
Toward a regional integration along Nigeria -Niger border: a case study of Katsina- Maradi Crossing

Waisu Iliyasu

Department of History and Security Studies
Umaru Musa Yaradua University, Katsina, Nigeria

Keywords

Regional integration, unrecorded crossborder, trade, impacts

Abstract

Regional integration had been a subject of discussion among academics and policy makers in West Africa. In Nigeria, crossborder trade had been in existence since the pre colonial period when the communities living along the border exchange with one another in order to satisfy their daily needs. Thus, the trade continued during the colonial period and after. The main trust of this paper is to discuss the evolution of the trade, the items involved, mode of transportation and the trade routes. The concluding part of the paper discusses the socio- economic impacts of the trade on the communities living along the border.

Introduction

Since the pre colonial times a common feature of the history of West African region had been waves of human movement bringing desert people into grass land environment and vice-versa (Jamilu: 2006:25). Such economic interaction was undoubtedly made possible by the presence of complementary needs among communities living around and beyond the border (Sani: 2009:2). It is therefore assume that unrecorded cross-border trade along Katsina-Maradi border has the potential of promoting regional integration amongst people of Nigeria and Niger Republic. This type of trade had been conducted at the formal and informal levels. The recorded trade which passes through the normal channels set by the respective governments is termed as formal, while out side this circle is referred to as informal/ unrecorded cross border trade (Balami: 1998/1999: 80-81). It is therefore base on this that this paper discusses the evolution of unrecorded cross border, items involved and the impacts of the trade on the people of Nigeria and Niger republic.

The Evolution of Katsina- Maradi Border Trade

Geographically, Katsina - Maradi roughly lie on the coordinates of latitude 22^{OS} and 20^{ON}, and longitude 10^{OW} and 30^{OE}. The divisions are situated in the extensive northern plains of Hausaland and underlined by basement complex rock (Saulawa: 1993: 212). The climate is of tropical continental type, with wet and dry seasons. The rainy season started from April to September every year. The mean annual rainfall is about 690mm and in some areas even lower than 345mm. Temperatures are relatively high with the mean annual reaching about 75^{OF}. The area lies within the Sudani - Sahel Savannah zone with the northern fringes dominated by herbs and shrubs (Saulawa: 1993:213).

However, in the centuries before colonialism the Hausa states of what is Nigeria were linked to the rest of the continent, as well as to the outside world, by a range of inter-regional trading circuits. Trade was based largely on ecological and artisanal specialization, although

routes were also influenced by levels of tolls and taxation, and a significant proportion of European manufactured goods had been introduced into these circuits in the centuries before the beginning of the colonial period (Lovejoy: 1980: 40). To the north, the Trans-Saharan trade routes linked centres in the desert and savannah areas of West Africa to Tripoli. In the context of the eclipse of empires further west, the Trans-Saharan routes terminating at Katsina, Kano and Kukawa (now Maiduguri) became important from the 17th century, and the Kano terminus gained particular prominence following the Fulani jihad in the early 19th century (Mahdi: 1978: 25). Exports from the Hausa areas of the central Sudan included slaves, hides and skins, local textiles, leather goods, small quantities of condiments and, in the 19th century, ostrich feathers. Imports from Tripoli consisted of a range of North African and European made goods, principally textiles, small quantities of arms, and miscellaneous manufactured goods (Hopkins 1973: 30).

Therefore, since before colonial period there had been socio-economic interaction between Katsina and Maradi. Ever since, the two cities have maintained these excellent relations. This is because Maradi was an extension of Katsina kingdom as such they share the same norms and values since time immemorial (Onoja: 1993:306). As noted by Sani since before colonial period there were interactions between Katsina and Maradi. Katsina tobacco farmers and merchants grew tobacco and travelled to Maradi. They returned with livestock to Katsina and fattened the livestock, and set off again... (Sani: 2004:55)

Similarly, Usman reiterated that there were trade relations between Katsina and Maradi since pre colonial period. This type of relation according to him was based on the exchange of goods like iron implements, cloth and leather goods, all of which occupied an important position in the pre-colonial economy of Katsina and Maradi (Usman:1981: 126).

