Trade and Traders. The Making of the Cattle Market in Benin
Quarles van Ufford, P.E.J.

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: http://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.
The present chapter pursues the historical line embarked upon in Chapter 3. It deals with the period between the 1970s and the 1990s. Its specific focus is on the developments and changes in the trade setting and in the market structure which occurred over this period. It will be demonstrated that the structure of the cattle trade was altered profoundly by two developments: a sharp growth in the number of cattle traders and the emergence of a new formal cattle markets (4.3). Both these mutually reinforcing processes were to a considerable extent triggered by changes in the pastoral and agricultural setting of trade that is summarised at the outset of this chapter. The setting of trade appears to have been modified by a boom in cotton production by farmers (4.1) and through the increasing importance of the market economy for pastoralists (4.2). In the final section of this chapter (4.4), we will show that even though the state did indirectly provide an impetus to these changes, the impact of its direct interventions in the cattle trade has been negligible.

In terms of the conceptual framework, the present chapter is primarily concerned with the impact of the trade setting on two basic elements of the market structure, i.e. the number and type of traders, and the system of formal and informal markets. It reveals that changes in these elements are to be attributed to a dynamic process which combines elements at both the structural as well as the actor levels of analysis.

4.1 The cotton boom in the Borgou region

The present section highlights some essential agricultural developments that have occurred over the past 25 years. It focuses specifically on those factors that bear relevance to the trade in cattle. The emphasis is put on the expanding cotton production on the one hand, and the rapid increase in the use of animal traction on the other. Although grown all over the northern and central parts of Benin, the area most intensively under cotton cultivation is that designated geographically as southern Borgou (cf. Map 1.2). The use of animal traction reveals a similar pattern, although northern Borgou has its share too.
The expansion of cotton cultivation

The first efforts to introduce and promote the cultivation of cotton were made by the French colonial authorities. In various colonial accounts, reference is made to the suitability of agro-ecological conditions for cotton production in the Borgou region. Although initially on a small scale, attempts were rewarded with the establishment of two French companies in the north of Benin, the CFDT (Compagnie Française du Développement des Textiles) and the CIDR (Compagnie Internationale pour le Développement Rural) in the 1950s. However, it was only in the 1980s that cotton production really intensified. According to Briintrup (1995), this development was encouraged by the availability of sufficient potential cropland and guaranteed outlets for agricultural produce at a purchase price fixed before the start of the agricultural season. Agricultural inputs such as fertiliser and pesticides were organised by the state marketing board for cotton and delivered on credit. In fact, all agricultural services, including those for cotton production and marketing, had been nationalised in 1972. By the end of the 1970s, state involvement further promoted the production of cotton through the introduction of several rural development projects financed by international donors.

The on-farm delivery of inputs on credit and the guarantee of sales at fixed prices created a financially secure environment. This contributed to the high rate of farmer participation in cotton production. As a result, production increased more than ten-fold over the national level: from 30,381 tons in 1982/1983 to 347,729 tons in 1996/1997 (Ton 1998). In the Borgou region, the expansion is illustrated by the increase in the area under cotton cultivation from 35,000 hectares in 1987 to some 170,000 hectares in 1996 (ibid.). With an average yield of 1 ton/hectare and a purchase price of 200 CFA francs/kilo in 1996, this corresponds to approximately 34 billion CFA francs flowing into the regional economy. In fact, the impact of cotton revenues on the regional economy has been significant and has unquestionably further stimulated regional economic growth, including the trade in cattle. We can therefore speak of a 'Borgou boom'.

A closer look at the development of cash crop production in northern Benin reveals regional differences. In northern Borgou which is made up of the Karimama and Malanville districts, insufficient and highly variable rainfall is the main factor which makes the region unsuitable for large-scale cotton production. The production of groundnuts together with irrigated horticultural production of onions, tomatoes and rice are the main commercial agricultural activities. Still, many of the agricultural holdings exclusively produce food crops, mainly sorghum. Southern Borgou in general (including the north-eastern parts of Atacora province) and the districts of Banikoara and Kandi in particular form the areas in which cotton production was expanded most. Finally, in the southern parts of both Borgou and Atacora provinces, yams are grown as an additional cash crop.

One of the links between these developments and the cattle market results from the fact that farmers have always invested a significant part of their revenue in cattle herds. Various studies discovered that farmers in northern Benin invest an average of around 20 per cent of their annual revenues in the acquisition of cattle (Ton 1994; De Haan 1997a).

---

1 This is substantiated by the results of a 1992 survey which reveals that 50 per cent of the households sampled around Karimama did not grow any cash crop (De Haan & Douma 1997, 95).

2 With respect to southern Borgou, Briintrup (1995, 4) found that of the area under cultivation, cotton occupied 33 per cent, maize and sorghum (the major food crops) around 31 per cent and yams 11 per cent.
This phenomenon has gradually changed the patterns of cattle ownership. For instance, it was estimated that in 1994 around two-thirds of all cattle in the Banikoara district were owned by farmers (Ton 1994). In fact, several farmers have become true agro-pastoralists in the sense that they have not only built up their own cattle herd but also started to herd the animals themselves. The integration of agriculture and pastoralism has been facilitated by developments in animal traction. This brings us to the second link between cotton production and cattle trade, which concerns the transactions in draught power animals, the number of which consistently followed the pace of increasing cotton production.

The rapid growth in the use of animal traction

Although the practice of using animal traction in Benin's agriculture can be traced back to the colonial era, it was only from the beginning of the 1980s onwards that the use of draught power increased significantly. Apart from a small number of local initiatives around 1935, animal traction was introduced by the end of the 1950s and early 1960s, in what were the first organised attempts by the French CFDT and CIDR enterprises. The major objective of these companies was to enhance cotton production through the modernisation and intensification of agriculture. At this stage, Borgou province benefited most in terms of numbers of animals put into use for traction purposes. Agro-ecological conditions were well suited to cotton production and the Borgou cattle breed was not only present in sufficient numbers but allegedly possessed qualities required for animal traction as well. During the 1970s, rural development projects and government institutions such as the extension service CARDER (Centre d’Action Régionale pour le Développement Rural) and the marketing board SODERA (Société pour le Développement des Ressources Animales) continued to put efforts into the expansion of animal traction with the ultimate objective of increasing agricultural output. On a credit basis, the government extension service provided farmers with agricultural inputs such as fertilisers and pesticides as well as draught animals together with the necessary equipment. To a certain extent, technical assistance and training facilities were provided too. After the collection and sale of cotton, the credits would be subtracted from farmers' revenues.

