice, yams and wood in exchange for fish and cattle, as witnessed by the heavy-duty trucks registered in Ghana that can be seen in Mopti port (including some that may even belong to Malian traders).

The volumes of exported agricultural products and imported manufactured goods in return are growing rapidly. With increasing urbanisation, a new era is getting underway: while, until now, most of the agro-pastoral production in the Sahelian zone was for home consumption, aside from a few cash crops (groundnuts, cotton), the barter economy has developed further, followed by specialisation. At the sub-regional level, rural revenues from subsistence crops have today reached a volume comparable to that of cash crops. The area’s continued urbanisation can only intensify this trend. Both call for regional integration, outside of any industrialisation process, and affirm the dynamic role of cities in the growth of local economies.

The demographic realities will have an important impact on the cross-border activities and the urban-rural interface. In less than 20 years’ time, the entire area’s urban population will be equivalent to its rural population – as against half today. Ouagadougou, with almost 2.5 million inhabitants, will be a major centre for the entire region, including the Mopti region. The challenge for some farmers and cattle-breeders lies in their capacity to meet the growing urban demand, a major source of revenue increase and, consequently, of their livelihood.

Problematically, the dynamics of regional relationships within this part of the Sahel mean that a part of one national territory serves as the hinterland of an important city in a neighbouring country. Mopti is closer to Ouagadougou than Bamako and is the hinterland for Burkina Faso’s capital. For practical purposes this means that regional actors have sought to do everything possible to make the most of the trade induced by this relationship, rather than emphasizing borders.

In contrast, Mopti is not strictly a border town since it is located about 150 km from the border with Burkina Faso. However, it clearly forms part of the Mopti-Ouahigouya micro-region. Although Ouahigouya (with less than 100,000 inhabitants) is much closer to the border (about 50 km), it does not enjoy significant trade. In fact, the proximity of Ouagadougou limits its area of influence. There is a dissimilarity between the two border areas that is noteworthy – a situation that often promotes cross-border relations and their dynamism. It is because the border crosses an urban network whose urban hierarchies are indifferent to the border line that trade develops at various levels.
Cross-Border Organisation: Rural-Urban Interface

The breakdown of markets in both Mali and Burkina Faso is as follows: semi-rural markets are visited by traders from nearby urban centres, such as Koro and Bankass and further afield. This is the case of the markets of Douna (Friday), Madougou (Monday), Pel (Sunday), Tiroli (Monday), Kopropé (Monday), Youdiou (Thursday) in the Koro circle, Nongodoum (Monday), and Kain (Friday) on the Burkina Faso side; village markets visited by the same peddlers during the rest of the week before they meet up once a week in the large urban centres (Saturday in Koro, Tuesday in Bankass); and villages with no market day, where peddlers seek farm products and offer manufactured articles (e.g. Sobangoma).

The markets of Douana in the Dioungani commune, 50 km from Koro, and of Madougou, or even the Koro urban centre are areas with a clear cross-border character. Consequently, in Douna, Burkina Faso traders stock up on grains, sesame, animals, acha (*fonio*) and string beans. They sell various vegetables and goods. On these occasions, the means used for travelling are carts, bikes or mopeds. They blithely cross the border and there are no border posts on the tracks used. On the other hand, the Ouahigouya market is one of Burkina’s largest modern markets after those of Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso. The region’s main products exported to other markets are cattle and market garden produce. For Malian users of the region, it is essentially a market for the supply of manufactured items: soap, sugar, oil, alcoholic beverages and sweets.

Ouahigouya’s modern operators look towards the national market and coastal countries for their enterprises. For the most part, they are based in Ouagadougou or Bobo Dioulasso and do not see the Malian market as a priority. Interviews with traders and transporters during field surveys have made it possible to identify the cross-border rural and semi-urban markets that they visit most. The table given on the opposite page provides a synthesis of their specificities and location.

These rural or semi-urban markets can be categorised into two types: those that specialise in the sale of animal products and those that sell grains and specific products such as dates or plaited loaves.

Markets that supply animal products, such as cattle, sheep, goats and rock salt, are one type. Internal markets supply meat to urban and semi-urban towns (Ouahigouya, Titao, Thiou). The main internal collection and pick-up markets are: Bidi, Méné, Nogodoum, Kain, Ségué and Sollé.

The cattle markets – Nogodoum, Ségué and Sollé – are the most often visited (number of Burkina and Malian localities that meet here, number of trucks on market days). Bidi and Méné are considered major rural markets insofar as they attract buyers from neighbouring villages and hamlets. However, there are few traders from

---

4. The Youba market is the fifth largest national market for cattle exports after Pouytenga, Bobo, Fada and Ouahigouya.
Ouahigouya, except for a few butchers. In Malian markets, cattle are purchased and then resold to cattle exporters in Ouahigouya and exports markets in Youba and Pétogoli. Major border cattle markets are Douna, Koundougo and Boni. Traders can also stock up on rock salt used for cattle feed brought in from Taoudénit at these markets.

