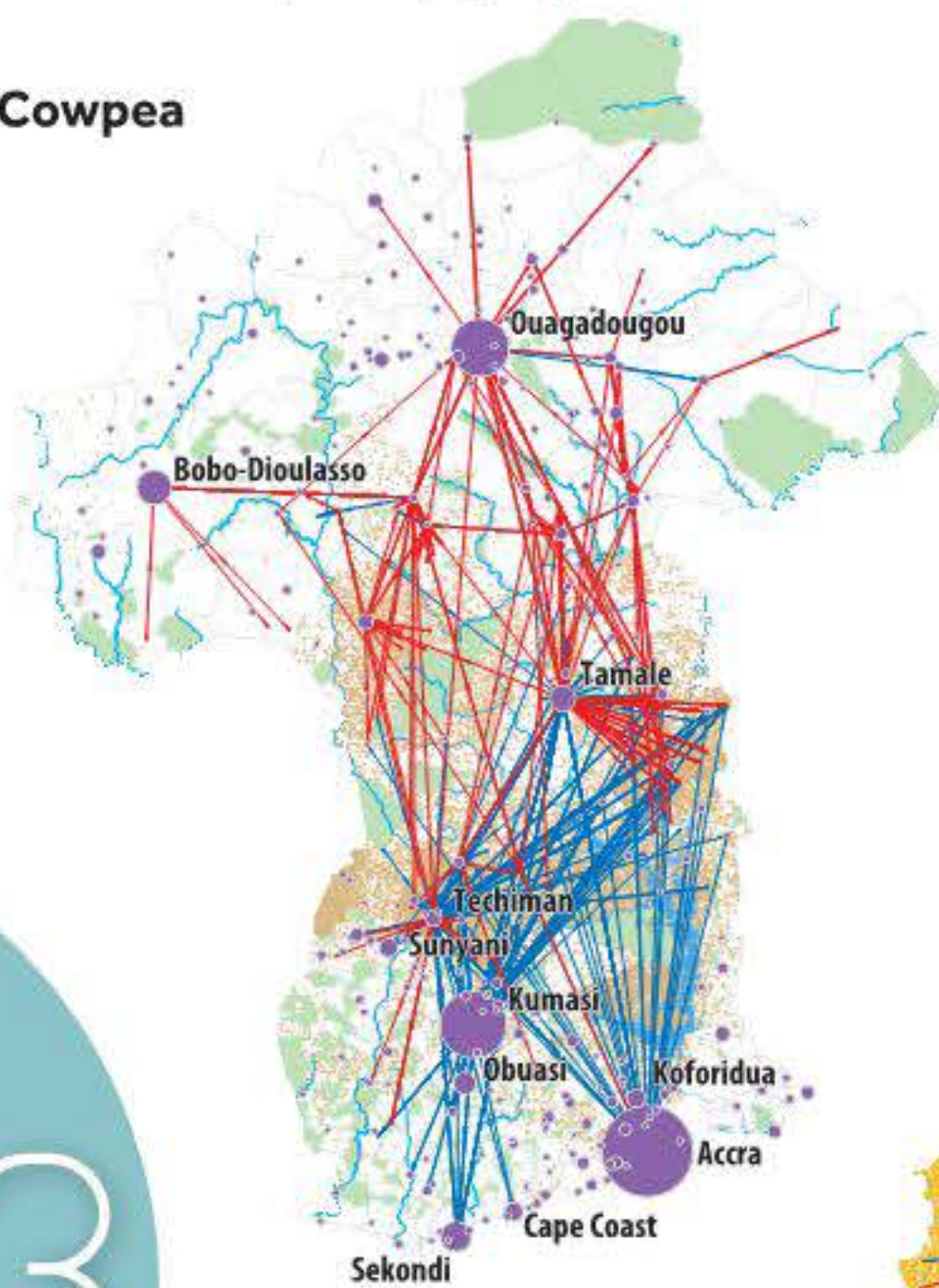


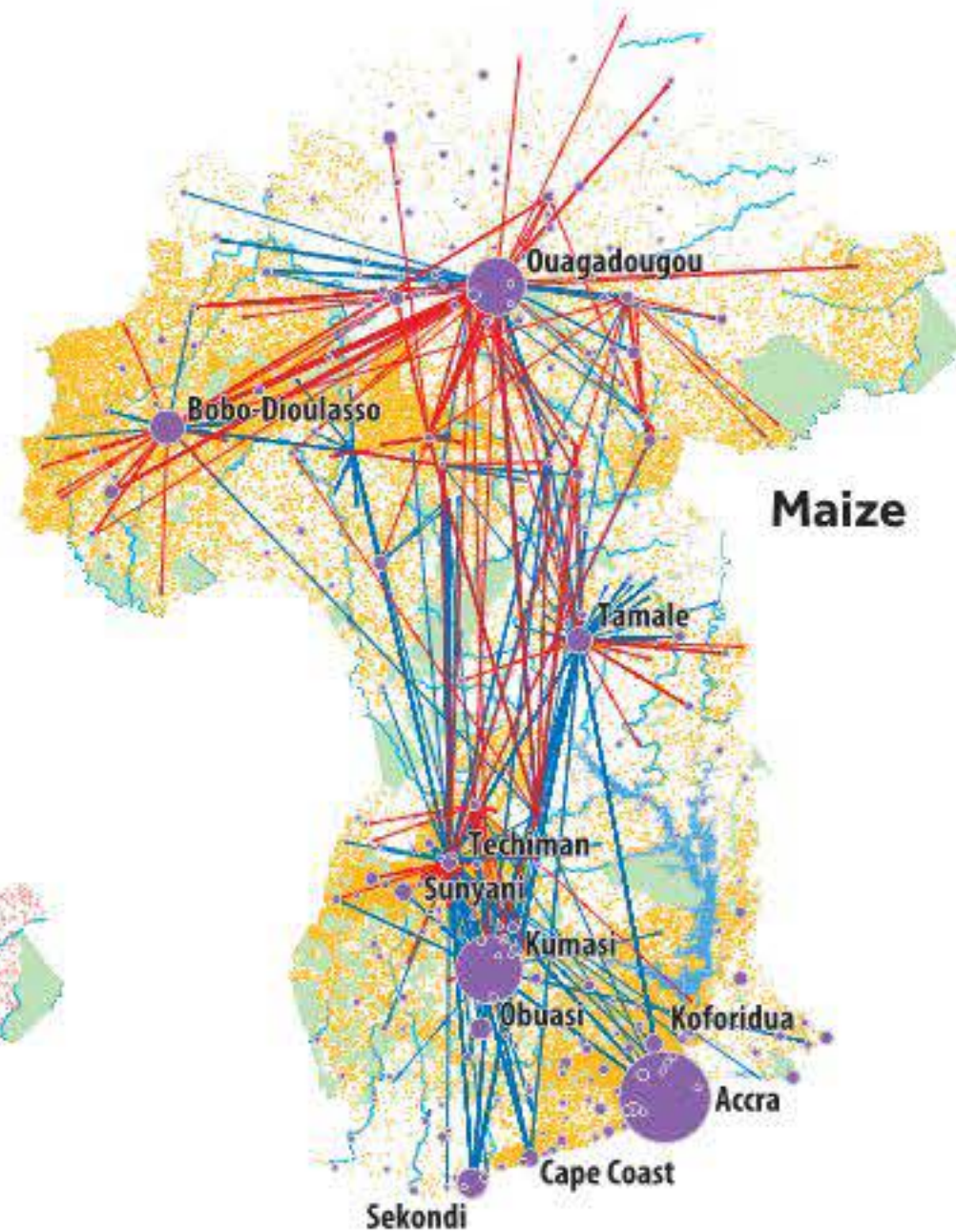
M48. Food crop flow of cowpea, maize and yam between Burkina Faso and Ghana - connections and complementarities

Source: author 2016 (see note page 69)