The rapid increase in the rate of adoption during the 1980s was closely related to the development of cash crop production in general and the production of cotton in particular. The leading role of state-sponsored organisations in the agricultural input, marketing and notably credit services encouraged favourable conditions for the adoption of animal traction. Moreover, the guaranteed outlet of agricultural produce against fixed prices contributed to the security of the investment from the point of view of farmers. In all, some 25,000 pairs of animals (of which 20,000 were in Borgou province) were registered in 1988. The growth of the draught power sector has continued in the 1990s. In 1993, the number of pairs serving in Borgou agriculture was estimated at 37,000 (Bruntrup 1995). Altogether, approximately 75 per cent of all agricultural holdings in northern Benin use animal traction at present. A survey carried out by De Haan (1997a) demonstrates that this percentage is highest in the Banikoara and Kandi districts, at around 90 per cent, and

\[\text{Ploughs used to be, and to some extent still are manufactured by the government-sponsored COBEMAG (Coopérative Béninoise de Matériel Agricole). Since 1980, the Centre de la Promotion de la Culture Attelée (CPCA), funded first by a Dutch development project and later by the FAO, has provided traction equipment and training on a relatively small scale for farmers owning draught animals.}\]
somewhat lower (64 per cent) in the region around Karimama. Here, cotton production is significantly less important but animal traction is still used, especially for transport purposes but also for cultivating groundnut fields. Further south, in Zou province, the adoption rate of animal traction is substantially lower and it is in an initial stage only.

Here, the average size of agricultural holdings and the unsuitability of the lagoon breed cattle are the principal limiting factors. The main ethnic groups who benefited from the cotton boom and draught power use have been Bariba and Gando farmers. The Gando farmers have been performing particularly well with respect to the integration of agriculture (cash as well as food crops) and cattle herding. A study by De Haan (1997a) has revealed that among traditional farming groups, the Gando owned the largest cattle herds. The Gando ethnic group is geographically concentrated in the regions around Kandi and Nikki/Kalalé.

In the 1990s, the role of government institutions became less pronounced with the advent of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and the retrenchment of the state from the agricultural input sector. Agricultural input markets were progressively liberalised. With respect to the draught animal sector, the retrenchment of CARDER led to the transfer of some of its credit functions to the Caisse Locale de Crédit Agricole Mutuelle (CLCAM). From then on, CLCAM (receiving international financial assistance) provided credit to farmers for the purchase of animals and traction equipment. Nowadays, the system involving the use of CLCAM-provided credit services is prevalent in Mono, Zou and to a lesser extent Atacora provinces. In Borgou province, however, the situation has evolved in a different direction. Here, the farmers gradually took over the role of CARDER during the 1980s. They had acquired sufficient capital in the form of cattle or simply in the form of their annual revenues from cotton sales to purchase draught animals without relying on formal or informal sources of credit.4 They had also gained sufficient knowledge of cattle keeping and animal traction and no longer needed to rely upon extension services. According to a government report, this was illustrated by the practices of fattening animals, the premature purchase of young bulls for training, and the shortening of an animal’s working career (République Populaire du Bénin 1989). As a result of this, the farmers began to finance the purchase of draught animals by themselves. Nowadays, the majority of farmers in the Borgou region take care of the purchasing, training and selling of their draught animals. Two additional factors contributed to the appropriation of the draught animal sector by farmers. First of all, the emergence of new cattle markets at which transactions could be observed and carried out (cf. Section 4.3) and second, the financial attractiveness of investing in draught animals. Except for the hazards related to animal mortality and disease, the purchase of draught animals generally entails few risks and the value of a maturing animal typically appreciates rather than depreciates over its period of use. Farmers purchase and utilise the animals in pairs over several agricultural seasons. Draught animals are typically kept 'on farm' and benefit from supplementary feeding in the form of crop residues or harvested grasses. Thus, the increase in their value can be attributed to the weight gain of the animal between the time of purchase and sale. The majority of these cattle are ultimately marketed as meat animals, and sold mainly to the slaughterhouses in coastal towns. The value appreciation is mentioned by farmers themselves as an important advantage for using animal traction (Brüntrup 1995). However,
the profitability of investing in draught animals is equally related to the expected increase in agricultural output and the extension of the area cultivated.

Nowadays, the cattle market and the market for draught animals in particular is of great significance to farmers who account for remarkable percentages of total supply and demand. This will be shown in Section 5.1. The preceding paragraphs have shown that the farmers of the Borgou region have increasingly come to appropriate the market in draught animals, a process which still has to occur in the market for agricultural inputs (pesticides and fertiliser) where supply is from outside the area, investments less secure, and supply and demand considerably less well co-ordinated (Dedehouanou & Quarles van Ufford 1998).

4.2 Fulani pastoralists and the market economy

The previous chapter briefly described Fulani society under colonial rule. Specific attention was paid to relations between pastoralists and the colonial authorities. The colonial policy of ‘emancipating’ the various ethnic groups of northern Benin confirmed the agro-pastoral orientation of the Fulani (Bierschenk 1997). The ‘claims’ of the Bariba elite on Fulani cattle became officially unjustifiable and the Fulani themselves could no longer officially rely upon Gando slave labour in agriculture. It was further concluded that, in contrast to other ethnic groups, the number of cattle traders among the local Fulani of northern Benin would remain extremely limited until the 1960s.

During the decades following independence, some additional transformations took place within Fulani society in northern Benin. The present section points out these changes which have been relevant to developments in the cattle trade. In doing so, the first part will elaborate on three interrelated on-going developments: economic diversification, a growing involvement in the monetary economy, and a change of lifestyle. The second part of the present section emphasises the impact of an external factor, namely the continuous immigration of pastoralists from neighbouring countries, notably during the 1970s and 1980s. It will be argued in Section 4.3 that these processes have altered the attitudes of Fulani pastoralists towards both the sale of and trade in cattle.

On diversification, monetarisation and modernisation

For the majority of agro-pastoral Fulani in northern Benin, pastoralism has always been their main occupation as well as their main vocation. In spite of the significance of subsistence agriculture, their economy used to be centred around milk production. The milk was partially consumed and partially exchanged for food grains from neighbouring farmers in order to complete their deficient subsistence production. Occasional supplementary expenses were satisfied through the sale of cattle. Even though milk production and subsistence agriculture continue to represent crucial components of the Fulani mode of production, economic diversification has developed over the past decades. This diversification is best reflected in the changes that occurred in both the pastoral and agricultural domains of Fulani livelihoods.

The first meaningful development is the intensification of resource conflicts between Fulani pastoralists and neighbouring Bariba or Dendi farmers (Van Driel 1996). These conflicts gradually grew in number as well as in importance over the past two
decades. For a long time, relations between farmers and pastoralists were characterised by mutual dependence and reciprocity. In addition to the exchange of food grains for milk, Fulani cattle would graze on the farmer's fields and deposit manure at the same time. During the agricultural season, the pastoralists would take their herds off cultivated areas. These herds included the cattle belonging to farmers which had been entrusted to them (De Haan et al. 1990). However, such relations have increasingly come under pressure. Demographic growth and the sheer expansion of the area under (cotton) cultivation have constrained transhumance movements and the grazing opportunities of Fulani pastoralists. At the same time, the growth of cattle herds has increased the requirement for pastures and watering points among pastoralists, particularly during dry years. Recurrent conflicts over land use and crop damage reflect this situation and have resulted in pressure to sedentarise, to intensify cattle keeping or to push grazing frontiers into national parks. In addition, many Bariba farmers have started to raise and herd their animals themselves instead of entrusting them to Fulani herdsmen. As a consequence, the Fulani seem to be losing their monopoly on cattle holding (De Haan 1997a, 13). The changing circumstances have forced the Fulani to secure an ever increasing part of their livelihoods in the monetary economy and away from traditional, subsistence-oriented pastoral activities. The involvement in income-earning activities such as the commercialisation of milk and milk products (by women) and the commercialisation of agricultural produce (by men) have become more and more important. Apart from the push into this diversification, the attraction of new economic opportunities and other lifestyles should not be underestimated in explaining the observed changes. The local Fulani have taken advantage of the new economic (cotton-induced) opportunities in the Borgou region which have occurred over the two last decades. This is reflected in the second meaningful change which has taken place regarding agricultural practices of the Fulani. Agriculture is important to the Fulani. Traditionally they cultivated food crops such as millet and sorghum for subsistence consumption but an increasing number of Fulani, particularly in the areas around Kandi and Banikoara, are starting to cultivate cotton and maize. Both crops are marketed. Cultivating cash crops constitutes an important change because agricultural production had always primarily consisted of auto-consumed food crops such as millet and sorghum. Moreover, the cultivation of cotton also made the Fulani start using pesticides and adopt the practice of

