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SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF INTER-COMMUNITY RELATIONS IN THE KATSINA-MARADI-ZAMFARA AREAS OF THE NIGERIA-NIGER BORDERLANDS

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Abstract:

This article examines the inter-community relations between the borderland population of Katsina, Maradi, and Zamfara in the Nigeria-Niger borderlands. Despite the demarcation of the Nigeria-Niger boundary by European powers, the historical, environmental, economic, social, and linguistic similarities have promoted and necessitated relationships between these border areas. This analysis focuses on the impacts of various activities undertaken by the border communities on the development of inter-communal relations.

Keywords:

Trade and Exchange Relations. Smuggling. Corruption. Cultural Festivals. Inter-Communal Relations



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Introduction

Inter-communal relations between the borderland population of Katsina, Maradi, and Zamfara have been mutual long before the imposition of colonial rule. The relations have grown stronger despite the demarcation of the Nigeria-Niger boundary by the European powers. The bottom line is some factors have necessitated and promoted relationships between the border areas of Zamfara and Katsina Emirate with Maradi in the Niger Republic. The most obvious of these are environmental, economic, social, and political similarities shared by the two regions and their proximity to one another.¹ Another factor is the role played by language. The people of Gobir, Zamfara, Katsina in Nigeria and those from Madarunfa and Maradi in the Niger Republic were and are still Hausa speakers. In other words, the two regions constitute a single linguistic group, which indicates the absence of a communication barrier between the two communities.² Similarly, economic activities have been important areas of linkages between the people of the Katsina Emirate and those in the Niger Republic either. So, the natural resources of the two areas are virtually the same. For instance, the major crops grown in the two areas include cotton, millet, and groundnut. As such, agriculture has been the dominant economic activity of the people of the two regions.³ So, such a high level of interaction makes it absolutely difficult for security personnel to differentiate between the two at security checkpoints.⁴ Consequently, the impacts of such inter-communal relations are tremendous, as they cut across social, economic, and political aspects. This paper analyzes the major impacts of the various activities undertaken by the border communities on the development of inter-communal relations in the area. The analysis shows that as a result of these activities and intimacies, the border role played by the border is insignificant and unsatisfactory in stopping the traditional linkages between Katsinawa, Maradawa, and Zamfarawa.

Social Impact

One of the significant factors that enhanced cordial intercommunity-relation between Katsinawa, Zamfarawa, and Maradawa indigenes was Islam. Islam has been an important integrative force between the two groups. The fact that the vast majority of the population of both Katsina, Zamfara and the people of Niger Republic are Muslims means that there is a common body of values and a single moral standard they share. Some Nigerians like Mallam Isa TudunYanlifidda, Mallam Nasiru Yanshuni, and Mallam Muhammadu Makudawa have been prominent Islamic Scholars in Katsina city who teach students Islamic education without bias on either tribal or national differences.⁵ The two communities attend the same mosques to observe religious activities and interact freely with each other. The Nigeria-Niger border communities are generally Muslims. They follow three major schools: the Tijjnniya (Tariqa) Brotherhood, the Qadiriyya Brotherhood, Izala, and very much recently, the Salafiyya. The increasing number of people, especially the young malamai (religious knowledge seekers) and their almajirai troops to Nigeria to study under 'numerous Malamai in Katsina, Gusau, Sokoto, and Kano since the pre-colonial days, and this practice has continued to the present.⁶ The dominant religious culture in the area was the Sufi orientation, represented by the *Qadiriyyah* and *Tijjaniyyah* brotherhoods. The Sufi tradition emphasized the increasing search for knowledge, closeness to God, and the purification of the heart for total submission to the will of God. Izala and Salafiyya, on the other hand, emphasize the purification of deeds and are opposed to the Tijjaniyya and Qadiriyya doctrines.⁷

It was under these conditions that more scholars of the Republic of Niger relocated to northern regions of Nigeria to make their living. Mallam Ibrahim Dantasawa was one such scholar; it was also around this time that Shaykh Abubakar Kiota lived in Zaria with the renowned Shaykh Yahuza Zaria,

¹ KSHCB/346, Katsina Emirate: Description, Historical Notes and Assessment Reports, KAT/NA, W44-Population Statistics. 1945, 5.

² S.A. Yakasai, "Language Across Two Borders: A Socio-linguistic Study of Hausa in Konni and Illela Border Towns", (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Bayero University, Kano, 1999), 88.

³ KSHCB/346, Katsina Emirate: Description, Historical Notes...8.

⁴ Commander Oumar (Duanne), 56 years, Interviewed at Dan-Issa, on January 3, 2022.

⁵ KSHCB/346, Katsina Emirate: Description, Historical Notes ... 10.

⁶ J. Hunwick, "Borders, Boundaries and ... 33.