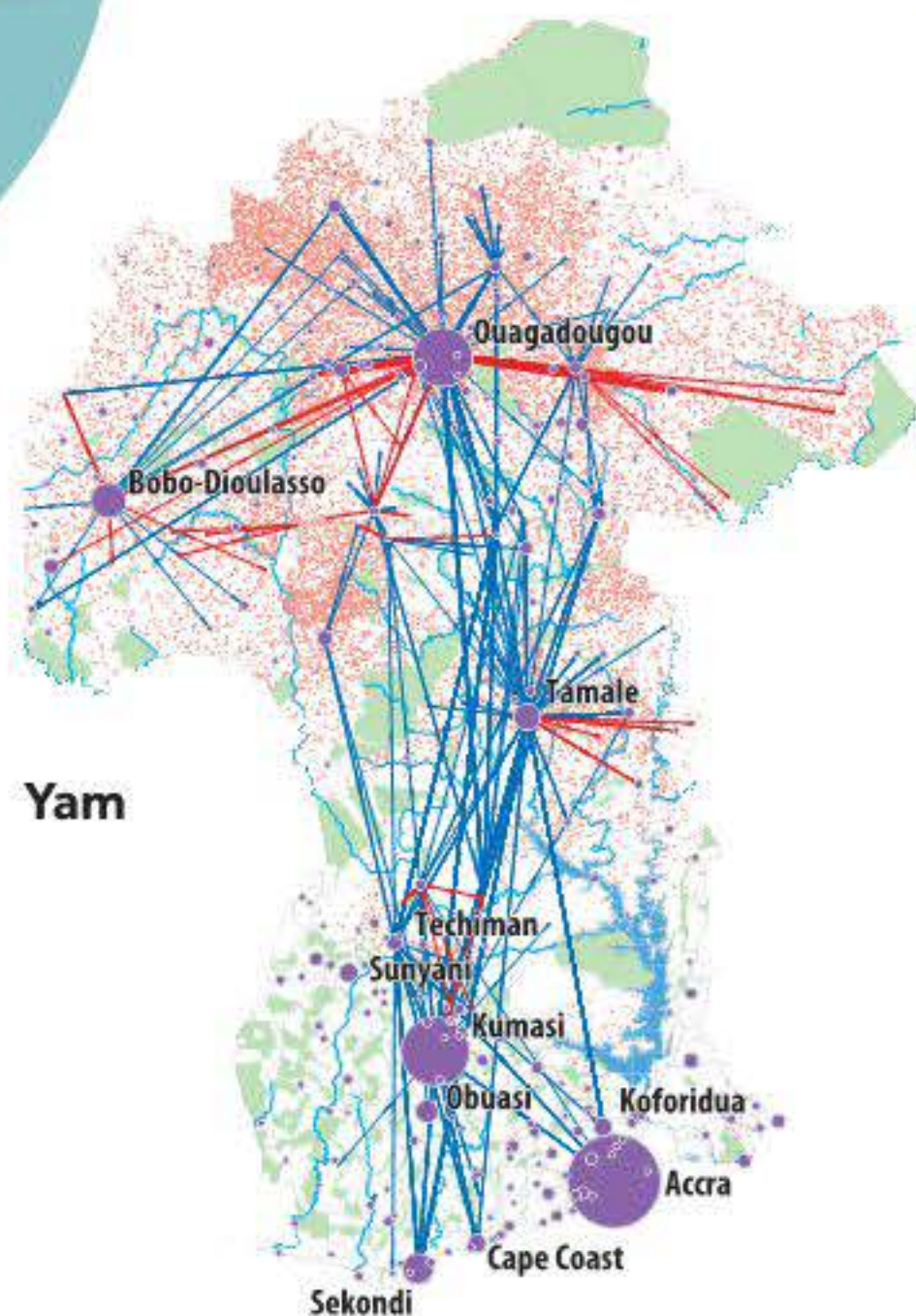
Cowpea



Maize

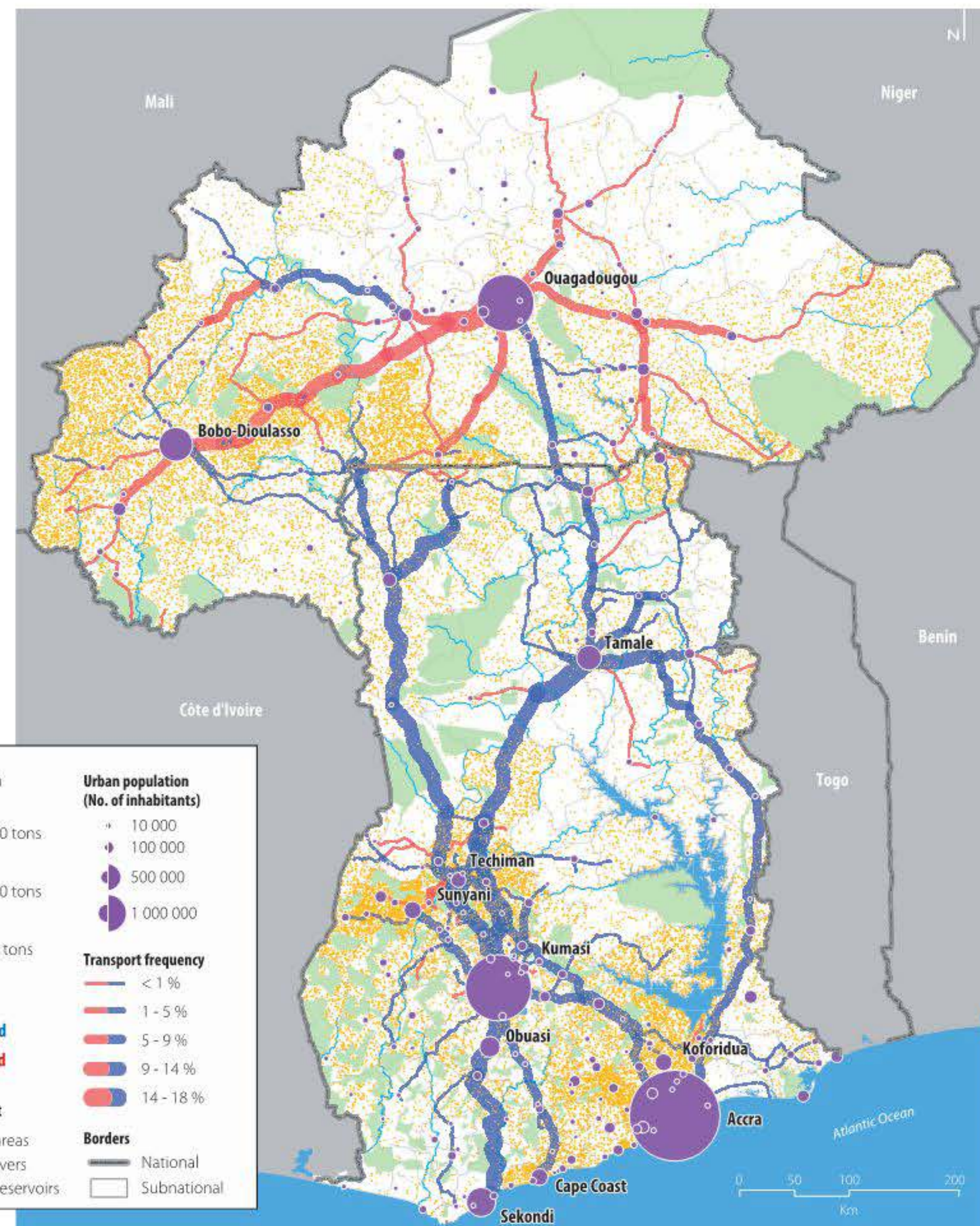


Yam



M49. Maize routes, from track to tarred road

Source: author 2016 (see note page 69)



THE OUAGADOUGOU-ACCRA CORRIDOR: SPATIAL INCLUSION THROUGH STAPLE FOOD CROPS

A heterogeneous area situated partially within the CFA franc zone, the Ouagadougou-Accra corridor is a real outsider in terms of regional integration in French-speaking Africa, and its food distribution channels foster complementarities between Ghana and Burkina Faso. Spontaneously reorganised during the Ivorian crisis, the resulting flows are restructuring the area, indicating potential that is attracting institutional attention.

• The concept of a corridor in West Africa

The concept of a corridor has many interpretations. As both a line of communication and a project territory, the functions, goals and stakeholders concerned differ from one corridor to another. With their concentration of transportation routes connecting remote places, corridors also sometimes enable movement within the areas they go through. In West Africa, the "Sahel-coastal" corridors are the legacy of colonial export infrastructure, reclassified after the countries gained independence as policies to tackle rural isolation. Initially the port-railway combinations orchestrated the movement of agricultural and mining products from the hinterlands and, in return, supplied these areas with consumer goods. Infrastructure policies have been conducted in these corridors for decades, with regional integration as a common goal for the different cooperation institutions. However, the effects of communication corridors do not necessarily result in the development of these territories.

