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## Peripheral urbanism in Africa

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## Peripheral Urbanism in Africa: Border Towns and Twin Towns in Africa

1

The past decade has witnessed a veritable explosion of writing about African borderlands after a long period in which the subject was distinctly unfashionable. As this literature has proliferated across the various disciplines, it has also become more diverse, including detailed studies of trade networks (Walther 2008, Walther 2014, Titeca 2012, Scheele 2012), migratory flows (Cross 2013, Streiff-Fenart 2013, Adeniran 2014), bureaucracy and 'practical norms' (Chalfin 2010, Titeca and De Herdt 2010), border (in)security and neo-secessionist movements (Engelbert 2009, Tomas and Zeller, forthcoming). An interest in border towns has been part of this new wave of research, and in many ways it has fed off each of the emergent strands (Dobler 2009a, Zeller 2009). Whether the objects of study are moving through border spaces or are located at the physical boundary, the towns themselves occupy an important position. Border cities and towns are, however, typified by profound ambiguities. They are often associated with acute poverty and desperation where those without alternatives frequently wash up - a feature that is thrown into sharper relief when the city also happens to be a national or regional capital (Raeymaekers 2014). But at the same time, they occupy strategic positions within regional trading systems, which means that private fortunes and public reputations alike are made there. And where there is a bustling border town, the chances are that there is a twin close-by. The twinning metaphor is not one that finds universal favour, and Jan Buursink has canvassed some possible alternatives - such as companion, neighbouring and transborder cities (Buursink 2001, 15-17). With respect to Africa, and arguably elsewhere as well, the alternatives are not necessarily a great improvement or they obscure the fundamental point that these conurbations share a high degree of inter-relatedness based on kinship as well as common economic ties. In Africa, there is almost no twinning at the institutional level, and municipal and district authorities are actively discouraged from communicating directly with one another: it almost all happens 'from below'.<sup>2</sup> In real life, twins do not always look so similar despite the fact that they share the circumstances of their conception - and much the same could be said of border towns in Africa where the siblings in question assume different shapes and sizes. But the crucial point is that they generally bear the hallmarks of their inter-relatedness.

Twin cities/towns cannot be considered as an inevitable by-product of the existence of international borders. It is just as often the case that borders run through physical wilderness where very few people live - which may be a consideration in the positioning of the border in the first place - or settlements may have their backs turned towards one another. To talk of twin cities/towns, therefore, implies not merely that urban settlements exist side by side, but also that they feed off one another in an active sense (Buursink 2001) - whether that be through the circulation of goods, the movement of people or the exchange of ideas and cultural practices. The twin city phenomenon is perhaps most familiar from the United States/Mexico interface where substantial conurbations have emerged along the length of the border (Nugent 2012, 557-571). In Africa, there are instances of border towns existing on one side only, but where towns do face each across the line they have generally not had their backs turned to one another, but have emerged out of mutually-embedded relationships. This partly reflects the limitations of state initiatives to manage space and partly the skill with which populations have woven their livelihood strategies around the existence of borders.

In Africa, there is a much wider spectrum of cases than along the United States/Mexico border. There are only a handful of true twin-cities, but there are examples of cities that have a much smaller sibling on the other side. And there are many more examples of twin towns, of more modest proportions, that have developed in an intimate relationship with one another. In the majority of

cases, we are talking of 'duplicated' rather than 'partitioned' cities/towns (Buursink 2001, 7-8), although this is often complicated by the fact that settlements have themselves relocated after the creation of a border - typically from one river bank to the next - creating an illusion of partition. One point that emerges strongly from recent research is that size can be a misleading indicator of significance. Smaller urban settlements are often remarkably well-networked and often derive their considerable dynamism from linking the local and the regional to the global (Dobler 2009b). In this article, therefore, we want to cover the broad spectrum of peripheral urbanism, but with a particular focus on settlements that face each across an international border and whose fates have been intertwined in various ways. In the first section, we identify some of the factors that have been instrumental in shaping the twin-town phenomenon in Africa. In order to deepen the analysis, we then proceed to consider two sets of regional examples in greater detail. The first is drawn from East Africa, taking the two Busias, Malabas and Lwakhkhas on the Uganda/Kenya border. The second concerns West Africa with a particular focus on Lomé in Togo and Aflao in Ghana alongside a number of smaller towns.

### 1. The Configuration of Twin Towns and Cities in Africa

Across Africa, there are quite distinct variants of the twin town/city phenomenon (see Table One). West-Central Africa provides the only example in the world of two capital cities that face onto each other. Kinshasa, capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Brazzaville, capital of the Republic of Congo, together constitute a vast urban complex of some 13 million people, which makes it significantly larger than greater London or Paris. There are also five other cases where a capital city is located on an international border: namely Lomé (Togo), Bangui (Central African Republic), N'djaména (Chad), Maseru (Lesotho) and Gaborone (Botswana). In the case of Gaborone, the issue of twin towns does not arise because the South African side of the border is essentially devoid of population. But in each of the other cases, there are towns of some size located across the line, whose existence owes something to the more substantial neighbour. Hence, the market at Kousseri (Cameroun) has provisioned N'djaména on the opposite bank of the Chari river. There is a similar relationship between Zongo (DRC) and Bangui that face each other across the Congo River (Bennafla 2002).<sup>3</sup>

Then there are many more cases where secondary cities, which may also be regional capitals, meet at an international border, such as Goma and Gisenyi in the DRC and Rwanda respectively. And finally, there are countless instances of border towns of a more modest size that are located on either side of the international border. The dynamism of medium-sized border towns emerges very clearly from Bennafla's detailed study of trade along Cameroun's borders - especially in the north where such towns were consolidated through a system of rotating markets specializing in different commodities (Bennafla 2002). In some cases, as we will see in the second part of this article, twin towns share the same name - such as Busia-Uganda and Busia-Kenya, Moyale-Ethiopia and Moyale-Kenya or Kerawa-Cameroun and Kerawa-Nigeria. This is a clear indication of a historic connection between neighbouring settlements that may have constituted a single settlement before the border was drawn or have emerged as a response to its existence. But even where towns might bear distinct names, or have changed their names, the bonds between one town and the other are often extremely strong - typically based on notions of a shared history, kinship and self-interest. In this article, we seek to account for the emergence of twin towns in Africa and to expose some of their internal dynamics.

