

Mangu: An emerging commercial town.¹

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Abstract: *This paper is the outcome of a local study of the two Mangus then a part of the old Pankshin division of Benue-Plateau State, Nigeria. The local study was a special school project embarked upon by final year students of the then Gindiri Teachers College² of which the author was privileged to be a part of in 1973. The study was directed by our Geography teacher Mr.³ Jonah Madugu whose dedication and patience in directing the study is well appreciated. The school sponsored the trip to the study area from Gindiri under the leadership of Mr Madugu who took time to show us important things about the study such as the economic importance of the river valleys.*

The second acknowledgement will go to Mr. Bello⁴ who spared valuable time to direct us to the person who gave us the History of Mangu Asali. He also took us to some important land marks of the town. Machut⁵ Lere, a fellow student and resident of Mangu town, gave the writer very valuable insight into the nature of trading activities in the Mangu market. Mr. Elisha Mangwvat gave us very useful information on export trade in the Mangu market. Alhaji Muazu from Mangu cannot be forgotten for his talk on trade and the names of some people who practice it on a commercial scale e.g. M. Hirse. Sunday⁶, a school pupil, was instrumental in our study of Mangu Hausawa on the major divisions of the town and the names of some commercial farmers.

The aim of the project was to study the emerging Mangu market, the basic outline of which this paper has retained. The presentation is narrative and descriptive being a study conducted by a final year secondary student. Thus while retaining the content and character of the study, the aim of this presentation is to capture the outlook of the market as it was emerging at that time. This will help benchmark some aspects of the earliest dynamics of the Mangu market to the year 1973. We have provided some annotations to reflect, among other things, major changes since the decade of the study.

I. Introduction

The two Mangus (Hausawa and Asali) are growing towns situated along the road to Jos. They are both a part of the broad platform of the Jos Plateau. Being also a part of the savannah belt of central Nigeria, grasses in the area interestingly grow to attain the maximum height of 12 feet and minimum of 6 inches in the rainy season⁷. The predominant grassland of the area is dotted with trees that are mainly shrubs with creeping plants noticeably growing on the trees. Agriculture is the main economic activity of the people of the towns especially Mangu Asali. This activity is done at the outskirts of the town with the farmsteads forming concentric circles around the towns.

Mangu Asali is an indisputable emerging commercial town. That the trading activities of the town distinguish it is seen in the separation between the commercial and peasant populations of the town and the fact that it is one of the largest local markets in Pankshin division⁸. It trades even on an export level with other cities in Nigeria. Ropes and goats are, for example, sent to Onitsha while Irish potatoes are sent to Maiduguri and Kano. Local industries flourish in both towns which range from food making industries such as bread making, kukuli and kosai etc. The two Mangus have a primary school and a dispensary each. Mangu Asali, in addition, has a secondary school and a police station. Mangu Hausawa has a primary school also.

Mangu Asali is obviously a major spot in the network of the distributive trade of Nigeria looking at the volume of commercial activities in the town. It is a major vent for foreign goods such as clothes, soap and goods from the industrial towns of the country such as Lagos, Kano, Kaduna and Onitsha to reach the local people whose land constitute the catchment area of the Mangu market. The volume of trading activities in the Mangu market accelerates many folds on the designated market day of the market which affords people of the catchment area and even beyond, the opportunity to participate. Located in the middle of the town, the outlook of the market, changes on the market day, which falls on Fridays⁹. The first noticeable change is the increase in the number of people entering the town on business to sell, buy or offer services. The market fills to capacity with people in some instances trekking up to 10 miles to attend the market. Thus, the market which is usually quiet and calm on non market days goes agog becoming a treadmill of commercial activities. This is seen in all the major divisions of the market such as the sections on second hand clothes, grains and animals. Local paths to and from the market can be seen with people filing in and out¹¹. The main road which cuts through the town, dividing it into two approximate parts is also most busy on the market days with increased vehicular

movements up and down the Jos – Pankshin road and beyond. The network of buying and selling in the market is a site to behold on the market day.