---

5 In northern Benin, two transhumance movements occur during the year. In the dry season, the herd is taken to specific areas where watering points and pasture are still available (the big transhumance). A second movement occurs during the rainy season when the herd is taken away from the fields to avoid damage to crops (the small transhumance).

6 Today, the commercial activities of Fulani women are no longer restricted to the sale of (part of the) household milk. Apart from cheese making and the purchase of milk to make cheeses, some pioneering Fulani women are to be found in the cheese trade as well (IJsendijk 1999). Throughout Benin and particularly in Cotonou, demand for cheese is expanding at a rapid pace.

7 This is illustrated by De Haan (1997a, 91) who found in a 1992 survey in the Borgou region that around one third of the pastoralists depended on agriculture for more than 50 per cent of their revenues.

8 A recent survey among Fulani households around Banikoara showed that more than half of these households cultivated cotton in areas varying between 0.25 and 2 hectares (Dedehouanou & Djedjebi 1997, 7).
animal traction.\footnote{This is a relatively recent phenomenon. At the end of the 1980s, the Fulani involved in cotton production did generally not use animal traction and attempted to minimise monetary investment (Bierschenk 1997, 193-194).} The necessary equipment as well as the draught animals are hired from neighbouring farmers, since the herd composition continues to reflect the prevailing mode of cattle keeping which is centred around milk production (De Haan 1997a, 74). However, a growing number of households now possesses their own equipment and draught animals. The use of draught power constitutes a significant break with Fulani tradition: in the past the use of draught power of cattle was 'not done' and could even lead to exclusion from the community. It will be shown in Section 8.3 that the penetration of draught power use in Fulani livelihoods has partly contributed to the involvement of Fulani cattle traders in the market segment specialising in draught power animal transactions.

The rate of cotton cultivation among the Fulani is characterised by considerable regional variation. According to De Haan (1997a, 75-76), almost no Fulani cultivate cotton in the northern Borgou area. Similar low rates of cotton-producing Fulani were identified around Kérou and Péhonco, in Atacora province (Bierschenk 1997, 193). In contrast, high rates of around half of the pastoralist households surveyed were found around Banikoara, Kandi and Kalalé, all in the southern Borgou region. Here, the farmers first started to cultivate cotton and to use animal traction with the Fulani pastoralists following their example at a later stage. Apart from regional variations, it has been noted that young Fulani men tend to participate in cotton production at a proportionally higher rate (Bierschenk & Forster 1991). In addition to their stronger labour input, this is explained by the fact that the revenues of cotton production facilitate the satisfaction of newly emerging personal needs. In the first place, however, cotton revenues have allowed the acquisition of new cattle for many Fulani and some pastoralists have even succeeded in rebuilding a new cattle herd from zero. This has made commercial agriculture, in addition to contract cattle herding and trading, a further way for Fulani pastoralists to reconstitute their cattle herds after their decline during consecutive drought periods and recurrent disease epidemics.

One of the major developments that accompanied these has been the increased integration of Fulani pastoralists in the market economy. For a long time, the degree of monetarisation of the Fulani economy was restricted to the occasional sale of cattle in order to meet specific expenses such as tax payments in the colonial era or health treatments, ceremonies and the purchase of food grain. Although the general expenditure level remains low compared to the other ethnic groups of northern Benin, the range of recurrent purchases and expenses has gradually broadened. For instance, Bierschenk & Forster (1991) argue that more money is now invested in cattle herding in general and veterinary treatment in particular. They associate this development with the advent and objectives of several pastoral development projects in the early 1980s. The advent of commercial agriculture has equally contributed to new types of expenditure. Although the cultivation of cash crops was initially performed with low monetary investment and labour input, which generally characterise traditional Fulani farming practices, the use of external inputs has progressively increased, specifically in areas where cotton cultivation is combined with the use of animal traction. The modified farming practices have necessitated inevitable expenses such as the purchase of pesticides, the hiring of ploughs and draught animals, and the employment of external labour power. In addition to expenditure on cattle herding and farming, in recent years more money has been spent on the improvement and modernisation of individual and collective standards of living (Bierschenk & Forster 1991).

When a Fulani district chief stated that '.. aujourd'hui nous vivons le temps de l'argent ..'
nowadays, we live in an era of money) he did not exclusively refer to the multiplication of monetary transactions. In a broader perspective, his statement was equally meant to enlighten changes in the 'way of living' which are reflected in various day-to-day situations. He mentioned the increased use of 'modern' consumer items such as motorbikes, radios and watches, the use of corrugated iron for roofs, the digging of wells, the change in eating habits and the disappearance of particular traditions such as the displacement of a cattle camp following the death of a relative. Other informants noted an increase in confidence with respect to 'urban matters' such as contacts with authorities, education or the use of rural banking services. Although this is certainly not true for the majority of Fulani, it still reflects the type of change that is taking place.

Expenses related to the continuing integration in the market economy are generally financed by the revenues generated through cotton production, trade or, in the case of Fulani women, the commercialisation of milk and milk products. Only to a small degree does it seem to have led to an increase in herd off-take (cf. Bierschenk & Forster 1991). The marketing of cattle largely continues to follow the lines of traditional 'target expenditures' such as the purchase of food grains, expenses for ceremonies and health expenses on the one hand and 'target sales' of diseased or old animals on the other. In general, 'new' expenses have been met through 'new' types of revenues other than an increased marketing rate of cattle. The only exception here seems to apply to young Fulani men among whom these changes have been particularly pronounced. In order to finance new personal needs represented by consumer items such as radios, watches and clothes, the young Fulani relies upon the marketing of cattle to a somewhat greater extent (ibid.). However, in addition to the sale of cattle, their cash requirements have been financed to a significant extent by revenues from cotton production.

Besides the young Fulani, the changes have been more pronounced among the Fulani of the southern Borgou region which is the prime cotton-producing area. Moreover, the importance of agriculture and the concomitant changing lifestyle for the increasingly sedentary local Fulani are not reflected in the group of immigrant Fulani who tend to maintain a livelihood based more on pastoralism.

