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Umuahia Cattle Industry and the Organization of the Cattle Market and Trade, 1914-2000

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Abstract- The cattle trade or industry had since the establishment of the cattle market served as one of the most significant economic activities in Umuahia which served the entire Southern Provinces. The Umuahia cattle market within a short period of its establishment had become the distributing centre for the sub-region. Cattle trade gained prominence in this town since before the inception of colonialism. The colonial regime took advantage of this trade to serve as a revenue generating industry. The organization of the cattle market was such that took care of various aspects of the trade; the most important aspect of the trade being the credit and credit recovery system. The network that was created as a result of this trade connected various towns and villages within and outside the Southern Provinces. We have employed various sources in this investigation such as oral, archival and written. We discovered that the cattle trade in this area served as one of the most important economic activity of the people. The cattle market became a Mecca of some sort for many other traders such as Kola nut traders, YanKoli traders and other petty trading. The need for the development of the cattle trade stems from the need of the people of the area for beef. That is to say it developed as a result of existence of the market for beef. The cattle market became the first point of contact between the cattle trading community and the people of the Southern Provinces. The importance of the cattle market and trade reached the most remote part of the Southern Provinces.

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Umuahia Cattle Industry and the Organization of the Cattle Market and Trade, 1914-2000

Haruna Muhammad Suleimuri

Abstract- The cattle trade or industry had since the establishment of the cattle market served as one of the most significant economic activities in Umuahia which served the entire Southern Provinces. The Umuahia cattle market within a short period of its establishment had become the distributing centre for the sub-region. Cattle trade gained prominence in this town since before the inception of colonialism. The colonial regime took advantage of this trade to serve as a revenue generating industry. The organization of the cattle market was such that took care of various aspects of the trade; the most important aspect of the trade being the credit and credit recovery system. The network that was created as a result of this trade connected various towns and villages within and outside the Southern Provinces. We have employed various sources in this investigation such as oral, archival and written. We discovered that the cattle trade in this area served as one of the most important economic activity of the people. The cattle market became a Mecca of some sort for many other traders such as Kola nut traders, YanKoli traders and other petty trading. The need for the development of the cattle trade stems from the need of the people of the area for beef. That is to say it developed as a result of existence of the market for beef. The cattle market became the first point of contact between the cattle trading community and the people of the Southern Provinces. The importance of the cattle market and trade reached the most remote part of the Southern Provinces.

I. INTRODUCTION

The discovery of the commercial viability of this area was to be the main attraction of the people and the subsequent establishment of the cattle trading community and cattle market. This was a gradual process because at first the cattle used to be brought to Umuahia through Abakaliki. It was to change when it was discovered that it was better and more convenient to make Umuahia the base as well as the distributing centre for the cattle trade in the Southern Provinces. This was a position that Umuahia occupied throughout and after colonialism. It came to acquire international status as the market became the centre for which people from countries such as Chad, Niger and Cameroun used to come sale their cattle.

By this time also the community was fully established with its sarki, a mosque and a burial ground. These are necessities that any Hausa/Muslim community cannot do without. The colonial authorities too were aware of these things and used to put them in

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their town planning lay-out. In 1929 a site outside Umuahia Township was in use. A site that had been in use for a very long time was the one in Afaraukwu overlooking the Golden Guinea Breweries. There was however one tradition about the location of the cattle pound or market or kraal. And that was the fact that all had been located near the rail line. That was why attention was drawn by the colonial authorities on the possibility of the cattle crossing the rail line. In citing the cattle pound also such issues as water supply and grazing facilities were of paramount importance.

It is important to note the high level of inter-group relations that went into the activities of the cattle trading community and the people of Umuahia particularly the Ibeku clan. It shows how significant the community had become in Umuahia following many years of existence in the town. After these many years the community had become synonymous with the town, the cattle market that they established was to acquire international status with people coming from far and near to patronize the market.

II. ESTABLISHMENT AND LOCATIONS OF THE CATTLE MARKET C. 1914-1950

The establishment of the cattle market was not analogous with the establishment of the Community as the Community was already established long before the cattle market was established. Available evidence showed that the first people to have settled in Umuahia were hunters then later yankoli (itinerant haberdashers) joined them.¹With these initial members of the community who were living a kind of transhumance life it was not long before they discovered that cattle trade had great potential in the East. They took advantage of this opportunity by bringing the cattle over a long distance. At first the cattle were being trekked from the North through Abakaliki and later with the introduction of railing facilities by the colonialists they were being ferried through the railway lines.

