

The Politics and Economics of “Fadama” Irrigation and Product sales in the Tin Mining areas of the Jos Plateau in Nigeria.

Draft paper for WOW working group on the politics of land, authority, and natural resources.¹

Henry Gyang Mang

Centre for Conflict Management and Peace Studies
University of Jos, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.

¹ Panel 3: unsettled and emergent authorities: How do authorities emerge and decline in the face of disturbance and crisis? Conflict, squatting, and migration present challenges to existing authorities. How do these disturbances reconfigure the basis of authority and the balance of power among local actors?

The Politics and Economics of “Fadama” Irrigation and Product sales in the Tin Mining areas of the Jos Plateau in Nigeria.

Abstract

This work discusses the transition in the politics and economics of irrigation farming in the Jos area of Plateau state, Nigeria. Examining the former and latter constructions of ownership, use, commerce and authority of land and products of obtained from it. The advent of commercial dry season farming called “fadama” or “lambu” in the Plateau area around the 1980’s produced a new group of temporary migrants. Itinerant farmers from the far north, who took advantage of the deserted mining ponds in and around Jos, the capital of Plateau state in Central Nigeria. This development saw the periodical use by the mainly Hausa farmers from the far north, of land in the dry season, slowly building a community in consonance with a few settled Fulani.² A new landlord-tenant relationship emerged, which saw the “tenants” relating well with their hosts, the autochthonous “land owners” who initially were quite oblivious of this new mode of irrigation, This relationship lasted until the 1990’s when skirmishes and emerging interests of the autochthons groups brought conflict between the two groups.

² The Fulani’s are generally known to be nomads, but in recent years, many have settled mainly in the outskirts of the metropolis or in villages all over the north.

1. Introduction

The post colonial struggle to attain, at least the minimum level of development for sub-Saharan Africans has brought in a mix in processes of development. While small pox has been eradicated, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has replaced it with more deadly vigor. Mineral wealth has produced individual success for a minute number through pilfering, while others have been left the option of either deifying the few rich or going hungry.

The sustenance of most Nigerians presently lies with their access to land, land which provides opportunities for food, shelter, identity, and also for security. The value of land in Africa is not particularly monetary, as it portends ethnic identity and ownership, rights to farming -usually sustenance.

The advent of dry season farming has placed emphasis on collective small scale production of mainly commercially viable food products (usually easily perishable vegetables) for distribution to major markets around the country. The emphasis on these vegetables has been due to the fact that firstly, growing them (the vegetables) is relatively easier and less time consuming than other agricultural products, and secondly; the ease with which the trade of these vegetables occurs. Unlike other non-perishable crops which can be stored in mass, for periodical retrieval, vegetables (most especially in Africa) cannot be well stored, and therefore are quickly exhausted in the market, making them a quick sell all over the country.

Nigeria remains a predominantly rural country, with perhaps 60-70% of the population still living in the countryside and 40% of GDP coming from 'agriculture', broadly defined (i.e. including livestock but excluding forestry and fisheries). Moreover, the poor are predominantly in rural areas where poverty remains chronic and persistent, especially as many of the facilities established in the 1980s, such as schools, clinics and water-sources, are no longer functioning. Indeed, there is evidence that the recession characteristic of the second half of the 1990s has actually driven many weakly established urban groups to

reclaim their landholdings for at least part of the year. Similarly, pressure on land, especially near towns, has increased the incidence of land sales overall, although this is still fairly rare in more remote areas.

In Nigeria today, the need for increased food production to feed the ever-increasing human population is more recognized now than ever before. Consequently, a number of conflicts and the mobilization for conflicts, which are in most cases portrayed as (ethnic) identity competition, premeditate on the acquisition of food resources, most especially by groups which do not possess highly prized resources in which they might demand control.³

Plateau state is not an exception, transiting from a solid mineral rich city in the mid 20th century, to an ecologically damaged area with manmade basins in the later part; this has turned the attention of both the people and governments to the exploitation of fadama lands; (Kparmwang and Esu, 1990).

Fadama or Lambu areas (dry season farming lands) are usually low-lying areas including streams channels and streamless depressions, which are waterlogged or flooded in wet season (Turner, 1977). More recently, there has been included in the definition, “man made depressions” (PADP, 1998), created mainly out of (as in the case of the Jos Plateau) mining activity. These areas are found scattered in the arid and semi arid regions. The importance of the fadama lands stem from their high level of moisture (residual moisture) even during the dry season as well as during drought conditions. (Turner, 1977, Kparmwang and Esu, 1990).

2. Dry Season Farming in the Plateau Area

Plateau state is located within what is politically called the “Middle Belt” zone. Geographically, it is denoted as part of Central Nigeria. In both determinations, the obvious synonyms are ‘central’ and ‘middle’. Until the late 1970’s and early 1980’s, little attention had been given to dry season farming.

³ Recently, i.e., from 1999; issues of resource control, mainly by the oil producing south has raised questions on regional or group ownership of resources, with various groups trying to take control of the processes and transactions relating to their “land.” This contradicts the 1978 land use act which confers the Federal Government of Nigeria the rights over land, and only confers customary custodian privileges to the primordial land owners.

However, with the realization that population in Nigeria is growing at an alarming rate while food supply is slow, optimizing the use of the limited land resources becomes even more pronounced. It is pertinent to note, however, that the increasing interest in dry season farming in Plateau State has portended a predisposition for the creation of potential conflict fault-lines.