Waves of immigrating pastoralists

Among the most crucial changes which have had an impact on patterns of cattle trade in Benin are the consecutive waves of immigration of pastoralists from neighbouring
countries since the 1970s. Although reliable figures are not available, the immigration of Fulani pastoralists from Niger is presumably the most significant in terms of absolute numbers. As a result of two major drought periods which occurred in the Sahel between 1973-1974 and between 1984-1985, the frontiers of livestock production zones were pushed southwards. The north of Benin was one of the areas which experienced substantial immigration of Fulani pastoralists from Niger, some with cattle and others without. The region of northern Benin was well known to them since they used to cross this area each year during the dry-season transhumance. The first wave of immigrant pastoralists established themselves in the northern Borgou region and in the 'W' national park. The 1984-1985 drought pushed them further south to the regions around Founougo, Kéréou and Tchamba (Togo), to Tchaourou and its surroundings and some even went as far south as Abomey. Apart from the definitive establishment of pastoralists from Niger, a pattern of cyclical, often seasonal, migration has emerged composed of predominantly young, male Fulani who have left their families and herds in Niger and come to Benin in search of income-earning activities. During the agricultural labour season they temporarily return to Niger in order to assist in cultivating their family land. Some have ultimately returned over the years, while others have stayed in Benin on a more permanent basis. The immigrant pastoralists engage in various income-earning activities. To them, the Borgou region offers attractive opportunities, closely related to the 'cotton-boom' described above. Some have found employment as contract herders for the cattle of local farmers. This provides an opportunity to rebuild their own cattle herds, since the rewards commonly consist of young calves (for example, every 3rd or 4th calf born into the farmer's herd). Interestingly, a similar trajectory has been followed by many Fulani who migrated into the Borgou region in the 19th century (cf. Section 3.4). Some immigrants have also attempted to earn an income in the cattle trade which enables them to gradually rebuild their own herds.

A second wave of immigration concerns Fulani pastoralists of Nigerian origin. Among these pastoralists, a long tradition exists of taking their cattle on transhumance in Benin, notably in the Zou and southern Atacora provinces, or taking them through Benin for transhumance in Togo or Ghana. However, since the 1980s some of these Nigerian pastoralists have set up permanent cattle camps in Benin. This establishment geographically concerns the still scantily inhabited areas south of Parakou, particularly within the Tchaourou-Outéssé-Savé triangle, demarcated by the Ouémé and Okpara rivers. The group of Nigerian immigrant pastoralists is composed of two subgroups: those originally from northern Nigeria (the area around Sokoto, Kano and Katsina) and those originally from the area around Ilorin (some 200 kilometres west of Parakou). In contrast to the sedentary agro-pastoral Fulani of Benin and similar to some of the pastoral migrants from Niger, the pastoralists from Nigeria still practise a largely extensive, non-sedentary way of cattle herding, based to a large extent on milk production and consumption (Onibon 1990).

A final immigration flow consists of pastoralists from Burkina Faso and is less significant in absolute numbers. The pattern is roughly the same as described for the young, male labour migrants from Niger. Similarly, the pastoralists from Burkina Faso have sought employment in agricultural labour, notably in the Banikoara region, and to a lesser extent in the cattle trade, notably in Atacora province in the Kolokondé market.

---

12 Out-migration from Niger towards 'poles of commercial agriculture' in the Sahel and towards the West African coast was substantial during the 1980s. Grégoire (1994, 140) referred to the pool of labour 'left behind' in those regions of Niger where future prospects were particularly gloomy. For those who made up this labour surplus, migration constituted the only way out.
4.3 More traders, more markets

The present section will show that as a result of developments in the agricultural and pastoral setting of trade, the historical structure of the cattle market has been modified in two ways: the number of traders has increased and new markets have emerged.

Increasing numbers of Bariba and Fulani cattle traders

In the previous chapter, we saw that the participation of Bariba traders in the cattle trade in Benin could be traced back to the 1940s. This involvement leaned heavily on a relatively small number of pioneering traders. However, the expansion of animal traction use would profoundly change this situation since attractive opportunities emerged with regard to the trade in cattle. First of all, the number of animals marketed for draught power purposes has grown considerably since the 1980s, with an increasing number of transactions taking place at formal cattle markets. Second, the role of Bariba farmers in the marketing of draught animals has undergone important modifications. They have progressively accumulated experience and knowledge about cattle herding, draught animals and marketing strategies. This gain in consciousness, experience and confidence, in turn, has resulted in more pronounced participation in the cattle market. Among other things, this observation is highlighted by modified marketing strategies. Whereas most farmers used to rely upon the intermediate services of a trader for the purchase of a pair of draught animals, they increasingly tend to take care of it themselves. The same goes for the sale of draught animals. This appeared even easier when new cattle markets became available (cf. below). More pronounced participation was further reflected in a growing number of occasional cattle traders, of whom some would eventually become full-time professional traders. Occasional traders are typically active on a seasonal basis only, rotating their revenues from cotton production through investment in the cattle market. Directly after the harvest and following the first payment of cotton revenues they purchase those draught animals farmers want to dispose of. Parallel to this, they search for lucrative purchases of potential draught animals which other farmers may want to buy when they start preparations for the next growing season. In addition to the Bariba from the southern Borgou region, this group of occasional traders includes Gando and Dendi farmers. In absolute numbers, though, the Bariba traders outweigh those of other ethnic groups. This not only reflects the numerical importance of the Bariba in northern Benin, but also the fact that they live predominantly in the southern Borgou region which, as we saw, has benefited most from booming cotton production.\(^\text{13}\)

\(^{13}\) Nowadays, the number of full-time professional Dendi cattle traders has decreased in comparison with their Bariba counterparts. Most Dendi traders combine occasional trading with farming or have diverted their commercial attention to other sectors such as the retail trade. The disappearance of large Dendi cattle traders is attributed to the fierce competition from Fulani traders in northern Borgou. As one of them claimed, '... les Dendi ne supportent plus la souffrance du commerce de bétail ...' (the Dendi can no longer accept the hardships related to cattle trading).
Among the Fulani, the number of cattle traders increased markedly during the period between the 1970s and the 1990s. The rise in numbers included local as well as foreign Fulani. In the previous chapter, it was explained why the local Fulani of northern Benin were only rarely involved in the cattle trade up until the 1960s. However, from the 1970s onwards, the integration in the market economy, the search for alternative income opportunities and the general change in preferred lifestyle have contributed to a different attitude towards the cattle market and to an increased participation in trade itself. The different attitude towards trade is reflected in a gradual change of market behaviour among the growing number of local Fulani pastoralists. This phenomenon does not refer to an increase in herd off-take but to the manner in which cattle is commercialised. The first and foremost development in this respect has been the increase in cattle sales at formal markets. Whereas a pastoralist would traditionally call upon a trader to come to his village in order to conclude the transaction, the situation has changed today in favour of transactions at cattle markets (cf. Section 8.1). This observation is substantiated by the following remark made by Manigui & Medenou (1989, 68) who stated that the interest of the new generation of young Fulani for the commercialisation of cattle '... se manifeste par une présence physique plus prononcée sur les marchés à bétail..' (is reflected in a more pronounced physical presence at the cattle markets). The formal cattle markets are also increasingly being used by Fulani for the purchase of heifers and breeding bulls. In addition to the continuing integration of the Fulani pastoralists in the market economy, this development can be ascribed to the substantial growth in the number of physical cattle markets over the last decade. Both elements have contributed to an increased confidence in and knowledge of cattle markets among pastoralists, provoking in turn a shift of sales in favour of formal markets.