The discovery of the commercial viability of this area was to be the main attraction of the people and the subsequent establishment of the cattle market. This was a gradual process because at first the cattle used to be brought to Umuahia through Abakaliki. It was to change when it was discovered that it was better and more convenient to make Umuahia the base as well as the distributing centre for the cattle trade in the Southern Provinces.

With the establishment of the cattle market there evolved other leadership titles such as SarkinZango who oversee the entire affairs of the cattle market and was appointed by the SarkinHausawa. Another title was SarkinGainakai who oversaw the affairs of the cattle drovers with the cattle from the north and from Cameroon through the mountains passing through Obudu to Abakaliki then to Umuahia. When they reached Umuahia too there were those drovers (Gainakai) who took them into the bush to feed them and made them fit for sale.

With the establishment of the cattle market and the advent of colonialism there were certain things that were added to the function of the SarkinHausawa these

Arrange water supply

Supply ropes and boys leading the cattle

Arranging grazing land with local natives

Feed and lodge the strangers who come with cattle

Settle by payment, if necessary, claims and fines for trespass.²

He was to do all these by collecting the sum of money known as "rope money" or "kudinigiya" per head for each cow amounting to 1/- (one shilling).³ This had become a kind of custom among the community in relation to the cattle market in subsequent years. This was to apply also to the Fatoma who lodged the strangers (fatake) who came with the cattle from the North to Umuahia.

This rope money i.e. kudinigiya caused some dissension between the top shorts of the community in 1929 that led to the invitation by colonial authorities of the SarkiOdodo or Dodo of Elele to come and resolve the problem being the senior sarki in the province (Owerri Province).⁴

The importance of Umuahia in terms of the cattle trade was what made the colonial authorities to take interest in the affairs of the cattle market and the community. In 1929 one Monsieur Chollier who brought a herd down to Umuahia in 1929 estimated that about 10,000 herds had been brought to Umuahia during the past twelve Months (i.e. in 1928).⁵ This was just an estimate and a conservative one at that, if one might add. This was because the Umuahia cattle market was a distributing centre to all parts of the Southern Provinces.

The cattle market had been located at various places within the Umuahia township area as well as at some of the neighbouring Ibeku villages such as Afaraukwu and Afarata (Amuzukwu) all within the Ibeku clan villages. In 1928 when the cattle arrived from the North they were usually brought to the Township and kept at night on a portion of land close to the Hausa quarters. This was when the cattle market (gariki) was located at Hausa/Eket Street over the rail. This place had already been earmarked to be used as native building sites.⁶

In 1929 with the problem between SarkiMallamOseni and Musa MadakiKazallaha there was the establishment of another garke or gariki site by Musa Kazallaha south of the Railway Station, this was near the Goods Shed area and buyers also patronized this market. One such persons was Monsieur Chollier who had in 1928 given his men some cattle to take to the site controlled by MallamOseni where they had to pay 1/- to SarkiOseni and 1/- to the man they lodged with i.e. the Fatoma. On this particular occasion in 1929 he went to Musa and had to pay only 1/- to Musa alone. The colonial authorities were in favour of Monsieur Chollier going to Musa as he had to pay only 1/- claiming that he had gone to the cheaper man.⁷

Because of this problem of division among the community involving the Sarki and one of the strong men of the community the colonial authorities became worried and wanted to resolve the matter before it escalated to violence. For them to do that they decided to invite the most senior sarki in Owerri Province at that time in the person of SarkiMallamOdodo or Dodo of Elele. Another sarki that was following SarkiOdodo in seniority was that of Port Harcourt in the person of SarkiMallamAlilu or Halilu. So that in event where SarkiOdodo cannot come to Umuahia to help resolve the problem SarkiAlilu would come instead. During this time Elele, Okigwi, Port Harcourt, Aba, Bende i.e. Umuahia were all under Owerri Province.⁸

SarkiOdodo of Elele accepted the invitation by the colonial authorities, which was more a command than invitation, and went to Umuahia on the 3rd June 1929 via Owerri and Aba.⁹ Details of what he did and how he did resolve the problem was not given. Details of what he did to bring the two people SarkiMallamOseni and Musa Kazallaha to settle their differences was not known but it appeared that after that visit there was no more problem.

On many occasions the cattle market had had to be relocated, in many instances as a result of the fact that the town had grown to meet it. This was why one finds many instances of the cattle market being relocated or new sites being proposed for the new cattle market. Because of the tendency of towns to grow also there were various plans by the Town Planning Authority to extend the township.