3. Cases in Point

The issues dealing with conflict and authority in Plateau state, initially revolved around what Adeyi coined “The struggle for emancipation.” (Adeyi, 1987) A struggle initiated by the first civilian state governor, Solomon Lar, on what he saw as the growing “settler,” (predominantly Hausa) influence and dominance in the affairs of the state. Plateau state unlike most other states has what can be described as a large “pot-purri” of ethnicities⁴ The other major factor for conflicts in Plateau is land or boundary disputes. This shows that land is becoming a very scarce factor of production either due to population pressure, land alienation or concentration of land in a few hands. More significantly in the conclusion of a survey in the Middle Belt (or central Nigeria) a link was established between the “conflicts,” “the economy” and “poverty” as follows:

“Communal conflicts have been exacerbated by the economic crisis and pauperization of citizens in recent times. Factors that account for these conflicts are numerous. These include ethnicism, religious differences and their manipulation, land hunger and burgeoning population, chieftaincy disputes and the native/settlers syndrome.” (ICPR, 2003).

Although the first of all conflicts in Jos was alleged to have occurred between Hausa and Igbo traders over market space, in 1945 was scarcely recorded, Plotnicov, terms it as the first conflict in Jos, (Plotnicov, 1971). Below is a list of conflicts in the Jos area of Plateau state.

⁴Apart from Cross River state and Taraba, no other state in Nigeria has the number of ethnic groups that Plateau has. Roger Blench puts that number at 37. (Blench, 2004)

EVENTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN JOS ⁵

S/N	EVENT	YEAR
1.	<p>Potato Riots: two were killed.</p> <p>Immediate cause: Argument over market space between an Igbo and Hausa Trader.</p>	1945
2.	<p>Fighting Between Hausa and Indigenes</p> <p>over political appointments in Native Authority, and an attempt to remove Bitrus Rwang Pam, son to the 1st Berom Chief, as Head of a Native Authority Committee.</p> <p><i>Three incidences (non specific, and only minor injuries in these cases.)</i></p>	1948/1949
3.	<p>Araba Riots (Pre-Civil War): Massacre of Igbo people, fueled by rumors Spread by some Northerners of ethnic Killings in the South-East. Rumors later found to be false, but many Igbos were killed in Jos and its environs. Many survivors –if not all, fled back to the South-East, and not all returned after the war. There had been questions of ownership of abandoned property.</p>	1966
4.	<p>Riot in Bauchi Road: Following a demonstration by University students the day before, young people rioted on Bauchi road destroying cars and wounding people. No deaths were recorded. Although no concrete reasons have been given, suspicions were that the results of earlier elections held in December the previous year in which an <i>Anaguta</i>, man, Gini Umaru, had</p>	1988

⁵ Henry Gyang Mang, "Citizenship, Indigene ship and Federal Character in Nigeria, a study of Ethnic Conflict in Plateau State, Nigeria," B.A. History diss., University of Jos, Nigeria, (2004)

	won; annoyed some people, and the demonstration by students became an opportunity to be used as a reason to riot.	
5.	Riot in Bauchi Road: this followed the appointment of Alhaji Aminu Mato, a Hausa man, as chairman of the Caretaker Management Committee of Jos North Local Government. This was subsequent to the division of Jos Local Government into Jos North and Jos South in 1991, an action particularly resented by the Berom, who view it as a favor by the then military head of state, General Babangida, to Jos Muslims, since it gave the Muslims an electoral advantage over the Christian population.	1994
6.	Garden Egg Crisis in Gero, Jos-South. So called because it was alleged that it occurred because a local from the Berom ethnic group was killed by a Hausa dry season farmer over a garden egg.	1996
7.	Fighting in Jos-North L.G.A office , due to an argument over 'Indigeneship Certificate.' Argument and fight between L.G.A staff and a group of Hausa boys who were refused indigene certificates due to a new rule made by the then L.G.A Chairperson, Frank B. Tardy.	1999
8.	Jos Ethno-Religious Crisis: This started in Jos-North (<i>Congo-Russia</i> , also called <i>Chwelnyap</i>) and extended to three other Local Government areas, Jos-South, Riyom and Barkinladi. Seen as the worst case of violence in Plateau State.	2001
9.	Jos Ethno-Religious Crisis: Jos-North. This occurred on the day after Local Government Council elections.	2008

These conflicts have been noted because they aroused a lot of media attention. Other minor conflicts on land and market authorities have occurred. Two cases in point make the basis for this paper; these two are specifically chosen because they spread over three local government areas, namely, Barkinladi, Jos-South and Riyom. All three local government areas were formerly mining areas, extensively devastated by open case mining. These local government areas, like Jos-North have gradually grown heterogeneous, and this has become a cause for conflict between the autochthonous Berom, who are the largest population, and other groups. Lastly, the markets in these areas, which are relatively a new phenomenon, have created new complications on issues of authority.

4. Histories

The advent of tin mining in the northern parts of Plateau brought in the creation of cosmopolitan Jos, a factor –either in error or for convenience- that introduced a new and unwanted hegemony in the introduction of a chief appointed by the emir of Bauchi, under the colonial government.⁶ The continuous increase in population during the peak of tin mining, and subsequently with the increased potential for trade which Jos proffered later on, people from various areas outside Plateau sought and obtained land from the colonial administration. The unique weather of the area also encouraged many Europeans and Levantines to seek rights to land. By the end of the Second World War, the proportion of migrants within Jos surpassed the autochthonous population, which mainly occupied the hill areas of the northern areas (Tambo, 1978). The control of this influx was done by the colonial authorities using an apartheid like policy in which settlements were created by clumping peoples of the same ethnicity or race together.⁷ This fueled animosities, first among the migrants; as seen with the ‘potato riots’ of 1945 which the Igbo’s and the

⁶ The placement of Hausa chiefs on the Jos Native town which was made the privilege of the Emir of Bauchi, created the earliest signs of ethno-religious tension in the area. As the autochthonous groups began to seek self determination, the realization of what they saw as eminent intrusion of their ancestral and traditional land, led to demands for traditional identity in local ruler ship. See, Logams, Paul Chunun, *The Middle Belt Movement in Nigerian Political Development: A Study in Political Identity 1949-1967*, Centre for Middle Belt Studies, Abuja, Nigeria, 2004.

