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## **The Socio-Economic Impact of the Railway**

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# CHAPTER 5: THE EMERGENCE OF NEW SETTLEMENT PATTERNS AND THE INTERMINGLING OF CULTURES

## 5.1 Introduction

In addition to the cash crop trade it activated, the completion of the railway opened many other opportunities, both for employment and for commercial ventures, which attracted migrants to the studied communities. The completion of the line meant that labour was required to fill the various positions in the railway and commercial firms, labour which was not available in the communities themselves. These employment and commercial opportunities attracted people from diverse ethnic backgrounds, which in turn led to the establishment of new settlements and the intermingling of Nigerian cultures in the studied communities.

This chapter analyses the influence of the railway on the migration of populations and the emergence of new settlement patterns as melting pots of cultures in the studied communities. The chapter argues that the burgeoning socio-economic opportunities which marked the advent of the railway were the force that attracted migrant populations.

## 5.2 Labour migration

The previous chapter discussed how the railway activated cash crop exports, commercial opportunities, and the spread of the colonial currency. As this chapter will demonstrate, during this period of increased globalization and mobility, the railway offered migrants from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds—most notably from Southern Nigeria, neighbouring countries, and Asia—opportunities to travel to the studied communities and participate in a worldwide cultural interaction. The burgeoning opportunities in the railway and the commercial firms were the forces that attracted these migrants, who took advantage of the cheap and fast transport to seek better fortunes for themselves. The existence of railway stations and commercial firms meant that skilled and unskilled labourers were required to fill the several positions across the communities. A good Western education and technical

expertise were required to be able to qualify for employment both in the railway and in the commercial trading firms.

There was a real scarcity of labour in the studied communities during the first and second decades of British rule in the North.<sup>1</sup> As the General Manager of Nigeria Railway pointed out, the men from the North lacked the expertise and qualifications to enter even the lowest positions.<sup>2</sup> Unlike their southern counterparts, the railway and the colonial authority in the North faced a real labour shortage, owing partly to the late contact with missionaries and Western education. The lackadaisical attitude of the British when they arrived also did not help matters, for instead of taking sole responsibility for educational affairs, they handed it to the Native Authority. The first elementary school in the North was not established until 1909.<sup>3</sup> In 1914, only 502 pupils were enrolled in school, out of the region's 9 million population.<sup>4</sup> Unlike Southern Nigeria, where the missions complemented government efforts in education, missionary activity was restricted in the North.<sup>5</sup> Until the 1930s, they were not permitted to operate there, and hence the labour scarcity. It was against the background of this labour scarcity and the employment and commercial opportunities that the studied communities and others along the rail line became "magnet" which attracted new populations. Prior to this, they were almost exclusively mono-ethnic settlements, largely Hausa/Fulani. The advent of the railway was a turning point in the population influx and in determining a changed ethnic composition.<sup>6</sup> The newcomers came with "cultural capital", a set of skills, education, and technical knowledge which qualified them for employment in their new homes. Some of them were products of mission schools in the South.

Three patterns of population influx can be observed. The first generations of migrants were those who came to work with the railway. These pioneers were predominantly Yoruba from south-west Nigeria and immigrant workers from Niger, Chad, Dahomey, and the Gold Coast, most of whom had some Western education or technical skills. The second generation came in the 1920s, the post-war boom era, following the physical establishment of

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<sup>1</sup> NAK SNP7/2227/1912 Baro-Kano Report; Oyemakinde, "Railway Construction", 315.

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Oshin, "Railways and Urbanization", 119.

<sup>3</sup> A. Adamu, *The Kano Civil War and the British Over-rule 1882–1940*, (Ibadan: Oxford Press, 1978), 236; A. Bako, *Sabon Gari: A History of Immigrants and Inter-Group Relations in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, (Sokoto: Usmanu Danfodio University Press, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Bako, *Sabon Gari*, 18-19; Ayandele, *Nigerian Historical Studies*, 159-60; Colonial Report-Annual, Nigeria Report for 1914, 17.

<sup>5</sup> Bako, *Sabon Gari*; Ayandele, *Nigerian Historical Studies*.