In 1929 another cattle pound was proposed to be located at Ishiama(Afara) end of the proposed extension of the native location.¹⁰ Plots were also laid out for the Hausa drovers to build their houses as they had to live close to the cattle pound. By this time Umuahia had grown in importance to the colonial authorities in view of the revenue that they got from cattle trade and many other related trades. In 1923 there was a lay-out by the town planning committee of Umuahia and even this time it took care of the cattle

market. In this lay-out many things were not put into consideration i.e. the fact that by the year 1928 more than 10,000 herd of cattle were brought to Umuahia, ¹¹this much traffic was not put into consideration in their locating of the cattle pound. By this period Umuahia cattle market had become the distributing centre to the whole of the southern provinces. In a period of less than three decades the number of cattle that enter Umuahia had increased from 10,000 to more 50,000.¹²

By this time also the community was fully established with itssarki, a mosque and a burial ground. These are necessities that any Hausa/Muslim community cannot do without. The colonial authorities too were aware of these things and used to put them in their town planning lay-out. In 1929 a site outside Umuahia Township was in use. A site that had been in use for a very long time was the one in Afaraukwu overlooking the Golden Guinea Breweries. There was however one tradition about the location of the cattle pound or market or kraal. And that was the fact that all had been located near the rail line. That was why attention was drawn by the colonial authorities on the possibility of the cattle crossing the rail line. In citing the cattle pound also such issues as water supply and grazing facilities were of paramount importance.¹³

On the issue of citing of cattle compound/market in Umuahia there were problems that arose. As we have seen with the coming of colonialism the status of the people of Nigeria change to being subjects and with it other titles such as squatters and so on.¹⁴The people were now squatters on their own land. All these were done in order to justify any action that the British colonialists were going to take and did take on the people pertaining to the land and other rights of the people.

In 1930 the question of the relocation of the cattle compound still came up as the old site was no longer suitable.¹⁵ The Medical Officer had earlier selected a site to the west of the Native location and outside the boundaries of the Crown Land. According to the Land Officer this site was not good because it was near the Native Town. He suggested a better site for the cattle compound in the Ishiama area to the south of the European Trading Area. In doing that it was proposed that the Railway authorities should extend the existing siding post to cover plots: 16, 17 and 18 further south.¹⁶That if this was done it was possible for the cattle to be loaded, housed and killed in the same area. It would appear then that with the current arrangement this was not possible.

In order to achieve this, the colonial authorities proposed to evict what they termed "layout squatters" in the village of Ishiama. They also proposed to make plots available for the people tending the cattle to erect their dwellings on as it was necessary for them to live close to the cattle. On this matter the Land Officer in the person of (Sgd) H. B. Shepherd reports thus:

I have to inform you that certain amount of trouble has arisen over the cattle compound at Umuahia. For some years the cattle were stabled on ground which had been laid out in plots for occupation by native and close to those already occupied. The Medical Officer of Health decided that the cattle were too close to this native town and ordered them to be moved to a site which it now transpires is not on Crown Land. The site is to the north and west of the European Trading and Residential Area but... when the cattle are added into the railway wagons from the ramp... opposite to Messrs Miller Brothers' factory they have to be driven through a portion of the European area and right through the native market... the present arrangement is by no means satisfactory. It appears that a considerable number of cattle are killed to the south of the European area in the neutral zone and close to plot 18.

...this area is the best for a cattle compound, but in order to be able to site it there it will be necessary to have a number of squatters who have been in occupation many years. But if the cattle are housed there it will mean that when loading on wagons they will have to be driven through the European Area unless the ramp is moved.¹⁷

And in order to do that

...the existing siding could be extended 100 yards at very little cost and trouble and a new ramp built in the market zone.¹⁸

He concluded that

...if this could be done it would mean that the cattle could be housed, loaded and killed all in the same area without causing any inconvenience to anyone under for more sanitary conditions that at present prevail.¹⁹

From the forgoing one can see the actual mentality of the colonialist as it pertains to land and its use in the colonies. The changing of status of the people of the colonies as they were being subjugated by the colonialist. The situation was a pathetic one where the people had no rights at all.

As a result of the friction in the community that led to the election of SarkiMamman Na-Ikare there was the need also to relocate the cattle market. The market was then located at Afaraukwu area. With the election of SarkiMamman Na-Ikare, he, also, at first established a separate cattle market at the spot now opposite the CPS (Central Police Station) in Umuahia. This place was the spot where Chewkas Cinema was once located. This place was in the middle of the town. The colonial authorities at this time were not in favour of two cattle markets at this time.

As a result there was one of the most elaborate schemes to build a new cattle kraal. It was during this process that SarkiAdamuOseni approached one Timothy Iroegbu of UmuwayaAmuzukwu to give him a

land located at Uwalaka Street to become the new cattle market or kraal. This was in 1950 and the family granted him this request. At first he wanted to buy the land but the family refused and instead demanded him to be giving them a yearly tenancy at the rate of £20 per annum. This agreement was made on the 28th of August, 1950.²⁰ Upon collection of the land known as Odipkiri, Sarki Adamu as a leader of the Hausa Community in Umuahia Township allowed all the cattle dealers to use the land and thus it became a cattle market not only for Umuahia but for whole of the East and South-south.