**Table One: Variants on Twin Cities and Towns in Africa Today**

Type	Twins	Population 1990 (or other year)	Population 2014 (or other year)
Capital to Capital	Kinshasa (DRC) &	Kinshasa 3.7 mn	Kinshasa 11.1 mn

	Brazzaville (Rep. of Congo)	Brazzaville 0.7 mn	Brazzaville 1.8 mn
Capital to Town	1. Lomé (Togo) & Aflao (Ghana)  2. Bangui (CAR) & Zongo (DRC)  3. N'djaména (Chad) & Kousseri	1. Lomé 450,000, Aflao 20,904 (1984)  2. Bangui, 427,435 (1988), Zongo (unknown)  3. N'djaména 500,000, Kousseri 53,713 (1987)	1. Lomé 1,449,284 (2010) Aflao 50,699 (2010)  2. Bangui 622,771 (2003) & Zongo 32,516 (2012)  3. N'djaména 1.2 mn Kousseri 89,123(2005)
City to City (examples only)	1. Goma (DRC) & Gisenyi (Rwanda)  2. Bukavu (DRC) & Cyangugu (Rwanda)	1. Goma 109,904, (1994), Gisenyi 22,156 (1991)  2. Bukavu, 201,569 (1994), Cyangugu 9,693 (1991)	1. Goma 1mn (est.) Gisenyi 126,706 (2012)  2. Bukavu (est.) 832,000 Cyangugu 27,416 (2012)
Town to Town (examples only)	1. Busia-Uganda & Busia-Kenya  2. Malaba-Uganda & Malaba-Kenya  3. Katima Mulilo (Namibia) & Sesheke (Zambia)  4. Malanville (Benin) & Gaya (Niger)	1. Busia-Uganda 27,967 (1991) Busia-Kenya 20,781 (1989)  2. Malaba-Uganda 7,577 (2002) Malaba-Kenya 7,302 (1999)  3. Katima Mulilo 13,377 (1991) Sesheke 5,390  4. Malanville 21,185 Gaya 14,868 (1988)	1. Busia-Uganda: 55,958 Busia-Kenya: 40,740 (2009)  2. Malaba-Uganda: 18,244 (2009) Malaba-Kenya: 16,480 (2009)  3. Katima Mulilo 28,200 (2011) Sesheke (pop unknown: district total 94,612 in 2010)  4. Malanville 43,939 (2010) Gaya 37,988 (2010)

Source: Figures for West Africa is based on the re-calculated figures of OECD, Africapolis/SWAC-OECD 2014. See [http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=SAH\\_URBA\\_LATLON\\_V3%20](http://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=SAH_URBA_LATLON_V3%20) We are grateful for permission to use these. The other figures are derived from two main data sets: <http://www.geohive.com> and <http://www.citypopulation.de/>. These have cross-referenced against [http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/wallcharts/WUP\\_2014%20Urban%20Agglomerations%20Wallchart.pdf](http://esa.un.org/unpd/wup/wallcharts/WUP_2014%20Urban%20Agglomerations%20Wallchart.pdf); <http://www.stat-togo.org/content/pdf/rgph4-tg-vol1-tab2.1.pdf>; and [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010\\_phc/Zambia/PreliminaryReport.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sources/census/2010_phc/Zambia/PreliminaryReport.pdf)

### 1.1. The Making of Twin Cities and Twin Towns

Twin towns have a 'pre-history' in Africa, but not in a manner that reveals particularly deep continuities. In the West African Sahel, twin towns were typically located within the boundaries of a single kingdom or empire, where the court of the ruler would be separated - both physically and symbolically - from the town associated with the Muslim traders, whose networks often extended across hundreds of miles (Loimeier 2013). Where regimes sought to secure an unstable border through planned settlement, as in the case of the walled towns on the southern margins of the Sokoto Caliphate, this was based on the presumption that there was nothing - except raw heathenism - on the other side. In Eastern Africa, towns and markets at the edge of the Great Lakes mediated the commercial engagement between different political centres. But there was typically a multiplicity of inter-related settlements rather than a straightforward dualism. Finally, across the continent, river crossings provided a convenient point at which rulers could regulate the movement of people and tax goods, but this did not of itself require much of an administrative presence. Riverain populations, whether along the lower Congo or the Zambezi, often enjoyed a close relationship with the people on the other bank, whilst resisting control by competing political centres (McGregor 2009, Gongola 1996). But stable urban conglomerations did not generally emerge. Before the colonial period, therefore, it is difficult to think of precise equivalents of the contemporary twin-town phenomenon. It was the dynamics unleashed by the demarcation of colonial borders that brought some of the potentialities of existing settlements into play.

### **(1) Colonial Legacies: Administrative, Fiscal and Commercial Logics**

The reasons why particular twin cities/towns took shape where they did has everything to do with colonial logics that were as much fiscal as administrative in nature. Other things being equal, the choice of a colonial capital was based on convenience. The choice of port cities, such as Mogadishu or Accra, as capitals hinged on their existing infrastructure and connectivity. This also meant that they did not necessarily stand in any geographical proximity to the borders that were defined at the close of the nineteenth century and properly demarcated in the twentieth. Bathurst (Banjul) was a singular case because by controlling the mouth, as well as both banks, of the Gambia River, the British aimed to obviate the possibility of a rival emerging. Lomé was distinctive for a different reason, namely that it was not located on a river and was not previously a port of any significance.

When it comes to Africa's inland river systems, colonial logics were rather more conducive to the emergence of the twin city/town. Colonial regimes had a penchant for locating capitals along rivers, because they were more readily accessible by boat before the advent of the railway and all-weather roads. As it happened, they also found rivers to be a convenient instrument for partitioning territory. The combined effect was that a number of Africa's colonial capitals were located along rivers that also constituted the international border. Such was the case with Bangui, N'djaména, and Maseru. In these instances, what was located on the other side of the river was not another city, but a rather peripheral region without any great demographic weight.<sup>4</sup> The exception was where river settlements represented nodes within a system of regional markets, as was the case along stretches of the Congo River. In these instances, the creation of an administrative centre on one side of the border would often stimulate the demand for goods in markets on the opposite bank. The one example of genuine twin cities is provided by Léopoldville (Kinshasa) and Brazzaville, which provided the capitals for the Belgian and French Congo respectively. The decision by the Belgians and the French to locate their capitals opposite each other arose from the simple geographical reality that the Congo River afforded the optimal means of transportation for both colonial powers. The chosen location was at the point where the river became navigable - that is above the falls. The river was relatively narrow at this point, although wide enough for the two regimes to maintain a safe distance, while the existence of the Malebo Pool made the waters there much less turbulent. The twin capitals that were created according to administrative convenience, but they developed on the basis of an intimate relationship between populations on the two sides. This, in turn, drew on older networks of trade. Before the Second World War, Kinshasa was fed by produce coming from the other bank, while consumer

goods were traded in the opposite direction. Much of the population in the two cities made a living from the transportation and sale of goods from one side to the other, a trade that ebbed and flowed according to the vagaries of supply, pricing and currency differentials. There is also an abundant body of literature which points to the close cultural ties between the two cities, most notably with respect to sport, music and religious observance (Gongola 1996, Martin 1995). Congolese music, properly called, was actually a co-production of musicians and entrepreneurs from the twin cities and came to be enjoyed in both locations (Stewart 2000). It is impossible, therefore, to understand the dynamics of either city without recognizing a profound embeddedness in the cultural and economic life of the other.