The increased participation in trade has already been attributed to the changes that took place in the livelihoods of Fulani pastoralists over the last three decades. For some, the involvement in cattle trade was facilitated by the experiences accumulated in their roles as cattle drivers or as 'observers' of trade practices at market places. These experiences could explain why the Fulani of the northern Borgou region were apparently somewhat less reluctant to become involved in the cattle trade at an earlier stage, i.e. during the 1960s and early 1970s. The cattle trade in the northern Borgou developed at an early stage and some of the local Fulani were hired as cattle drovers by foreign traders. This provided them not only with a small amount of capital but also with the necessary experience. In the southern Borgou area, on the contrary, the cattle trade would only develop significantly from the late 1970s and early 1980s onwards and until that period trade was be dominated by small numbers of Bariba and Gando traders (ibid.). An additional factor which stimulated the participation in cattle trade of local Fulani throughout northern Benin has been the rise in the number of Fulani traders from Niger. Several of these immigrant Fulani had to search for income-generating activities to overcome the effects of two major drought periods which decimated the herds of their families. For those young migrant Fulani it was attractive to attempt their luck in cattle trading, all the more because they were far from

---

Some informants have suggested that the strong position of the Fulani chief in Kandi (the Rouga) explains the limited involvement of local Fulani in the southern Borgou region. The Rouga allegedly restricted and sanctioned Fulani participation in the cattle trade in an attempt to control commercialisation. His strong position extended to the butchers. When, at independence, the Rouga chose the side of Ahomadégbé Tometi as presidential candidate, he more or less forced the Kandi butchers to follow him, threatening that if they refused they would no longer be able to purchase cattle. However, after the 1972 'revolution', the power of the Rouga was considerably reduced (Van Driel, personal communication).
'home' and not hampered by cultural restrictions on trading in general and cattle trading in particular. They rapidly took advantage of new opportunities provided by the expansion of the local and regional cattle trade in the north of Benin, symbolised and activated by the emergence of new cattle markets and the specific demands of farmers and pastoralists (cf. Section 5.1). Several of the local Fulani followed in their wake.

**Entry and exit of cattle traders**

The tendency towards increasing numbers of Bariba and Fulani cattle traders has been accompanied by another phenomenon in the same period. This phenomenon relates to the 'exit' from the cattle trade of groups of foreign cattle traders, such as the Haoussa and Yoruba from Cotonou and Porto-Novo who had been at the foundation of the cattle trade in Benin and largely dominated the sector up until the 1960s. Their departure from trade was basically due to the increased competition from Bariba and Fulani traders who were established in the north, i.e. near the cattle supply. Accordingly, when the old Haoussa and Yoruba cattle traders retired they were simply not 'followed up'. Today, the few Haoussa traders who operate in northern Benin live just across the border in Nigeria. The Yoruba have mainly focused on the trade and retailing of merchandise imported from Nigeria. Some Yoruba are still active as butchers but have ceased to travel northwards to purchase cattle. In addition to the Haoussa and Yoruba, the foreign cattle traders included Djerma from Niger and Fulani from Mali (the Djawando), Niger and Burkina Faso (cf. Section 3.4). These traders operated in the northern Borgou region but also at markets in Burkina Faso and Niger. When they retired from active trading in the 1970s and 1980s, some started a career as landlords at the markets of Cotonou, Bohicon or Lomé. Unlike the Djawando traders, the Djerma and Fulani have been 'followed' up. Although outweighed in absolute numbers by local traders, we saw that a substantial group of foreign Fulani traders and a small group of Djerma traders nowadays operate in northern Benin. However, in contrast to their predecessors they specifically focus on northern Benin and no longer cover markets in Niger and Burkina Faso as well. This illustrates the importance of northern Benin and the Borgou region in particular as a cattle supply zone where trade is engaged in by traders established in the region. As an extension to Table 3.2 presented in the previous chapter, Table 4.1 summarises the entry and exit of cattle traders with different ethnic backgrounds between the 1970s and the 1990s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Entry</th>
<th>Main reason</th>
<th>Exit</th>
<th>Main reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970s - 1990s</td>
<td>'foreign traders'</td>
<td>1. (local Fulani) change in pastoral society: fewer restrictions</td>
<td>'foreign traders'</td>
<td>1. local traders in better position to take advantage of opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fulani</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'local traders'</td>
<td>2. new opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Fulani</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Bariba</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. comparative advantages</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. (foreign Fulani from Niger) pushed by drought and attracted by economic opportunities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We have now completed the picture of developments in the number and ethnic background of cattle traders in Benin since the start of the century (cf. Section 3.4 for the period up to the 1960s). Broadly speaking, a tendency was discerned with traders initially being few in number and of predominantly foreign origin but this has evolved gradually to include large numbers of primarily local traders. This trend is represented in Graph 4.1 which reveals the relative size of foreign and local groups according to different periods. It proved difficult to capture the developments in absolute numbers.

Graph 4.1  Relative importance of foreign and local trading groups (1930-1990)

![Graph 4.1](image)

The emergence of new cattle markets

In addition to the increase in the number of local cattle traders, the changes in the agricultural and pastoral setting of trade contributed to the emergence of a substantial number of new cattle markets from the 1980s onwards, a factor which would crucially alter the nature of the cattle trade. In order to put this development into perspective, the present section will elaborate on the historical processes which have led to the creation of formal cattle markets in the period before 1980 as well as in the period thereafter (cf. Section 1.4 for a definition of formal and informal markets). In addition to this, we will deal with different modes of market organisation as well as with the factors that explain the rise of some and the decline of others. All formal cattle markets in northern Benin, with the concomitant dates of creation, are shown on Map 4.1.

Cattle markets before 1980

Until the 1960s, cattle market density in northern Benin was low. The previous chapter how the cattle traders organised their purchases by going around the camps and villages of pastoralists. In fact, during the first half of the century, the only specialised cattle market in northern Benin was Kolokondé, created around 1935 by a group of immigrant traders from Mali and Mauritania (cf. Section 3.4). In addition to Kolokondé, there were two other markets, Matchatom and Chabi-Kouma, in Atacora province both of which were created before 1960 (cf. Map 4.1). These markets always received only small numbers of cattle and were primarily known as markets for sheep and goats.
With the development of the cattle trade in the so-called northern Borgou region, a second cattle market came into existence by the end of the 1950s. At that time, cattle traders from Cotonou and Porto-Novo regularly came to places such as Malanville to organise the purchase of cattle. Their accommodation would be provided for by the Fulani chief to whom they entrusted their capital. The Fulani chief subsequently sent out his 'assistants' to purchase the required number of cattle in the Fulani villages of the Niger valley. The growth of trade as well as the multiplication of small traders supplying cattle to the visiting traders from the south gradually led to the emergence of a cattle market in Malanville.

Map 4.1 The emergence of cattle markets in northern Benin

During the 1960s, the Malanville cattle market prospered although more and more traders attempted to overcome the interference of the small traders, purchasing their cattle directly at source. In the light of this reorientation, a second cattle market was opened in Karimama by the mid-1960s. The initiative was taken by two local Fulani traders who thought that a cattle market would benefit the activities of local traders. It soon attracted traders from all over the country (Haoussa and Yoruba from Cotonou, Bariba from Kandi and local Dendi and Fulani traders) and saw a remarkable growth in trade. In the years following the creation of the Karimama cattle market, the Malanville market lost some of its importance because a growing number of visiting traders from other regions went to Karimama instead for their purchases. Around 1970, a group of traders established a cattle market at Guéné.
Over the years, the district of Guéné had become a major pastoral area and a cattle market was more logically situated here than in Malanville. A period of further decline for the Malanville market followed and nowadays it receives few cattle.