This was all happening after the election of Mamman Na-Ikare as another Sarkin Hausawa in Umuahia. Before this time there was one cattle market especially since 1929 when Sarki Ododo of Elele came to Umuahia to resolve the problem in the community. After the election of Mamman Na-Ikare and the bad blood that it created Na-Ikare had to open a different cattle market as we have seen. But with Sarki Adamu Oseni acquiring of the land at Umuwaya Amuzukwulbeku, Sarki Na-Ikare also approached the other family that owned a piece of land adjacent to the one acquired by Sarki Adamu at Uwalaka Street. An agreement was entered between Na-Ikare and Iheukwumere Nwadinobi representing his family on the 1st of October, 1950 on the land known as "Isiokpula". The land was leased to Na-Ikare at the rate of £15:0:0d (fifteen pounds).²¹ These lands "Odipkiri" and "Isiokpula" situate at Umuwaya, Amuzukwu-Ibeku were to remain the cattle market until 1994 when they were forced to relocate to Ubakala in Umuahia South Local Government by the Military Administrator of Abia State, but instead choose to relocate to Okigwe in Imo State.

Meanwhile, it is important to note the high level of inter-group relations that went into the activities of the cattle trading community and the people of Umuahia particularly the Ibeku clan. It shows how significant the community had become in Umuahia following many years of existence in the town. After these many years the community had become synonymous with the town, the cattle market that they established was to acquire international status with people coming from far and near to patronize the market.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE CATTLE MARKET

The cattle market has one of the most elaborate and complex organizations that one can think of. It is a kind of commercial chain defined by the role the individual and group play in the buying and selling that takes place in the market. These practices pertain to the credit and payment system of the market. The organization and operation of the Umuahia cattle market have not always been the same over the years.²² Like the social process that led to the establishment of the Community it has undergone several transformations

also. These transformations or changes were on many levels touching on the commercial practices in the market. Several concepts developed and got transformed based on developments that were bound to take place in such a pluralistic, multicultural setting like the cattle market. On another level the Community of the market is an appendage.²³ As new peoples are being absorbed into the community they also come with their experiences and culture. These are often expressed in various ways. It can influence and be influenced by the new community. It was a socio-economic exchange and counter-exchange.

The market was organized in what we will like to refer to as a commercial hierarchy with each functionary performing specific functions in the running of the market. These are not permanent roles occupied by the members of the community.²⁴ The number of years that one spends in the activities of the market qualifies one to occupy the upper echelon of the hierarchy of the cattle market. The buying and selling system relied very much on the credit and payment system. That is to say, the cattle market was organized in such a way that it took care of all the functionaries of the market and by extension the community.

At the top of the hierarchy of the organization was the patoma or the landlord. This was the person that the falke or the owner of the merchandise stays in his place during the period of his stay at Umuahia.²⁵ The falke is a person who engaged in long-distance trade and since he was going to a place other than his place of residence he needs a place to stay. This was where the fatoma come into play. The falke or bako i.e. stranger stays at his place with his merchandise under his care. During the whole period his feeding was also being taken care of by the fatoma.

The fatoma in turn has people under him who oversee the selling of the cattle in the form of what is known as ware.²⁶ This was a situation where upon the bringing of the cattle by the falke they were separated by his boys known as yangida some few minutes before the market starts. These were his boys or men, but always men, who help in selling the merchandise. Each member of the household of the fatoma was entitled to a number of cows depending on the size of the cattle brought by his baki or fatake. This division or ware very much takes into consideration the rank of the individual in the household. We use the term merchandise because the falke is not restricted to cattle alone but also any person who buys goods and travels to sell them is known as falke.²⁷

In this case the yangida can also be called or regarded as dillalai or brokers. In the cattle market the yangida usually will separate the cattle into what is known as ware under the care of another functionary or a younger person known as dantare sing. oryantare plu. They are so called because they take care of the cattle

in the market and make sure they stay in one place while the market goes on. This is to prevent the cattle from straying into the next ware.

At the end of the market and after sales the yantare were given some reward as collected by the dillali in form of la'ada from the butcher or any person that bought the cow.²⁸ At all times the la'ada was the attraction of the dillali who was the dangida of the fatoma. It worked very well for both the falke or patake and the fatoma. Over the years there were modifications in the amount of money to be collected as la'ada.²⁹ This aspect will be discussed in detail when we come to talk about the System and Organization of the Cattle Trade.