Aside from the siting of capital cities, colonialism was also conducive to the creation of secondary towns that were located along borders. Early colonial states sought to balance the books by controlling key choke-points along internal trade routes and then taxing the commodities that passed through. Even before the borders were properly demarcated, military and administrative posts were established along lines that existed only on maps and in treaties. Many of these subsequently developed into full-fledged administrative centres. Where competition between the Europeans was intense, there was often a tit-for-tat process of creating administrative posts. This 'mirroring' dynamic is apparent from the Great Lakes region where fierce competition between Belgium and Germany eventually culminated in the Hecq-Bethe agreement of 1899. Gillian Mathys observes that the need to prove some form of 'effective occupation' led to a competitive process of establishing colonial posts along what became the Congo-Rwanda border. She writes that:

The Hecq-Bethe agreement explains why posts often mirrored each other and the current spatial outlines of the Goma/Gisenyi and Bukavu/Cyangugu as twin cities. When one post was established, the other colonizing power had to establish a post on the other side of the border, with an equal military strength, in order to secure territorial claims (Mathys 2014, 127-8).

Hence she notes that the Congo Free State's establishment of Cyangugu was a direct response to the German occupation of Shangi, while the creation of Goma in 1906 was a riposte to the creation of a German post at Gisenyi the previous year. Once created, these particular administrative posts evolved into substantial towns, whose relationship was based on administrative imperatives as well as the need to channel labour and regulate trade. The importance of Goma, in particular, derived largely from its role in directing Rwandan labour to settler farms in Kivu (eastern DRC today). On the other hand Bukavu, which was initially far larger than Goma, prospered by being selected as the capital of Kivu District in the interwar period (Mathys 2014, 229). At the moment of independence, the administrative logics scarcely altered. Capital cities located on borders grew apace, while regional capitals continued to be regarded as important for anchoring state structures in the borderlands. In a country as vast as the DRC, regional capitals necessarily developed according to their own dynamic, sucking in population from the surrounding areas.

## **(2) Post-Colonial Developments: The Catalytic Role of Trade**

During the colonial period, some of the impetus for the emergence of twin towns arose from differential tax regimes. The resulting price differentials turned smuggling into a profitable pursuit. During the Second World War, the shortage of basic commodities, which were typically more acute in the French colonies than in the British ones, also played a role at a critical juncture. To some extent also, the movement of peoples back and forth across the line in order to avoid paying direct taxes contributed to the emergence of safe havens within border zones. But it is above all in the post-colonial period that divergent economic policies created the incentives to engage in cross-border trade, and thereby generated the phenomenon of border towns that thrived on contraband.

There were several factors at work here. The first was the collapse of a number of federations in the decade on either side of independence in the early 1960s, yielding a multiplicity of independent states pursuing essentially competitive economic policies. Whereas the former French colonies in West Africa (with the exception of Guinea) and in Equatorial Africa remained tied to France through adoption of the CFA franc, the former British and Belgian colonies established their own central banks and independent currencies. The latter became overvalued when governments responded to economic constraints by simply printing more banknotes. Amongst the most extreme instances were those of Ghana in the 1970s and Zaire (now the DRC) under Mobutu. Secondly, the larger states generally sought to build national industries from behind tariff walls, and based on subsidies derived from a range of taxes on export crops, thereby necessitating the creation of harder borders. For the micro-states that enjoyed access to the sea, industrialization was not a realistic option, but the re-export of consumer goods certainly was. This provided an incentive for traders to establish themselves in close proximity to the borders, channeling contraband goods into neighbouring territory and despatching cash crops in the opposite direction (Golub 2012). The rulers of the micro-states along the West African littoral - notably the Gambia, Benin and Togo - had no incentive to discourage the contraband economy, which brought in Customs revenue and secured livelihoods for much of the population. Hence there was a coincidence between popular livelihood strategies based on cross-border trade and the fiscal interests of the states in question.

Thirdly, the OPEC oil price hikes led to an acute economic crisis in a number of countries. Ironically, the countries that benefited from the oil price hikes, most notably Nigeria, opted to subsidize petrol prices for their own populations, which provided an additional stimulus to engage in smuggling. The development of twin towns along the Nigeria-Benin border was a manifestation of the second and the third dynamics at work: that is relatively expensive Nigerian manufactured goods, by comparison with those entered through the Beninois port of Cotonou, and subsidized petroleum prices created the ideal conditions for the development of the contraband economy. The other well-documented case is that of Zaire (DRC) under Mobutu where low producer prices for cash crops (MacGaffey 1987, 113, Mukoya 1991),<sup>5</sup> a worthless currency and consumer shortages were accompanied by the decomposition of the national economy and the elaboration of dense networks of international exchange. Border towns developed a close relationship with their counterparts in neighbouring countries, and these were in turn linked into a truly international trade in minerals and cash crops. Whereas the thinking behind economic nationalism had envisaged development radiating outwards from the capital, by the early 1980s Africa's main cities were often in a decrepit state, whereas urban centres closer to the border were often booming on the basis of their strategic role in regional trading complexes. The era of Structural Adjustment removed some of the economic rents that resulted from overvalued currencies and consumer shortages, but it did not alter the underpinning logics of cross-border trade. Indeed, trade liberalization often provided a spur to commerce in border regions, as Olivier Walther demonstrates for the three towns of Malanville (Benin), Gaya (Niger) and Kamba (Nigeria) and the twin settlements of Birni N'Konni (Niger) and Illela (Nigeria) (Walther 2008, Walther 2014, 188).<sup>6</sup>

More recently, African countries have come to embrace regional integration agendas that seek to achieve a better integration into the global economy through large-scale investments in infrastructure and tariff reductions. In the process, the trade across borders has assumed new dimensions. Bridge crossings, railheads and trucking stops are helping to give some established border towns a new lease of life, while leading to the emergence of others. A good example of the transformative power of infrastructure is on the border between Namibia and Zambia where the bridging of the Zambezi River in 2004 has led to a substantial increase in traffic from the Zambian Copperbelt along the transport corridor to Walvis Bay, thereby creating a boom-town effect in Katimo Mulilo (Namibia) and to a lesser extent in Sesheke (Zambia) on the opposite side of the river (Zeller 2009). The picture is more mixed at the border between Zambia and the DRC where the Copperbelt itself straddles the

boundary. Chililabombwe, which is set back from the border, is located at the northern railhead of the Zambian railway. Its population is estimated to have risen from 48,055 in 1990 to 77,818 in 2010.<sup>7</sup> An improved road leads from Chililabombwe to Lubumbashi, the largest city in the southern DRC. Set hard against the border, on the DRC side, is Kasumbalesa whose growth in recent years has derived from its position along a vital trade corridor that handles around 500-600 trucks a day.<sup>8</sup> The perennial delays at the border crossings, here and elsewhere, have created opportunities for people selling services of various kinds.