⁷ J. Hunwick, "Borders, Boundaries and ... 35.

who died in 1958. Shaykh Abdulrazaq Kuso (Magarya) received most of his scholarly training under Shaykh Tijani *Yan Mota* and Shaykh Abubakar Atiku Sanka in Kano.⁸ Similarly, Nigerian students thronged into northern Nigeria for the same purpose. Liman Shafiú, the son of Liman Ishaq, the present chief imam of the central Maradi mosque, studied in Kano under these conditions.⁹ Most members of the scholarly family interviewed in Maradi (Shaykh Mallam Abba and Shaykh Ibrahim Danjiratawa), in Niamey, and beyond all testified that they studied in Kano, Sokoto, Katsina, Gusau, or Borno during the colonial and post-colonial periods. Overall, although new barriers were put in place that clearly separated the territorial lands of Nigeria and the Republic of Niger as distinct political entities, the nature of the French colonial policy and its dislike for mixing religion and governance led many Nigerien scholars and students to move into the northern Nigerian area in search of Islamic knowledge.

The complementary needs among the Nigeria-Niger border communities, as indicated in the previous papers, have led to other social forms of relations, such as intermarriages.¹⁰ Oral data obtained in the course of this research has shown that marital relations have been an important factor in the intercommunity relations between Katsinawa and the people of the Niger Republic.¹¹ For instance, the late Ali Babba, the ShantalínMagajin Garin Katsina, married two Tuaregs (*Buzaye*) women of Niger Republic stock.¹² Indeed, the bond that developed because of inter-marriages makes both vertical and horizontal integration possible. There is also a record of the social relations between the Katsinawa and the people of the Niger Republic through the provision of horses into Katsina during some important celebrations.¹³ In pre-colonial and colonial times, traditional institutions have been rearing horses for ceremonial, transportation, and defense purposes. However, in the post-colonial period, rearing was greatly reduced, perhaps due to the introduction of modern means of transportation. It is a common phenomenon that whenever there is a ceremony in Katsina, such as Sallah Carnival, horse racing, and the like, quite a number of horses are brought to the city to cater for the celebrations. An oral source indicates that over sixty percent of the horses used during Sallah Carnival are brought from Niger Republic.¹⁴ Usually, the horses are brought from areas like Mayi, Gazawa, Tassawa, Kanem Bakashe, Tsibirin Kare, Madawa, Jan Ruwa, Damagaram, Gidan Kyata, Dalangashe, Gadambo, Maiki, Kotare, Magami, Babban Anne, SharkiDandana, and Chaduwa among others. And the transporters spent about seven to eight days on the road before reaching Katsina. Upon arrival, they are received by horse agents mainly concentrated at Galadunchi, Dan Fako, Kofar Sauri, Yarinchi, Yar'adua, Filin Ugu, and Kofar Soro wards in the city.¹⁵ It is important to note that the coming of the Niger Republic people to Katsina with these horses no doubt promotes social cohesion between the two communities. After the celebrations, Niger Republic people do not go back empty-handed. Instead, they buy some important items that they lack, such as leather mats, foodstuff, and household equipment, among others.

Furthermore, the migration of indigenes to Niger did not cease with the colonial conquest in the 20th century. A colonial report put the total figure of Niger people in Katsina to 9,757 in 1945.¹⁶ According to Shehu, Alhaji Musa claimed to have been one of the earliest arrivals during the colonial era.¹⁷ He pioneered the establishment of the local Bakery Industry in the late 1940s at Galadunchi ward, followed by Alhaji Mamman at Sabon Layi in the northern part of the metropolis.¹⁸ After Nigeria's independence, especially from the 1970s, the Nigeriens were again pushed to Katsina due to the Sahelian drought and famine that had devastated their social and economic lives. The migrants abandoned their villages in Niger and moved in large numbers to some of the major cities in Northern

⁸ M.M. Gwadabe, "Reformist Islam, the ... 46.

⁹ M.M. Gwadabe, "Reformist Islam, the ... 49.

¹⁰ Alhaji Sani Ango, 78 years, Retired Civil-Servant, interviewed at Katsina, on August 10, 2021.

¹¹ Magaji Jibril, 70 Years, Magajingarín Makada, traditional ruler, Interviewed at Jibiya, on February 15, 2022.

¹² Aude Mai Calendar, 68 years, Farmer, Interviewed at Jibiya, on August 10, 2021.

¹³ . Abdulkareem Ibrahim, 53 years, Cross-border trader, Makada, Jibiya, on January 4, 2022.

¹⁴ . Alhaji Sani Ango, 78 years, Retired Civil-Servant, Interview at Katsina, on August 10, 2021.

¹⁵ . Alhaji Sani Ango, aged 78 years, Retired Civil-Servant, Interview at Katsina, on August 10, 2021

¹⁶ KATNA, W44-Population Statistics; KSHCB/346, Katsina Emirate: Description, Historical Notes and Assessment Reports, 1946

¹⁷ KSHCB/346, Katsina Emirate: Description, Historical Notes and Assessment Reports, (1946), 9.

¹⁸ Shehu, J., "Some Reflections on ... 37.

Nigeria¹⁹ to find means of livelihood. A large number of Nigerien Tuaregs, both pastoralists and sedentary, moved out from Niger to another part of Katsina, Zamfara, and Sokoto to earn means of livelihood.²⁰ Also in the terrain were *Almajirai* between the ages of 4 and 15 who, due to the increasing difficulty of parents to feed their households, were attached to itinerant Ulama in the name of 'Islamic Scholarship'.²¹ The phenomenon of *almajirci* is more pronounced in urban centers as they constitute better opportunities for social and economic activities.²² Regrettably enough, the children who looked for food were commonly found in hotels, restaurants, and public places, as well as begging in peoples' houses.