List and specialties of main cross-border markets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Market day</th>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Products sold</th>
<th>Products purchased</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MALI</td>
<td>Bankass</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>bags</td>
<td>Second hand clothes, market garden produce, salt, rice, cattle feed, manufactured goods (soap, oil, spare parts, plastic bags, etc.)</td>
<td>Millet and plaited loaves Cattle and dates Grains Cattle and grains Fish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Douna</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Kombri-Banh-Dioungani*</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cattle and dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Koro</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>OGH-Bankass</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Koundougo</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Tougan-Néhour-ou-Bankass</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cattle and grains</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mopti</td>
<td></td>
<td>OGH-OUO-MOPTI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dinangourou Bani</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Sollé-Douentza</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cattle, rock salt, bazin cloth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boni</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Sollé-Dianangour-ou-Douentza</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Koro</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>OHG-OUO-MOPTI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mopti</td>
<td></td>
<td>OGH-OUO-MOPTI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dinangourou</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Sollé-Douentza</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Boni</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Sollé-Dianangour-ou-Douentza</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Youba</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Oudhigouya-Diouréma</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cattle/export</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nogodoun</td>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Banh-Bani</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ségoué</td>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Banh-Sollé</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sollé</td>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Banh-Pétogoli</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cattle, grains</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* This route is extensively used by Burkina Faso traders. It is not accessible in the rainy season, given the number of streams that have to be crossed. Another route leads to Douna via the Koro-Dioungani road.

Another type of market is the cross-border arrangements that meet weekly. The semi-urban market of Koro (Mali) is the largest in the region. It mobilizes five ten-tonne trucks, three bush-taxis, one passenger bus and about 30 traders per truck. Fruit and vegetables come from Yatenga. They are also sold in Dinangourou, north of Yoro. However, demand remains very variable, whence the effort to diversify the export markets for these products (towards Ouagadougou, coastal towns or Europe).

One of the main reasons some Ouahigouya traders prefer this market is because of the informal understanding reached with customs authorities, who seem to apply a fixed charge taxation system, negotiated essentially because of the low quantity of the goods transacted. The Koro market is also the place where traders-importers who pick up goods in Bamako meet up. Every Thursday, a group of traders travels together from Ouahigouya to Koro, where they meet their Malian colleagues to pick up fresh supplies in Bamako before returning to Koro on Saturday (two days later). There are at least two advantages to this arrangement – a charter service and the
“protection” that Malian traders provide their Burkina Faso colleagues in Malian territory. The Bamako market is known for the purchase of spare parts, manufactured and hosiery goods, and its competitive prices. These items are later sold in the Ouahigouya market, and subsequently in rural and semi-urban markets. Burkina Faso’s traders who visit Bamako market simply purchase goods there.

Not many Burkina Faso traders visit the Mopti market because of its high prices as a tourist city. Only fish is of interest to foreign buyers. In fact, the dry and smoked fish wholesaler based in Ouahigouya is Malian. Other Malian markets are known for specific products: dates in Douna, grains and plaited loaves in Bankass, grains in Koundougo. Conversely, certain Burkina Faso markets provide fresh supplies of manufactured and staple consumer products to Malian villages (sugar, oil, salt, etc.), but also of agricultural inputs and machinery (fertilizers and pesticides, local ploughs, etc).

Trade in subsistence products between Mali and Burkina Faso is dependent on vagaries of the rains, but the Malian area apparently has a surplus in normal years. It specialises in millet and sesame production. According to traders and the customs department, various information sources agree that in 2003, maize left Burkina for Mali, but in 2004, it was basically millet that entered Burkina Faso territory.

Obstacles to Trade: Infrastructure and Controls

The Mopti-Ouahigouya route, also known as the “fish route”, is the main road taken by transporters and traders. It deviates from it where the Sévaré-Bandiagara route is being re-laid and asphalted and where the Somadougou-Ouo section is damaged. Consequently, vehicles go from Mopti to Sévaré, Bandiagara, Ouo, Bankass, Koro, and then to Ouahigouya. From Koro, other access routes to Burkina are for the most part tracks that can be used when the land is of a sandy and sandy-loamy texture on the Malian side, with some passages that are difficult to cross in winter.

There are also tracks used by smugglers. These are generally routes through the undergrowth, river valleys and swampy areas in winter into which vehicles cannot venture. On the Burkina Faso side, the 105 km road from Koro to Ouahigouya is not asphalted; only the portion between Ouahigouya and Ouagadougou via Yako (180 km) is asphalted. Others, although they are national roads, are earthen roads and are difficult to use in the rainy season. Departmental roads too are earthen tracks, smaller in size and even less usable during the rains (July and August in particular).

Between Koro and Ouahigouya (100 km), there are three control points (border police, national police force and customs) in Thiou, on the Burkina side, and six on the Malian side (Kiri, Koro, Koprona, Bankass, Gani for the Bandiagara and Goundaga police station, which have the police, the national police force and the National Transportation Agency). It takes twice as long to transport goods as to
transport passengers. Finally, the Koro-Mopti route takes twice the amount of time as the Koro-Ouahigouya one.