Connective infrastructure has not merely been important for extractive industries and for long-distance trucking of consumer goods, but equally so for more localized cross-border trading networks. Some traders who specialize in sourcing cheaper goods from China have set up well-stocked stores at the border. Hence, Gregor Dobler has shown how the Namibian border town of Oshikango has experienced its own mini-boom based on shoppers crossing through the Angolan border town of Namacunde to acquire commodities more cheaply from Chinese stores (Dobler 2008). It matters that taxes vary significantly between one African country and the next. Hence, the Rwandan state taxes petroleum significantly more than its counterpart in the DRC, which creates an incentive to spirit it across the border. In an article that compares petroleum trading in Goma and Gisenyi, Hugh Lamarque observes that Goma has prospered from the substantial border trade more than Gisenyi. In Gisenyi, the sale of petroleum products is heavily controlled (and taxed), whereas in Goma it is scarcely regulated by the state at all. While Goma might be seen as disorderly by comparison with its Rwandan twin, it is also seen as a place of more abundant opportunities (Lamarque 2014). The patterns of uneven urban growth to some extent reflect this balance of advantages.

### **(3) Refugees and Displaced Peoples**

In the decades immediately after independence, the flow of migrants across borders, which had been actively encouraged by colonial regimes, continued unabated. The relatively new element was the flight of populations from conditions of insecurity. This began with the messy end to the Belgium empire in the Great Lakes region, continued with civil wars in the Nigeria and the Horn in the 1970s, and in more recent times has been compounded by the Rwandan genocide and its knock-on effects in DRC - to mention only some of the most obvious cases. A common pattern is one in which people fleeing conflict simply relocate with kin on the other side of the border - as has happened repeatedly on the Senegal (Casamance) border. A more common pattern is one in which refugees have been formally registered with UNHCR and been moved into camps - as happened when refugees fled from Bangui to Zongo in 2001. Whereas camps are based on the logic of cordoning off the refugee population, the first pattern has been more conducive to the growth of permanent towns.

Conflicts also create internally-displaced persons who often move to urban centres in search of greater security. This has been a major factor in the growth of towns along the Rwanda/DRC border since the Rwandan genocide. Supporters of the ousted Rwandan regime relocated to the Kivus in the DRC, thereby sparking a series of linked conflicts between notional indigenes and Tutsi 'strangers' in which the Rwandan army was directly involved.<sup>9</sup> In 2002, Goma is estimated to have had a population of 250,000 people, but at the time of writing it is thought to have risen to no less than a million - the great surge coming from people escaping the fighting in rural North Kivu. Across the Rwandan border, where conditions have been stable since the coming to power of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) regime, Gisenyi is estimated to have a much smaller population of 106,335.<sup>10</sup> In the other pairing of Bukavu and Cyangugu, the relative order of magnitude is very similar. Whereas Bukavu, the main city in South Kivu, is estimated to have a population of 832,000, the population of Cyangugu across the border is estimated at only 63,000. The upheavals in South Kivu again account in large part for the surge in the urban population in DRC. For the Rwandan authorities, who have

been party to the conflict, it has been important to contain the fighting in DRC which might partially explain why the demographic growth has been significantly slower in Cyangugu and Gisenyi.

To briefly summarize, there are a number of different dynamics that we have identified in the sedimentation of border towns. These were rooted, firstly, in administrative-cum-fiscal logics - whether arising from the need to find the most convenient site for the location of a colonial or regional capital or from the imperative to regulate the movement of people and goods. Secondly, some border towns grew up around the opportunities for trade that borders often presented, especially in the decades following independence when the financial returns from smuggling multiplied. Thirdly, some border towns acquired their significance from the channeling of human flows: most especially labour migrants, displaced persons and refugees. Fourthly, border towns grew up at specific nodes along roads and railways at the points where these crossed colonial and post-colonial borders. This list, which is not exhaustive, captures cognate phenomena that have been identified right across the continent. But it would be difficult to sustain a typology of border towns on the basis of these distinctions, for the simple reason that in concrete instances the dynamics have been interwoven in complex ways. Hence, as we have indicated, the founding of administrative centres often stimulated trade in settlements located across the borderline. Again, in recent times displaced peoples and migrants have often converged on administrative centres because of the greater personal security that these afford. Some border towns embody more of one dynamic than another. This is also true of towns that face each other across the line: for example, a city like N'djaména has grown by virtue of its role as the capital, while Kousseri's more modest expansion is almost entirely a consequence of the possibilities for trade that its neighbour presents. But their emergence as closely related settlements has to be understood in terms of the interplay between the dynamics in question which have shaped each other's trajectories as cities and towns.

## **2. Twin Towns on the Uganda-Kenya Border: Busia, Malaba, Lwakhakha**

Having sketched out some of the dynamics that have helped to shape twin cities and towns across Africa, we turn now to two regional case-studies and some specific cases within them. The first case-study is from East Africa, and focuses on twin towns along the Uganda-Kenya border. In neither country is the capital city located close to the international border, even if Kampala is situated on the edge of Lake Victoria. The southern Uganda-Kenya borderlands are demographically dense, but the variant of peripheral urbanism that has emerged here is one on which border towns have remained relatively small: indeed, the towns in question do not make the top ten in either country.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, they have played an important role within regional commercial flows and national governance structures. The three pairings we will consider - Busia, Malaba and Lwakhakha - share the fact that they are the approved border posts on the southern border between Uganda and Kenya. All the commercial traffic that passes from Kenya through Uganda to Rwanda, South Sudan and the DRC transits through these three towns. The first two are classic examples of 'connected' cities/towns (Buursink 2001, 8) whose fortunes have been transformed by infrastructural investments.

This case-study provides a good illustration of the way in which colonial administrative logics played themselves out. The border was settled between Uganda and Kenya in 1902. Although British administrators governed both colonies, they did not always see eye to eye. The Ugandan administration and the Bagisu people, who wished to be administered together with the related Babukusu people in Kenya, hoped to one day shift the border back to the Nzoia river where it had once been located.<sup>12</sup> But unlike on the northern section of the border, where the line was actually re-drawn to conform to an ethnic boundary between the Karamoja and the Turkana, the southern border became fully entrenched.<sup>13</sup> The contours of the border were shaped by the existence of pre-colonial market towns and the presence of rivers that could be used to define the international boundary. Situated between Lake Victoria and Mount Elgon, Busia was the perfect location for the development

of a market, because producers from different ecological zones - fishermen from the Lake Victoria and farmers from the surrounding area - could gather there to exchange their products. Such an intermediary position, enhanced by the flat landscape, was convenient also for the establishment of a colonial border. By contrast, Malaba and Lwakhakha further to the north were each located on two sides of a river that constituted the border. Indeed, Malaba derived its very name from the river.