Mangu town is increasingly becoming cosmopolitan with both Christians and Muslims coexisting peacefully. While the Christians have their churches the latter have their Mosque.

The absence of pipe borne water and electricity¹² in the two towns is a major setback. They are nevertheless set on the path of development as evidenced by the market activities in Mangu Asali and the heightened tin mining activities¹³ of the ATMN in the other Mangu. Their potential of attaining the kind of development in Jos is a probably just a matter of time.

Historical Background Of Mangu Asali

The establishment of Mangu Asali is attributed to the patriarch, Mwansat. Originally a native of Kopal near Kerang, tradition has it that he and his mother for some unknown reasons left this village and settled in Mararaba (Pushit). Mwansat's mother divorced his father and remarried in Mararaba. She also divorced this man and left with her son to the Pyam country where they settled as they found the place to be good and the people friendly.

Mwansat keyed into both the social and economic life of his Pyam host taking part in the thriving Boto trade in Bauchi Emirate. According to our informant, the Mwansat tradition has it that he and his Pyam friend, by name Mangvwat, both settled in Langai which they came across in one of their numerous trips to Boto. The two taking advantage of the soil fertility of the plains of Langai made both economic and social progress. More people came to join them from both the Sura¹⁴ and Pyam people to develop a flourishing polity around the Dungushiri hill.

As Langai grew and developed its chieftaincy institution, Mwansat made no claims of involvement with it accepting the fact that he was an outsider. This, notwithstanding, some unhealthy relationship developed over time between the two groups as evidenced by an incident in a drinking place where a fight broke out. One of Mwansat's men was killed. This broke the healthy relationship that hitherto existed between Mwansat and Mangvwat. Mwansat was led to finding Mangu as an alternative settlement about 12 miles away from Langai. The movement of Mwansat and his people from Langai to their new found settlement in Mangu was a giant start of what is today Mangu Asali.

Historical Background Of Mangu Hausawa¹⁵

The second Mangu, called Mangu Hausawa, started as a mining settlement. Like Jos, the immigrant mining population of the town was ruled over by rulers who were sent from Bauchi. The rulers were said to have come from the Bani people who settled in the town as the tin mining industry flourished. There are memories of the rule of Shehu, Sambo and Gwani who was the last of these rulers sent from Bauchi. It was reported that the Managing Director of the tin mining company wrote a letter to the king of Bauchi to terminate the mandate of Shehu who was detested for depriving them of buying eggs. Sambo who replaced Shehu was himself for incompetence removed. Gwani was the last of these rulers that had jurisdiction over only the immigrant mining population and not the indigenous groups. The institution was abolished in 1937¹⁶ after the creation of the Plateau province.

The decline of the mining industry has stunted the growth of the town. The town has nevertheless remained as many ethnic groups including the Sura¹⁷, Yoruba, Pyem, etc. whose major attraction to the town was the tin mining activities.

II. Physical Setting

Local Relief

The two Mangus are as already said located on the broad plains of the Jos Plateau that is generally raised about 4500ft above sea level. Mangu Asali slants from the east to the west. Its soils are laterite and smooth in composition. The eastern part of the town is best for its future expansion.¹⁸ At its southern out-skirts are the Boras hills. The another hills that together with Boras form a semi arch around the town for security purposes are the Daleb, Tullu Wurang and the Denden. The Tullu Wurang hills are the highest of all the hills in Mangu.

Mangu Hausawa¹⁹ does not have the kind of protective rocks and hills the other Mangu enjoys. This is because the former was only recently started as a mining settlement when the security concerns that informed the establishment of the latter were unnecessary. Nevertheless, Mangu Hausawa is crested to the west by some rocks called Dutse Lamba located about a mile from the town, they are very high. The two towns are situated near rivers which give them their flat and slanting landscapes.

Geology

On the surface, the two Mangus have a geology that is not complicated. The rocks that have been exposed over the years are mostly the granite type. Most of the exposed rocks can be easily broken which the people use in constructing their houses. As hinted above, the rocks have a simple formation. Only the Dutsen Lamba shows some semblance of a range.