<sup>6</sup> M. C. Magbeafulu, *Migration and the Economy: Igbo Migration and the Nigerian Economy 1900 to 1975*, (New York: iUniverse Inc, 2003); Oshin, "Railways and Urbanization"; Bako, *Sabon Gari*, 20-1.

commercial firms in the communities. This group was mixed, comprising Yoruba, Ibo, Hausa, Beriberi, and other sub-groups within the North, as well as immigrant traders such as Syrians, Lebanese and, later, Asians. These were mostly commercial migrants and artisans who came in response to the post-World War I boom. The completion of the Eastern Railway from Port Harcourt to Kaduna in 1927 and of the Benue Bridge in the 1930s increasingly facilitated movements of Igbo, Tiv, and Idoma migrants to the studied areas and elsewhere along the rail line. Kaduna (the capital of the Northern Provinces from 1917) became a major railway junction and the largest passenger exchange point where migrants from the west and east of Nigeria entered various centres in the North. The economic dislocation of the 1930s, the burden of taxation, and the intensification of the activity of the commercial firms, as well as the scarcity of cultivable land, pushed many southerners to the North, including to the studied communities.<sup>7</sup> These population movements had significant consequences on the ethnic composition and inter-group relations in the communities.

For many migrants, this was their first sojourn outside their home towns. They were characteristically young men seeking new frontiers in the emerging colonial economy. As Reuben Udo pointed out, labour migration is always selective in terms of age and sex.<sup>8</sup> Although women also engaged in migration, their proportion was insignificant because of the cultural practice of confining women to the home, because of employers' preferences for male labour, and also because of the Christian notion of women as the weaker sex.<sup>9</sup> Informants pointed out that most migrants heard about opportunities in the studied areas through relatives and friends who had preceded them and had written back. These constitute what Jaquin Arango called migration networks. These networks are interpersonal ties or relations that connect migrants with relatives and friends or fellow countrymen at home.<sup>10</sup> Migration networks reduce the cost and uncertainty of migration, by providing prospective

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<sup>7</sup> See for instance R. K. Udo, "Food Deficits Area of Nigeria", *Geographical Review*, 61/3, (1971): 415-430, 417-8; Bako, *Sabon Gari*, 36; U. Hannerz, "Town and Country in Southern Zaria: A View from Kafanchan", in: A. Southall (ed.), *Small Urban Centers in Rural Development in Africa*, (Madison: African Studies Program, 1979), 226-240; Oshin, "Railways and Urbanization", 111-2; Magbeafulu, *Migration and the Economy*, 26-7, 29-37.

<sup>8</sup> R. K. Udo, "Internal Migrations and Development", in: J. S. OgunToyinbo, O. O. Areola and M. Filani, *A Geography of Nigerian Development*, (Nigeria: Heinemann, Books, 1978), 124-137, 124.

<sup>9</sup> B. Rogers, *The Domestication of Women: Discrimination in Developing Societies*, (London: Routledge, 1980), 30-40.

<sup>10</sup> A. Arango, "Explaining Migration: A Critical View", *International Social Science Journal*, 52/165, 287-288, 291.

migrants with support and assistance by way of information, financial assistance, and accommodation, and as well as linking them to employers.<sup>11</sup>

For instance, an informant, Theophilus Adeyinka Shittu, a Yoruba man from Offa, commented that his father, Samuel Shittu, came to Gimi in the 1940s on the advice of a younger brother who himself had been living in Zaria City. Prior to this, the father had lived at Beji, a small railway town in Nupe Province.<sup>12</sup> Another informant, Innocent Opufou, an Ijaw man, related how his father, Wellman Warri Opufou, came to Gimi in 1939. He came to know about Gimi through his elder brother, T. E. Opufou, who was working with the London and Kano Company at Dutsin Wai (another railway town south of Zaria) in 1938. This elder brother relocated to Gimi in 1939, having secured employment with John Holt, after which he invited his two younger brothers, Wellman Warri Opufou and E. C. Opufou. The two younger brothers later secured employment in the groundnut industry through him. The former worked with the UAC, while the latter became an LBA in the 1940s.<sup>13</sup> As Arango asserted, migration networks can serve as social capital insofar as they “permit access to other goods of economic significance such as employment or higher wages”.<sup>14</sup> Within two decades of the opening of the rail line, the migrant population had grown steadily both through migration and natural increase. As the evidence indicates, the Yoruba were dominant at Madobi, Dangora, Yako, and Auchan, while the Ibo or those from the old Eastern Nigeria were dominant at Gimi, Kwankwaso, and Challawa.<sup>15</sup>