The practical effect of the border was felt locally only a few decades later, particularly with the construction of border posts in the 1930s. Following a familiar pattern, the Ugandan administration responded to a Kenyan decision to establish posts on their side of the line by following suit.<sup>14</sup> Administrative reforms completely changed the organization of power in the region, imposing a modification of the Buganda system on the Uganda side of the border that was different to what prevailed in Kenya.<sup>15</sup> In addition, the trajectory of the towns was influenced by larger administrative processes. The proximity of Malaba-Uganda to Tororo meant that the former developed in the shadow of the larger and more important district capital. This affected its growth, even if its central role was guaranteed by the presence of the border itself. Lwakhakha was favoured by its northern position close to Mount Elgon. But at the same time its remoteness, and the difficulty of the terrain, negatively affected the development of its infrastructure. Indeed this has remained the main obstacle to its development to this day.<sup>16</sup> Despite diverging priorities between the regimes on the two sides of the border, the region became mutually economically dependent through a common communication system for East Africa, arising out of the construction of the Uganda Railway. The result was the creation of new towns and communities, which reflected the fact the borders not only divided some people who were already there,<sup>17</sup> but also attracted new settlers. This served to create much more mobile and heterogeneous communities. In addition, the railway made the margins central to the thinking of the states concerned. For Uganda especially, Kenya provided the main, and at times the single, gateway to the external world. Here, we can witness the ways in which administrative and economic logics fed off one another.

In the decades after independence, the trajectory of the border towns was profoundly influenced by the interplay between political and economic processes. The two Busias became the largest and the least peripheral of the three towns considered. They were centres of trade, where a single community predominated.<sup>18</sup> Busia-Uganda thrived thanks to a trade in fish from Lake Victoria,<sup>19</sup> and to some services that were not present on the other side of the line, such as the bus park and the existence of a formal market.<sup>20</sup> Generally the twin towns evolved in parallel. After independence, the business of Busia-Uganda began to thrive and the town, which had been very small, started to show some signs of expansion. However, it developed at a slower pace than its Kenyan sibling, which derived some of its stimulus from the more rapid commercial development of western Kenya. In general, the flow of population across the border was not impeded, and both towns tended to benefit from a high level of mobility.

#### INSERT UGANDA/KENYA MAP ABOUT HERE

The turning point was the military coup that brought Idi Amin to power in Uganda in 1971. The economic collapse that followed the pursuit of a series of disastrous policies, including the expulsion of the Asians, led to the emergence of *magendo* (Prunier 1983) – a term that covered a range of activity from engagement in the black market to smuggling. In Amin's time, the borderland was characterized by a paradox: because of the paralysis of the Ugandan economy, some unofficial activities flourished, most notably the smuggling of coffee (dubbed the 'black gold'). This brought some wealth to the border towns, which served as the transit points for the contraband trade with Kenya (Wekesa 2010). But at the same time, an attempt by the regime to crack down on smuggling, coupled with Amin's revival of the 'old' border dispute with Kenya, brought with it a military presence and hence greater risks to cross-border traders.<sup>21</sup> Although some profited - and in a sense

the risks were proportional to the economic rents - this was not really reflected in the built environment because to invest in property risked attracting unwelcome attention. The wisest thing to do was to trade with Busia-Uganda and invest in Busia-Kenya. It is only in the past few decades that Busia-Uganda has started manifesting the outward signs of development, and even more recently that it has exhibited a demographic growth comparable to that in Kenya. It now boasts many double-storey buildings, well-stocked stores and services befitting a provincial centre.<sup>22</sup> These new buildings are a consequence of the increased presence of both traders and government employees. The apparently larger and more developed town of Busia-Kenya has benefited from the same conjuncture between its centrality in commerce and its own role as an administrative centre. It boasts many more stores and an impressive multi-story hotel that towers over the border crossing.<sup>23</sup>

Although local government structures have been important for the demographic growth and spatial layout of these border towns, the central bureaucracy has also established a more visible presence in response to the increased flows of both people and goods. In the early 1990s, Immigration statistics reveal that far more people officially arrived and left Uganda through the Busia and Malaba border crossings than through the national airport in Entebbe. The presence of the Revenue Authorities - which embrace Customs, and Immigration, to mention only the frontline state agencies - has played no small part in the expansion of the Busia and Malaba twin towns. By contrast, the two settlements called Lwakhakha still feel like small outposts.

**Table Two: Arrivals and Departures Through Entebbe, Busia and Malaba , 1992-1994**

Year	Arrivals from Kenya			Departures to Kenya		
	<i>Entebbe</i>	<i>Busia</i>	<i>Malaba</i>	<i>Entebbe</i>	<i>Busia</i>	<i>Malaba</i>
1992	61,726	59,899	36,994	61,109	65,556	39,557
1993	74,427	71,652	53,002	73,206	80,877	53,636
1994	102,838	78,074	61,898	97,896	92,814	59,033

Source: Uganda. *Migration and Tourism Statistics* (Busia, Entebbe and Malaba), 1995.

At the present time, the importance of these border towns is being considerably enhanced as a consequence of the regional integration agenda pursued by the East African Community (EAC). Alongside the harmonization of Customs and Immigration, substantial investments are being channeled into connective infrastructure, including new road networks and One-Stop Border Posts (OSBPs). This is having a visible impact on the twin towns of Busia and Malaba, albeit in different ways. The two towns of Busia are the most lively, benefiting from the flat terrain and favourable location - even if there is surely more business on the Kenya side. The traffic in Busia is mainly in the form of 'wet' goods, and in particular petroleum, thanks to the relative proximity of Kisumu, one of the hubs for the oil trade in Kenya. A striking difference with Malaba is the much greater number of small-scale smugglers in Busia. Here, a prominent role is played by disabled traders (Ingstad, Whyte 2007, 290), a phenomenon that became more prevalent during Museveni's time.<sup>24</sup> Despite its smaller size, Malaba-Uganda is the headquarters responsible for six Customs sections - that is, along the length of the Eastern border.<sup>25</sup> Its strategic position arises from its proximity to the Northern corridor,<sup>26</sup> which brings goods to South Sudan, a country that is almost entirely dependent on the Uganda route for its trade. Traffic in Malaba is mainly in the form of 'dry' goods,<sup>27</sup> taking some of the pressure off Busia. Its advantage derives from the presence of the railway, which carries trade goods rather than people. The construction of OSBPs at Busia and Malaba<sup>28</sup> further reinforces their importance as focal points for the performance of state- and inter-state regulation. In Malaba, a major infrastructural bottleneck is presented by the bridge across the river, which was built during colonial times and which cannot handle more than a single vehicle at a time. However, a new bridge is under construction, and there has been some success in facilitating the passage of goods and people through this border post. It is anticipated that more traffic will pass through Malaba in the future, bringing further business to the towns of the same name that face each other across the river.

To sum up, several points emerge from the Uganda-Kenya case-study. The first is that the creation of a colonial border, which was far from a random choice, was accompanied by the formation of twin towns that were designed to regulate the flow of people, cattle and goods. These were administrative imperatives, but it is important to recognize that the creation of the border imparted an enhanced significance to settlements that were inserted into much older systems of trade. Secondly, their significant demographic expansion really began with the development of the contraband economy in the 1970s. This was initially more apparent on the Kenya side of the line where there was greater physical security and a more buoyant local economy. Despite the flourishing cross-border trade, endemic insecurity on the Ugandan side tended to discourage entrepreneurs from investing in property in somewhere like Busia-Uganda. Census data would suggest that it is only recently that Busia-Uganda has demographically caught up with, and possibly overtaken, its twin on the other side of the line. Thirdly, the regional integration initiatives being pursued by the EAC have singled out these border towns as the strategic nodes that will link larger regional economies. The connective infrastructure of rail, road and OSBPs is drawing in more traders, but also enhancing the local presence of the state. The built environment in Busia and Malaba is being visibly transformed in the process. If Lwakhakha is upgraded, to better handle the traffic to South Sudan, its own fortunes may be transformed in the future - as indeed may those of Bibia (northern Uganda) and Nimule (South Sudan) where another OSBP is envisaged.