There were many other functionaries of the cattle market. The organization of the market was a complex one with every individual playing a role in bringing about a successful completion of the market day(s). The business of the day cannot move without having these machineries in place.

The hierarchy that we have enumerated above takes care of the commercial aspect of the cattle market, those who buy and sell for the profit. That is to say they serve those who buy the cattle for commercial purposes. These were the butchers who sell the beef raw and those who roast the meat in form of the famous suya. The first group consists of mostly Igbo while the second group consists of exclusively the members of the Cattle Trading Community known in Fulfulde as bangarbe or bangaro or mahauta or mahauci in Hausa.

There was another group whose function was mostly to serve those people who come to the market to buy cow for domestic use. This was usually during festivities such as Christmas, Easter, Wedding, Burial Ceremonies, etc. these group were known as yanarnandaji.³⁰ Arnandaji means those that come from the bush or village to buy cattle for the festivals we just enumerated above. This was because most of the people who come to buy from this group come from the villages. This is not saying that those that lived in the town do not come to buy. The point is that once you come to buy for domestic purpose you usually ask someone who knows the price to buy for you. That is where this group comes into play. They usually buy the goods above the market price and this was the incentive that draws the group to engage in this business of arnandaji.

In the sections below we have outlined some of the other functionaries of the cattle market. This is not an exhaustive list considering a market of this magnitude and Community that consist of several peoples with different economic inclinations. What we are trying to say here is that there were other forms of commercial activities that do not involve selling of cattle. Some of this trade or even most were an appendage of the cattle trade though. One of such commodities was kola nut. Some of the fatake when they finish selling their cattle will buy kola nut for the consumption of the people of

the north. Though the kola nut sellers have their headquarters or so to speak, in the Hausa quarters or AmaHausa, majority of the trade was also being conducted at the cattle market. Just like the cattle market the AmaHausa was also a place where you have large concentration of people from the north.

How the market was organized was never static, there were changes based on the realities on the ground that occurred. The functionaries, the fees in form of the la'ada or rope money, the revenue accruing to the various authorities in charge of the cattle market i.e. the Cattle Trading Community or the Hausa Community, the Colonial authorities and after independence the Local and State governments. These all benefited with the establishment of the cattle market. This was evident in the kind of attention that the Community and Market received in the course of the history of the Cattle Trading Community.³¹

IV. THE "FATOMA" I.E. LANDLORD OR THE MIDDLEMAN

The Fatoma or Middleman is a very elaborate and important institution in the cattle market. In some areas and studies of the cattle market such as in Ibadan and Kumasi it is the same as saying landlord. The various roles of the Ibadan cattle landlords (in Hausa known also known as maigida) are dealt with very adequately by Abner Cohen. In a general way, taking Cohen's article as read, we would briefly define a landlord as a settled stranger, who makes it his business to accommodate long-distance stranger-traders (fatake) and to assist them in selling, and usually in storing, their goods.³² If a landlord operates in a market then he is also a dillali (or broker), a Hausa word of Arabian origin, signifying a formally recognised intermediary between buyer and seller.³³ It is important not to confuse the dillali proper, who is a formally recognised intermediary between buyer and seller who usually possesses certain compulsory powers, with the mere commission-seller who acts on behalf of the seller only and has no "public" function. In our case this is the dangida -a member of the household of the fatoma or landlord. However, the latter may evolve into the former. The West African landlord System is especially associated, historically, with the long-distance trades in livestock (cattle, sheep, and goats).³⁴

Abner Cohen examined the mechanism of Ibadan cattle market mainly in terms of the roles of the chief permanent functionaries of the market, the "landlords". Landlord in our case is the fatoma, maigida in Hausa and joumusare in Fulfulde. Unlike in Umuahia in a few regions, such as Hausaland, landlords may be natives, whose business it is to receive long-distance traders who are also natives. In Umuahia the fatoma or landlords come from the Cattle Trading Community, they were people who have lived in the Community for a

longer period. That is to say they are what the Igbo refer to as amaala or dankasa in Hausa. They are called thus by virtue of the fact that they are permanently settled in Umuahia. They are not like the cattle owners or traders i.e. fatake who come and go with their cows or merchandise to sell under their supervision.

The landlords outside Hausaland are nearly all settled strangers. If a landlord has not inherited his position from his father, then he is likely to have been a long-distance trader himself, one who made such a success of his business that he was enabled to buy, build, or rent a house large enough for the accommodation of other strangers. Landlords wish to give the appearance of having retired from active trading -of being elder statesmen above the fray: thus do they enhance the dignity of their neutrality as brokers.