Of the nine control posts, five are located in the town of Thiou alone and three in Malian territory (including two in Koro). For traders and transporters, the way through Thiou is a major obstacle. Several duties and/or bribes have to be paid. At this level, a distinction must be made between the charges paid to the customs department and the extras that have to be paid at police and national police roadblocks. An overall estimate suggests that at the police and national police roadblocks, about CFAF 10,000 is collected for a round trip from bush taxis and double that from cargo trucks. This is valid for a round trip on the same day and if the same agents are present. Payment has to be made again if there is a changeover of agents on the return journey. At the Thiou customs post, transporters and traders give the following estimates: a flat-rate tax of CFAF 10,000 per truck on the outward journey, a rate of 100 to 150 F per bag of grain on the return trip (F 500 for a bag of sesame), a flat rate of F 1,500 per truck for a plant safety inspection of food grain. In Malian territory, at the Koro customs post, for the outward trip, you have to pay F 5,000 per ton of oil cake, salt and rice; on the return trip, a flat sum of F 15,000 per truck. Municipal parking charges in the city cost F 500 and F 1,000 per truck and are paid to the transporters’ union. At the Kiri national police station, a flat round-trip rate of F 15,000 to 17,500 has to be paid (vehicle documents are confiscated till the return trip). In general, each passenger with no identity document or vaccination card must pay F 1,500.

On the whole, the Malian system appears to be less strict despite a flat sum collected systematically from each truck. Due to the strictness of Burkina customs in Thiou and the high number of roadblocks on the Ouahigouya-Koro route, many transporters and traders make a detour, using departmental tracks leading to Malian territory. Although not so usable, these tracks have fewer roadblocks. Apart from the main Ouahigouya-Koro commercial route, studies mention three other access routes in this area, to the cross-border markets of Boni, Douna and Koundougo. These markets specialize in cattle and small ruminants. Those in Douna and Koundougo also sell millet and sesame. They get visitors mostly in the dry season, given the bad overall state of secondary roads. The intensity of passenger traffic in both directions is considered to be 120,000–130,000 passengers per year. As for goods traffic, the Mopti Customs Regional Directorate report places it at 73,212 tons in 2003, representing CFAF 7,705 billion. However, the traffic is not regular. For products coming from Burkina, extensive use is made of informal routes.

Since the Côte d’Ivoire crisis, the route has become more active and the supply route has moved towards Benin, Ghana and Togo. The increase in traffic between 2002 (prior to the crisis) and 2003 (in the aftermath of the crisis) can be appreciated by looking at the way the TIE (transit routier inter-états or inter-state road transit) figure has gone up: from 792 in 2002 to 2,403 in 2003, i.e. a three-fold hike. The
regional delegation of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry sees it as a positive
development for the regional economy, but transporters view it as an evident cause
for the acceleration of the degradation of the fish route, which is opening up to other
products.

The Ouahigouya-Koro route witnessed an increase in traffic after the Côte
d’Ivoire crisis, which would not be beneficial for the local economy. According
to the Thiou customs office, the number of trucks from and to Mali has gone up sig-
nificantly. The truck traffic has increased more than three times between 2002 and
2003. A high volume of goods transit through for Mali (from coastal countries),
especially rice, sugar, oil, tea, soap, fertilizers, cement, sawn wood, motorcycles, etc.
Many foreign trucks (Ghanaian, Togolese, etc.) return empty. The main Malian
products that go to third countries are cattle, dates and rock salt.

The customs department believes that no significant receipts are associated
with transiting goods. Only the guarantee fund is collected; it accounts for 0.25
percent of the value of the goods. For the customs department, fish is the main
source of receipts. This product is intended not just for the cities of Ouagadougou
and Ouahigouya, but also the localities of Gourcy, Kaya, Koudougou and
Pouytenga. Fish trading activities are shared between Malian and Burkina Faso
operators. As for “miscellaneous” products, the customs department is aware of the
fact that fraud is rife and that only a small part of these goods is accounted for.
The same grievance is equally valid for cattle that cross the border on foot. Such
fraudulent activities justify the mobile patrolling operations by the Thiou customs
office and the Ouahigouya mobile brigade. For the Thiou customs office, the act of
reaching Burkina territory via departmental tracks (to Banh or Sollé for instance) is
considered to be smuggling.5

The low level of trade activities on the Ouahigouya-Koro-Mopti route is due to
several other factors, including the low turnover of traders working on this route. The
Ouahigouya market is considered very narrow and traffic usually involves small
quantities of goods. In reality, customs authorities believe that they are not dealing
with “true economic operators” on this line. Some goods are subject to a certificate
of compliance. In order to get such a certificate, a trader needs to be registered with
the trade register. Yet, the majority of traders that use this route do not seem to be
registered. The competency level of the Thiou customs office is also important.
It cannot do customs clearance for values exceeding CFAF 500,000 and products
such as sugar, wheat flour are necessarily under transit until Ouagadougou. It also
appears that the route is not open for fuel, as per Malian regulations, which restricts
the trade of some products.

5. It is not surprising that trips to Douna take place late at night (sometimes around 10 pm). Some
spend the night in a border town and continue the journey the next day by bicycle or moped.
Conclusion

West African cross-border zones are becoming ever more populated and have an increasing potential. Yet many of these border zones remain marginalised and often fragile. Cooperation and integration are hindered daily in these areas despite existing ECOWAS rhetoric on the free movement of goods and people. These zones also suffer the consequences of disparities between national economic policies. They are subject to a purely “national” notion of how the economic sectors should be managed. Such sectors’ potential is thus impeded because of their cross-border nature.