### **3. Twin Towns on the Ghana-Togo Border**

Our second case-study is drawn from the Ghana-Togo border in West Africa. Peripheral urbanism has manifested itself at different scales and in a somewhat different manner to the case we have just considered. First of all, as we have already mentioned, this region provides an example of a capital city, Lomé that is located on an international border, where it almost merges with its much smaller Ghanaian neighbour of Aflao. Secondly, there are a number of other closely related towns strung along this border, even if the phenomenon of towns bearing the same names is less common than in East Africa. Some towns have derived their importance from serving as official border posts, but historically most of the commercial traffic has tended to pass through the single Lomé-Aflao crossing.

As in the case of East Africa, colonial administrative and fiscal logics played a fundamental role in shaping the demography of the borderlands. The extension eastwards of the Gold Coast Colony in 1874 was motivated by a British desire to capture and tax the trade traveling southwards along the Volta River valley. Lomé existed as a series of small fishing villages, whereas Aflao was a coastal port that had been familiar to Atlantic traders in the eighteenth century. Significantly, Lomé was founded by a motley collection of European and African traders seeking to evade Gold Customs duties. This meant that the town was ethnically highly diverse from the start, a pattern that was reinforced by virtue of in-migration in the colonial period (Marguerat 1992). Ultimately, it was administrative logics that proved to be decisive in shaping its growth as a city. In 1897, the Germans transferred their capital from Anécho to Lomé. The city was constructed according to a grid pattern, with a clear differentiation between an administrative quarter and the commercial that pre-dated the arrival of the Germans (Gervais-Lambony 2012, 46-8).<sup>29</sup> By contrast, Aflao expanded in a more organic fashion. The contrast between the planned capital and the unplanned border town is strikingly reflected in satellite maps today. Securing the border was an immediate imperative for both the British and the German authorities. Establishing Customs posts was complicated along the coastal strip, which is broken up by lagoons, but it was considerably easier further north where the Volta River itself constituted the border.<sup>30</sup>

The trajectory of Lomé as a city was shaped not just by its role as the capital city, but as importantly by the development of its port facilities. From Lomé, the Germans constructed three railways to each of the main cash-crop producing zones in the interior. Cocoa, palm products and cotton were shipped out from the wharf at Lomé, which was completed in 1904, while imported goods travelled the other way. After the First World War, France laid claim to Lomé, which had been under British occupation from 1914, on the basis that it provided the only suitable port facilities along the coastline (Nugent 2002, 31). In 1921, the capital and railways were formally conferred upon France, which proceeded to build a new wharf and to re-plan parts of the city. Further north, the British retained a segment of German territory as British Southern Togoland, which required the demarcation of a new borderline east of the Volta. In some cases, closely-related settlements were partitioned in the process. Agotime provides the most obvious instance thereof. What had once been a polity of some regional significance in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was divided into two unequal halves. Kpetoe, the capital was placed in British Togoland, while the majority of the Agotime towns were allocated to French Togoland.

The subsequent history of the border was shaped by two realities: the first was that because the Gold Coast did not levy direct taxes its import duties were generally higher; and the second was that the port of Lomé was considerably closer to the eastern districts of the Gold Coast and British Togoland than its own ports were. British commercial firms therefore chose to channel much of their trade through Lomé. In addition, there was a substantial contraband trade in goods that were more expensive in the Gold Coast - especially Dutch gin, which provided a major source of revenue for the British. Border populations typically purchased the goods that had already cleared Customs in Lomé, and then headloaded them across the border into British territory. Hence, the importance of Kpetoe market was enhanced by the transit of consumer goods through Assahoun in French territory. Finally, although the fate of Lomé was bound up with the re-export trade, it was also the point of departure for migrant workers who made their way to Accra, where the options for paid employment were considerably greater. The combined importance of trade and migration to the Gold Coast, meant that the English language enjoyed considerable currency in Lomé. Here again, we can gain some sense of the ways in which administrative logics were intertwined with other dynamics related to trade and migration.

As in the case of East Africa, the independence years were pivotal in the development of border towns. Whereas the regime of Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana embraced a policy of state-led industrialization, its counterpart in Togo preferred to pursue an entrepôt strategy based on the steady flow of goods through the port at Lomé. The subsequent completion of a deep-water port in 1968 conferred an additional advantage on Lomé. The failure of Nkrumah's socialist programme culminated in the imposition of increasingly stringent import licensing and exchange controls in the 1960s. Under military rule in the 1970s, the crisis deepened further as Ghana's factories laboured under severe shortages of raw materials and spare parts. The lack of consumer goods created the opportunities for traders in the border zone who typically purchased them in Lomé, transported them by lorry to the border, offloaded and headloaded them into Ghana, where they were re-loaded onto trucks on the other side. This relay system depended on the existence of close relations between border populations on either side of the line who worked together to frustrate anti-smuggling operations by the Ghanaian authorities. In addition, some settlements were able to exploit their particular location. In Agotime, the tiny village of Wodome is located on either side of the road that separates Ghana from Togo. At the height of Ghana's crisis, it became a hive of commercial activity as Ghanaians travelled from as far afield as Kumasi to purchase goods and to drink beer on the Togo side of the road. But once the shortages ended, Wodome returned to being a village of no great significance. A crumbling police station on the Togolese side of the road is the remaining visual reminder of a time when Wodome boomed.

## INSERT GHANA/TOGO MAP ABOUT HERE

The Lomé free port was notionally intended to facilitate the economic links with the landlocked Sahelian states, but this barely disguised the reality that much of what was imported was really intended for Ghana (Bost 2007). As with Benin in relation to Nigeria, becoming a successful entrepôt state entailed capitalizing on the idiosyncracies of economic policy next door (Igue and Soule 1992, Golub 2012).<sup>31</sup> But it was also part of what enabled the Eyadéma regime, which was always considered by southern Togolese to have usurped power, to establish a modicum of compliance amongst the youth of the capital (and the south more generally) by allowing free rein to the contraband trade. The cloth market in Lomé, which was run entirely by female traders, was inserted into a truly global chain of connectivity (Cordonnier 1987). The cloth was imported from Europe, sold at the market and then redistributed throughout the sub-region. Given the travails of Ghana's own textile factories, much of it was destined for the latter market. Many traders in Lomé either sold cloth directly into Ghana or acted as intermediaries for traders further along the chain. Although the fact that Lomé was the capital was almost bound to lead to some urban growth, it was the economic underpinnings of that growth that mostly explain why it served as a magnet for the rest of the country.