⁷ Adam Higazi, Interview with Norma Perchenock, American sociologist living in Jos. Jos, 26th September 2006. (Author Present)

Hausa's fought over the authority of the potato market (Plotnikov, 1971). Plotnicov (1967) quotes the Jos Division Annual Report for 1954, states; "... with its polyglot population (Jos) must always be considered a potential trouble spot."

The post-colonial era saw an expansion in self determination and an increased rate of mistrust between the autochthons and those they termed as "settlers". In terms of both politics and land ownership, claims and counter claims over rights to rule and to own continued, this did not stop the daily business of living though, tensions grew. The first manifestation of these latent conflicts occurred in 1987, at the then Jos Local Government Headquarters⁸ and has continued until the recent November 28th 2009 ethno-religious conflict, which was caused by the local government elections in Jos-north.⁹

5. Tin Mining, Processes and Effects

The significant tin mining areas of the Plateau area are principally within Jos-North, Jos-South, Barkin-Ladi, Riyom and parts of Bokkos local government areas.¹⁰ (See map of tin mining areas on page 23) By the late 1970's, tin mining was waning. The colonial tin mining syndicates had acquired over 90% of land in the area under lease by the 2nd World War, (Bower, 1948). By the late 1960's these companies had either folded up or conglomerated into larger units. The demand for tin, although still high, had diminished. With the coming of independence in 1960, the confidence of the European miners in holding control of the

⁸ What are today, Jos-East, Jos-North and Jos-South local government areas, were before 1991 one single Local government area.

⁹ The recent Jos-north election violence caused an estimated 500 deaths and destruction of millions of dollars worth of property . A conflict seen by most analysts as avertable.

¹⁰ The local government system commonly referred to by its acronym 'LG', with LGA; standing for "local government areas" – the physical land space, and LGC; standing for the "local government councils" – the structure for the areas governance and symbol for grass root democracy.

tin mines and their accessories was also diminishing.¹¹ The post Nigerian civil war era (1970's) saw transitions in leadership which concentrated on nationalizing all facets of the Nigerian economy. With this began the death of tin mining as an organized industry. Large scale tin mining started to decline, and because the paper-work on land reclamation and compensation was quite lousy.¹² The nationalization of what became the Amalgamated Tin Mines of Nigeria (ATMN), which was the product of a collection of small mining syndicates, (Fwatshak, 2001; Plotnicov, 1969), led to a break down in order within the tin mines. Arbitrary abuse of mining leases, sale of land without the consent of the autochthonous land owners, and also non adherence to the land use requirements which included compensation and reclamation of post mining ponds.

With the death of tin mining by the 1980's, the devastation became more obvious, large excavations which grossly depleted farm land and left the farmers having to move more into the periphery. Because farming before the 1980's was primarily seasonal, (dependent on the rains which fall between May to September)¹³ most local farmers were at a loss as to what to do with the bodies of water which had now littered the land. The coming of Hausa dry season farmers though, changed the scenery.

6. Origins of Dry Season Farming (Lambu) in Jos

Although Blench states that the earliest Hausa dry season farmers claim to have started coming to the Plateau area in the 1960's, evidence of that only links with small garden farms with which the Europeans had encouraged for their daily vegetables. More commercial farming though is said to have started around the late 1980's,¹⁴ these farmers mainly from the north western parts of the country, had learnt to take

¹¹ Apart from the tin mines, there was an independent electricity generation and supply company, which supplied the areas electricity. Also, the city had grown out of the growth of tin mining. For more on this, read Leonard Plotnicov's, *Strangers to the City; Urban Man in Jos*. Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1967).

¹² Interview with Engr. Gyang Chollom. Mining Engineer and retired staff of Consolidated Tin Mines (CTM), formerly Amalgamated Tin Mines of Nigeria (ATMN). Jos, 16/05/08

¹³ In Nigeria only two seasons are observed, the rainy season and the dry season, commonly called "Harmattan". Rainfall on the Jos Plateau varies between 131.75cm to 140.00cm, and it is usually recorded within the months of April and August.

¹⁴ Interview with Mallam Garba Nagogo (age: 54) initially an itinerant dry season farmer, but settled in Heipang in 1985. 22/10/2008, Bukuru.

advantage of water available to them well because of the relatively limited availability of it in their areas. While the Jos Plateau area boasts of at least six (6) months of rain in a year, most far northern areas have less than four months (Usman & Abbathe, 2000; Blench, 2004). The use of local water portage like the *shaduf* and channeling water from ponds downstream to farms was initially the common feature. With the introduction by the 1980's, of the gasoline water pump, an increased population of dry season farmers evolved.

7. Case Studies

For this paper, two case studies have been taken; these are studies of incidents in Forom and Gero, all former mining villages. This does not douse the fact that there are other areas where these issues do not arise. These areas have been chosen because, firstly, they cover two of the four local government areas in the study, namely, Barkin Ladi, Jos-South Jos-North and Riyom. The two areas, one in the rural areas and the other in semi-urban areas, have been chosen to show the various patterns of ownership and authority in the mining areas of Jos. Secondly, the four areas have been noted to have latent potentials for conflict, over land ownership and market authority.