However, the imposition of colonial rule in many parts of West Africa led to the creation of artificial boundaries. The boundaries divided people with the same cultural background. This transformation no doubt affected Katsina- Maradi border which for long had been together. The first step took by the colonial governments was the restriction of the movement of goods and persons across the border (Anene: 1970: 281 - 282). As noted by Kassim-the restriction of the movement of people and goods along Katsina-Maradi border was a clear indication that the British and French colonial governments were aimed at creating a demarcation between the borders of the two cities. In fact they went ahead to established customs and immigration stations on the major roads into Maradi. Such as Jibia - Maradi border, Kongolam - Maimourjiya, and Zango -Matamaya border (Kassim: 1992: 58-60). Indeed institutional frameworks like the Customs services and their strict border patrols seriously obstructed regional integration and commercial transactions along Katsina-Maradi border (Usman: 2005: 5). Therefore, with the establishment of these border controls, traders and merchants from both sides of the border towns feared to cross with their merchandise and therefore evaded the stations in order to avoid apprehension from security agents (Anene: 1970: 58). This is because the creation of the border was not based on any clear socio-cultural reason rather was arbitrary; hence kinsmen were divided by border and yoked into different countries. Even though the division was not recognized by the families so affected, thus they continue with their economic interaction along the border (Ogunkola: 1998: 6).

So, as a result of this, people in Katsina and Maradi had to devise means in evading the security check points. The reason behind this according to Ogunkola was that Nigeria and Niger governments are perceived to be distant from the people, and therefore the people do not see the relationship between their welfare functions and those of the government (Ogunkola: 1998: 6). Thus, people along the border have to smuggle food items, cosmetics e.t.c with a belief that their interaction had predated colonial periods such it should not be cut-off over night (Ogunkola: 1998: 6). In fact Ogunkola went further to say. This type of trade arises as more of reaction to misalignment in the micro-economic policies of different countries. Thus, tariff and other barriers, monetary policy differences, trade restrictions and price disparity for identical produce are some of the major causes of unrecorded cross border trade between Nigeria and her neighbours (Ogunkola: 2005:26).

Therefore, unrecorded cross border trade along Katsina –Maradi border continued despite the custom stations established along the border. The impact of this was the decline in government revenue due to wide spread of the trade across the border. To prevent this, colonial government in Nigeria passed a law titled “Nigeria Defence Regulation”. The regulation was aimed at creating a frontier area six miles deep within which it was an offence to move any controlled goods at night, and goods in transit on the day time could be stopped and detained pending proof by their owners that they were not intended for export (NAK/KATPROF/W/1184:1950: 79). Another reason for the increase in the trade was the emergence of Maradi as a commercial nerve centre in Niger republic. Coupled with the fact that, Niger is a land locked country solely depends on transit goods. As such the trade is profitable to all those concerned in the business; the smugglers, security agents etc. The trade brought about collaboration between smugglers and law enforcement agents. As such contrabands were smuggled through the border. For instance from Maradi trucks loaded with contrabands usually wait at Dan- Isa village, pending clearance by the customs and other security agencies along the border. The trucks usually arrived at the day time and cleared at midnight for onward crossing the border (Utomwen: 2009: 2). In fact, it has been revealed that smugglers paid a colossal amount of money before crossing the border. In an interview with Malam Musa he says that smugglers paid one hundred thousand (₦100, 000) per truck and above before crossing the border with their goods (Musa: 2013). In other instances negotiations were carried out /concluded according to the size and the type of items in the trucks (Ibrahim and Shehu: 200: 1). To this end Usman says

The Katsina-Maradi border of Nigeria and Niger republic is also a point of unrecorded cross-border trade in Manufacture and petroleum products. It is through the border that operators establish trade link with the central areas of the Sahel in parts of Mali and Burkina Faso (Usman:2004: 8-9).

Moreover, Lawal reiterated that

... There was a remarkable decline of agriculture while the population continued to grow geometrically. This therefore, led to inadequate of food supply which compelled the importation of consumable goods, and patronage of unrecorded cross-border trade to compliment the problem of hunger, poor prices, Sahelian dryness, crop failure and corrupt practices of the political class (Lawal: 1999: 169-170).