We should strongly emphasise the importance of the fact that each long-distance trader i.e. falke has his regular fatoma or landlord to whom he often remains attached for years and this stability is a general feature of the fatoma institution or landlord system, whatever commodity may be involved and represents a highly-developed form of the reciprocal regular-customer relationship which is of such general importance in West African market trading, both wholesaling and retailing. For instance in her study of Kumasi cattle market, Polly Hill said that the name of each stranger's landlord is so well-known as to be almost automatically recorded against his (the stranger's) name in the official record of cattle arrivals at the market, yet both there and in Ibadan, landlords compete vigorously for old as well as new business, even to the extent of sending agents to Mali to advertise their good name.³⁵

The picture is the same in the Umuahia cattle market where the fatoma engaged in such a fierce competition to the extent that almost on daily basis their used to occur changes of fatoma or maigida among the strangers. Successful fatoma or cattle landlords, with many strangers attached to them, are very prosperous people. The la'ada (or commission on sales), also known to the Cattle Trading Community in Umuahia as rope money or kudinigiya, is their only remuneration. Depending on many factors the amount has been fluctuating over the years.

Polly Hill, when visiting Abakaliki cattle market in Eastern Nigeria, in April 1965, was informed that la'ada was 12s., made up as follows: 5s. for the maigida; 3s. for the cattle seller; and it is the landlord who gives his stranger a present on his departure -not vice-versa. She concluded by saying that: "am sure that in large southern cattle markets the la'ada is not very important to the landlord in monetary terms -it is basically a mere witness fee".³⁶

This observation is significant for us since a part of the Umuahia cattle traders and the fatoma once stayed at Abakaliki. In fact Abakaliki was one of the first places that they stayed at in the eastern part of Nigeria.

During the civil war too some sections of the Community also stayed at Abakaliki from where they returned to Umuahia after the war. Auchu in the Edo area was another place that received some contingent of the Community during the period of the Civil War.

Each fatoma had a number of his yangida i.e. members of his household and this comprises of a secretary, a treasurer, a financial secretary and other assistants. These were the people that normally sell the cattle on behalf of the fatoma for the falke. They were the minor brokers or dillalai.

The significance of the fatoma was even recognized by the colonial authorities. This was made known through a letter written by the Veterinary Officer to the Resident, Owerri Province in paragraph 10:

Broker: These men are of vital importance. Traders all over the East and North East rely on these to facilitate sales, act as hosts to herdsmen and agents to return money. It is their efficiency, more than higher market prices that attracts traders to Umuahia. We must remember that there are unsaturated markets paying as big price at Enugu, Onitsha, Aba, etc. I think they should be met and reassure that they will not be superceded by the new market but rather helped. Their fees should not be interfered with. Should they not agree to co-operate the success of Umuahia as a market would be seriously interfered with.³⁷

The quote shows not only the importance of the fatoma as a broker but also the important role that the cattle market and by extension the community has played to the development of Umuahia as a market. This shows that more than any other market activity, the cattle trade was of more importance. The cattle market provided one of the highest taxes to the colonial authorities. Otherwise they would not have gone to the extent of trying to placate the fatoma or brokers at the cattle market.

V. THE "FALKE" OR "BAKO" I.E. CATTLE OWNERS

These were the people who used to bring cattle from the North to Umuahia to sell. They, therefore play one of the most significant roles in the cattle market. This is because without them there would not be a market in the first place. The falke as we have already discussed was a very significant functionary of the cattle market. This was because he was the one who brought the merchandise to be sold.³⁸ He was the main reason why there was a market in the first place. That was why the fatoma or landlord and other functionaries in the cattle market accord him so much respect.

The role of the falke in relation to the cattle market and trade is very important since he was the one that brought his goods in form of the cattle to be sold. It may be said though that his role could be the same with that of the fatoma who used to house him upon arrival at

Umuahia.³⁹ Together they make for the most important members of the cattle trading community. Most of the time fatake or cattle owners were not permanent resident of Umuahia as they come from the North with the cattle to sell during one of the various market days. Depending on the market situation a falke can come to Umuahia sometimes two to three times a week. This is because we have three most important market days; Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. This was possible because they used to have their boys who go and bring the cattle for them as they stay in Umuahia either to collect their money that they give on credit or to even rest after being on the road for so long.

VI. RETAILERS OR “YANBARANDA”

These were the most conspicuous among those that see to it that the butchers get the merchandise that they needed. They are members of the Community who do not have the opportunity to travel to the North to buy cattle on their own. What they therefore do was to wait on the fatake to bring the cattle to buy and in turn sell to the butchers or any other customer, such as those for domestic consumption on retail. Sometimes they could give the falke through the fatoma or dillali i.e. broker who will serve as the surety the full payment but at times they will buy on credit and pay back when they sell the cows. They are very strong functionaries of the cattle market who knew just the right people to sell to. They too also did sell on credit and were paid later by the butchers.