This brings us to some particularities of the twin city/town phenomenon along the Ghana-Togo border. Based on a recent re-calculation of urban growth figures for West Africa, Olivier Walther concludes that border market towns are demographically "indistinguishable from other population centres based on a strictly demographic criterion" (Walther 2014, 160). The main exception is along the coastal strip that runs from Lagos through Lomé/Aflao to south-eastern Ghana, where the acceleration of urban agglomeration has been closely associated with the elaboration of regional trade networks. The five-fold expansion of Lomé in the two decades between 1960 and 1980 undoubtedly reflected the overwhelming importance of cross-border trade. Although some formal employment was created around the industrial zone from the 1990s, Lomé became a magnet for people who carved out a living in the informal sector. Merchants, small-scale traders, currency changers, head porters, drivers, bar and storekeepers came to depend on the border for their livelihoods and accumulation strategies. In the last two decades, the population of Lomé has doubled again, reaching an estimated 1.5 million inhabitants. The same pattern of rapid and sustained growth is apparent in Aflao. The population of what was once a small town grew by 342% between 1970 and 2000 at a time when the population of Ghana as a whole expanded at a rate of 221%. In fact, Aflao grew faster than metropolitan Accra (266%) and Kumasi (338%) over the same time period. This almost certainly reflects the movement into Aflao of people who sought to make a living from working the border. Traders in Aflao have always enjoyed close kin relations with their counterparts in Lomé. The manner in which Aflao has expanded in recent times partly reflects the presence of a large array of state actors, given that is Ghana's most strategic border crossing. But it is also a consequence of the fact that, following the political turmoil in Togo in the 1990s, Lomé came to be regarded as an unsafe place to live. Hence many chose to reside in Aflao while conducting business in Lomé. The destinies of the two conurbations continue, therefore, to be thoroughly intertwined.

However, as one moves inland a different picture emerges that lends support Walther's observation. Strung out along the border, there are small towns that mostly pre-date the demarcation of the border in the mid-1920s. These are home to closely related peoples who have intermarried, traded and shared other social relations even when the borders have been formally closed. Some of these towns have developed on the basis of being designated as border posts through which important roads have been located. Along the Togoland hills, such posts have been located at the most accessible crossing points. Examples would be the twin towns of Wli-Afegame (Ghana) and Yikpa-Dzigbe (Togo), or Leklebi-Dafo (Ghana) and Tomegbe (Togo). But in many cases, the border villages remained very small, with the real towns being set back

from the border. The pattern is somewhat different on the two sides of the line. Because the main trunk road from Aflao to Ho skirts the border, many Ghanaian towns are located on or very close to the line: examples would be Honuta, Shia and Nyive. But in Togo, the main trunk road from Lomé to Kpalimé is located at some distance from the border, with the result that the main towns tend to be set back as well. Nevertheless, the fate of many such towns have often been closely intertwined. Dzodze (Ghana) and Noépé (Togo), with an estimated population of 31,727 and 9,414 respectively in 2010, can reasonably be regarded as twin towns because of their close economic and social relationship. The border post in Ghana is located at Akanu, a tiny village to the south of Dzodze, whereas Noépé itself is set back by a couple of kilometres. But since the 1970s, there has been a vibrant trade in contraband goods linking Noépé and Dzodze. The same would be true of the relationship between Kpedze (Ghana) and Kpadafé (Togo). In partitioned Agotime, Kpetoe (Ghana) continues to host an important market, which sucks in trade from towns on both sides of the border. At the border itself, Batome Junction is a small village in Ghana whose significance derives from being designated as an official border crossing, while a few kilometres into Togo the village of Batoumé is another small settlement that was founded by people from Kpetoe in the nineteenth century. The nearest substantive (non-Agotime) town to Kpetoe is Assahoun, which is located some 15 kilometres from the actual border. But as with Noépé and Dzodze, the commercial towns of Kpetoe and Assahoun have been closely linked through trade. Away from the coast, therefore, the dominant pattern is a proliferation of towns that are plugged into the border economy rather than a concentration of population in a few trading centres.. This partly reflects the fact that the trade at the border has tended to reside in the hands of those who construe themselves as the indigenes. The relay system arose in part because of the reluctance of border populations to permit merchants from outside to dominate local trade.

Finally, as in the East African case, the regional integration initiatives of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are likely to have an impact on border towns that stand to benefit from the redirection of trade and a heightened administrative presence. The Abidjan-Lagos trade corridor, which is by far the most important within the West African sub-region, passes through Lomé/Aflao. Imports entering Lomé and Cotonou reach Burkina Faso and neighbouring Sahelian states by passing through Ghana. Although many smaller vehicles currently travel through other designated border crossings, the heavy-goods traffic has thus far been concentrated on Lomé/Aflao. This pattern is expected to change in the coming years. The Customs posts in Ghana have revenue targets to meet and there is already a policy of redirecting some of the traffic towards smaller posts like Kpoglo. Some of the traders who import Chinese goods from Lomé also prefer to use posts like Batome Junction because of the shorter waiting times.<sup>32</sup> But most importantly, a joint OSBP was opened at Noépé at the end of 2014, with the expectation that more of the heavy-goods traffic will take this alternative route. If this funneling of regional trade has the intended effects, it is likely that Dzodze and Noépé will attract many ancillary services and experience accelerated growth in the coming years.<sup>33</sup>

#### **4. Conclusion**

In this article, we have sought to make a number of points about the trajectory of twin towns and cities in Africa. The first is that history matters. The choices that were made by colonial regimes about where they placed their capitals, where they constructed their roads, railways and ports, and where they established border posts had enduring consequences. But whether, and in what specific ways, border towns came into existence also owed a great deal to the pre-existing political and economic landscape. After independence, the divergent economic policies adopted by African governments similarly had an important bearing on the evolution of patterns of cross-border trade and urban development. The second main point is that Africa reveals markedly different variants on the phenomenon of twin cities/towns. At one end of the spectrum is the vast conurbation of

Kinshasa/Brazzaville, while at the other end lies the pairing of small settlements like Batome Junction and Batoumé on the Ghana-Togo border. In between are very many smaller towns - of which Busia-Uganda/Busia-Kenya and Dzodze/Noepé are prime examples - which have grown in tandem with one another. Towns like Busia-Uganda and Kpetoe have found themselves at the centre of cross-border trade, but have experienced sluggish population growth for periods of time. This would suggest that both the organization of the trade and issues of security have also played a mediating role. A third point is that while administrative logics and trade have been the main drivers in the development of twin cities/towns, it is difficult to disentangle these from migratory flows. Again, the flight of populations from insecurity have also played a significant role in the Great Lakes region and in West-Central Africa. Fourthly, although border towns in Africa have grown considerably since the 1960s, and some have experienced periods of boom, this has typically happened unevenly on two sides of a given border. But, by contrast with the United States/Mexico border, it is difficult to locate a uniform pattern. Whereas on the Kenya/Uganda border, the towns located in the country with the stronger economy have expanded faster, this pattern is reversed on the DRC/Rwanda border. The importance of informal border trade does, however, share some characteristics with the US/Mexico case (Staudt 1998). There is also some similarity between the ways in which aspiring migrants from Mexico converge on trampoline towns at the border, and the way in which displaced populations in Africa become lodged in border spaces. In consequence, none of these points would suggest that there is a need to invent a different typology to cover African manifestations of the twin town phenomenon: it is true that states have had a more limited capacity to mould border spaces, that there is a very broad spectrum of size, and that duplicated cities/towns are the norm, but there is nothing qualitatively different in any of this. This bodes well for future efforts at cross-regional comparison.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Paul Nugent would like to thank the Institute for Advanced Study (IAS) in Princeton where he was based as a member when this paper was written. The authors are especially grateful to Wangyal Shawa, head of the Map and Geospatial Information Center of Princeton University, for creating the maps.