Forom (Barkin Ladi): Forom, in the South western fringes of the local government, Located 36 km from Jos, the Plateau State capital city, has a population of 5,267¹⁵ and an area of about 38 km². It is primarily an agrarian economy that produces potato, maize, sorghum, cabbage, lettuce, carrots in commercial quantities. Forom has one of the largest tomato markets in the state, with farmers, middle men and buyers trooping in on market days. The dry season farms are located within Forom village, Bisichi and Heipang all old mining settlements not far from each other. Dry season farming, most especially in Bisichi and Gada Biyu (Forom) was before 1988 predominantly a Hausa venture, with the Berom preferring to indulge in scavenging at what was left of the abandoned excavations, for tin; which was slowly piled and sold to

¹⁵ Source OFFICIAL GAZATTE (FGP 71/52007/2,500(OL24): Legal Notice on Publication of the Details of the Breakdown of the National and State Provisional Totals 2006 Census. National Bureau of Statistics. www.nigerianstat.gov.ng

licensed miners at rock-bottom prices.¹⁶ The Hausa dry season farmers were in two groups. The first group, former workers in the tin mines, displaced by the death of tin mining. This group, although a large population preferred more of the function of middle men for the second group which comprised of dry temporary migrants who moved from the north east and north west, primarily Katsina and Jigawa.¹⁷ (Harris et al., 2003) The farm lands, located around the old mining ponds were given to these farmers temporarily during the dry season to grow the vegetables. (Adepetu, 1985)¹⁸ In most cases, like that of Bisichi, Gada Biyu and Gero, illegal mining, and dry season farming occurred side by side. Illegal mining, which by the mid 1980's had notoriously grown, became a menace, not only to the authorities, but to dry season farming, this was because the illegal miners excavated arbitrarily, unlike the more organized mining companies. These excavations in some cases extended onto farmland. Although this led to minor conflicts, they were easily settled through the authority of the village head.¹⁹ Gada Biyu and Bisichi, by the mid 1980's became hubs for tomato farming. With the Plateau Agricultural Development Program (PADP) introducing foreign varieties of vegetables which were well received through agricultural extension work, there was an increased production of vegetables, the markets increased, extending even outside Nigeria. (Porter et al., 2003). This growth in produce and demand required a market, but another problem that arose was the placement of a central market. Although there were weekly markets²⁰ where produce were sold in retail, they had limitations. Firstly, the markets transited from one village to the other, all under different

¹⁶ Most of these miners worked illegally in those mines, and were regularly confronted by the authorities. This though did not stop the mining because the miners held on to the notion that 'their' ancestral property had had been left for them by the 'whiteman.'

¹⁷ Focus group interview with Hausa market middle men; Ibrahim Dan Jibia (48), Mallam Tanko (66), Bello Dan Kazaure (30) and Danlami (23) at Gada Biyu Forum, 12/11/2008.

¹⁸ Adepetu notes from his extrapolation that by the mid 1980's the Hausa and Fulani made up an estimated 64% of the total dry season farmer population in four different sites.

¹⁹ Most of the land later tenured to the farmers and also exploited by the illegal miners was usually contentious land which was disputed between native Berom "land owners," therefore it was usually easier for the land to become a sort of "no man's land," where usually the ward or village head had control over as custodian over contentious land. Interview, Engr. Gyang Chollom... Jos, 16/05/08.

²⁰ These markets are common all over Nigeria, every week a market holds collectively among a group of villages, rotating every day, with the exception of Sunday. The Jos Plateau markets though only started during the colonial times. See Porter, G. "Markets, ethnicity and environment in a vulnerable landscape: the case of small-scale vegetable production on the Jos plateau, Nigeria," 1991-2001. Report to DFID Crop Post Harvest Research Programme Project R 7924, 2002.

authorities of the various village heads, who tried to dominate issues of taxation, arbitrarily collecting higher amounts from those they termed as “non indigenes”.²¹ Secondly, the fact that access roads to most of these villages which were not in good condition most of the time, meant that most large scale transporters were not comfortable with going from one village to another every week with the bulk vegetable buyers buying small amounts until their trucks were full. Also, the buyers, being aware of the perishable nature of vegetables, would try as much as possible to buy quickly and transport as fast as possible to anxiously waiting buyers outside the state. To them, buying from a central area would be more advantageous than going round markets.

Eventually for the case of tomatoes in the Forom Area, the idea of a tomato market was accepted, with a prominent politician who gave out land at an area called Mararaban Forom (this interprets as Forom Junction) a place very proximal to the main tarred road and also easily accessible to the farm areas of Bisichi, Forom village, Heipang and Gada Biyu, all villages close to the area. Large amounts of tomato were moved to the market every day, unlike the weekly markets, and the markets held every two days of the week, the market was open for large scale tomato trade. Eventually, the market built a reputation all over the country. Administration of the market then was left to its initiators. The Hausa farmers who were then the largest population in the dry season farms, they were well organized and had a hierarchy which helped in settling local disputes, setting prices and regulating sales. Now under a “sarkin kasuwa” (market chief), all transactions ran through him and his team, a team instituted by the Hausa farmer community. This fabulous growth of the tomato market, which was established in 1985, encouraged new comers into the business of commercial dry season farming, as Porter (1994, 2002) points out; “By 1991, many farmers had acquired mechanical pumps for irrigation and the traditional *shaduf* was fast disappearing...the expansion of market gardening in the former tin areas was found to be even more remarkable. Village and district leaders in the three survey districts generally observed this as the most important change in their villages.”

²¹ Focus group interview with Hausa market middle men...Forom, 12/11/2008.

Previously rented land was now collected by their owners or by the village heads, leaving the Hausa farmers with very little or no land to farm on. This not only occurred in the Forom area, but in most other places in Barkin Ladi and Riyom local government areas. This change in farmers consequently led the Hausa farmers who initially held sway in both the farms and the market to move into the markets where they served as both administrators and middle men. Although the land had been donated by a prominent Berom politician,²² his interests were more of the name than the proceeds from the market. This with time was not so for the growing Berom population of farmers. Who saw the whole market authority by the Hausas as an affront on the “indigenes.”²³ For a few weeks in September 1994, sales at the Mararaban Forom tomato market were virtually stopped. At first, issues of who had the right to conduct sales in the market arose. Although the Berom farmers could bring their tomatoes to the market, they were not allowed to transact with the buyers directly, there had to be a go between who did not necessarily have to own crop, he²⁴ was only answerable to the *sarkin kasuwa*. What annoyed the Berom farmers was the fact that they would have to part with a service charge for the transaction which was conducted by someone who was not the owner of the crop. The middle man was entitled to 10% of proceeds from the transaction, and also, the market authorities collected tolls at the entrance, which varied depending on the quantity of the product brought in.²⁵ The Berom farmers, who felt they were being exploited, at first complained to the land owner, demanding that he intervene on their behalf. This did not work. In order to avert conflict, the Berom farmers set their own market about 400m from that of the original market, in an effort to take their product sales into their own hands.²⁶ This seemed to work for a while, but a few things became apparent. There was

²² A former 2nd republic senator, John Wash Pam. He owned the land, and gave it initially for free so as to seek future political patronage if it came to that. Interview with Mallam Garba Nagogo (age: 54)...22/10/2008, Bukuru.