They could either pay the falke through the fatoma at the end of the market day if they were able to sell to the butchers or any other customer without credit. This is to say that they too could sell on credit and pay back when they get the money from the butcher. This usually was the next day in the morning where they go to the slaughter house either in Umuahia Township or the neighbouring towns and villages to collect the money. Another possible way or means of recovering credit was to wait for the butcher who will come during the following market day with the payments. On this occasion too he may buy on credit again.

The credit system in the cattle market and trade was so complex that when the goods were bought on credit the person that buys will only pay the la'ada or rope money. The la'ada or rope money was the life-blood of the cattle trade. It was what sustains all the functionaries of the cattle market. Sale may even be discontinued if the buyer does not have the la'ada. The profit from the trade is also there. These two played a very important role in the activities of the cattle market and trade.

VII. THE SYSTEM AND ORGANIZATION OF THE CATTLE TRADE

The system of trade in the cattle market was such that cater for many of the functionaries of the

market. It also took care of the needs of those who buy from the fatoma and sell to the butchers. Trading was organized in such a way that worked for the people and the different functionaries as well as the customers. This was where the role of the fatoma and those that served him in form of yangida and by implication dillalai i.e. brokers comes to play. The system of trading followed the Igbo traditional marketing system. Since the Igbo were the primary customers the market system of the cattle market conformed to the traditional Igbo system of trade. In the end it did not disrupt their economic activities as they used to know them.

In case if a customer or in most cases a butcher was buying a cow on credit, which was a constant thing there was an elaborate system of credit guarantee system as well as the recovery pattern. So one find that most often people stood as surety to a customer they were familiar with. These customers could be doing their butchery business at Umuahia metropolis or in the neighbouring towns and villages and even in other States of the Southeast and South-south. These include, cities like Aba, Owerri, Port Harcourt, etc, and villages such as Abriba, Arochukwu, etc. this is to mention but a few of the various places that the butchers used to come from and buy cattle.

The credit system though not regulated by any laid down rules was however, built on trust which was sometimes abused. To the extent that some credit or debt went unpaid, what the bankers would call bad credit. Many a people were made to lose their livelihood through this means.

The operation of the guarantee system was on many levels. It starts with the dillali or broker who was the dangida of the fatoma or even the fatoma himself and who was familiar with the butchers as well as the remotest of villages where the butchers come from or where they were conducting their business from. Usually it was the leader of the yangida of a particular fatoma or maigida that was entrusted with the responsibility of going into the villages to collect the money. That was why when a butcher finished buying his goods and it happens that it was on credit the lead dangida was called upon to ask the butcher when the money will be available so that he can come and collect it. It was usually the morning of the next day when the cow was being butchered. During the sale a person can decide to when called by the butcher to vouch for him and to promise that he will go and collect the credit when it was ready the following day. There were cases too where the butcher will bring back the money on his own the following day or on the next market day. In any case, however, there must be someone who can stand as a guarantor to the customer be they butchers or not in the case of credit.

There was, therefore, series of dependence in the organization and or execution of the trade system in the cattle market. The falke, however, most times have

the final say in these matters but on some occasions the fatoma had the final say. This was because he knew the butchers more than the falke since he had been residing in the area for a longer time than the falke who went and come from time to time. The fatoma on the other hand had been living in Umuahia for a long time; advice was therefore sort of him first on these matters. On some occasion where it happened that the falke had stayed for a long time without selling his goods he would leave them with the fatoma to go and get more cattle so as not to miss out on the next market day.

VIII. MARKET DAYS

It is important to note that in respect to the markets days the Community adopted something that was almost similar with the market days of the Igbo. The Igbo divide their week into market days of four days i.e. Afo, Eke, Nkwo and Orie. The Community therefore also has days in which they held their market. In essence, however, every day of the week that one comes to the market, one could buy cow. There were, though three "big market days" in which the market holds: these were and still are; Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. These were all market days but Tuesday was the biggest with Thursday and Saturday respectively following.

Every other day however that one comes to the market you could still buy goods. The market days were divided into two; morning and afternoon. The morning session as the name implies takes place in the morning as from 6am up to 10am, while the afternoon session starts from 12pm to as long as 8pm. There may, however, be an overlap depending on the size of the cattle in the market and the volume of purchase on a day.