Political Impact

Politically, Katsina, Maradi, and Zamfara areas have a shared history. This can be seen from the various sources or traditions in regard to the origin and development of Katsina, Maradi, and Zamfara.²³ Similarly, there has been a continuous pattern of relations for a very long time, which became very prominent at the beginning of the 19th century. Even though the Sokoto Jihad of 1804 dislodged the old Hausa rulers of Katsina and established their authority over much of the territory, forcing them to flee to Maradi and establish a new government, relations between these areas continued.²⁴ There have been a series of exchanges of visits between the authorities of Katsina and their counterparts from Zinder and Maradi. The constant visits no doubt improve bilateral relations among them. It has also been established that the two groups attend each other's turbaning or installation ceremonies. Whenever any Emirs are being turbaned on either side of the area, their counterparts make it a duty to attend.²⁵ Similarly, whenever Nigeria's Head of State visits Katsina virtually, the majority of the traditional rulers, government officials, and the common people on the side of the Niger Republic come across to offer support in welcoming him. The same case applies to the Niger Republic.

Economic Impact

There has been quite a number of trading activities between the Niger Republic and the people of Katsina and Zamfara; for instance, trade routes such as Katsina-Gazawa-Tasawa-Tegama, Katsina-Gazawa-Korogam-Zinder continued to flourish. Throughout the 19th century, the Abzinawa brought into Katsina city items like salt, livestock, leather receptacles of various kinds, and dates, amongst others. From Katsina city, the Abzinawa went back with commodities such as grains like millet and corn, locust beans, groundnuts, and clothes, among others.²⁶ Other people of Nigerien origin inhabiting Katsina city were the people of Agadez, who, according to Sani, populated Kofar Guga and SararinTsako wards in the 19th century.²⁷ According to him, SararinTsako was named after one of the Kings of Agadez, who was called Tsako.²⁸ During the same period, the King of Agadez also had a permanent consul in Katsina city called *Sarkin Turawa*, who oversaw the business activities of the

¹⁹ Apeldoorn G.J., *Perspective on Drought and Famine in Nigeria*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), 63.

²⁰ M. Kwaire, "A History of Tuareg Migration from Niger Republic to Sokoto Metropolis, 1900 -1985", (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto, 2012), 62.

²¹ Suleiman M.D., "Towards a New Social Order in Kano: A Re-examination of the Almajiri System," Being a Paper Presented at the Workshop on Social Policy, Faculty of Law, (Bayero University, Kano, 5-7 June, 1989), 10.

²² Sa'id, M.I., and Usman, M.T., "Persistence of Bara and Almajirci in Some Parts of Northern Nigeria in the 20th Century: A Re-examination of the Islamic Concept of Social Problem and its Solution," Being a Paper for Presentation on Islamic Sociology at the city Campus, (Usmanu Danfodiyo University, Sokoto from 21st - 24th March, 1994), 3.

²³ Hinjari, W.L., "The Impact of an International Boundary on the Social and Economic Relations of Border Communities: A Case Study of Kano/Katsina States of Nigeria and Niger Republic," Asiawaju," A. I. & Barkindo, B. M., *The Nigeria- Niger Trans-border Co-operation*, (Lagos: Malthouse Press Ltd, 1993). 161

²⁴ Emmanuel, Gregory, *The Alhazai of Maradi...*

²⁵ M.M. Inuwa, The Making of Colonial Boundary and Migration in Katsina-Maradi Border region, in Ashafa A.M. et-al, *Readings in Postcolonial Border and Economy in West Africa*, (Fyla-Mak, Kaduna, 2018.), 56.

²⁶ Sani, A.B., "The Mercantile Landscape of Northern Katsina Emirate 1865-1954," (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Bayero University Kano, 2004), 69.

²⁷ Sani, A.B., "The Mercantile Landscape of Northern Katsina Emirate

²⁸ Sani, A.B., "The Mercantile Landscape of Northern Katsina Emirate....68

Abzin people. The *Sarkin Turawa* connotes the leader of the Tuaregs in Katsina city, and he hosted not only merchants from Agadez but other parts of Niger. Merchants who came to Katsina city from Abzin were also lodged by the *Sarkin Turawa*, who at the same time found markets for their commodities, especially in different parts of the city. The *SarkinTurawa* also acted as a middleman whenever the Abzin merchants wanted to purchase any commodity in Katsina. Also, there is a huge Hausa community/population in Niger Republic as well as Fulani. The migration of indigenes to Niger did not cease with the colonial conquest in the 20th century. A colonial report put the total figure of Niger people in Katsina to 9,757 in 1945.²⁹ People like Alhaji Musa claimed to have been one of the earliest arrivals during the colonial era. He pioneered the establishment of the local Bakery Industry in the late 1940s at Galadunchi ward, followed by Alhaji Mamman at Sabon Layi in the northern part of the metropolis.³⁰