²³ Focus group interview with Berom market middle men; Da Micheal Dem (67, now late), Badung Chall (38), Nuhai Dem (30), Markus Bature (30) at Mararaban Forom, Forom, 14/11/2008.

²⁴ The use of “he” here emphasizes the fact that both the farming and trade was mainly a male affair. Presently though, a few women have joined in vegetable farming, most of them transporting their products themselves to places like Abuja, thereby keeping away from any attempts at discriminating them in the markets.

²⁵ Focus group interview with Berom market middle men...Forom, 14/11/2008.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

still a more recognized market run by the Hausas, this established market was difficult to dislodge. Secondly, the Hausa's who had mastered the trade in the market knew the system of trade well, and thus had quite an organized pattern which was recognized and accepted by all who came to the market. In discussions with the Hausa middle men at at Mararaban Forum, they pointed out that the use of the *dillali*, or middle man, was to ensure a unified price for the products. The *dillali* had the responsibility of ensuring that a minimum price for a basket of tomato was attained. Thus, once a product was brought to the market, a *dillali* was attached to it, and; "it is only right that the product owner pays him for the service."²⁷ One of the things that annoyed the Berom farmers though, was what they termed as exploitative tendencies of these *dillali* who were alleged to connive with the bulk tomato buyers, to cut down regulated prices on products of certain "groups."²⁸ By groups here, they meant ethnic groups, most likely signifying the Berom. Although this allegation could not be fully ascertained, because the issues raised were basically arguments by word of mouth, this practice, which the Hausas were accused of still happen today, the only difference being that the perpetrators are now both Berom and Hausa.

In contrast with the Hausa dominated tomato market administration, the new and inexperienced Berom market lasted not up to two months, even with the backing of the Barkin Ladi local government council, which provided legal and financial authority and support. The problems they experienced had to do with leadership. While the Hausa had a sort of pristine structure of leadership and administration, the Berom had initial problems of even the choice of leaders. Conflicts arose over who and who had authority over the new market, over the need or otherwise of *dillali*'s, and under whose authority the market was (i.e. was it autonomous of the local government authorities and only required by law to pay tax, like the Hausa dominated market; or was the local government council, which had provided financial assistance, in dominating control?) This question, which obviously should have been asked before the situation of the

²⁷ Focus group interview with Hausa market middle men...Forum, 12/11/2008.

²⁸ Focus group interview with Berom market middle men...Forum, 14/11/2008.

market, became another problem because the local government council, which expected to be put in the know of things, was sidelined by the leadership of the market. Thus, just as they had no serious authority over the Hausa dominated market; they had none with the new market. This and other complications which arose over authority in the market, led the then Local government chairperson, Johnson Chollom, to order the closure of the market, and a subsequent merger of the two markets, with authority shared. This did not go down well with the Hausa market leaders, and almost led to violence, which was averted by the military. It was alleged that Chollom wrote to the state governor then, Colonel Habibu Shuaibu, requesting that the military and other security personnel be brought into the markets for security purposes.²⁹ This action although authoritarian, led to a resolution. Positions of authority in the market were now to be run for through elections. The positions were open to all farmers registered with the market irrespective of ethnicity. This resolution, which helped douse the latency of conflict in the area, was subsequently the tool used in harmonizing other markets, in Barkin Ladi and Riyom local government areas.

Gero (Jos-South)

Gero has the reputation of being the first conflict in Jos with a casualty figure above 20. Although one of the least reported of crises in Jos. The Gero incident (popularly called the “garden egg incident”) proved to be the worst incident of communal violence before 1996.³⁰

Located only about 6km from Bukuru, the capital of Jos-South local government area, Gero came to be as a result of tin mining in the 1940’s. One of the many syndicates acquired exclusive rights to the rich tin deposits in the area. The excavation was so wide and extensive, leaving four different un-reclaimed ponds in the area. By the 1980’s a large population of the Hausa’s, formerly mining with the syndicate had settled in the village, and under the tenure of the chief of Nyango, whose jurisdiction Gero is; land surrounding the

²⁹ Although throughout the research I came across no such letter, groups I interviewed confirmed that at some time in the last quarter of 1995, soldiers were called in to secure the market, while the local government officials conducted an election which saw the first Berom *sarkin kasuwa* or market chief.

³⁰ Before Gero, most incidences of conflict were in a small scale, the revelation of such gross ethnic aggression in 1996 should have served as a vital warning of a worse impending conflict.

ponds was apportioned to many of these people to farm on, both during the rainy and dry seasons. Unlike the farming in Forom, tenure was friendlier and the groups related well. Also, unlike the Forom area where tomatoes were the most prominent of vegetables, Gero was and is still unique for its variety of fruit and vegetables. From watermelons, cabbages, cucumbers, carrots and beets, to spinach and celery. With the growth of the Gero vegetable farms, the need for a market arose to take advantage of the proximity to both towns, Bukuru and Jos town, a midway market was established behind another market, the “building material market.” This new vegetable market, which comprises of units for the various vegetables in stock, unlike that of Forom runs only once a week, on Tuesdays. The reason being that Tuesdays have been reserved for bulk sale of all vegetable types, and for the fact that the markets in the towns unlike those of the villages are daily markets, excess vegetables from the bulk are mopped up into the retail of the daily markets. Similarly to that of Forom though, was the fact that the market was initially in the hands of the Hausa farmers.