This population influx with its attendant problems was accompanied by measures from the colonial state to control the migrants politically, economically, and medically through the establishment of segregated settlements under different terminologies. Based on the 1914 Cantonment Proclamation, the settlement was conceived exclusively for housing “natives” and “non-native Africans” working for the government and for commercial firms. In practice, the policy in the studied communities, as elsewhere, led to the establishment of separate settlements for migrants, most notably for southerners, “non-native Africans”, and Asians, as well as for northerners that were not indigenous to the communities, in areas known as *tasha* (from the word for station or railway settlement), *sabon gari* (new towns or stranger quarters), and *tudun wada* (exclusively for northerners that were not indigenous to

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 9.

<sup>12</sup> E-mail communications with Dr. Theophilus Adeyinka Shittu, 5 and 10 January 2013.

<sup>13</sup> E-mail communication with Mr. Innocent Opufou, 11 July 2013; NAK ZarProf MKT vol. I, Groundnut Buying Stations and Points.

<sup>14</sup> Arango, “Explaining Migration”, 291.

<sup>15</sup> Wiseman, “Structural and Ideological”, 2; KSHCB no. 68, Inspection Notes vol. 1.

the communities). Previously, it had been assumed that the segregated settlements in the North were established to protect Islam and Hausa people from the influence of southern Christians.<sup>16</sup> Studies by Ahmed Bako indicate that the settlements were established for political, economic, and medical needs—and not for protecting Islam or Muslims as was previously assumed. According to Bako, the settlements were settled both by Christians and Muslims and included Hausa, and they were not settled exclusively by Christians and southerners.<sup>17</sup> However, whether established to protect Islam and Muslims or not, it is common knowledge that the colonial segregation policy was a divide-and-rule strategy to prevent Nigerians from forming a common front against colonialism.

This development resulted in the emergence of two complex settlements on the rail line. On the one hand, there was a settlement for southerners, “non-native” Africans, and Asians and another settlement for northerners that were not indigenous to the host communities. It needs be pointed that, apart from Madobi, all the other communities had only one settlement for migrants (e.g. *unguwar Likoro tasha*, *Gimi tasha*). These settlements were the nucleus and commercial nerve centres of the indigenous communities, and the export economy revolved around them. For instance, the stations, commercial trading firms, and even markets were situated around these settlements. The indigenous settlements, on the other hand, were situated within the walled towns and inhabited exclusively by the host communities. The migrant settlements were administered generally by political designate ward heads (*masu unguwani*; sing. *mai unguwa*), appointed from among the migrants and answerable to the indigenous village heads through their representatives (*wakilan tasha*).<sup>18</sup>

However, owing to the concentration of population in some of the settlements, those with particularly high economic prospects were upgraded to *sabon gari*. As the records generally indicate, the migrant settlements in Madobi, Dangora, and Yako were the recognized *sabon gari*. Madobi Sabon Gari, which was the first and the largest settlement, was from the start established as an independent village unit in 1935 with own village head, a development which resulted in a reduction in the indigenous authority’s influence. A Yoruba

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<sup>16</sup> G. Olusanya, “The Sabon-Gari System in Northern States of Nigeria”, *Nigerian Magazine*, 94, (1967): 214-248; Oshin, “Railways and Urbanization”; R. Olaniyi, *Diaspora is Not Like Home: A Social and Economic History of Yoruba in Kano, 1912–1999*, (Europa: Lincom), 61.

<sup>17</sup> A. Bako, “Colonial Rule and Residential Segregation: The Sabon Gari Settlements Reconsidered”, in: A. M. Yakubu, I. M. Jumare and A. G. Saeed, *Northern Nigeria: A Century of Transformation, 1903-2003*, (Kaduna: Arewa House, 2005), 469-477; Bako, *Sabon Gari*, 1-9.