After Nigeria's independence, especially from the 1970s, the Nigeriens were again pushed to Katsina due to the Sahelian drought and famine that had devastated their social and economic lives. The migrants abandoned their villages in Niger and moved in large numbers to some of the major cities in Northern Nigeria, including Katsina, in order to find means of livelihood.³¹ As pointed out by Kwaire, a large number of Nigerien Tuaregs, both pastoralists and sedentary, moved out to earn a means of livelihood.³² According to the 1963 census, there were about 1,122 Niger Republic people in Katsina.³³ And by 1972, the number had risen to about 14,903.³⁴ However, after realizing that Katsina was equally affected by the drought, a large number of Nigeriens moved further south to such areas as Funtua, Malumfashi, and Kankara, where conditions were more favorable. Also in the terrain were *Almajirai* between the ages of 4 and 15 who, due to the increasing difficulty of parents to feed their households, were attached to itinerant Ulama in the name of Islamic Scholarship.³⁵ The phenomenon of *almajirci* is more pronounced in urban centers as they constitute better opportunities for social and economic activities.³⁶ Regrettably enough, the children who looked for food were commonly found in hotels, restaurants, and public places, as well as begging in peoples' houses.

Large-scale migration of Niger nationals became intensified in the Katsina metropolis after the creation of the State in 1987 due to growing economic opportunities. The hospitable attitude of the Katsina people enabled many Nigeriens to settle on a permanent basis, where they secured houses within the city and outside the metropolis. In fact, a ward within the metropolis was named after some of the earliest Niger Republic settlers in the area called Gobirawa, though Katsina people also reside in the area. Interestingly, Mallam Usman Dan Mada, a *Bagobiri*, was appointed as the ward Head of Gobirawa.³⁷ However, some of the Nigeriens come to the Katsina metropolis only on a seasonal basis to engage in various menial jobs and petty trading activities. During rain, they will go back home to participate in farming activities. Some prominent Nigerien businessmen in the Katsina metropolis include Alhaji BadaruYanshuni, Alhaji Abdulbaki Hamza, and Imamu Badaru, who own stalls at the Katsina Central Market selling provisions without any bias. Other Niger businessmen are Alhaji Ashiru Tankuri and Alhaji Sagir Umar.³⁸

However, apart from buying and selling in the central market and other parts of the Katsina metropolis, the Nigerien nationals have also been the most dominant water vendors. The development of this type of business was the result of the government's inability to provide adequate water to

²⁹ KSHCB/346, Katsina Emirate: Description, Historical Notes and...

³⁰ Alhaji Musa Maibiredi....

³¹ Apeldoorn, G.J., *Perspective on Drought and Famine in Nigeria*, (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), 63

³² Kwaire, M., "A History of Tuareg..."

³³ North-Central State of Nigeria Statistical Year Book, (1969: 16),

³⁴ North-Central State of Nigeria Statistical Year Book, (1972: 17).

³⁵ Suleiman, M.D., "Towards a New Social Order in Kano: A Re-examination of the Almajiri System," (Being a Paper Presented at the Workshop on Social Policy, Faculty of Law, Bayero University, Kano, 5-7 June, 1989), 10.

³⁶ Sa'id, M.I., and Usman, M.T., "Persistence of Bara and Almajirci...3.

³⁷ Alhaji Abdu Danmairakumi, aged 62 years, interviewed at Jibiya, on September 11, 2022

³⁸ Ahmed Tijjani, 46 Years, Businessman, Faru, Maradi, Niger Republic, 15/02/2022

households in the metropolis. The Niger nationals conduct this water-selling business with two-wheeler carts loaded with 25-litre jerry cans hawking in every nook and cranny of the metropolis. The selling of water by the Nigeriens has indeed been an important factor in the interaction with Katsinawa. Furthermore, Katsina benefits a lot from the livestock produced in Niger Republic, such as cattle, sheep, goats, horses, and camels, among others, that are almost daily driven to the neighboring border communities for consumption and resale to other parts of Nigeria. The livestock owners also come to Katsina territory with the livestock for grazing purposes because of the availability of grassland in the Niger Republic.

Similarly, economic activities have been important areas of linkages between the people of Katsina Emirate and those in Niger Republic. The natural resources of the two areas were virtually the same. For instance, the major crops grown in the two areas include cotton, millet, and groundnut, among others. As such, agriculture has been the dominant economic activity of the people of the two regions. Politically, relations between the indigenes of Niger Republic and Katsina can be traced back for a very long period of time. For instance, by the 16th century, the Hausa State of Katsina had extended its political control at Tassawa, Gazawa, and Kanem Bakashe up to Maradi, which are all today in the Niger Republic.

An important town that served as a connecting bridge to the Zamfara-Maradi-Jibiya axis is Kaura Namoda in Zamfara State. Kaura Namoda is located on the Gagare River (a tributary of the Rima). It is also located along the railway line, which led to a population increase and an improvement in economic activities. Consequently, new settlements emerged to accommodate the influx of people. One of such settlements was Sabon – Garin Kaura-Namoda in Zamfara, Yanbata, Kukar Kosai, Sabon Gida, Unguwar Sarkin Musulmi, Guiwa, Kurya, Nahuche, Karazau, Kucheri.³⁹ Kaura Namoda has become a major collecting point for peanuts (groundnuts) and cotton. Besides these export crops, local trade is primarily in millet, sorghum, cowpeas, rice, sugarcane, and tobacco.⁴⁰ Goats are the main source of meat and skin, but the local Hausa and Fulani also keep cattle, sheep, donkeys, horses, and camels. A government dispensary serves the town, and it is the headquarters of a local government council. Kaura Namoda is the north-western terminus of the trunk railway from Lagos and Port Harcourt, and it is located on the highway between Gusau and Jibiya (on the main highway between Katsina and Maradi in Niger). Individual traders and investors along Kaura-Namoda benefited from the scheme as hundreds of the inhabitants and new settlers got employed through various trading activities while others got direct jobs as permanent and non-permanent staff of the Nigerian railway and European firms like London and Kano, Ambrosini, Cavaris, Tangalis and Olivants, BCGA, John Holt, Peterson Zochonis, African Company, British American Company.⁴¹