Because of custom constraints and badly regulated traffic, at the local level, the Ouahigouya-Mopti route is used well below its actual trade capacities, despite a deep rooted belief in the benefits of border trade among local populations. What this means is that there is pressure “from below” to legitimize cross-border trade and linkages; impulses stimulated by the dense links between communities within the micro-region. The challenge of narrowing the gap between local “informal” realities and the formulation of “official” regional integration policies remains. This is not because such a confluence would constitute a change of scale, but rather that it would cement a genuine relationship between local, national and regional scales, as well as enabling the implementation of concerted policies.

The public and private actors have many projects, initiatives or ideas that they try to implement: mediation structures and conflict prevention, health centres, border markets, a cross-border system of rural routes, concerted management of transhumance trails, etc. Fortunately, these initiatives are strongly supported by the populations and are able to develop over time. While recognizing and supporting these initiatives, regional institutions could accelerate and reinforce the regional integration process from the “bottom up”, thereby improving the region’s development. Today, West Africa does not have a juridical framework encouraging cross-border cooperation. It is thus essential to provide institutions like ECOWAS with such a framework, which would allow member states to engage in cross-border cooperation. Hence, macro-regional preoccupations would converge with micro-regional ones.
Bibliography


Cross-Border Cooperation Between Niger and Nigeria: The Case of the Maradi Micro-Region

Mohamadou Abdoul and Marie Trémolières

Within Africa, renewed interest is being shown in sub-regional integration and West Africa is no exception. Fresh interest is expressed through substantial progress made in drafting and harmonizing the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) policies, as well as by the convergence pacts between these two organisations. Such official moves coincide with a considerable growth in cross-border trade dynamics—in the unofficial impulses that stake out regionalisation processes.

Over the past few years, a rich variety of more flexible and “people-centred” cross-border cooperation efforts have multiplied in West Africa. Towns have signed twinning agreements, civil society associations mediate in conflicts, medical centres coordinate resources, schools welcome cross-border students, stock breeders have set up transhumance corridors, traders engage in the setting up of cross-border markets. The dynamism of these “micro-initiatives” tends to cement peaceful relationships, develop social and economic interdependencies, and make up a base for “regional civil society”. They are not, however, formalised or well organised and do not therefore, for the time being, form a pressure group capable of making their voices heard at the policy-making level.

Even though there is an increasing awareness of such micro-regional processes and some signs that politicians and institutional leaders believe that these initiatives should be encouraged and included in the regional integration process there is still a long way to go before the top-down and state-led macro-regional policies are synchronised with such micro-regional dynamics. The problem posed is therefore that of bringing into line local reality with the formulation of official regional integration policies. In other words, facilitating the “catch up” of the formal with the dynamic and progressive features of informal regionalisation.

This paper presents the case of a “micro-region” developing within the broader Benin-Niger-Nigeria border-zone: the axial routes of Maradi–Katsina–Kano (Niger-Nigeria). The study illustrates the approach where cross-border cooperation is the driver and engine of regional integration, a kind of regional cooperation transcending the micro-region itself and acting as an effective lynchpin for a variety of integrative trends. The distinctive characteristic of the Maradi-Katsina-Kano micro-region is the promotion of regional trade beyond the borders of Niger and Nigeria thanks to a cross-border junction structured around the Hausa network.

The surface area of the Maradi–Katsina–Kano zone is 83,000 sq km, with a population of about 19 million. With over 200 inhabitants per sq km, this is one of
the most densely populated areas in West Africa. Complementarity and competition exist among the various actors within the micro-region, the strategies they draft and develop, and the diverse regulatory bodies established within the geographic space, as well as their levels of intervention and activities. This paper concentrates on the region-building strategies adopted by local communities, particularly the role of the Hausa trading network. It also considers the often dysfunctional relationship between such localised region-building and the attempt at region-building implemented by states and inter-governmental organisations.

**Maradi–Katsina–Kano Corridor**

The Maradi–Katsina–Kano route is located within the Kasar Hausa (Hausa territory) zone. Historically, this area has been subject to a continuous process of deconstruction and (re-)construction, borne along by the social, economic and political changes it has undergone. Originally, Hausa territory was confined to the area under the direct control of the seven pre-colonial Hausa states. It later expanded with the extension of the Sokoto Caliphate and, thanks to the dynamism of the language, has even led to the incorporation of certain non-Hausa ethnic groups located along its northern, southern, eastern and western borders. The territory therefore extends from the Tillaberi-Dakoro-Nguigmi line in the north to the northern foothills of the Jos plateau in the south, and from the frontiers of the ancient Bornu to the Niger valley to the east and west.