<sup>18</sup> Interviews with Malam Ali Tela (ward head of Gimi Tasha), Gimi Tasha, 7 March 2011; Alhaji Mohamadu Abubakar Goga (scribe to the village head of Auchan), Auchan, 8 March 2011; and Malam Haruna Audu (ward head of Tasha Likoro), Likoro Tasha, 24 March 2011.

man, AbdulRahimi Ogunlade, was appointed its village head. Also, a *tudun wada* was established near the *sabon gari* settlement the same year. The *tudun wada* did not become important until the 1950s, when the whole area (including the *sabon gari*) was renamed Tudun Wada, following Ogunlade's death.<sup>19</sup> It is surprising that, despite its importance, Gimi Tasha was not upgraded to a *sabon gari*. Those at Yako and Dangora, which were not as important as the one at Gimi, were upgraded to *sabon gari* in the 1950s, though they were not as important as Madobi Sabon Gari.<sup>20</sup> Conversely, centres like Likoro, Kwankwaso, and Challawa had no significant numbers of migrants besides the railway workers there, owing to the low economic opportunities available in these centres. As indicated in the last chapter, the commercial firms did not establish at Likoro, and the only firms that established at Kwankwaso and Challawa closed down owing to the poor economic prospects.<sup>21</sup>

The uneven socio-economic opportunities contributed to the expansion of some of the communities and the decline of others. For instance, centres like Madobi, Gimi, Yako, and even Dangora (an entirely colonial creation) expanded and developed into peri-urban-like centres along the rail line. In pre-colonial times, their strategic locations on trade routes and their defensive character enhanced Madobi and Gimi's position. Their location on the rail line and the activities of the commercial firms and population further accelerated their expansion and popularity. Even Dangora, an entirely colonial creation, transformed into an important centre almost overnight. However, centres like Likoro and Kwankwaso, which had previously both been important, declined in importance owing to the low economic opportunities or absence of commercial firms.

It would be interesting to have detailed comparative data on the migrant populations and the indigenous settlements, but unfortunately such data are not available. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 are the only data we have so far on the migrants in Madobi, Yako, and Dangora. The data itself is misleading and so should be used with caution. It records taxable male adults, exclusive of women, children, the old, and Asian immigrants. The tables also do not provide explanations for the fluctuation in population. The tax lists for the main towns, which could have assisted in this study, were not used because they are not properly arranged. A detailed study of the lists will be required to arrive at a valid conclusion. Despite their shortcomings, these lists cannot be ignored, as they are the only available primary evidence on the migrant population.

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<sup>19</sup> Umaru, "Tudun Wada Madobi"; Yusuf, "New Approaches", 219; Yusuf, *Impact of the Railway*.

<sup>20</sup> KSHCB KanProf 1/11/13, History of Kiru.

<sup>21</sup> KSHCB Acc. no. 68; NAK 5280; Yusuf, "New Approaches", 207-223; Yusuf, *Impact of the Railway*, 129.

**Table 5.1 Migrant population in Madobi Sabon Gari, 1939–1949**

Town	1939	1942–43	1943	1943–44	1948–49
Madobi Sabon Gari	208	138	142	142	114

Source: KSHCB Acc. no. 68, Kura Inspection Notes vol. 1.

**Table 5.2 Yoruba and Ibo population in Yako and Dangora, 1955**

Yoruba	47
Ibo	34

Source: KSHCB KanProf 1/11/13, History of Kiru.

## **5.2 Socio-economic basis of diaspora community**

### ***Railway work***

The railway was the main industry in which the migrants were employed, being the main employer of labour during the colonial and post-colonial period. Many of the migrants worked as permanent way workers or labourers (*leburori* or *yanbita*), while some worked in the stations as clerks, signal men, and station masters. These were drawn from the first group of migrants in the communities. Many of them came from different parts of the country and from neighbouring countries. The Yoruba and Ibo were the earliest indigenous groups to join the railway because of their early exposure to Western education and wage employment. The Hausa and other northern groups joined afterwards.<sup>22</sup> Linda Lindsay and Wale Oyemakinde pointed out that Nigerians joined the railway because of the attraction of a steady income and the prestige associated with the work.<sup>23</sup> Lindsay noted that steady income helped these

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<sup>22</sup> A. G. Oilfield, “The Native Railway Workers in Nigeria”, *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 9/3, (1936): 379-402; Oyemakinde, “Railway Construction”; Oshin, “Railways and Urbanization”.