The emergence of the railway in Kaura-Namoda had, therefore, helped in making transportation of agricultural raw materials and even passengers very easier. The railway was efficiently used to transport thousands of people, goods, heavy duties, machinery, petroleum, petroleum products, solid minerals, livestock, food, agricultural produce, coal, and steel to different parts of the country. It was generally assessed that no type of transportation offers these cheap services with added value on net gains compared to the railways in Nigeria.⁴² There were four categories of trains plying the Kaura - Namoda - Zaria Route, including the Kaura-Namoda to Lagos Express with first class and second class coaches with wagons for goods.⁴³ It operated on Tuesdays: Arrival evening and takes off at 6:00 am; the Kaura-Namoda train to Ibadan arrives on Thursdays and Saturdays by 6:00 pm and takes off

³⁹ Adamu L.D. "Kaura-Namoda Railway: Before and after the Train Transportation, *Daily Trust* 4/12/2011.

⁴⁰ The Information was gathered from various oral sources mainly from the business community residing along the boundary. The fieldwork was conducted between 12th January and 15th February, 2022. Key Informants include; Alhaji Abdurahman (Babangida), aged 38 years, interviewed at Dan-Isah, On Januaey 03, 2022; Alhaji Hamisu, aged 55 years, Former Local Government Chairman, Jibiya LGA, interviewed at Magama, January 02, 2022; Alhaji Tasiu Waliyyi Jibiya, Businessman, aged 60 years, interviewed at Jibiya, on January 2, 2022.

⁴¹ NAK/SOK/PROF, Assessment Reports on Gusau District, 1930.

⁴² Nigerian Railway Corporation, (1999) *NRC Annual Reports, 1991*, P.6.

⁴³ NAK/SOK/PROF: (1930), Assessment Reports on Gusau District; NAK/SJF-65-C15: (1932) - Trade and Industries.

at 5-6 am on the next day; the Ibadan to Kaura - Namoda train on Thursdays. It arrives in the evening and departs in the morning of the following day. This train conveyed a significant quantity of essential commodities, such as vegetables, palm oil, foodstuff, and other building materials.⁴⁴ The fourth and last category was the train for both Goods and passengers (Unlimited), which operated daily from Zaria to Kaura-Namoda. It arrives in the night and takes off in the morning.

The strategic importance of the Kaura-Namoda Railway Terminus is not restricted to the development of Nigeria's/Niger inter-group relations alone. It has also led to an increase in inter-community relations in many ways. Similarly, the Kaura-Namoda terminus attracted investors and business-class people from the neighboring Republic of Niger who contributed enormously to the economic development of cross-border trade among the neighboring communities.⁴⁵ Farms produced, especially cash crops which were the most preferred by the British Royal Niger Company, were supplied in a very large quantity from the Niger Republic through the Kaura-Namoda Railway Terminus. The major supplies came from *Tassawa, Gezawa, Agge, Chediya, Maradi, TungarBanji, Yan Kuregau, Dan Hayi, Dan Issa, Bangi, Tunfafi, Burwa*, and *Shanxi* in the southern parts of the Niger Republic.⁴⁶ Agricultural products such as beans, groundnuts, cotton, and spices were conveyed on camels and donkeys using some available cattle routes that linked Nigeria and Niger through Kaura-Namoda in Zamfara State.⁴⁷ Similar goods were also supplied from *Waginianand Batsari* in Katsina.⁴⁸ This development has helped to strengthen the economic relations among the border communities of the two countries as hundreds of traders discovered the terminus to be very lucrative not only for economic but social interaction as it was evident that even after the collapse of the railway in Nigeria, majority of these traders visited Kaura-Namoda from time to time for commercial activities while some even permanently reside at Sabon-GarinKaura.⁴⁹

Trans-border trade has always been influenced by the socio-cultural affinities between Hausa traders and officials of Niger and Nigeria, especially those of Maradi, Katsina, and Kano constitute a major determinant in cross-border trade between the two countries. These affinities lead traders of one country to stop at the border and transmit their merchandise to their counterparts in the other country. The latter will then take responsibility for transporting the merchandise to its final destination and carry out the necessary negotiations with national administration agencies. Without this "border relay," road harassment would indeed reduce the transaction volume. Socio-cultural links also help to explain the successful circumvention of regulations limiting cereal exports on both sides of the border. Despite this socio-cultural advantage, there's increasing language complication for traders as one moves deeper beyond the K2M, and gradually, the language barrier reigns over socio-cultural affinities. In fact, outside the Hausa lands in both Nigeria and Niger, this language barrier becomes difficult to overcome, which explains why only a few traders decide to cross the borders for major trade. Apart from petty trade, the majority of transactions bring together two groups of actors linked by economic and/or cultural, social, family, religious relations, etc. That is why one can talk of a trade that takes the form of a "relay race" in which one group of traders takes the goods to the border while another group takes the goods from there to wholesale or consumption markets. Each group indeed specializes in negotiating with officials of their country. This also explains why border markets and "discharging points" flourish along all ECOWAS borders.