The reason behind this according to Olaniyan was the failure of some countries to in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to implement some policies especially on trade liberalization, which aimed at expansion of intra regional trade (Olaniyan: 1984: 157). Consequently, in order to beat up security/border check points, the smugglers used magical or extraordinary practices connected with the trade. Some of these extraordinary elements involved the application of charms which were mainly inherited from ancestors (Sani: 2003: 195). Some of these practices which seem to be pagan in outlook yet continued to be applied by the smugglers. In fact other groups that engaged in such practices were aimed at self preservation against harmful elements (Sani: 2003: 195). The charms used by the smugglers include *Sabani* (one of the legummonosac) which if possessed by a smuggler, could never be seen by the law enforcement agencies no matter the strict vigilance (Sani: 2003: 201, Bargery: 1934: 875). There is also *Daurin Kasa*, *Daurin Baki*, which are used by the smugglers to prevent disagreement with the law enforcement agencies (Bargery: 1934: 244). The nature of these magical element/charms comprised of words and names of Jins and attributes of Allah. Others are a mixture of water and powdered barks of trees (Sani: 2003:1999).

It is therefore with this protection that smugglers used to transport their goods across the border with a relative ease. In the course of transporting their goods they followed illegal routes or bush trails. Some of these routes were formally trans-Sahelian trading routes, others were manmade. In Katsina the bush trails exist in varying degree criss-crossing towns and villages along the border. For example, from Katsina the smugglers pass through Magama - Faru - Chadura - Maradi. While from Maradi they pass through Zango - Wanke Ciya - Kuntu - Tashar Dan Arne - Damagaram (Garba: 1982: 30 Muhammadu: 2009). Through these trade routes goods from Nigeria found their way to Niger republic within a couple of days. So, one could see how Katsina-Maradi border trade evolved from the time immemorial to date.

Items Involve in the Trade

The concern here is on the major items which form part of the trade (imported and exported items). Some of the items involved in the trade are food and merchandise; food items include maize, rice, millet and corn. Merchandise include blankets, utensils, cigarettes, clothes and cosmetics. Therefore, goods imported from Niger republic are livestock, rice/spaghetti and vegetable oil, popularly known in Katsina as *Olga*. While goods exported to Niger republic include petroleum products, textile materials, e.t.c.

Goods Imported to Katsina

Rice / spaghetti and vegetable oil (*Olga*) constitute the major items imported to Katsina from Maradi. The products were originally produced in Libya, Egypt, Burkina Fasso, Benin republic etc. The rice found its way to Niger republic through the borders of Mali, Benin and Togo. The modes of transportation in the trade are Volkswagen Golf, Peugeot 504 and Peugeot J5. The vehicles moved comfortably on the bush trails. Others used motor cycles and bicycles to transport their goods across the border. The products are usually carried in sacks and in most cases unpackaged. On reaching immediate destination, the goods were exchanged and re-distributed through complex distribution networks to all parts of the state (Jamilu: 2006: 55). That is why rice and spaghetti are cheaper in Katsina than any where in Northern Nigeria. It was estimated that over 50 tons of rice is smuggled daily from Maradi to Katsina (Abdullahi: 2013). The product is imported in large quantity to the extent that it could not be consumed in the state. On reaching Katsina, the goods are re-exported to the neighbouring states of Kano,

Kaduna, Jigawa and Abuja. Vegetable oil (*Olga*) is another major item imported from Maradi. The product is carried in Jerry cans and on a few occasions in drums. The product is loaded in Peugeot 504 and Peugeot J5 for onward transportation to Katsina (Sa'adu: Maradi: 2009).

Goods Exported to Maradi

Petroleum products are Nigeria's most prominent exports to countries like Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. In Katsina-Maradi border, it was estimated that over 50-100 tankers loaded with petroleum products daily entered Maradi through the bush trails (Mamman: 2013). The reason behind this is partly because the products are relatively cheaper in Nigeria than in the neighbouring countries of Chad and Cameroon. Besides people used 50 litre Jerry cans to transport the products across the border (Muhammadu: 2009). Even though, one could not doubt the discovery of petroleum in Niger republic in the early 2010. This notwithstanding, Nigeria's petrol is cheaper than that of Niger that is why people of Niger prefer to buy petrol from Nigeria. In fact it has been estimated that Niger petrol is sold at the rate of N250 per litre (\$2 dollar). While Nigerian petrol is sold at the rate of N97 per litre this simply means it is not up to a dollar. Therefore because of the disparity in the prices smuggling of petroleum products from Nigeria to Niger continue to increase over a period of time (Sani: 2010: 4).