Change came in the 1990’s. First with the issue of land, by the late 1980’s a renewal of interest tin mining arose, young Berom men, not interested in dry season farming, discovered that there was still a sizable amount of tin in the area. This led to a massive rush to what they saw as a “no man’s land” where they could make their fortunes.³¹ Like that of Forom, arbitrary mining techniques were used, in some cases excavating through farm land. The resurgence of tin mining brought increased activity in and around Gero, a large number of non-resident Berom came to Gero to illegally mine tin. With these miners, the community grew, the need for accompanying ventures led to more growth in the population of Berom, mainly young men and women, who either came to mine, trade or other support service. An initial conflict arose over this encroachment in 1990, when a group of Hausa farmers got annoyed over mining activity on pieces of land allocated to them. On reporting to the chief of Nyango, the Berom youth got annoyed and

³¹ Interview with Engr. Gyang Chollom. Mining Engineer and retired staff of Consolidated Tin Mines (CTM), formerly Amalgamated Tin Mines of Nigeria (ATMN). Jos, 16/05/08

reacted by partially destroying crops of the Hausa, declaring that the land belonged to them, and the Hausa were just tenants who should accept their state.³² Although this scuffle did not end in violence, this sowed the seed of animosities which became eminent with time. From that point, more Berom became interested in dry season farming, slowly taking over most of the land in and around Gero. Porter et al. (2003) adduce that the 1990's saw the beginning of disaffection between the Berom and Hausa over farm land. Slowly land changed hands and disaffection grew. Field studies conducted in the Jos- Bukuru area in 1993-4 by Omomoh (1999) helped confirm this when he points out that the growing interest of Berom farmers in dry-season production and the increased scarcity of land available to migrant and settler farmers greatly encouraged the growing tension between them. Gero was an exception, more of an extreme because in September 1996, the anticipated, but in an unexpected way; happened.

In an interview with one of the Hausa men still living in Gero, he noted that the coming of the miners into the area was not welcome by them at all, because with it came a lot of crime, drinking and bickering. Life was more complicated, and frustrating for the Hausa farmers as their produce were sometimes pilfered.³³ This pilfering led to the complications of September 1996.

Information on the 1996 Gero conflict, is still limited. Quite a lot of people in the Hausa community left the village for good after the conflict. Also, because most of the miners who were part of the fighting at that time were not also from there, not much ground breaking has been done on the subject.³⁴

On the evening of the 14th of September, 1996, the bridge linking Gero, which is slightly in the outskirts of Bukuru was destroyed. The police that were alerted, it was alleged; had to stop at the bridge and walk over 4km into the village to quell a conflict. From the interview with Danjuma Dankanwa, the remote cause of the conflict was the death of a Berom boy (name not known) after it was alleged that he stole a few garden

³² Interview with Danjuma Dankanwa, (60's). Former labourer in the Gero mines, and dry season farmer, Gero, 12/02/09

³³ Interview with Danjuma Dankanwa, (60's). Former labourer in the Gero mines, and dry season farmer, Gero, 12/02/09

³⁴ In my preliminary visits to the area, I was only able to interview two people, one of the few Hausa still living there and a Berom man. Hopefully, within the year I hope to take a more detailed study of the Gero incident.

eggs from a Hausa man's farm. The boy apparently a miner was on his way to one of the ponds to wash off dirt when he stopped to pick a few garden eggs³⁵ to eat. The farm owner, upset about the boys disrespect for property, accosted him, and eventually a fight broke out. It was alleged that the farmer, using a hoe, struck the boy on the head, leading to a concussion and bleeding. The boy was rushed to a clinic in Bukuru, but the clinic refused to accept a seriously wounded person, claiming that the Nigerian police force always gave them problems if a patient in his situation is brought without a police escort. Because of this, the the young man died. Angered by the actions of the clinic and police, the Berom youth who had brought the young man went on rampage, first attacking the farmer alleged to have killed the boy, and then going into Gero village where they attacked houses of the Hausa community. Due to the delay in access to the village because of the destroyed bridge and night time, an estimated 22 people were killed and over 49 houses burned. Crops were destroyed and a large amount of property either stolen or destroyed. But for the intervention the next day by the military within Jos town, reprisals would have taken place. The casualties were mainly Hausa and Fulani settlers, who had been cordial with their Berom neighbours until the coming of the illegal tin miners. Most of the Hausa farmers, who were already frustrated by the reduced land available and the now unfriendly disposition of the Berom, left Gero.

Issues at the vegetable market were later on to complicate too, with demands from Berom farmers of rights of authority over the market. Similarly, like that of Forom, the *dillali* issue arose. Although it had been an issue for long as that of Forom had been, the heating up of things by the violence in Gero further exacerbated the demands by the Berom for rights of authority in the market. The security situation, which was obviously shaky, called for the Jos-South local government council which owned the land and had originally given it for use as a market, to swiftly take total control of the market. Although allowing for the democracy of the market, the Jos-South local government council, unlike that of Barkin Ladi adopted a

³⁵ Just to clarify, garden eggs in Nigeria are egg shaped vegetables, either white or green, with a moist soft inside, some varieties slightly bitter.

stricter supervisory and revenue collection role in the market. Collecting tax through hackney permits from transporters, portage, storage and organization were closely monitored by staff of the local government. This initiative struck a balance between the various groups in the market, unlike the tomato market, there was less regulation of the products; market authority, instead of being a compromise between groups, revolved around the local government, thereby giving legitimate bureaucratic authority³⁶ in contrast to bureaucracy which was perceived as either ethnic or religious.