The socio-economic reality of border communities along the Zamfara, Katsina, and Maradi areas can be said to be characterized by complementarity. As a result of this, there is a prevalence of petty trading activities carried out by local traders who transported grains, livestock, and consumer goods

⁴⁴ Nigerian Railway Corporation...7.

⁴⁵ NAK/SOK/PROF/vol. III (1946)-Commercial layouts.

⁴⁶ Nigerian Railway Corporation...7.

⁴⁷ A. Sani and M. Bello, 'The Impact of the Collapse of Kaura-Namoda Railway Terminus on Nigeria-Niger Economic Relations' in A.M. Ashafa, et-al, *Readings in Postcolonial Borders and Economy in West Africa*, (Pyla-Mak, Kaduna, 2018), 474

⁴⁸ A. Sani and M. Bello, 'The Impact of the Collapse of Kaura-Namoda Railway...475.

⁴⁹ A. Sani and M. Bello, 'The Impact of the Collapse of Kaura-Namoda Railway...476.

for resale at neighboring markets across the international boundary.⁵⁰ In Jibia and Dan Issa, for instance, people engage in various economic activities without regard to the official border control. This is because, while the official perception of informal cross-border trade amounts to smuggling and attempts to sabotage the economy of the communities living in the borderlands, it is very legitimate. The Doune/Customs officers typically worked with one or two local village assistants (boys) *Yaran Custom*. Usually, the boys would lie in wait to capture hapless 'smugglers' for surrender to the customs officials.⁵¹ The economic activities carried out along the border are organized through the participation of traditional institutions such as craftsmen traders, middlemen, traditional institutions, and others. The participants in the trade often organized themselves into occupational guilds, rings, and sometimes pools.

Trade and exchange relations, however, have to be settled through the medium of currency exchange, which is managed by the currency changers, the *yanchanji*. The major category of '*Yancanji*' offers two main forms of services and has agents residing on both sides of the border. They are the first instant service offered to anyone in need of foreign currencies. They sold the amount of currency to an individual in need and charged a small commission.⁵² The second service is offered to those who expressed a preference for collecting the currency in another country. He can collect the amount of currency indicated in the note from the agent of the seller. These agents are very popular and have specific permanent bases where they can be easily traced. The agents have also organized themselves under an association that not only regulates their activities but also mediates with the authorities where needs arise.⁵³ The minor category of '*Yancanji*' offers only the first kind of service. They enable a customer to change his money before leaving for the other side of the border. Even though they did not have agents in other states, they are very ubiquitous, always at the beck and call of anyone who needs their services. The second way of dealing with the problem of differences in currency is by selling and buying commodities on all sides of the borders.⁵⁴

Border communities usually use two methods to get their goods across the border: formal and informal. The formal is recognized and officially accepted, known as *Ka'ida*, and the informal is known as *Tarkake*. The *Kaidastyle* is based on informal agreement and mutual understanding between traders and state officials, and there are two categories. The first category involves agreements between the senior officers who head organizations such as Douannes, Gendarmeries, and Police in Niger and Customs, Immigration, State Security, and Police in Nigeria, on the one hand, and traders or intermediaries on the other hand. In this mode, an agreed-upon amount of money would be given to each organization. On their part, officers cut a few corners to get the paperwork done with dispatch and cooperate with the traders in different ways. For example, in Nigeria, the traders are alerted and advised on the next step whenever the Federal Patrol team is on duty. Immediately, the team departs, and it is no longer risky to proceed with their trip; the traders are informed.⁵⁵

The second category of the *Ka'ida approach* is based on an agreement between traders and field officers of the junior cadre. The significant difference between the first and second categories is the rank of officers, cost, and risk involved. The first category is more expensive but less risky, while the second is relatively cheap but risky.⁵⁶ Moreover, the second category entailed nocturnal journeys and avoiding significant routes. To be sure, the junior officers demand less money than the senior officers. Still, the danger is that it must be renegotiated when the senior officers discover the deal. Whatever

⁵⁰ S. Wampuk, 'Cross-Border Interactions Between...67.

⁵¹ S. Wampuk, 'Cross-Border Interactions Between... 71.

⁵² Ashafa, A.M., 'Nigeria-Niger Borders Relation...95.

⁵³ Alhaji Hamisu, 55 years, Former Local Government Chairman, Jibiya LGA, interviewed at Magama, January 02, 2022.

⁵⁴ See for instance, Sama'ila, A. "Cross-border Trade and Parallel Currency Exchange Markets Across Nigeria-Benin Border Areas" in Y. Abubakar and T. Wuam, (eds), *Nigeria's Apex Bank: The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and its Major Role in the Nigerian Economy Since 1958*, Bahiti & Dalila, Lagos, ISBN: 978-978-8546-57-3, 2021, P. 296.