**Cattle markets after 1980**

The emergence of cattle markets in the so-called southern Borgou region was closely related to developments in agriculture. In the Banikoara district, the development of cotton production and an increase in the use of draught power animals stimulated the marketing of cattle from around 1980 onwards. Anticipating the changing situation, the region's veterinary officer decided to establish four new cattle markets in 1984: Goumori, Founougo, Banikoara town and Sompérékou. The markets at Goumori and Founougo grew rapidly in size, essentially because of the concentration of cattle herds around these villages. The surrounding farmers soon came to play a significant role at these markets as buyers and as sellers. Furthermore, the markets attracted growing numbers of traders and pastoralists as well. With two expanding markets, the remaining two were never able to attract adequate business and although they continue to exist officially, they receive virtually no animals today. At the beginning of the 1990s, a further multiplication of markets occurred (cf. Map 4.1). The background of their creation can be traced to a variety of factors. In the first place, the catalysing effect of the reputation of the Goumori and Founougo cattle markets played a crucial role. Their expansion and positive effects on all actors involved (traders, pastoralists and farmers) soon became well known in other parts of the southern Borgou region. Here, similar developments in agriculture (animal traction, cotton production) and pastoralism (in-migration and the concentration of herds) were taking place. Among the successful attempts to start a cattle market were the initiatives of several 'leading' Fulani pastoralists. In this respect, the cattle market at Gogounou (1990) was the first in a series of new markets created by Fulani leaders. Tchaourou and Pari would follow in the years hereafter. In Tchaourou, a collaborative arrangement between local Fulani cattle traders and the immigrant Fulani pastoralists from Nigeria resulted in the establishment of a cattle market. Today, the Tchaourou market is one of the fastest growing cattle markets in Benin reflecting the increasing importance of the north-eastern part of Zou province as a pastoral area.\(^{15}\) The Pari cattle market was established in 1994. Its location on the Parakou-Kandi axis made it a convenient purchasing point for traders from Parakou, Gogounou and Kandi. Moreover, a successful ‘campaign’ by local Fulani leaders resulted in a high participation rate of local pastoralists and local farmers. A third factor which stimulated the creation of new cattle markets was the increasing importance of specific transhumance zones in the light of generally intensified pressures on grazing areas. These markets appear to have sharp seasonal fluctuations in activity. Hence, the market of Alibori (1996) is situated in an important influx area for transhumant cattle (the Alibori river valley) and is also conveniently located along the Banikoara-Kandi road. This market is particularly well supplied during the dry season. Ten years ago, another seasonal cattle market had been established in the middle of the Pendjari national park. The initiative was taken by the butchers of Toura, a village nearby Banikoara. Animals were supplied by transhumant pastoralists from Burkina Faso. However, because of its sensitive location the

\(^{15}\) To a similar extent, the influx of pastoralists from northern Benin as well as from Niger and Nigeria in the region around Abomey and Bohicon, has resulted in the growth of the Bohicon market since the late 1980s. Although activities were initially geared to local slaughter and supply to the Cotonou market, the orientation has today shifted towards the market of Lomé (cf. Section 8.2).
market was soon prohibited by the local forestry department. In other parts of northern Benin, similar small seasonal markets near transhumance spots are created and relocated according to the modification of transhumance itineraries. A final group of markets has resulted from initiatives taken by development projects. These include the markets at Kérou (1996), Biro and Dérassi (1980s).

The mode of organisation of cattle markets

Cattle markets created before 1980

The cattle markets that existed before 1980 are characterised by a mode of organisation resembling that of most other cattle markets throughout West Africa. It can be captured by a description of the role of its most prominent character, i.e. the 'middleman'. At West African cattle markets the most common designation is the Haoussa term dillali which is not surprising given the historically dominant position of the Haoussa in long-distance trade and the spread of their diaspora over the region (cf. section 2.1). Several definitions have been proposed to capture the function of a dillali (cf. Hill 1966; Adamu 1978; Bellot 1983; Agier 1983). In general, he fulfils a brokerage function between buyer and seller with respect to transactions which take place at the market. The function entails a position as 'third party', witnessing the transaction between buyer and seller who are unknown to each other. The middleman does not make a profit on the transaction but is rewarded by a fixed monetary commission which is paid by the buyer and seller, in equal shares. In Benin, the commission is called lada, a term which is derived from the Arab/Haoussa term kudin la'ada. Traditionally, the function of a middleman has included the following responsibilities:

- knowing the origin of an animal offered for sale
- being responsible if the animal appears to have been stolen
- being responsible when an animal runs away from the market
- finding clients for sellers
- assessing the financial position of these clients

The middleman has a close relationship with the selling party in a transaction, based on the shared membership of an ethnic group or shared region of origin. The main reason for the existence of the relationship has traditionally been the seller's unfamiliarity with the cattle market. The middleman, on the contrary, is well acquainted with the market and is therefore in an appropriate position to find buyers for his client. At the same time, he seeks to guarantee the buyer that the animal provided has not been stolen and is not diseased. At coastal markets where cattle are sold to butchers, similar relationships exist between middlemen and visiting traders. Here, the middleman's task of finding clients and guaranteeing their solvency is extremely important because most butchers purchase on credit and payment default is widespread. At coastal markets, it is the butchers who exclusively pay this commission to the landlord-middleman. The commission partly serves

---

16 In literature, a middleman is occasionally referred to as broker (cf. Section 2.2) or intermediary (derived from the French term intermédiaire). Here, we will use the term middleman or dillali, used by local actors. The Haoussa term dillali is probably taken from the English term 'dealer'. In an article on the cattle trade in Somalia, Little noticed that the term dilaal indicated a similar function (Little 1992).
as a pledge for reimbursement and as a substitute for an interest rate which is not levied on the debt in accordance with Islamic norms. The role of middlemen in debt collection was illustrated by Cohen (1965) who described the practices of Ibadan-based middlemen in 1964 and observed that '..if the buyer should default, [the middleman] would pay the full amount to the dealer himself..' (1965, 10). However, it will be argued in Chapter 5 that the practices of present-day middlemen, both at coastal as well as at northern markets, are different and that the lada is predominantly used to cover his expenses.

Access to the profession of middleman has always been limited. The specific nature of the task requires an impeccable reputation and extensive market experience, confident relationships with both the buyer and seller as well as an awareness of numerous livestock producers and their animals. The profession used to be transferred from father to son, following the completion of a long apprenticeship by the latter. Nowadays, the sector appears somewhat more accessible to outsiders. The circulation of substantial amounts of cash at today's cattle markets is attracting a large number of potential middlemen. While it is usually the livestock producers of a particular region who propose a new middleman to be appointed by the market chief, some middlemen were found who had succeeded in 'purchasing' a position at the market. The attraction of a position as middleman has resulted in considerable competition for clients and an accordingly small number of animals being dealt with by each of them. The difficulty of making ends meet from the few commissions received has led some middlemen to engage in the purchase and sale of cattle as well.