The fatake usually plan their journey to coincide with most of the market days especially Tuesday which was the biggest market day. For the Tuesday market they usually arrive on Monday to make sure that they were at Umuahia by all means. When they arrive Monday morning or afternoon the cattle were taken by the gainako or drovers to the bush to sleep over until Tuesday afternoon. They will be brought back in time for the start of the market day on Tuesday. Gainako is the attendant who tends the cattle either in the bush or within the cattle market as the case may. This is to say that it was not always that the cattle were being taken to the bush. Sometimes the cattle may not be in the state of health to be taken to such great distance to look for pasture for them. In this case you had people whose job was to go and cut the grass for the cattle, to feed those that were not that strong.

Another market day was Thursday; this was the second most important market day of the cattle market. It too starts from Wednesday with the fatake arriving late in the evening or in the night or very early in the morning on the Thursday. They also follow the same pattern

where the cattle were being taken to the bush to be fed so that they come to the market in the afternoon of the Thursday refreshed. For those that were sick or not too strong to be taken to the bush they were left at the premises of the cattle market and the services of a Veterinarian was employed to either inject them or to give them the necessary treatment. The Veterinarian was usually the gainako who had no formal education on this matter but who became familiar with the various drugs through long years of tending the cattle. All these were done in time for the market which starts at around 12pm and holds until 6pm. Depending on the size of the cattle that the fatake brought on a particular market day the period could extend to 8pm.

The Saturday market day too, follows the same pattern as the Tuesday and the Thursday markets and its importance is almost the same as that of Tuesday. This was because of the fact that it falls on the weekend and a lot of activities used to take place on this day in time for Sunday when people rest. Sunday was also a day saw many festivities in the form of weddings and burials and so on. People therefore attend the market on Saturday to buy the cows for the ceremonies.

However, it is interesting to note in the final analysis that whatever day of the week that one come to the market one will be able to buy the cattle that he wants. Hardly would the market stay without cows for sale at any one time. There was constant supply of cattle to the market from the North by the fatake that one can only see the cow that was not his choice rather than not to find at all to buy.

IX. CONCLUSION

The reason for the presence of the Cattle Trading Community in Umuahia was at first not the cattle market i.e. trade. It was a later development as the first settlers were hunters and yankoli who used to sell beads and other items of beautification to the Igbo. The history of its establishment therefore, is necessary to determine the course of the history of the community as well as the nature of the inter-group relations in Umuahia. With the founding of the cattle market in Umuahia other issues came into play bordering on inter and intra group relation aspects. Of particular importance was the political organization of the community as well as the market. This was not an easy thing for the community due to the fact that personal interest was brought into the matter in the years following the establishment of the cattle market.

The cattle trading community in Umuahia provides one of the most significant examples in complex political organization and inter and intra group relations in Nigeria in general and in Eastern Nigeria and Umuahia in particular. This was a community that thrived in an area other than their place of origin. Though that was the case they contributed a lot in the development

of Umuahia particularly in the economic sphere over a long period of time. The importance that colonialist accorded Umuahia stems from the considerable cattle trade in this town. This trade provided considerable revenue for the colonial state that they feared anything that would constitute a problem to the smooth running of the cattle market.

The cattle market in Umuahia was part of the economy of the town since its establishment in the early years of the 20th century. Before this time though, the community has been carrying out its economic activities in the area through the Aro trade system and routes. The significance of the community lies on the provision of items of trade not available in the area. As a result they impacted on the area in terms of bringing additional items of trade such as clothing known as akwanmiri in Igbo language.

ENDNOTES

1. Alhaji Yusuf Bello, born 6th March 1952, interviews at various times at Kaduna and Okigwe 2009 and 2011.
2. NAE, OW 385/21 RIVPROF 8/9/322, Owerri Province Hausa Settlements, 1921-1930.
3. Ibid.
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11. Ibid.
12. NAE, OW 2747 Vol. III UMDIV 3/1/341, Umuahia-Ibeku Town Planning: Cattle Kraal Scheme, 1947-1952.
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15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
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21. See the Memorandum of Agreement between IheukwumereNwadinobi and Chief MomoNakari on October 1st 1950.
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25. AlhajiHamman Suleimuri 54 years, interviews at various times at Jalingo, Okigwe and Umuahia, 2011.
26. Ibid.
27. Alhajilnuwa born 1945, 56 years interviews at various times at Kaduna, Okigwe and Umuahia 2009-2011.
28. Ibid.
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37. NAE, OW: 2747 Vol. III UMDIV 3/1/341, Umuahia-Ibeku Township, Cattle Kraal Scheme, 1947-1952.
38. Alhaji Yusuf Bello, born 6th March 1952, 55 Years, interviews at various times at Kaduna, Okigwe and Umuahia 2009-2011.
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