<sup>23</sup> L. Lindsay, “Money, Marriage and Masculinity on the Colonial Nigerian Railway”, in: L. A. Lindsay and S. F. Mescher (eds), *Men and Masculinities in Modern Africa*, (Portsmouth, NH, 2003), 138-55; L. A. Lindsay, *Working with Gender: Wage Labour and Social Change in South-Western Nigeria*, (Heinemann: 2003).

workers to maintain harmonious relations with, and made them more attractive to, their wives.<sup>24</sup>

As a rule, all railway workers (station masters and clerks and signal men) lived in the railway quarters situated along the rail line. These were the educated few, often products of mission schools in the South. The labourers constituted the bulk of the railway workforce in the communities, as elsewhere. They were mostly uneducated but possessed certain technical skills which qualified them to be employed in the railway. This group was responsible for maintaining and repairing the line. They worked in gangs under a head ganger, each gang inspecting a certain mileage of the line daily. The labourers lived in camps, or beater camps as the Nigerian Railway called them, which were spread along the line, the largest of which was around Likoro and Dangora. Many of them also lived in the migrant quarters and the indigenous settlements.<sup>25</sup> As far as safety and maintenance was concerned, it was this army of labourers who looked after the line. Their career was characterized by mobility here and there along the rail line. As many of the labourers interviewed generally pointed out, many of them had worked in almost all the communities considered in this study.

Their presence had profound consequences on the social and economic landscapes of the communities. On the one hand, their presence helped in the circulation of the colonial currency, as they were the main wage earners in the countryside. Railway workers were, as Wale Oyemakinde pointed out, “harbingers of the currency revolution” at a time when the colonial coin was still novel in Nigeria.<sup>26</sup> They attracted markets and populations around themselves. The villagers made the railway camps, quarters, and stations their markets. They sold on credit and expected payment on days when the railway workers received their salaries or wages. In this way, part of the wage income entered the local economy.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, service industries such as eateries, bottled beer, and locally brewed alcohol (*burukutu* and *pito*) centres, credit services, brothels, and entertainers developed to cater for these workers. On another level, they constituted an enlightened group, who were anxious to give their children a better education. They were always up to date on social and political happenings in

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<sup>24</sup> L. Lindsay, “Money, Marriage and Masculinity”, 144.

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Alhaji Ahamdu Dan Barno, Kwankwaso, 5 March 2005.

<sup>26</sup> W. Oyemakinde, “The Railway Workers and Modernization in Colonial Nigeria”, *Journal of Historical Society of Nigeria*, 10/1, (1979): 113-124, 115-6; Oyemakinde, “Railway Construction”, 317-323.

<sup>27</sup> Oyemakinde, “Railway Construction”, 318

the country.<sup>28</sup> As informants noted, the locals got their information about happenings in the country through the railway labourers.<sup>29</sup>

However, the presence of the railway workers, coupled with the expanding cash economy and the influx of foreign ideas, had the consequence of breaking down or undermining the traditional social control over dependent women and girls. For instance, women and young girls who frequented railway camps and stations to trade often asserted their independence and even deserted homes, owing to contact with the railway labourers who enticed them into sexual relations. Informants commented that women and young girls usually ran away from home to the camps. An informant, Alhaji Ahmadu Dan Barno, a retired railway labourer, pointed out that “whenever a woman or girl got missing or ran away from home, the railway camp was always the first place to look for her.”<sup>30</sup> The attraction to railway workers was understandable; they had a steady income, which made them attractive lovers. The railway workers stimulated local trade, as their camps and quarters became a sort of market to local women.<sup>31</sup> Women who attached themselves to them not only stood a chance of getting a permanent space to sell from, they also had a steady allowance or even capital to expand their business.

In a society undergoing major transformations through the introduction of cash, sexual relations with railway labourers were a way of negotiating social and economic ties. As studies by Judith Byfield and N. A. Fadipe revealed, the advent of the railway increased the rate of divorce and prostitution in Yorubaland. Married women and young girls in the course of contact with railway workers defied their husbands, parents, and public opinion, and ran away from home to become mistresses to railway workers.<sup>32</sup> As Byfield pointed out, the railway camps provided new relationships and economic opportunities, as well as sanctuary from the traditional authority, in the form of an alternative legal space under the railway’s jurisdiction.<sup>33</sup> As one early annual report also indicates, married women along the

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<sup>28</sup> Oyemakinde, “Railway Workers”, 116-7.

<sup>29</sup> Interviews with Malams Yusuf Inusa Dan Madaki, Hussaini Abdu, Adamu Zaki, Chindo Mohammed, and Idi Inusa, Yakum Dan Baure, 10 April 2011.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Alhaji Ahmadu Dan Barno, Kwankwaso, 5 March 2005.