<sup>2</sup> In West Africa, there are a couple of designated trans-boundary development corridors where officials are supposed to work with one another. These are the Sikasso-Korhogo-Bobo Dioulasso corridor which straddles Mali, Côte d'Ivoire, and Burkina Faso; and the Maradi-Katsina-Kano corridor between Niger and Nigeria. But these initiatives remain very much incipient. See the contributions to Enda Diapol (2007).

<sup>3</sup> However, Karine Bennafla (2002, 87) notes that it was Mbaiboum, on the Cameroun border to the west, which became Bangui's source of consumer goods originating from Nigeria and Cameroun.

<sup>4</sup> In the first two cases, the asymmetries were very striking whereas the towns on the South African side of the border were relatively large in relation to Maseru.

<sup>5</sup> In the 1970s, some 40 per cent of the coffee crop was smuggled out of Zaire, with Kivu featuring especially prominently in the illicit trade.

<sup>6</sup> The most recent population estimates for Birni N'Konni was 63,000 and Illela 32,000.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.citypopulation.de/Zambia-Cities.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.trademarksa.org/news/kasumbalesa-border-revenue-50>. There seem to be no reliable population estimates for Kasumbalesa, but Congolese sources claim a population of around 100,000 for the commune as a whole. Satellite maps would tend to confirm that it is significantly bigger than Chililabombwe <http://acpcongo.com/acp/cite-de-kasumbalesa-du-statut-de-cite-a-celui-de-commune-rurale/>

<sup>9</sup> At various points, the Rwandan army was fighting inside Rwanda against the Mayi-Mayi.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.populationdata.net/index2.php?option=pays&pid=183&nom=rwanda>

<sup>11</sup> Population data for the two sides are difficult to compare. We have access to the (provisional) 2014 Uganda Census data, but only 2009 data for the Kenyan side. For the two Busias and the two Malabas these are contained in table 1 above. The Kenyan government did not publish figures for Lwakhakha, while Lwakhakha-Uganda town council has a total of 9,061 inhabitants. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, *The 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census, Volume I A, Population Distribution by Administrative Units*, August 2010; Uganda Bureau of Statistics, *National Population and Housing Census 2014, Provisional Results*, November 2014.

<sup>12</sup> The Bagisu lived in the Mbale area in the Eastern Province of Uganda. Uganda National Archive [UNA], Entebbe, President's Office: Confidential Collection Box 71. C.LAN 4 Boundaries Interterritorial" (1947-1961) and Box 95, CONST 6/5 "Eastern Province - Bugishu" (1959).

<sup>13</sup> The aim was to reduce conflict associated with cattle raiding. UNA, Entebbe, President's Office: Confidential Collection Box 91, C.LAN 43, "Interterritorial Boundaries Uganda/Kenya" (1958-60).

<sup>14</sup> UNA, Entebbe, Provincial Papers Box 6, N122, "Annual Report by the Provincial Commissioner of the Eastern Province for the Year 1931"

<sup>15</sup> Most of the African agents and chiefs used in the region were Baganda, a factor that reshaped Eastern politics, society and economic activities, through the imposition of the Buganda's administrative system; UNA, Entebbe, Box 33, C.022/46, "Native Administration in the E.P." (1938). In Western Kenya, the British attempted to impose chiefs from the more centralized Wanga sub-group on the closely related peoples of Kavirondo (MacArthur, 2016, 46-47).

<sup>16</sup> Poor infrastructure, particularly roads condition, determined the ban over major traffic of goods through Lwakhakha, evidently strongly influencing its development; interview with Nelson Mugisha – Uganda Revenue Authority [URA], Lwakhakha 30 August 2014.

<sup>17</sup> UNA, Entebbe, President's Office: Confidential Collection Box 71. C.LAN 4 Boundaries Interterritorial" (1947-1961) and Box 95, CONST 6/5 "Eastern Province- Bugishu" (1959).

<sup>18</sup> In Busia's area the main ethnic group is the Samia, even if with different variation of the language on the two sides of the border. Interview with Odeke Nicodemus, local retailer, Busia-Uganda 22 August 2014.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Odeke Nicodemus, Busia-Uganda 22 August 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Fabian Okumu, manager of Maryland Inn, Busia-Uganda, 24 August 2014.

<sup>21</sup> The army had orders to shoot the smugglers on the spot. Interview with Odeke Nicodemus, Busia-Uganda, 22 August 2014.

<sup>22</sup> The official statistics for population are possibly misleading because the Ugandan figures would appear to include a larger area than the town proper. The fluctuating and unsecure trajectory of Busia-Uganda is mirrored in its administrative history: originally part of the District of Tororo, Busia gained full District status in 1976, only to be lowered to a sub-District in 1979, before being promoted again into District in July 1997. Interview with Odeke Nicodemus, Busia-Uganda 22 August 2014. UBOS, Busia District 2009; [http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/2009\\_HLG\\_%20Abstract\\_printed/Busia%20District.pdf](http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/2009_HLG_%20Abstract_printed/Busia%20District.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> Hotel Itoya would not be out of place in any capital city.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Odeke Nicodemus, Busia-Uganda 22 August 2014.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Geoffrey Balamaga, regional manager Eastern Customs – URA, Malaba-Uganda 28 August 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Elizabeth Opondo, Principal revenue officer at enforcement and security section, KRA [Kenya Revenue Authority], Malaba-Kenya 29 August 2014.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Geoffrey Balamaga, Malaba-Uganda 28 August 2014.

<sup>28</sup> Malaba's OSBP started working on January 2015; email to Isabella Soi from Masaba Rogers, Malaba-Uganda, 4 March 2015.

<sup>29</sup> By the end of the German period, the current layout was essentially complete (Marguerat 1992, 25).

<sup>30</sup> In this case what was unusual is that both banks of the Volta River were claimed by the Gold Coast Colony.

<sup>31</sup> The other such country was Benin.

<sup>32</sup> These comments are based on informal discussions with Ghana Customs officials at Kpoglo and Batome Junction in October 2014.

<sup>33</sup> This is apparent already in the proliferation of new hotels in Dzodze. Discussion with Noel Kossonou, Afua Eshun, Bright Senam Gowonu, Dela Bani of Borderless Alliance at head office, Accra-Osu, Ghana, 28 October 2014.

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