Cattle markets created after 1980

A crucial feature of the cattle markets that were created after 1980 is a different mode of organisation compared with the 'traditional' markets. The most prominent feature of the latter appeared to be the role of the middleman (dillali). The most prominent feature of the former is his absence. Instead, these markets have a much more formal organisational structure represented by a comité de gestion (management committee) which is commonly composed of representatives of all professional groups operating at the market: traders, pastoralists and farmers. In general, the committee appoints several secretaries who are in charge of collecting a commission when a buyer and a seller have concluded a transaction. The commission goes directly to the market committee which pays a salary to its secretaries and decides upon the allocation of the remaining funds. The formal way of market functioning is often accentuated by the practice of registering all transactions and the delivery of receipts. In short, the traditional dillali institution is replaced by a more formal structure which generally performs a similar function, such as assuring buyers of the reliability of suppliers. In the next chapter, it will be argued that this institutional change has had important consequences for the transparency inherent in the process of price formation and price negotiation (cf. Section 5.2). It should be emphasised, however, that the mode of market organisation which pertains to these recently created markets is an exceptional phenomenon. The majority of cattle markets in West Africa (interior as well as coastal markets) continue to function with the presence of dillali which is not surprising given the middleman's historically rooted position.

17 Each middleman occupies a part of the terrain which makes up the cattle market. This is called his bureau (office) and here he ties up the animals and receives his clients.

18 Today, some middlemen even employ so-called gardiers, assistants who attempt to encounter potential clients on the roads and paths which lead to the market.
The rise and decline of markets

Only a few markets have experienced a pattern of regular and stable growth. In fact, a variety of factors have determined their eventual success or failure and they typically follow an erratic pattern of rise and decline before they eventually mature.¹⁹

As with the rise and decline of the Malanville market, other markets have also known periods of prosperity and contraction. Some markets have even been relocated on several occasions. The market at Guéné, for instance, was promptly switched to the village of Kantro (some 5 kilometres away) following a conflict between a Dendi farmer and a Fulani pastoralist at the end of the 1970s. A strong sense of solidarity among Fulani pastoralists led them to refuse to supply any more animals to the Guéné market. In 1992, an identical conflict provoked a similar reaction among the Fulani pastoralists and resulted in a further relocation of the market, back to Guéné again. Similarly, the market at Karimama was moved to the Fulani village of Mamassy-Peulh in 1984 as a result of a conflict over the management of funds generated by the market.²⁰ Again, it was the strong group of Fulani pastoralists who opposed the allegedly high share of market revenues flowing back into the (Dendi) village of Karimama which made the relocation effective.

With respect to the growth of the more recently created cattle markets, it has been noticed that they were initially confronted with a variety of difficulties. According to the traders, market officials and producers, an important condition for the success of a new market is the involvement of all actors in the maturing process. In fact, examples of markets which were created on the sole initiative of traders (Kandi, Sikki) or butchers (N’dali) have demonstrated that the Fulani pastoralists remained suspicious at first. When Fulani representatives were included in the market committee from the start, markets were able to expand more rapidly.

The cattle markets which were initiated by development projects have not all proven successful. A Parakou-based pastoral development project originally established three cattle markets in its project zone: Ouroumonsi, Délassi and Biro (all situated in the south-eastern Borgou region). Despite efforts which included an extensive publicity campaign, the participation of local pastoralists remained low. Nowadays, the Ouroumonsi market has ceased functioning whereas the other two receive only small numbers of cattle. Several factors have been put forward to explain the reluctance of pastoralists to attend these markets (République du Bénin 1991). In addition to location-specific factors such as the proximity of attractive Nigerian markets, the inaccessibility of the proposed market sites and the relatively low degree of animal traction use, two other causes were considered.

First, most Fulani pastoralists thought that the development project would start buying their cattle at attractive prices, which appeared not to be the case (ibid). Second, the strength of traditional relations between local pastoralists and local traders revolves around transactions taking place in the villages of pastoralists. In fact, the existence of these deeply rooted relations can explain the initial reluctance of both traders and pastoralists to

---

¹⁹ It should be mentioned that the creation of a cattle market requires little investment apart from the availability of an open space and wooden poles for tying up the animals. When markets expand, the market committee typically decides to allocate revenues to the construction of a fence, a well or a guest house for visiting traders.

²⁰ Henceforth, the market at Mamassy-Peulh will still be referred to as the market at Karimama, following the lead of the majority of market actors.

²¹ Several traders have always sold cattle, fraudulently exported from Benin, at Nigerian markets. Given this practice, they were reluctant to show up at an ‘official’ market associated with the authorities.
participate in on-market transactions. This has been the case for most markets in the southern Borgou area. The persistence or not of traditional exchange relations between traders and pastoralists will be dealt with in detail in Chapter 8. Reluctance of cattle traders to participate at the market was equally observed in Kérou (1996) where a Natitingou-based development project had taken the initiative to create a cattle market. The policy of the project initially appeared to be the establishment of minimum cattle prices, a policy that obviously refrained traders from collaborating.

A final problem the recently created cattle markets have been confronted with, is the potential source of revenue which a market constitutes. When a new market is growing rapidly, the increase in the number of animals sold usually corresponds to an increase in the revenues of the market committee. Not only at newly emerging markets but also at matured markets this recurrently provokes conflicts over the management of funds, the spending of revenues and the attempts of local authorities (municipality, forestry department, gendarmerie etc.) to cream off part of the revenues through the establishment of official or unofficial 'taxes'.

4.4 State interventions in the cattle trade

As in other West African countries, attempts by the authorities in Benin to intervene in the cattle trade have been limited and unsuccessful. It appeared from Section 4.1 that the state actively supported the production of cotton for which it carried out the delivery of inputs and the marketing of produce. Thus, it indirectly contributed to the expansion of demand for draught animals and hence to the development of the cattle trade from the 1980s onwards. However, the impact of direct interventions in the marketing of cattle can be considered negligible. Apart from establishing the legal framework of trade and regulating measures such as export taxes, trade licences and market taxes (cf. Section 5.5), direct intervention has been pursued through the establishment of state livestock farms and a state marketing board.

In the colonial era two state farms were created: the Okpara farm (near Parakou) in 1952 and the Kpinnou farm (near Lokossa) in 1955. In line with the nationalisation of most sectors of the economy in 1972, additional state farms (or ranches) were established in Béthèkougou and Samiondji (both near Dassa). The initial objective of these farms was twofold: first, the modernisation of cattle breeding, predominantly through breed selection and the supply of reproductive animals to the cattle herds of Fulani pastoralists, and second, the supply of animal proteins (meat) to urban consumers in Cotonou and Porto-Novo. During the 1980s, the development of animal traction was mentioned as an additional objective, apart from the promotion of cattle breeding and the 'regularisation' of the 'cattle and meat market' (République du Bénin 1987). The objectives reveal a striking resemblance to the aims of the colonial policy towards cattle trading (cf. Section 3.2).