Textile materials also form part of the items exported to Maradi through unrecorded cross - border trade. Goods under this category include wax prints (both Nigerian made ones, popularly known as the "Nigeria Wax" and imported ones. This include Dutch, English and Japanese wax which are wholly cotton and mixture of cotton and other materials that come in rolls. The wholly cotton and mixture used for male clothing, while the wax prints are used for female clothing. The materials are bought from Kano, Funtua and Kaduna textile companies. These companies produce textile materials of many varieties for males and females (Balami: 1999:91, Hashim: 2009: 90).

The Impact of Unrecorded Cross-Border

Unrecorded cross - border trade is not officially recognized by governments but it is understood that the trade has the potentials of facilitating regional integration between Nigeria and her neighbours. Therefore the trade has the following impacts.

Economic Impact

Unrecorded cross - border trade satisfies consumer needs and provide means of livelihood to thousands of small scale traders in market places across the border (Usman: 2004:9). Some of the goods that the consumers obtained are quite indispensable and contribute to economic development (Usman:2004: 9). For example, trade in petroleum products across Katsina-Maradi border brings together significant large number of intermediaries, all of whom attempt to take maximum advantage of their position in the transaction. Tradesmen, carriers or border - trackers, each tried to exploit his position in order to make brisk business. Law enforcement agencies also take advantage of the trade to receive their share by extorting money from smugglers and their agents. In some cases, the law enforcement agents participated directly in the trade. (Mamman: 2009). Therefore it is a common phenomenon to see border trackers and smugglers across the border signing agreement directly with the law enforcement agents in order to ensure the safety arrival of their goods (Urwatu: 2009, Stary: 1999: 175 - 76). This made the trade a lucrative job to all the parties involved.

The trade also contributed toward economic integration between Nigeria and Niger. This is because goods of different varieties were transported across the border which aimed at satisfying consumer needs. The reason behind this according to Usman was that the formal process of promoting regional integration had so far recorded limited results over the years (Usman: 2004: 10).

Another economic impact of the trade is the reduction in revenue generation, increase in criminal activities along the border towns (Balami: 2002; 74). A clear example is the emergence of *Hirji* village in Maradi. The village is located along Katsina - Maradi border that is around Jibia - Magama axis. The village has been a hiding place for criminals and joint place for social activities (Ibrahim: 2009). It has been estimated that Nigeria and Niger republic losses millions of dollars monthly because of unrecorded cross border trade. On agriculture, Maradi did not suffer much on the impact of cross border trade due to the benefit derived from inflows of subsidized inputs from Katsina especially fertilizer (Hashim and Meagher: 1999: 82). Therefore inflows of grains from Katsina have undermined the intensification of Maradi's grain production, but the Katsina's market has provided a significant stimulus to the production of cash crops such as cowpeas (*aya*) and groundnuts (Meagher: 1996: 5).

Moreover, the outflows of grains and other food crops to Maradi have contributed to rising grain price with a positive effect on surplus producers, but with a negative effect on small scale farmers and consumers (Meagher: 1993: 7). In Katsina, the inflows of cowpeas and livestock largely from Maradi have posed serious threat on the major cash crops of the border towns of the two countries (Meagher: 1993: 7).

Social Impact

Katsina-Maradi border trade led to the emergence of towns and villages along the border. A clear example is the emergence of Jibia as a border town in Katsina State. It was based on this that Jibia town earned the epithet of *Aljannar Yan Sumogal* (the paradise of smugglers) (Lawal: 2013). However proximity to the border line made villages like Dankama, Gurbi, Madarumfa and Maimujiya in Niger republic to witness urban growth. Despite being border towns, they were also strong agricultural and commercial nerve centres in the border. This no doubt attracted many people from Nigeria and Niger. This indeed, contributed immensely to their development.