Given its location in the tropical zone and its low altitude of generally less than 300 m, the micro-region is heavily influenced by the rainy season, on which its primary production depends. The latter is utterly central to the extensive trade that exists within the area and beyond. The average annual rainfall there varies between 500 and 800 mm, increasing from north to south; Kano receives 120–130 days of rain while Katsina and Sokoto have a dozen or so days or less. The region's weather cycle is governed by two seasons: the rainy season, between May and September, and a dry season for the rest of the year. Caught between the Sahel ecological zone and the Guinean savannah, the region combines a Sahelo-Sudanese and Sudanese climate and is an area that is conducive to high agricultural production, such as cereals, peanuts and cotton, when climatic conditions are favourable. It is also an area favoured by pastoral and nomadic communities.

**Hausa: A Tradition of Incorporation in International Circuits**

The Hausa civilisation is believed to have developed between the seventh and eleventh centuries with the growing influx of continuously mobile populations in the central Sahel. Historians attest to the antiquity of the presence of Kanuri, Gobirawa, Alozinawa, Wangarawa, Larabawa, Kabawa and other peoples in this area. Since the twelfth century, Peul (Fulani) cattle-breeders have been migrating to summer
pastures, settling in Hausa territory as clerks, marabouts and advisers to Hausa sovereigns. These neighbourly relations have led to extensive social and cultural interpenetration. Moreover, the rise in population density due to these migrations has been an important factor for the development of economic activities.

The history of the Hausa city-states is closely linked to trans-Saharan trade and the Islamisation of western and central Sudan. These cities were located at the southernmost point of the caravan routes linking North Africa and the Mediterranean region with the afforested African interior. Land routes across the Sahara have been used for many centuries to transport goods (millet, salt, slaves, kola)\(^6\) and they have played a major role in the organisation of space, even influencing human settlement choices. A number of villages in the Maradi valley, those in the Gabi valley, as well as several cities in northern Katsina were incorporated in the trans-Saharan economic system, as they were connected through the major trade routes.

In the eleventh century, Hausa city-states such as Kano, Katsina and Gobir were fortified towns within which the caravan trade developed, alongside extensive weaving, dyeing and leather manufacturing activities. They were also major trading centres for cereals (millet and sorghum), cotton and sugarcane, which were produced in the hinterland. Commercial activities were organised into corporations that were self-regulatory and collected taxes. Tax income was submitted to the *Sarki* (traditional chiefs from Niger) as a pledge of loyalty; in return, the latter guaranteed the freedom and safety of trade.

The administrative grid was based on a very elaborate system with distinct, specific functions. Thus, ‘the existence of the posts of *Tafarki* (security guard along trade routes), *Madugu* (head caravaner), *Sarunan Sana’a* (trade chiefs), *Kofa* (city gate guards), and different industrial and artisanal activities leaves no doubts about the contribution of trade to the state’s and administration’s revenues’ (Mahamane, 1993). This body of officials oversaw the proper functioning of the administration and the safety of economic activities and trade.

**Territorial unity and cohesion beyond successive authorities**

Under the authority of the Songhrai and the Borno\(^7\), the Hausa city-states, despite their political instability, were able to retain their territorial integrity and a very strong cultural unity.\(^8\) Their structural stability was, however, put to a severe test

---

\(^6\) These trade relations also promoted the spread of ideas, which is how Islam reached Western and Central Sudan. The impact of Islamisation was so strong that Kano and Katsina gained fame as cities that exerted a strong intellectual and cultural influence on the Islamic world.

\(^7\) There was political equilibrium between them, but allegiance was given either to the Songhrai or to the Bornu, or even to the Kanem-Bornu. Katsina and Kano paid tribute to Bornu and the Kingdom’s merchants controlled the trade routes in the Hausa territory. During the Songhrai domination period, Songhrai merchants promoted trade in Kola, imported from the Ankan forests.

\(^8\) The Hausa city-states, under the suzerainty of Bornu, continued to witness power struggles throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the process, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Gobir,
by a series of particularly harsh droughts in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. The length of the famines and the social crises that followed created a feeling of discontent among the people, who made the most of the Peul Muslim reformists under the guidance of Usman dan Fodio. The *jihad* or holy war that he initiated from 1804-08 led to the submission of the Hausa States: Zamfara, Kebbi, Katsina, Kano, Zaria, Alkalawa and Birnin Gazarganu. This led to the emergence of a Sokoto Caliphate, in the form of a confederation of several Emirates, which agreed to place themselves under the suzerainty of the Caliph – the Commander of the Believers.

The British signed a treaty with the Sultan in 1885, with the aim of persuading the Peul and Hausa chiefs to recognize the British protectorate of the Sokoto Caliphate’s Emirates. However, it was not until 1903, after the capitulation of Borno, that the British planned the military conquest of Sokoto and Kano. The protectorate was established over Hausa territory and most executive and legislative powers were vested with its High Commissioner. Practically the entire traditional chain of command was ‘assigned’ to the level of low-ranking officers in the colonial order (Last, 1997: 67–82). The system of “indirect rule” that was set up nonetheless enabled the chiefdoms to retain a fair amount of autonomy and an ascendancy over people and goods that they still exert to this day. In fact, they enjoyed legal prerogatives in certain matters, such as divorces, disputes, debts, and the freeing of slaves, in the light of Islamic law (i.e. *Sharia*).