Mangu Asali has more rocks scattered around the town. A clear view of the town is possible from the vantage of the highest hill.

It is interesting to know that on these hills around the town are soil patches on which agriculture is possible especially on the Denden and Boras hills. On the Boras and Tullu Wurang hills are lush groves that probably serve ritual purposes.

The drainage systems of the two towns are also not complicated as the land is predominantly slanting and flat. Run offs after rainfall have over the years cut rivulets which together with manmade gutters and trenches drain the areas into the two major rivers westwards in the case of Mangu Asali and eastwards in the case of the other Mangu. In Mangu Asali, a small river called Ligyet originates from the hills of Tullu Wurang, forming a major part of the drainage structure of the town. It drains the southeastern, southern and some parts of the southwestern parts of Mangu Asali.

The drainage structure of Mangu Hausawa is similarly simple. It has a big river the, Hale, and a smaller one being a tributary. The smaller river originates from Dutsen Lamba in the northwestern parts of Mangu Hausawa. These, together with both natural and manmade gutters and trenches form the main drainage of the town.

III. Local Climate And Weather

The local climate is generally mild and accommodating. The weather is neither too hot nor too cold at any time to hinder human activities. The climate permits work throughout the year. Climate is not therefore a debilitating factor throughout the year. The climate in the wet season is most suitable for working on the farm. In this season, the climate gets to the highest. The temperature rises to its highest of 80-85f to herald the rainy season. The rains start off in April, sometimes in torrents and stormy winds that blow off roof tops. And as the westerly winds take firm control of the atmosphere, good weather condition stabilizes with the rains becoming frequent, especially towards the month of June. Much of the rainfall in the year comes between August and October²⁰ when it stops.

With the onset of the rains in April, the vegetation rejuvenates blossoming in lush leaves and flowers. The dry season takes up the rest of the year starting in October and sometimes November, ending roughly in March or April. At the beginning of the season, the outlook of the sky changes into a mantle of clear and clean sphere, free from clouds looking as clean as if the waters of the oceans have been used to wash it. As the name of the season denotes, there is a rapid drying up of the waters flowing in the gutters and rivulets and of the pools of water evaporating away. The top soil and grass vegetation dry up into a brown spread. The trees also begin to drop their leaves in preparation for the dry conditions of the season.

As the dry season continues, it develops into the notorious harmattan which blights the atmosphere not only with cold but also the waves of dusty winds of the easterlies especially between December and January. The climate gets so dry that the soles of bare footed people, especially the peasant farmers crack. The weather in the wet season is moist and warm with the rain clouds constantly forming shades especially over the heads of those on the farm. The weather generally gets cold after the rains and sometimes very warm when the sun is up and the sky clear. This pattern continues throughout the season.

Natural Vegetation

The vegetation type is largely of grasses, dotted with trees which in some places are single or in clusters. The vegetation along the rivers is generally richer because of the perpetual moisture that is associated with water courses. For this reason, the vegetation clusters along the rivers are conspicuous. The hills on the southern and western parts of Mangu Asali namely the Tullu wurang and Boras hills support a steady growth of trees especially on the Boras Hills which are put to economic use by the people as wood fuel and charcoal by blacksmiths. The vegetation is not thick therefore exotic alternatives such as cassia and eucalyptus are being experimented with.

The economic and domestic use of the trees to especially the rural peasants is its commercial value in the form of firewood which is sold in the towns. They also make charcoal from it which is sold particularly to blacksmiths. At a higher level, the bigger trees such as mahogany are lumbered and the wood used for roofing their houses and making ceilings. The trees are also cut and used as poles and pegs to make shelters and stalls at home and the market.

Livestock

There is a great drive in the people in their pursuit of livestock farming. The emerging Mangu market provides the ready market outlet for this aspect of agriculture to thrive as the market for their hens, goats, sheep, ducks, rabbits, pigs exist. The tendency is to keep growing these animals in increasing quantities with the Mangu market continuously absorbing them. They do not have mechanized system of raising the livestock except Mr. Fompun who feeds them in a controlled farm. He is a businessman. He has the necessary equipment such as brooders, feeders and drinkers. Thus the growing export of goats, chickens and pigs to Nigerian cities is thriving only on this aspect of the people's agriculture.