⁵⁵ Arzika...

⁵⁶ Vanguard Newspaper, October 18, 2016.

amount of money the junior officers received from the traders does not count, and the agreement is invalid.⁵⁷ The second informal mode is the *Tarkake* method, which requires no prior agreement with the security officers. In this mode, cross-border trade rules and regulations are deliberately violated, evaded, or ignored. It requires knowledge of trade routes, the ability to evade security personnel or their informants, the ability to conduct successful impromptu negotiations with them, and money to strike a deal with them in the event of failure to evade them. This mode is the riskiest of all modes. This is partly because if negotiation with the customs officers, for example, failed, the goods would be confiscated as contraband and the owner arrested. Under such a circumstance, the trader has few options. The first option is resigning himself to the prospect of being jailed, which is not an option.⁵⁸ The second is bribing the officers to 'buy his freedom.' The third is to hire the services of people who acted as intermediaries between customs officers and traders, which means readiness for any astronomical sums to get his goods and freedom. And the fourth is to devise a foolproof way of sneaking away without being seen.

Informal Cross Border Trade (ICBT)

This is another important area where the indigenes of Zamfara, Katsina, and Maradi participate and relate with one another. Informal cross-border trade is an undocumented trade between one country and another that shares a common border, usually described by people as smuggling. In other words, it refers to imports and exports of legitimately produced goods and services, which directly or indirectly escape from the regulatory framework for taxation and other producers set by the government and often go unrecorded or incorrectly recorded into official national statistics of the trading countries.⁵⁹ Goods smuggled into Niger Republic through the Jibia border included corn, millet, maize, groundnut, leather works, and cotton, among others. In return, goods such as scents, spirits, and cigarettes like Benson and Rothmans were smuggled into Katsina also via the Jibia border. However, due to the increase in population and the demand for food, the smuggling exercise took a new dimension. New goods such as rice, spaghetti noodles, and vegetable oil were mainly smuggled into different parts of Nigerian border towns. Vehicles of the Peugeot brand loaded in tones of the aforementioned goods from Maradi were smuggled into villages around Katsina almost every day at night till daybreak via numerous bush trails and main roads after 'clearing' with Law Enforcement Agencies. Other important goods involved in the smuggling activity are textile materials.⁶⁰ Every Monday and Thursday, hundreds of trucks loaded with the materials are transported from Maradi to Dan Issa and Jibiya through to Katsina and Kana. It is worth noting that trade plays a vital role in job creation and reducing social vices among teaming youths as it promotes peaceful coexistence among border communities.

Reliable information is indeed central to the success of any organization or group. The role played by informants in ICBT across the borderlands in the study area and other borderland areas is so decisive that without informants, the success of ICBT activities across the Nigerian borders will indeed be insignificant or even be thwarted. The entire ICBT activity network depends on reliable and updated information to avoid losses. Therefore, they need information about the whereabouts of security agents operating at the borderlands and the dynamics of their operations. To achieve this, traders secretly recruit informants among border communities to keep close watch over security agents stationed in strategic areas like the border posts, roadblocks, or illegal routes where security agents, particularly customs, are stationed. Different sets of people operate as informants, which include local community members in several villages along smuggling routes, such as Hirji, Dan Issa, and Kukar Babangida, among others. ICBT traders or victims of customs seizure and security agents who serve as moles and thereby pass unto the ICBT agents decisions taken by the security circle for or against them.⁶¹

In this respect, while some of these informants are on their ICBT agents' payroll, others are

⁵⁷Sama'ila, A. "Cross-border Trade and....298.

⁵⁸Sumaila, A. "Cross-border Trade and...

⁵⁹ Abubakar Liman, *Informal Cross-border Trade and National Security in Nigeria: A Study of North-Western Borderlands of Sokoto and Kebbi States*, (*PhD Political Science*, November 2021),135.

⁶⁰ Abubakar Liman, *Informal Cross-border Trade and National Security*....144

⁶¹ Abubakar Liman, *Informal Cross-border Trade and National Security*...145

freelancers who are paid based on the information they provide.⁶² Hence, Informants among the Katsina and Maradi axis border communities provide information that counters security strategies adopted to curb ICBT in the area.⁶³ Therefore, they are central to the survival of the trading network; they are also detrimental to security operations along the border areas. Therefore, through these informants, ICBT agents often succeeded in bypassing security agents. Generally, citizens of border communities in the area consider ICBT activities as a right. This is further compounded by the fact that most business elites are known to have acquired their riches through ICBT activities. The low level of education, poor infrastructure, inadequate social amenities, and low literacy level among the population of these communities further make it very difficult for border security agencies to educate them about the threats posed by ICBT on Nigerian national security.