As far as possible, colonial policies avoided questioning the traditional and Islamic values followed in the former Sokoto Caliphate and its various Emirates. All said and done, indirect rule played a role in strengthening the Hausa-Fulani domination and identity in northern Nigeria, with Hausa recognised as an official language. Additionally, under the British colonizers, the north underwent rapid economic development, in particular with the construction of the railways in 1912, which transported cash crops (peanuts and cotton) to ports along the Atlantic coast.

---

9. It was during this period that Hausa territory was divided between the French and the British. The former colonised Niger and the latter, Nigeria. In spite of this division, Peul-Hausa solidarity remained constant. In fact, it was to do away with the strong influence of the Hausa community in Zinder and to weaken the influence of the prosperous and highly populated northern Nigeria that the French administration chose to relocate the colony’s headquarters from Zinder to Niamey in 1921. By doing so, it believed it would restore the balance of economic and, above all, local political power.

10. A proposal to relocate the capital, Lagos, to Kaduna was seriously envisaged at one time.
Settlement, Production and Trade

This historical background will help in understanding one of the fundamental characteristics of Hausa territory and the Maradi micro-region — the considerable interdependence between settlement dynamics, urban development, agricultural production and trade. Due to the simultaneous presence of all these factors, the area has greater potential for integration than most other West African areas witnessing economic and social development. The paradox is that these very same factors also partly lead to the fragility of the economic and social balance of power which is under continuous strain, due to droughts, bad harvests, pressures on land resources, political disagreements between major Nigerian and/or Nigerien traders or ethnic tensions.

In Niger, 75 per cent of the population is concentrated in the south, along the Niamey–Zinder route, which represents just 12 per cent of the national territory. In this context, the settlement dynamic in the Maradi administrative department (the most highly populated in Niger) is closely linked to the development of the Hausa towns in northern Nigeria, such as Katsina, Kano and Gobir. With high population densities over a long period (approximately 150 inhabitants per sq km), the Kano region has witnessed a further population growth in the 1990s, with some parts of the Katsina region also being included. During this period, the occupation of space has depended upon physical and food security criteria. Thus, the valleys formed by the area’s waterways and its bushland have been the first to be occupied. The department has witnessed a very rapid population growth, as the population has risen from 1 million inhabitants in 1977 to 1.4 million in 1988, 1.7 million in 1995 and 2.2 million in 2001.

Most high-density villages are located along the borders with Nigeria. The high population concentration can be explained by several factors: the long years of population concentration inherited from Hausa Kasar history, the fertility of the land and the proximity of the markets (UNDP, 1997). As a result, the urban population has grown rapidly and constantly. Maradi city’s annual population growth rate has in the past been around 8 per cent, mostly due to a massive rural exodus following a series of groundnut production and marketing crises. From 12,500 inhabitants in 1959, the city’s population rose to almost 200,000 in 1995 and 300,000 in 2000. In Kano state, four cities have a population of over 200,000 inhabitants, whilst Kano city has 1.4 million. These high densities have led to a situation where the Hausa–Fulani region has been subject to strong population pressures within a limited agro-pastoral area.

The Maradi–Katsina–Kano route is distinguished by the development of a network of relatively dense secondary cities. Their population growth rates are high enough to stimulate agricultural production in the surrounding rural areas, includ-
ing the Nigerian coast. The urban–rural network operates under the guidance of perfectly coordinated networks of economic players, from producers to wholesalers, and this has enabled cross-border trade to develop economically well beyond its limits, placing the micro-region in a regional and even international framework based on ancient, well-organised trade networks.

The concentration of trade around a dense network of markets goes back to the era of trans-Saharan trade in certain trading hubs, such as Zinder and Konni in Niger and Madaou, Iléléa and Kamba in Nigeria. These focal markets attracted merchants from considerable distances as well as from surrounding areas, thanks to their links with a host of periodic markets, each covering a vast radius of several hundred square km and forming supply centres and import–export hubs. In fact the entire Hausa territory is crisscrossed by a road network linking the main market and warehousing cities with transshipment points or villages where weekly markets are held. A market typology has been established, based on the specific functions of each market in the system as a whole.

- Harvest or pick-up markets located in the northern Nigerian production zones, i.e.: Bakori, Dandume, Danja, Tsiga, Sheme in Katsina State; Giwa, and Makarfi in Kaduna State; Sundu and Dawanu in Kano State.
- Grouping or consolidation markets: Kano, Kaduna, Zaria, Funtua, Gusau and Maiduguri.
- Transit or border markets, such as Jibia, Iléléa, Kamba, Maiadua, Maigatari Mubi, Kerawa, Baga and Malanville, which are the main markets of this type.
- End consumer markets such as Lagos, Cotonou, Niamey, Maradi, Zinder and N’Djamena and those in northern Cameroon.

The above list is obviously not exhaustive. Over a hundred border markets can be found along the entire 1,500 km long border between Niger and Nigeria. Moreover, the recognised functions of a market do not preclude it from playing other roles. Jibi, for instance, is a transit market, but also a grouping market. It shares this dual role with other cereal markets in Katsina state, namely Dandume, Dutsinma, Charanchi, Yargansi and Batsari. Customers come from Niamey to stock up at the border markets, whilst Guribi, Matameye and Madaou are harvest markets and markets for transit to other large urban centres in Nigeria.