Location.

Mangu Asali is located South/West of Gindiri, and North/West of Pankshin. It is North/East of Bokkos. This gives it a strategic location in the Pankshin division. Being in the middle of the division, Mangu is a pivotal commercial Centerport not only in the division but beyond. The flourishing trade of the town has made it a major distribution point for goods from Jos and beyond.

Mangu Hausawa is only 3 miles west of Mangu Asali. Because of the high volume of trade in Mangu Asali, trade in the other Mangu has been stunted. Nevertheless some evidence of trade has been left behind as one could see shops and stalls. It has been described as a continuation of Mangu Asali Market.

The location of these towns near rivers with alluvial soils is rich for their agriculture. This has led to intensive agriculture on the river valleys which has been capitalized upon by businessmen like Alhaji Muazu Longkam.

Agriculture

Agriculture is the main economic activity of a majority of the people especially those living in the outskirts of the towns. In this case, the manner of land use is both intensive and extensive. Movements between the towns and the outlying farms are common in the mornings and evenings, as farmers shuttle between their homes and their farms. This affects both those who live in the outskirts of the towns and the town dwellers. Of these two categories of farmers, the bigger farmers are those from the town, one of which is Alhaji Muazu Longkam. For those farmers outside the town, farming is far from being a pass time. That is mostly what they have as livelihood. They grow a wide range of crops which include millet, cocoa yams, cassava, Rice, yams, maize and guinea corn.

The rivers as already mentioned, are of great significance to the agricultural development of the towns both in the dry and wet seasons. These rivers make agriculture possible throughout the year. Thus in the dry season, irrigation is used to raise crops such as onions, sugar-cane (being the major one) and tomatoes etc. The heavy rains of the mid rainy season in August and September have a great tendency of putting alluvial materials on adjoining farmlands as the banks of the rivers flood. This undoubtedly increases the soil fertility of the affected land. For both small and large scale farmers, maize and guinea corn are staples as they are grown on a large scale.

From a careful survey of the agricultural practices of the people under study, four categories of farmers are discernible. The first group is made up of those that are not able to produce enough to meet their needs of feeding and educating their children and attend to other family needs. The implication of this is the sad fact that what they harvest in a particular year hardly sustains them to the next harvest, making them to be susceptible to food shortages if not for the monies they raise from menial jobs. As already mentioned, sending their children to school is difficult unless²² with the help of relatives or from the money they make working for other farmers. Finding it hard to secure modern inputs such as chemical fertilizers, this group of farmers still has to pay taxes with great difficulties.

The second category of farmers are those who can easily pay their taxes, afford primary school education for their children and a better standard of living. They can however hardly afford secondary school education for their children even though they generally stand better chances in life than the first one. They have a reasonable degree of food security.

The third group of farmers is made up of those who produce more than they can feed on. This makes them more mobile and flexible within the context of the local economy. Their choices in life and standard of living are much higher than the previous classes. They have enough food and money and thus can readily send their children to primary and post primary institutions. This group can afford to buy bicycles to help them get to their farms more easily and can also buy fertilizers making their agriculture more profitable than the previous classes.

The fourth category of farmers are the large scale or commercial farmers. They are distinguished primarily by the large farms they cultivate using the labour of the other categories of farmers and tractors from the ministry of Agriculture and Natural resources. This makes them an elite group which means that by

themselves they do not physically engage in farming activities like their other counterparts. This group has Alhaji Muazu Lonkgam, Mr. Fompu and Mr. M. Hirse.

Trade and Industries

Mangu Asali is basically a commercial town as already alluded to. A class of professional traders is emerging as an interesting socio economic dynamic, shaping the development of the town which explains why Mangu is increasingly becoming a significant market for the distribution of industrial goods and a primary commodity market. The Mangu market, at the risk of repetition, has become a big local market serving a significant part of the commercial needs of a big neighbourhood stretching from, as far as the Daffo-Richa area to the Boto- Tafawa Balewa and Lere region in the Bauchi Emirate.