Conclusion

Land and market authority in the tin mining areas of the Jos Plateau has obviously transited. From the control of the colonials to the advantage taken by the Hausa of what can be termed as either negligence or ignorance of the Berom, to an attempt at “emancipation” later on. With these transitions, most especially the latter, the latency of conflict has become obvious. In the two cases presented, the conflicts that arose emanated not primarily as would be explained by one party, from exploitation, or an attempt at dominance, but from the struggle for diminishing resources as both population and technology increase. The process of authority also has been seen to influence relationships. While democracy might seem to be the best compromise, it might not necessarily provide the best bureaucracy due to the fact that sectionalism might be encouraged. These assumptions are not conclusive, but will provide the stepping stones for further study.

³⁶ The perception being that a western system was more acceptable to all parties.

References

Adepetu A.A. "Farmers and their Farms on Four Fadama on Jos Plateau." *Plateau Environmental Resources Development Program. Interim report #2*. Department of Geography University of Durham and Department of Geography and Planning, University of Jos, 1985.

Adeyi M. *Politics of Emancipation*, Jos, Ade Press, 1997.

Blench R. "Recent Research on the Plateau Languages of Central Nigeria," (in the proceedings of the Hamburg meeting to mark the retirement of Professor Ludwig Gerhardt, March 2004.)

Blench, R. *Natural Resource Conflicts in North-Central Nigeria: A Handbook and Case Studies*, London: Mandaras Publishing, 2004.

Bower, P. "The Mining Industry" in Perham, M. ed. *Mining, Commerce and Finance in Nigeria*. London, Frank Cass, 1948.

Fwatshak, S.U. "Colonialism and Indigenous Enterprises on the Jos Plateau 1902-1945." *Mandiyeng; Journal of Central Nigerian Studies*, Vol.1 No. 1 (Early Rains, 2001), pp, 59-72.

Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution, *Strategic Conflict Assessment: Consolidated Zonal Reports Nigeria*, Federal Government of Nigeria, The Presidency, Abuja, 2003.

Kpamwang, T. and Esu, I. E. Characteristics and agricultural land use of fadama soil in the savanna region of Nigeria: A review. *Savanna* 11:116-131, 1990.

Logams, P. C. *The Middle Belt Movement in Nigerian Political Development: A Study in Political Identity 1949-1967*, Centre for Middle Belt Studies, Abuja, Nigeria, 2004.

Omomoh, E. "Economic characteristics of dry season gardening: the Jos-Bukuru example," in Grossman D, van den Berg L. M and Ajaegbu H. A, eds. *Urban and peri-urban agriculture in Africa*. Ashgate, Aldershot, 117-146, 1999

PADP. "Progress report on project implementation for the period of October-December 1997 and January-September 1998." PADP project coordinating committee meeting, Abuja, October 1998.

Plotnicov, L. An Early Nigerian Civil Disturbance: The 1945 Hausa-Ibo Riot in Jos. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1971, Cambridge University Press pp. 297-305

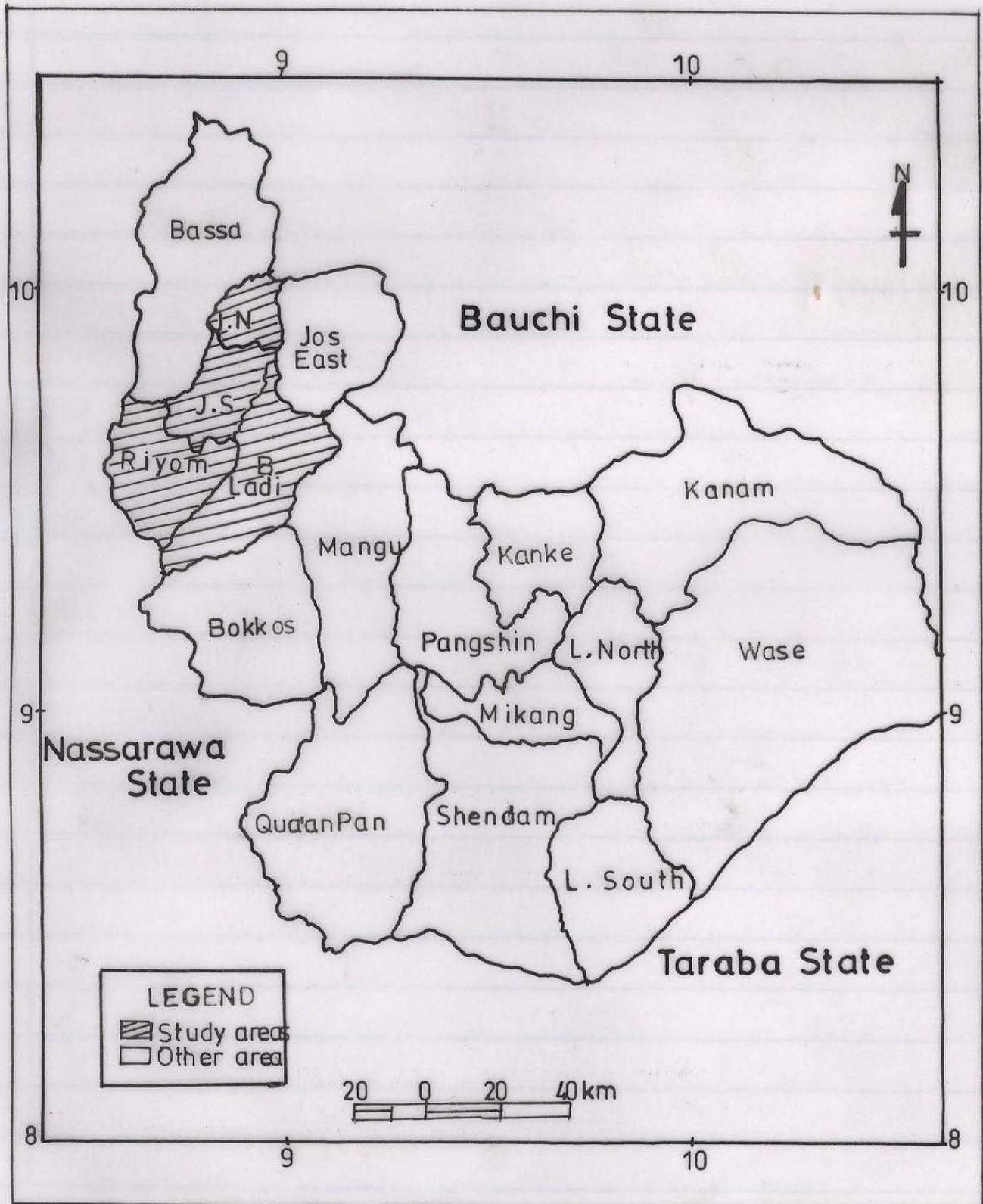
Plotnicov, L. *Strangers to the City; Urban Man in Jos*. Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1967