The market and warehousing cities are connected with transshipment points or villages where weekly markets are held through three main routes, from west to east, such as the Konni–Iléléa–Sokoto–Gusau–Zaria road, which continues toward southern Nigeria via Jos; the Maradi–Jibiya-Katsina route, which stretches as far as Kano, Zaria, Kaduna, Abuja and Lagos; and the Zinder–Matameye–Daura–Kazaure–Kano road. These main roads are in turn interconnected by secondary roads.
and several link roads, leading to villages in northern Nigeria and the agricultural areas. Thus, the road infrastructure favours the supply of food to urban centres, whilst the return journeys are used to bring manufactured goods to the most remote corners of Nigeria and Niger.

The development of trade relations between southern Niger and northern Nigeria stems from two major activities: trade in local products and transit. The flow of goods from Niger to Nigeria includes a type of string beans (niébé), Zulu nuts (chufu), gum arabic, cattle, leather and skins, commodities and manufactured goods from Lomé and Cotonou. Goods flowing in the other direction include cereals, other food products (pasta, corn meal, sugar, salt, yams, fruits, etc.), hydrocarbons, building materials and plastic products, both from Nigerian as well as international sources.

In keeping with a very old tradition, livestock trade occupies a very important position in trade relations between Niger and Nigeria. Nigeria’s several million head of cattle constitute one of its biggest assets. The livestock sold in Nigeria is highly taxed, with animals taxed at 40 per cent of their market value, which tends to encourage the parallel market. Statistics refer to exports of 115,000 head of cattle, a figure that appears to be far below the actual numbers which are, in fact, traded. About 70 per cent of the Nigerian herd can be found in the northern part of the country, mostly in the Sahelian areas. The statistics for 2001 state there were 24.3 million goats, 20.5 million sheep and 19.8 million cattle (Atlas of Nigeria, 2002). In the savannah areas, where the vast majority of animals graze, cereal cultivation is of equal importance.

Nigeria produces 8,000,000 and 6,000,000 tons of sorghum and millet respectively. Niger’s structural deficits in millet and sorghum are overcome by the surplus produced in northern Nigeria, which further binds the micro-region together. Endowed with a large cereal market, Kano is the hub for redistribution to households or other industries within the country, as well as in Niger. As compared to other regions in West Africa, it constitutes one of the main cereal reserves, combining the local potential of Maradi and Nigeria’s scale of production and taking advantage of existing complementarities and seasonal differences.

The organisation of transit operations (see below) – a major activity between Niger and Nigeria – is characterised by a combination of formal and informal mechanisms. However, the high disembarkation duties imposed at Lagos port and the protectionist measures or non-convertibility of the naira are weakening these operations, which nonetheless continue due to the toleration of neighbouring areas, despite the regularly announced bans on the import of several products. For the most part, these activities follow a transportation corridor starting from the ports of Lomé and Cotonou and passing through the Malanville market and customs in Gaya before crossing through the cities of Maradi or Zinder and ending in northern Niger, where they take advantage of Kano’s distribution network.
Indeed, the border crossing system is characterised by both horizontal and vertical networking. The porosity of customs posts stems from cultural solidarity and collusion between Hausa inhabitants on both sides of the border, and the influence and pressure by major traders both at the centre and in the districts. Several players intervene at different decision-making levels in the states, as well as in different segments of the marketing channels, which converge in Nigeria, from Europe and, especially, Asia, after passing through Benin (or Togo) and Niger. At one end of the channel, the latter have regular correspondents in Asia or Europe, and sometimes even in the USA. Among other things, they make it possible to tailor supply contracts to demands, in terms of both quantity and quality. At the other end of the marketing circuit, semi-wholesalers or retailers based in the Nigerian market, particularly in Kano, dispose of the goods. Some of them pay their suppliers after the sale of the goods. Those involved in this sort of trading relationship are generally recruited from within family or community networks that are loyal to the main importers or from among the traders established in big city markets. On the other hand, others (non-insiders) are expected to pay cash when they have accumulated enough capital to purchase the goods stored in Kano or Katsina.

The goods are registered in Gaya, at the border, before being transported to Maradi, or Zinder. These transit formalities help verify that the goods are really meant for export and not for the Nigerian market. But according to customs officials as well as traders, the goods are almost never unloaded, but simply “checked”. Only weapons are systematically sought out. For the rest, assessments are made on the basis of samples in order to facilitate operations, as well as not cause unnecessary complications to the intimate relationships that exist between traders and state officials on the border.

Conclusion

The development of the Hausa Kasar as a formal micro-region has been compromised today by extensive smuggling activities, which are strengthened by the differences between Nigeria and its neighbours with regard to economic policy. While Togo, Benin and Niger have very liberal import systems, since their tax revenues depend on re-exports to Nigeria, the latter tries to protect the development of its own production infrastructure.

Dodging customs duties is a tradition that goes back to the time before when borders were drawn and in which several specialised professions are involved—sponsors, informers and other couriers. Many traders began by transporting goods across the border on foot. From taking a few jerrycans of petrol from Jibia to Dan Issa, to the Cotonou–Kano crossing, there has been a continuum of more or less lawful activities. The reality of small-time smuggling and its repression by customs de-
partments should not minimize the existence of institutionalised smuggling, which involves much larger volumes and in which state officials are complicit.