• A corridor outside the WAEMU

Because of the route it takes and the formal trade that gravitates around it, the Ouagadougou-Accra corridor is not really the legacy of colonial infrastructure. The Kumasi-Accra road was indeed built for gold and cocoa in the early days of the British Gold Coast, but the Kumasi-Ouagadougou section, straddling Burkina Faso and Ghana, corresponds to other processes. Tamale was only linked to Kumasi by Road in 1920, for administrative purposes and the recruitment of workers for the south of present-day Ghana. The stretch linking Ouagadougou to Tamale will be consolidated over the next decade.

In terms of the economy and transport, the successive colonial and national policies implemented until the mid-1990s left the landlocked states dependent on the outside, generally through a single sector and a single maritime outlet. These states then opted for competition between the maritime outlet points which, combined with the Ivorian crisis, enabled the Ghanaian corridor to set itself apart from its neighbours, linked to Abidjan, Lomé or Cotonou. Formal international trade flows in the Ouagadougou-Accra corridor rapidly increased in volume in the 2000s, even though this area is an outsider to the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) with no legacy of colonial infrastructure.

A first WAEMU/Ghana Road Programme was launched in 2002 under NEPAD, followed by economic integration policies and calls for

free movement by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which includes the WAEMU member countries. But the removal of barriers to intra-regional trade is still limited: while ECOWAS external trade benefits from a common tariff, internal movements of goods remain problematic.

• Enhancing complementarities in food production

The main strength of this corridor is its diversity: a Sahel-coastal climatic gradient combined with a political, linguistic and monetary boundary. This diversity is a source of spatial complementarities illustrated by the food distribution channels for yams, maize and cowpeas. Yams, which are relatively rare in Burkina Faso, are grown in the forest-savannah transition zone, from the border to the south of Lake Volta, whereas cowpeas are mostly produced in the north, in the Sahel zone, and to a lesser extent in Ghana. Maize is grown along the whole length of the corridor, with high concentrations in the southern parts of both countries.

Flows of yams go in two directions: huge demand from southern Ghanaian cities and massive exports towards the Sahel. Movements of cowpeas are mostly towards urban parts of Ghana, after concentration in the major markets of Burkina Faso. Grown in most parts of the corridor, maize follows more complex patterns: the southern half of Ghana has two rainy seasons, but the humid tropical climate is an obstacle to drying and conservation. Flows therefore have interannual variations depending on harvests, are reversed according to the climate and are even reconfigured depending on prices. It is not unusual for grain from Ghana to be dried in the Burkinabe Sahel zone before returning to its country of origin. As a priority, these flows of food crops are intended for urban markets, but they also meet growing, more diversified demand from the emerging

intermediate towns, and more recently from rural markets, which were previously largely self-sufficient.

• A cross-border perspective for spatial inclusion

The centre of gravity of cross-border trade – whether formal or informal – has shifted in favour of connections between Ghana and Burkina Faso, rather than the traditional Ivorian outlet inherited from colonial trade flows and the Bobo-Dioulasso zone. In an opportunistic manner, this trade has intensified and market specialisation has restructured the economic area of the corridor, but it has not become more formalised as a result. Although free trade is hampered by numerous illegal levies, strategies to avoid these many obstacles and border crossing practices range from completely legal to completely illegal. As a result, this trade network linking rural agricultural basins, intermediate towns, border markets and urban consumption hubs mobilises different types of stakeholders on different levels, from agriculture to the retail trade, via transport, logistics and finance.

Inclusive rural development projects have emerged in the cross-border areas this corridor goes through. These include the Northern Rural Growth Programme and the Savannah Accelerated Development Authority in Ghana, and the Bagré Growth Pole in Burkina Faso. Over and above the interconnection of the areas it covers, the Ouagadougou-Accra corridor provides a type of hybrid integration, which is neither institutionalised nor completely informal. Through the dynamism of its food distribution channels, this outsider corridor is a laboratory for more general spatial inclusion, which generates jobs and rural development.

Gabriel Poujol