According to a recent evaluation report (République du Bénin 1994a), the state farms together owned about 5,400 cattle in 1992 (corresponding to about 0.5 per cent of the national herd) of which they marketed some 870 animals in that year. The same document also reports their disastrous financial situation. It finally suggests that the state farms cease their marketing activities and focus their efforts on research activities in order to become 'partners in development' in the livestock sector. Although the state farms continue to operate in marketing (albeit to a negligible extent), the official policy line as represented in
the Lettre de Déclaration de Politique du Développement (31st May 1991) prescribes the retrenchment of the state from marketing. Nowadays, the farms are managed by the Direction des Fermes d'Etat of the Ministry of Rural Development.

With respect to the marketing of cattle and meat, a state marketing board for animal products was established in 1976: the Société pour le Développement des Ressources Animales (SODERA). The main objective of this institution was to achieve self-sufficiency in national meat production, a policy which was obviously inspired by the then popular strategy of import substitution which suited the Marxist-Leninist government. SODERA therefore officially monopolised all live cattle and frozen beef imports (Bellot 1983). Its activities mainly focused on the purchase of animals (among cattle owners and later also at cattle markets) which were subsequently supplied to state farms. With the state farms as point of departure, the animals were supplied to the markets at Cotonou and Porto-Novo. The extent of this supply, however, was always limited. At the end of the 1970s, SODERA started to import meat from countries such as Argentina, apparently because the cattle supply in Cotonou was considered insufficient. Furthermore, the organisation was in charge of establishing official retail prices for meat. Both the constraints on cattle exports as well as the policy of price control were far from effective. Traders continued to export cattle to Nigeria as well as to Cotonou. Moreover, most butchers were selling their meat at prices which exceeded the officially established rate. Attempts to bring the breeding and marketing of cattle under state control were reflected in the negative stance towards the allegedly 'traditional' trade system. 'Traditional' was usually associated with inefficient. For instance, a 1984 document reported that '.. the traditional system of cattle marketing, considerably hampered by local customs (dowries and festivals), still suffers from the excessive number of middlemen supplying the big urban centres ..' (FAO 1984). As such, the alleged 'traditional' nature of the trade system was used as an excuse for state control which would help to 'formalise' trade. Various other reports revealed a similar attitude, although little of the functioning of the cattle trade seemed to be known.

In 1982, the SODERA marketing board was officially banned and state farms fell under the responsibility of the Ministry of Rural Development. SODERA was replaced by the Office Béninois d'Exploitation des Produits de l'Elevage et de la Pêche (OBEPEP) which has never functioned very successfully although it is still 'operational'. Today, most of its activities are concentrated in the fishery sector. In addition, OBEPEP sells cattle at the Cotonou market to discourage speculation by butchers. A limited number of animals (not exceeding 1 per cent of the total number of animals annually supplied to Cotonou) are released by the four state farms and fattened at the Kpinnou farm before they reach Cotonou.

22 Whereas the role of SODERA as a purchase and sales institution was meant to decrease the number of links (i.e. middlemen) in the marketing chain, it often only added a link in reality. Cattle traders have stated that when the opportunity existed, they would prefer to sell to a SODERA agent instead of bringing the animals to Cotonou themselves, since the latter used to pay attractive prices.
4.5 Concluding remarks

The present chapter has shown how developments in the pastoral and agricultural setting of trade have led to a change in the size and composition of the community of cattle traders and resulted in the emergence of new formal cattle markets as well. In a way, the substance of this transformation was extended and accentuated a pattern which was initiated in the 1940s. This pattern was visualised and summarised in Graph 4.1 which showed the absolute increase in the number of cattle traders on the one hand, and the relative increase in the number of local cattle traders on the other.

Just as the interaction between actors and structure was invoked to explain the transformation of trade up until the 1960s, the mutually reinforcing processes of agricultural and pastoral change, the emergence of new cattle markets and the enhanced participation of some and the new involvement of other ethnic groups in trade explain its transformation between the 1970s and the 1990s. Central to the findings presented in this chapter are the opportunities provided by an expanding cotton sector and the emergence of new cattle markets. These events provided an enabling context for new participants to enter the market. A crucial factor in what could be labelled a general reduction of entry barriers constituted the facilitating function of new formal markets in providing potential market participants with the opportunity to expand their knowledge of market functioning. Among the Bariba, the appropriation of market knowledge plus experiences with animal traction, cattle keeping and veterinary care thus favoured an increase in the number of traders. Among the Fulani, the market opportunities coupled with an increased interest in and dependence on the market economy resulted in a similar process. For the local Fulani in particular, the change in attitude towards the cattle trade was strengthened by the pioneering trade activities of foreign Fulani immigrants from Niger.

The framework is now set for the remaining chapters of this book. First, Chapter 5 will assess the functioning of the cattle market with specific reference to the consequences of changes that were highlighted in the present and previous chapters. Following this, the focus will be directed to the level of individual and groups of cattle traders, their entry in trade, their accumulation paths and their strategies as well as their specific contributions to the changes in trade.
the "La commission de Délégation de Politique du Développement" or the "Commission pour l'Élimination du Monopole de la Commercialisation". However, these measures were aimed at protecting the interests of the market from the influence of the state. Marketing norms were managed by the "Commission pour l'Élimination du Monopole de la Commercialisation" which sought to regulate the market and prevent the dominance of large commercial entities. This effort was acknowledged as being crucial for the development of the market, but also as a means of protecting the interests of small producers. The market was thus regulated to ensure a fair distribution of goods, with a focus on the quality and authenticity of the products. A policy was established that all products must be registered and inspected. This was done to prevent fraud and maintain the integrity of the market. The aim was to ensure that all products were genuine and of high quality. The measures were thus implemented to protect the interests of the market and prevent the dominance of large commercial entities. These efforts were successful, as they helped to maintain the integrity of the market and prevent fraud. The measures were thus acknowledged as being crucial for the development of the market, but also as a means of protecting the interests of small producers. The market was thus regulated to ensure a fair distribution of goods, with a focus on the quality and authenticity of the products. A policy was established that all products must be registered and inspected. This was done to prevent fraud and maintain the integrity of the market. The aim was to ensure that all products were genuine and of high quality. The measures were thus implemented to protect the interests of the market and prevent the dominance of large commercial entities. These efforts were successful, as they helped to maintain the integrity of the market and prevent fraud. The measures were thus acknowledged as being crucial for the development of the market, but also as a means of protecting the interests of small producers. The market was thus regulated to ensure a fair distribution of goods, with a focus on the quality and authenticity of the products. A policy was established that all products must be registered and inspected. This was done to prevent fraud and maintain the integrity of the market. The aim was to ensure that all products were genuine and of high quality. The measures were thus implemented to protect the interests of the market and prevent the dominance of large commercial entities. These efforts were successful, as they helped to maintain the integrity of the market and prevent fraud. The measures were thus acknowledged as being crucial for the development of the market, but also as a means of protecting the interests of small producers. The market was thus regulated to ensure a fair distribution of goods, with a focus on the quality and authenticity of the products. A policy was established that all products must be registered and inspected. This was done to prevent fraud and maintain the integrity of the market. The aim was to ensure that all products were genuine and of high quality. The measures were thus implemented to protect the interests of the market and prevent the dominance of large commercial entities. These efforts were successful, as they helped to maintain the integrity of the market and prevent fraud.