The trade also promote cooperation and friendship among actors on both sides of the border. The impact of this was intermarriage among people living in the border towns (Usman: 2004: 9). In fact, majority of the people interviewed testified that traders, drivers, guides, usually married from Niger republic (Ma'aruffibia: 2013). According to them marriage in Maradi is cheaper. The trade led to the destruction of local industries due to high rate of smuggling in the two countries. This manifested heavily when the trade sustained and develop other sectors of activity, which would be unable if the traders were to buy goods from the national industry or import them legally at high cost (Stary: 1999: 176). As noted by Utomwen

...the worrisome rate of smuggling activity along Katsina - Maradi border is detrimental to the country's economy...the smuggling activities are one major reason industries in the Northern region are collapsing...because it is easier to smuggle goods through Katsina border than through Lagos-Badagry border (Desmond: 2009:2-3).

The trade also led to loss of lives and property worth millions of naira due to clashes between customs and smugglers. A clear example was the Feb 2, 2009 clash between custom and smugglers in jibia (Katsina) border.

...in both Jibia and Maradi border villages, there had been tension ... after a custom patrol team arrested a bus loaded with rice belonging to some indigence of the area. The items were being smuggled into Katsina state through the border (Ibrahim and Shehu: 2009:1).

They further maintained that:

Two custom officers were killed and another one injured by smugglers at the border (jibia) Katsina state, while five of the smugglers died while pursuing their impounded vehicle. (Ibrahim and Shehu: 2009:1)

Several clashes also occurred between the smugglers and their cohorts. These occur in their efforts to either become lords or mafias in the smuggling business. This act did not go down well with others, as such they protested against who ever attempted to do so. Thus Mangal, who craved to be the lord of the smuggling mafia in Katsina state had attempted to force this unwritten code down the throats of other petty smugglers...backed by some youth in Jibia Local government, the people revolted, threatening to disrupt the entrance or exit of all his smuggled products along Katsina-Maradi border... (Desmond: 2009:3). Katsina-Maradi cross border trade has the potential of employment generation and provides opportunities for income generation and even accumulation for a large number of people. This is because many have entered the trade in response to the context of unemployment as in the case of Nigeria (Hashim and Meagher: 1999: 82).

Conclusion

The paper discusses the evolution of unrecorded cross-border trade along Katsina-Maradi border. Within this ambit, the paper discuss the origin of the trade from the pre colonial period to date. The paper also shade lights on trade routes and the items involved in the trade. It was revealed that the smugglers followed bush trails in order to evade customs and other security agents. It is therefore pertinent to argue that despite the problems associated with unrecorded cross - border trade, the trade has the potential of facilitating economic integration between Nigeria and Niger. This is because goods from Nigeria for example were transported to countries like Mali, Togo and Cameroon through Niger republic. Visa viz goods from Niger were transported through Maradi border to Nigeria. This has created a wide range economic interaction among people in Nigeria and Niger.

References

- Anene, J (1970), *The International Boundaries of Nigeria, 1885 - 1960*, Ibadan
- Bargery R (1934), *A Hausa - English Dictionary and English - Hausa Vocabulary*
- Bruno, S (1999) "Cross - Border in West Africa: The Ghana - Cote d'voire Frontier," Bach. Daniel, (ed) *Regionalism, Integration and Disintegration in Africa*, London, Tames Currey
- Balami, D.H (1998/1999) "Toward a Regional Trading Observation of Some Selected Goods in the Northeast Border Region of Nigeria: A preliminary Analysis," *Annals of Borno*, Vol. xv/xvi
- _____,(2002) "Government Policies and Behaviour of Actors in the Informal Trans-frontier Trade between Nigeria and her Neighbours. A case study of Borno frontier," *Annals of Borno*, 17/18 2000/2001