Porter, G. "Food marketing and urban food supply on the Jos Plateau, Nigeria: a comparison of large and small producer strategies under SAP." *Journal of Developing Areas*. Vol. 29, 91-110. 1994.

Porter, G. "Markets, ethnicity and environment in a vulnerable landscape: the case of small-scale vegetable production on the Jos plateau, Nigeria, 1991-2001." Report to DFID Crop Post Harvest Research Programme Project R 7924, 2002.

Porter G., Harris F., Lyon F., Dung J., Adepetu A. A. "Markets, Ethnicity and Environment in a Vulnerable Landscape: The Case of Small-Scale Vegetable Production on the Jos Plateau, Nigeria, 1991-2001." *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 169, No. 4, 2003, pp. 370-381

Usman, Y.B & Abbathe, A. *The Misrepresentation of Nigeria: the Facts and the figures*. Zaria, Centre for Democratic Development Research and Training (CEDDERT) Occasional Publication, 2000.



Source: Cartographic and GIS Lab. Geol & Mining UJ.

Figure 1. Map of Plateau State showing study areas

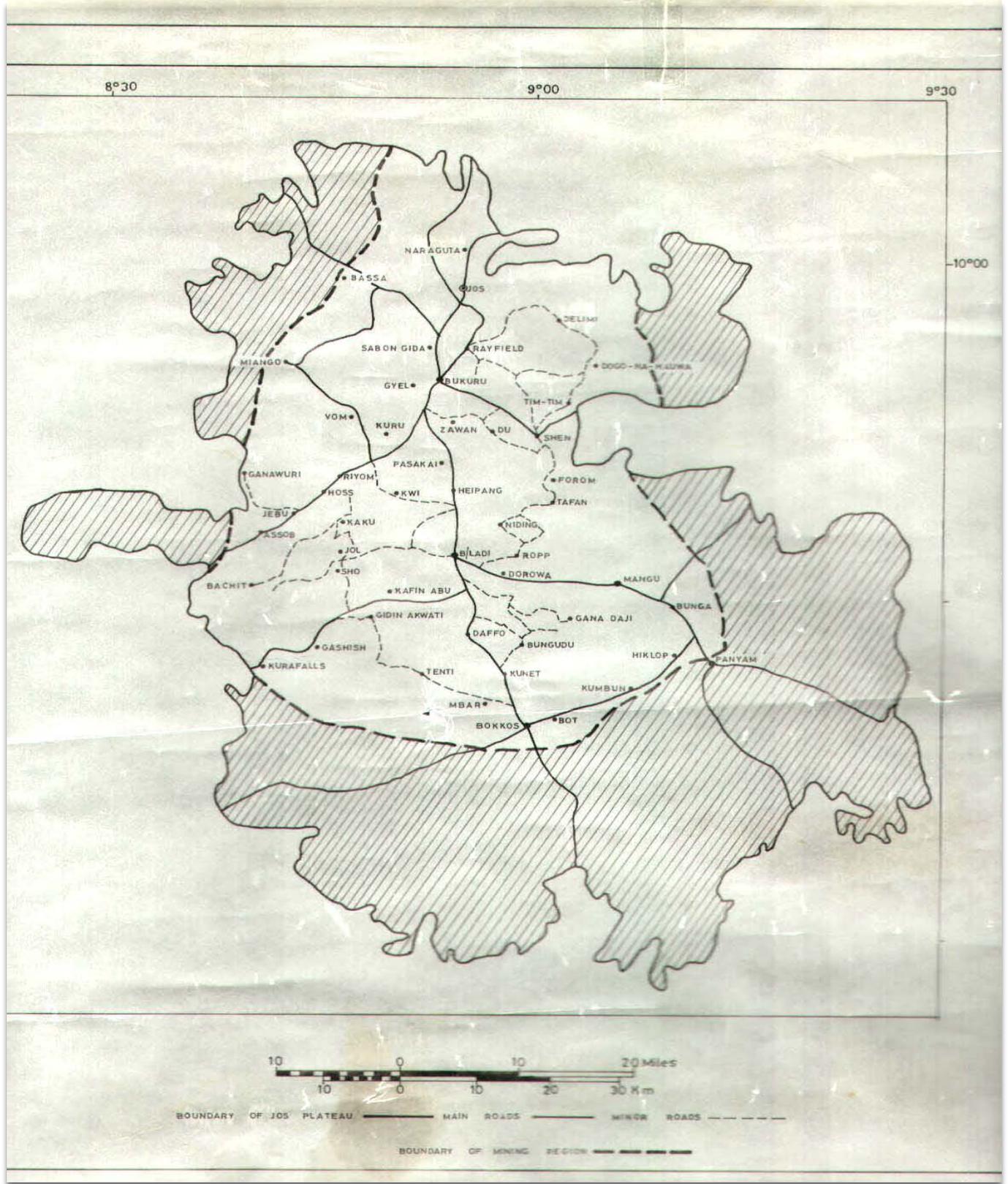


Figure 2. Map of the Mining Region of the Jos Plateau



Foreign vegetable seeds for sale by PADP in the market



Green Beans laid open, Cabbage in the sack for the South East and Pumpkins



Various modes of transporting the vegetables