Three categories of traders associated with the trading activities of the Mangu market are identifiable. The first category comprise of people who attend the market to sell their farm produce. They usually leave their homes very early in the morning for the market on market days trekking along clearly designated routes in the manner of a caravan (for security reasons) while taking shortcuts. These routes such as the one from Gindiri to Mangu can be traced by linking the date plants from seeds²² that were dropped along the roads by the traders. On reaching the outskirts of the market, the second category of traders who are petty middlemen encounter this first group to buy what they were bringing to the market. The items include eggs, mats, livestock, ropes and grains at low prices. With the working capital they came to the market with, the second group bought from the first only to resell to the third category that are essentially exporters. The third category operates in the other local markets such as Gindiri, Mararaba, and Pankshin.

They take these goods to Maiduguri, Kano, Zaria, Enugu, Onitsha and Lagos. While mats are sent to Kano and Zaria, sheep and goats go to Enugu and Onitsha. Ropes are sent to Maiduguri and Lagos.

Transport

Transportation to and from the Mangu market is varied. It ranges from human portorage to the use of bicycles, cars and Lorries. A local count showed that not less than 50 vehicles frequent the Mangu market to move the growing volume of trade in the emerging market. The volume of vehicular movement on market days along the Pankshin Jos road averages between 80 and 200.

Industries

From our survey, the dynamics of the Mangu market is a facilitating factor in the rise of local industries in the town. In general, the rise of Mangu as a semi urban settlement is tied to this dynamic. The development of industries to cater for the needs of the people is logical. The industries include bakeries for making bread, soap making, wood carving, mat and rope making, and, tie and dye.

There are two bread making factories in Mangu located at the east and west ends of the town. They are owned by Mr. Fompun who has been mentioned as a large scale farmer.

The soap making industry in Mangu town is the handiwork of Yoruba women. The hard soap, locally called "soda", is made from soda and palm oil, using the empty tins of liquid milk. Found in all local markets of the area, the soap is cheap and affordable.

The Yoruba are historically known to be town and city dwellers and are reckoned among the builders of the Mangu town. Their enterprising women apart from the soap making industry, also started the tie and dye industry making the popular *adire* cloth from white cloth materials. From our survey it is possible for a woman to make thirty pieces of the *adire* cloth in a week.

Other forms of industry in the town include the weaving industry mostly using local materials. Among the items churned out of this industry include mats of various sizes and colours and the famous *zana* which is woven from reeds found along streams and rivers and used as fence in homes, making external bathrooms and stalls in the market. The mat making industry is a pass time and specialty mostly associated with women especially the Muslim women kept in purdah. From our survey, the average weaver made one mat every week and about 40 in a year. It is quite interesting to note here that we found a hand loom operated by a woman in the town with quite an impressive weeklycloth output.

The making of local mattresses and pillows is common in the town using grass and wool from *Rimi* a local plant. Rope making is also a major industry with backward and forward linkages with the agriculture of the people. The jute plant is grown on backyard farms. While its leaves serve as vegetable, its seeds are used to produce a popular local condiment and its bark peeled and processed into the rope²⁴ that is sold in the market for export.

The brewing of local liquor known as *burkutu* is a thriving industry that has a big market especially on Fridays, the official Mangu market day. Women exclusively control this industry from which they make plenty of money and this on a daily basis. That this development of daily local liquor sales in Mangu town is an

indication of its increasing urbanization and the breakdown of traditional lifestyles of the people where wine was hitherto not commoditized, is not in doubt.

Although there is no industrial layout designated for these cottage industries, they are strong prime movers of the urbanization process in Mangu. They are also further drivers of the rising profile of the town as an emerging market as they provide the people the market outlet for their produce and products. The future of Mangu as an emerging market will greatly depend on the continuous growth and transformation of these industries.