- Ezenwe. U (1984), *ECOWAS and the Economic Integration of West Africa*, Ibadan
- Garba, A M (1982), "The Impact of Border on Daura", *B.A History Project*, BUK
- Hashim, K (2009), "Cross-Border Trade and the Parallel Currency Market between Nigeria and Niger", www.nai.uu.se/publications.htm, 31/8/2009
- Hashim, K and Meagher, K (1999), 'Informal or Economic Subversion: The Development and Organisation of Parallel Trade in West Africa' in Lavergine, R (ed) (1999), *Regional Integration in West Africa*, Karthela
- Hopkins, A.G (1973), *An Economic of History of West Africa*, Longman, London
- Ibrahim, L and Shehu, A (2009), "Customs, Smugglers in Bloody Clash in Katsina", *Sunday Trust*, Vol. 3, No.2
- Jamilu, S (2006), "Markets in Katsina: A Comparative Study of Charanchi and Jibia Markets in the Twentieth Century", *M.A Dissertation*, History, UDU Sokoto
- Kassim, A (1992), "The Evolution and Development of Jibia as Border Town to 1980", *M. A History*, BUK
- Lawal, A.A (2001), "The Negative Impact of SAP on Agriculture in Nigeria," *The Nigeria Journal of Economic History*, No. 2
- Lovejoy, P.E (1973), *The Caravan of Kola*, Longman, London
- Mahdi, A (1978), *The Hausa Factor in West African History*, Ahmadu University press, Zaria
- Mahmane, B. et.al (1993), *Regional Cooperation and Integration in West Africa*, Paris:OECD/CINEAGIE/ADB
- Meagher, K (1993) 'Nigeria, Granary of Niger: The Implications of Cross border trade for food security in Nigeria and Niger' in *Integration through Markets in Sub-Region Niger-Nigeria Interaction, Proceedings of a Meeting held in Maradi Oct 20-27, 1993*, Cinergy (BAB/OECD) NAK/KATPROF/W 1184, 'Smuggling Relations', 1950, Annual Reports, Katsina Province
- Ogunkola, O (1998), "An Empirical Evaluation of Trade Potential in the Economic Community of West African States". *African Economic Research paper 84* Nairobi
- Olaniyan, O (1984), "Major Issues Arising from Trade Liberalization Programme in the ECOWAS", *Nigeria Forum*, Vol. 4, No. 7
- _____, (1989), "African Economic Integration and Nigeria's Industrialization Challenges for the Defence Sector", *Journal of the Nigeria Defence Academy*, Vol. 8
- Onoja, L.A (2003), "Problems of Local Administration and the Imperative of Border Co-operation: The Experience of Katsina State", Asiwaju and Barkindo, *The Nigeria - Niger Trans-border Co-operation*, Lagos
- Saulawa, A.M (1993) "Drought, Animal Husbandry, Impact and the State in Katsina - Maradi Boundary Division of Nigeria and Niger Republic, C. 1972 - 1983: A Historical Analysis of Drought Phenomenon and the Need for Stronger Trans-Border Co-operation". Asiwaju and Barkindo, *The Nigeria - Niger Trans Border Co-operation*, Lagos Malt house
- Sani. A.B(2004), "The Leadership of a Mercantile Landscape of Northern Katsina 1804 - 1955, *PhD. Thesis*, History, Bayero University Kano, Nigeria
- _____, (2003), "The leadership of Mercantile Communities in Hausaland in the 19th and 20th centuries", *FAIS Journal of Humanities*, BUK, Vol. 3, No. 2
- _____, (2009), 'Discernible Trends in Economic Linkage and Ethnic Inter-Mingling. The Trade Relationship between Hausa Communities, the Yoruba and areas South of River Benue in the 19th and 20th centuries', *Paper presented at Isa Kaita College of Education during Annual Conference of History Department*

Usman, M (2004), "Cross - Border Trade and the Prospect for Economic Development and Integration in West Africa," *Paper Presented at the DPMF/CODESRIA Joint Conference, Ethiopia, 2004.*

_____, (2005), "An Evaluation of the Viability of a Single Monetary zone in ECOWAS," *African Economic Research Consortium, Paper 142, Nairobi, Kenya*

Usman, Y.B (1981), *The Transformation of Katsina 1400 - 1883*, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria Press

Utumen, D (2010) "Alhaji DahiruMangal: The profile of Yaradua's Buddy and Nigeria's Richest Cross-border Smuggler" www.saharareport.com/index.php

Oral Interviews

Group interview at Jibia: Abdullahi Commander, Smuggler, 45 years, 18/9/2013, Lawal Ibrahim, Civil servant, 50 years, Malam Urwatu 49 years, farmer.

Group interview at Maradi: Malam Sa'adu farmer, 51 years, 28/7/2011, Malam Muhammadu, farmer, 52 years, Malam Ma'aruf, Trader, 40 years.

Group interview at Kongolam: Ibrahim Bagobiri, 60 years, Brick Layer, 25/8/2013, Nasiru Mamman, 35 years, Mai'adua, Civil Servant, Alhaji Abu Jihadi, 55 years, farmer, Musa Sani, Smuggler, Maradi, 57 years, 2/11/2013