In the Maradi–Katsina–Kano area, the rising population in the cities has given an impetus to agricultural activities among the surrounding rural population, both in Niger and in neighbouring Nigeria. The urban-rural links established by networks of economic players are perfectly coordinated, from the level of producers to wholesalers. The Maradi–Katsina–Kano area illustrates what West African Long-Term Perspective Studies (WALTPS) have described as a spatial reorganisation of rural populations depending on urban markets: ‘The picture of urban areas in the 2020s is based on the hypothesis that national urban systems, incited towards autonomy following their independence, will tend to be integrated into a limited number of sub-regional systems, each focused on a given metropolis, which will exert its influence beyond national borders’ (De Cour and Snrech, 1998). The area is subject to a dynamic that is centred on activities in Kano, its weakness stems from its capacity to develop a viable macro-economic environment that would enable it to be included in a formalised and permanent regional and international approach.

While the population density and the urbanisation of the Hausa Kasar provide it with considerable potential, the question of its regional future depends on its capacity to consolidate its industrial development in the face of competition from the world market. Investigations on the ground reveal that the “state” is perceived differently depending upon whether one talks to the central administration or local representatives. The latter often express themselves as local actors and perceive problems in the same way as other border actors, including traders and smugglers. They are often involved in dialogue and de facto cooperation with their counterparts working on the other side of the border. Although it is rare that officials argue that the local level should and could replace the national and regional levels to promote regional integration, the notion of subsidiarity has always been exhibited through examples such as cross-border cooperation described in the Maradi-Katsina-Kano area. This example shows that many solutions can be found on the local level, even if it is obvious that the national and regional levels have specific and crucial roles to play so that cross-border cooperation can reach all of its potential. In the Mopti–Ouahigouya zone, there is a local will to reorganize the primary health system on a cross-border basis. Such a system cannot be set up without the support of the health ministries in the relevant countries. However, local border actors, even if united by a common history and language, remain separated by official languages, currencies, distinct laws and regulations. Neither the federal states of Nigeria, nor the towns or regions of Niger, have the right to engage in international cooperation. As a result, the sorts of activities that have been detailed in this paper remain very much in the main at an unofficial level and provide an intriguing example of bottom-up regionalisation based on quite intense historical legacies. The task for the official post-colonial state is surely to recognize these and harness such impulses for
a more broad-based development strategy that takes advantage of what the citizenry are already engaged in.

Bibliography

Abdoul, Mohamadou, K. Dahou, and Marie Trémolières (2004), 'Maradi-Katsina-Kano: A development corridor?', Coll WABI, CSAO-OCDE.


Boluvi, M. (2004), 'Malanville-Gaya: Trading post and speculation corridor (informal cross-border area)', Coll WABI, CSAO-OCDE.


Grégoire, Emmanuel, (1986), 'Les Alhazai de Maradi (Niger), histoire d’un groupe de riches marchands sahéliens', Editions de l’ORSTOM.

LARES, 'Sécurité alimentaire et échanges régionaux de cereals', Occasional Paper No. 9.


Notes on the authors

Mohamadou Abdoul holds a PhD in history. He works at ENDA Prospectives Dialogues Politiques, an international NGO based in Dakar (Senegal). His work focuses on the dynamics of regional integration and urban thematics in West Africa.

Fredrik Söderbaum divides his time between being Associate Professor at the Department of Peace and Development Research (Pärrig), Director of the Centre for African Studies at the School of Global Studies at Göteborg University and a research fellow at the United Nations University-Comparative Regional Integration Studies (UNU-CRIS), Bruges, Belgium. He is widely published on the topic of regionalism.

Ian Taylor is a senior lecturer in the School of International Relations, University of St. Andrews; Associate Professor Extraordinary in the Department of Political Science, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa; and visiting lecturer at the Faculty of Development Studies, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Uganda. He is the author of many books and articles on African politics.

Marie Trémolières holds a PhD in Political Sciences. She is a researcher at the Local Development and Regional Integration Unit at SWAC-OECD (Sahel and West Africa Club). She is one of the focal points of WABI (West African Borders and Integration).
List of Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFAF</td>
<td>CFA Franc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHR</td>
<td>Regional Hospital Centre (Centre Hospitalier Régional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CILSS</td>
<td>Permanent Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMESA</td>
<td>Common Market for Eastern and Southern African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSCOM</td>
<td>Community Health Centres (Centres de Santé Communautaire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSPS</td>
<td>Health and Social Promotion Centre (Centre de Santé et de Promotion sociale)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Referral Health Centre (Centre de Santé de Référence)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECOWAS</td>
<td>Economic Community of West African States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>Organisation of African Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SADC</td>
<td>Southern African Development Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIE</td>
<td>Inter-state road transit (transit routier inter-états)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WABI</td>
<td>West Africa Borders and Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAEMU</td>
<td>West African Economic and Monetary Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALTPS</td>
<td>West African Long-Term Perspective Studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