IV. Future Development

From the findings of this study, Mangu Asali has great potentials for future development given the fact that it is an emerging market strategically located in the middle of the Jos Plateau- the core area of Irish potato production in Nigeria. It has great potentials for developing municipal services, presently absent. One of these is the immediate upgrade of the grade II area court in the town to a grade I²⁵ as the town is growing with the possible increase in crime and disputes. This will improve the jurisdiction of the court and necessitate the employment of qualified lawyers to handle cases in the growing town.

An immediate improvement of the Mangu market is probably the most urgent, being a strong emerging market. There is the need to get a more spacious place²⁶ for the market with modern stalls and improved sanitation. The town is been planned to have streets and using more concrete materials to build houses. The State is planning to electrify and provide pipe borne water to the town. Looking at the increasing volume of production of cereals in the area, the plan to install a factory for making wine from corn called "Tiger" is achievable.²⁷ Upgrading the postal Agency in the town to a post office²⁸ is also on paper to make it possible for the people to get higher postal services such as money order- currently available only in Barkin Ladi. To provide better policing for the town, there is a great desire in the people to build a bigger police office outside the town and convert the present one to the anticipated post office.²⁹ Building an army barracks in Mangu for better defence is also a great desire of the people.³⁰

End Notes

- [1]. The study covered the two Mangus. At this time, Mangu as it is called today used to be Mangu Asali and the other one Mangu, Mangu Hausawa, now, Mangu Halle.
- [2]. The Teachers College Gindiri was established in 1934. It is today called COCIN Comprehensive College.
- [3]. He is now Dr Jonah Madugu
- [4]. His second name was not captured in the study. He is Bello Hirse
- [5]. He is now Prof Mark M Lere
- [6]. It is unfortunate that the second name of this informant was not captured at the time of the study.
- [7]. Today both intensive agricultural and grazing practices make the attainment of this kind of height difficult.
- [8]. The structure and nomenclature of local administration has changed. What was then the Pankshin Division is today divided into Five Local Governments one of which is the Mangu Local Government.
- [9]. The market has systematically moved away from this predominantly seasonal nature to a daily one. Two days, Thursdays and Fridays, today stand out to be the official market days especially the produce section of the market.
- [10]. At this time, the transport sector of the Nigerian economy depended largely on trucks or Lorries much of which was not available to the villages. This made trekking the most common option.
- [11]. Most of these foot paths have today become untarred motor roads linking the catchment areas to the market.
- [12]. While electricity has been provided to the town, having been put on the National grid, pipe borne water is still not available. The Mangu regional waterworks contract is still on-going.
- [13]. The company has folded up while mining activities in the town are almost down to zero.
- [14]. This name is not in use any longer having been replaced with Mwaghavul.
- [15]. Now Mangu Halle, this town was renamed after the river that passes it to the east. The dominance of the Hausa through the Native Authority system of the colonial state was accountable for the predominance of Hausa place names in central Nigeria. The change in the name of this town was definitely a correction of the wrong infusion it connoted. The town was not a settlement established by the Hausa.
- [16]. This was also the case with the Sarkin Hausawa of Jos that was abolished at this time.
- [17]. Mwaghavul
- [18]. This expansion is unfolding at such great speed that the hitherto separate towns of Bugha and Mangu are today merged as one town.
- [19]. Now Halle
- [20]. Now the rains stop mostly between the end of September and first week of October. At this time it was between the end of October and the first or even the second week of November.
- [21]. He is actually----- Fompun
- [22]. Primary education was made free for all Nigerian children in 1976 in the wake of oil boom.
- [23]. The source of Dates as fruit sold in the Mangu market was largely the Boto- Lere area.
- [24]. It is believed that the Mwaghavul name *Sura* was derived from this product with which they are greatly associated by Hausa traders. Today synthetic alternatives have greatly affected the rope making industry the Mangu area.
- [25]. Today Mwaghavul has a Magistrate.
- [26]. This was achieved immediately after the study in the mid 1970s. The Market was moved to a more spacious place where it is today.
- [27]. This has not been achieved.
- [28]. The postal agency was approved and built not long after the study.
- [29]. This proposal did not work out as planned. The police station remained where it is as the post office was built along the Bwai road.
- [30]. No military Barracks in Mangu yet. The nearest, presently, is the one in Shendam.