Another reason why ICBT is very strong among the border communities of Katsina and Maradi is that political connections are at the highest level within the context of Nigeria-Niger relations. This ensured the continuation of activities that were integrated within broad and deeply internationalized border games that involve border communities. For instance, by the late 2000s, one of the richest businessmen, Alhaji Dahiru Mangal, controlled from his base in Katsina a fleet of no fewer than 600 trucks and a network of warehouses and agents that stretched across the world. His business consisted of ensuring safe passage to counterfeit textiles, clothing, fabrics, and yarn manufactured in China and smuggled into Nigeria through Cotonou harbor.⁶⁴ Because of the well-established political connection that encompassed the presidency in Abuja, Mangal's activities were free to expand despite their illicit nature and destructive impact on Nigeria's textile industry. Despite the change of government accompanied by policy reforms in 2015, not much has changed.⁶⁵

Smuggling in these Nigerian border markets is intricately connected with corruption, as the border communities condone it. With the collusion of customs and immigration officials and the border communities, contrabands were smuggled into Jibia daily. From *Maradi*, *Dan Issa*, *Hirji*, and other surrounding border villages, trucks loaded with goods would have to wait pending clearance from the customs posts, which usually come at midnight. It appears that there is an intricate relationship between the traders, border officials of the three countries, and even border communities that seem to participate actively in circumventing goods across borders.⁶⁶ However, the relationship fluctuates from time to time depending on the prevailing circumstances, especially when anti-smuggling measures are intensified. In many cases, smugglers reacted, sometimes with certain elements of violence, whenever new anti-smuggling measures were introduced. For instance, in 2005, hoodlums sacked the Magama-Jibia-Maradi border outpost of the NCS and almost destroyed offices and the NCS' local barracks.⁶⁷

Related to smuggling is the widespread corruption among security officials. The information gathered during the course of interaction with respondents among traders and security personnel reveals that some of the traders serve as fronts and conduct trade on behalf of some of the security officials. It is pertinent to note that posting personnel to the border posts among the security or law enforcement agencies is regarded as 'lucrative,' and only those 'favored' get posted to the border areas. Corruption in the border areas, therefore, is rampant, and some of them were even referred to as *Aljannaryansimugal* (paradise of smugglers).⁶⁸ In fact, the name Jibia (one of the prominent border markets) became synonymous with smuggling, and customs officials even lobbied to be posted to "Kuwait" as Jibia is known amongst officers, signifying the almost sure material benefit derived from

⁶² In respect to this see, A. Kassim, 'The Evolution and Development of Jibia as Border Town to 1980, *Unpublished M.A.* Bayero University Kano. 1992, 22.

⁶³ Group Interview: Alhaji Nafiu Sani Dadinkowa, 44 Years, Cross-border Trader, JibiaBorder Market, (Magama-Jibia border market); Alhaji Kabir Bashi, 45 Years, Cross-border Trader; Alhaji Isyaku Ahmad (Hero), 42 Years, Cross-border Trader, JibiaBorder Market, January 14, 2022.

⁶⁴ Iloani, E.A. Nigeria has not flouted ECOWAS pact over border closure. 2019, December 3 _Daily Trust_. Retrieved from <https://www.dailytrust.com.ng>, 23.

⁶⁵ Iloani, E.A. Nigeria has not flouted... 34.

⁶⁶ Alhaji Tasiu Waliyyi Jibiya, Businessman, aged 60 years, interviewed at Jibiya, on January 2, 2022.

⁶⁷ Samaila, A., The Growth of Border Markets in North-West Nigeria: A study of Jibia Market in Katsina, 1974-2005, *Journal of Historical Studies*, (Department of History, BUK, 2015)

⁶⁸ Samaila, A., The Growth of Border Markets in North-West Nigeria...

such posting.⁶⁹ Smuggling across the borders of the country became seriously intensified and even institutionalized with much larger volumes, which state officials are complementing through corruption.

The border communities adapt dozens of warehouses and storage facilities for different kinds of goods. The goods are usually kept in these places pending the confirmation of their safe exit to the city centers. Although Nigerian customs and other security agents know these places, it's usually very unsafe for them to conduct their operations inside these communities as the traders have community support. Border communities also organize informal arrangements through connivance with smugglers along 'satellite border villages' proximate to the informal corridors adjacent to the Nigeria-Niger borders. The border villages surrounding Zamfara, Katsina, and Maradi areas tend to complement the activities of large trading networks in ICBT.⁷⁰ Other strategies used by the border communities include: 'Diversion from the official routes taking ever-changing illegal routes; Deception 'forge agreement' (*Libge*); Use of magical or extraordinary practices connected with the illicit trade; Trade on and trade in (*Takara* and *Jagwal*); Use of 'Satellite border villages' along the boundary; use of ferrying specialist (*yanfito*/ ferrymen) etc.⁷¹

Conclusion

In conclusion, the inter-communal relations among the communities of Katsina, Zamfara, and Maradi in the Nigeria-Niger borderlands have had a significant impact on the social, political, and economic aspects of the area. These interactions have led to the development of various activities, including cultural festivals, collaborative communal work, and trade networks. The strong social network of relations has not only strengthened traditional political institutions but has also contributed to the economic development of the border areas through enhanced trade networks. Overall, the interconnectedness of these communities has played a crucial role in shaping the dynamics of the region.

⁶⁹Iloani, E.A. Nigeria has not flouted ECOWAS pact over border closure...28.

⁷⁰Iloani, E.A. Nigeria has not flouted ECOWAS pact over border closure...

⁷¹ Samaila, A. The Growth of Border Markets in North-West Nigeria...