<sup>31</sup> Oyemakinde, “Railway Construction”, 323

<sup>32</sup> J. Byfield, “Women, Marriage, Divorce and the Emerging Colonial State in Abeokuta (Nigeria) 1892-1904” *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 30/1, (1996): 32-51; N. A. Fadipe, *The Sociology of Yoruba*, (Ibadan: Ibadan University Press, 1970), 90-1.

<sup>33</sup> J. Byfield, “Women, Marriage, Divorce”, 254.

rail line asserted their independence by refusing to bear children, aborting their pregnancies without their husband's knowledge.<sup>34</sup>

The Nigerian Railway was one government industry in which southerners, especially the Igbo, were dominant. They constituted the bulk of the engine drivers, technicians, and engineers. In the 1960s, many southern railway workers, most especially the Ibo, fled from the communities during the Civil War. Their departure during the crisis disrupted rail services between the North and South, and the system came to a virtual standstill.<sup>35</sup> Although there were no attacks in the studied communities, many of the southern migrants fled owing to fear and rumours of impending attacks. At the end of the war, many of them returned, by which time the railway was in a decline.

### ***Groundnut trade***

Many of the migrants were employed in the groundnut trade industry as clerks and middlemen or sub-agents to the commercial firms. A number of the Yoruba and Ibo worked as clerks. Many of them, including the Hausa and the Asian traders, and particularly the Syrians and Arabs, acted as middlemen to the firms or sub-agents to the main middlemen who advanced them credit to purchase produce. Credit advances were a prominent feature of the produce trade.<sup>36</sup> The migrants were attracted into the produce trade by their awareness of the possible cash returns. Their ambition was to save money to send their children to school. Some of these migrants were also independent traders, who used their personal capital to purchase produce.

The migrants controlled the produce trade in the communities through kinship networks. They enjoyed what amounted to a monopoly. For instance, J. A. Wiseman pointed out that the Ibo dominated the produce trade in Gimi.<sup>37</sup> The Yoruba, on the other hand, controlled the produce trade in Madobi, Yako, and Dangora. As early as 1924, a senior colonial official in Kano Province, H. H. Middleton, reported that the bulk of the groundnuts purchased by the firms in Madobi that year were possibly via Yoruba traders. Many of them had been living in the area before the firms began to operate there.<sup>38</sup> A number of them

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<sup>34</sup> SNP/10 Zaria Province Report (Annual) 1914.

<sup>35</sup> For details, see M. E. Zukerman, "Nigerian Crisis: Economic Impact on the North", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 8/1, (1970): 37-54.

<sup>36</sup> Adebayo, "Production and Export, 286; Hogendorn, *Nigerian Groundnut*.

<sup>37</sup> Wiseman, "Structural and Ideological", 2.

<sup>38</sup> AHAK 3/3/16, Report on the Groundnut Trade in Kano Province by H. H. Middleton, 6, 16.

started out as clerks in the trading firms. Having acquired the expertise and saved enough, they resigned to start trading themselves, and some even established their own firms.<sup>39</sup> Their activities generated employment for fellow migrants and the indigenous population. Prominent produce middlemen among the migrants in Gimi were T. E. Opufou, E. C. Opufou, P. H. Sawyer, and Umoru. They became LBAs in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>40</sup> In Madobi, Michael Nwankwo was the most prominent produce trader in the 1950s and 1960s; he established his own trading firm, Michael Nwankwo Ltd, in 1947.<sup>41</sup> AbdulRauf Fashola was another prominent middleman at Dangora in the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>42</sup>

In the 1920s, the dominant position of the southern produce traders in Madobi and Yako was challenged by new arrivals, most notably Syrian and Arab traders who also were attracted by the post-war trade boom and their awareness of the profits to be made.<sup>43</sup> As M. A. Bugren, the foremost Arab trader, interviewed by J. S. Hogendorn in Kano in the 1960s, pointed out, he came to Kano because of the money in the groundnut trade.<sup>44</sup> Many of these traders also started as intermediaries to the European firms before saving money to establish their own firms. As indicated in the previous chapter, when the trading outlet in Madobi was established, the Arabs and Lebanese were the first group to establish their firms there. Although they were not many compared with the indigenous middlemen, as Table 5.3 indicates, they constituted a distinct commercial group, and they had stronger capital than their indigenous counterparts combined. Toyin Falola asserted that the indigenous traders were jealous of the Asian and European traders because of their strong capital and control over the markets and their ability to use their networks and branches to divide the markets.<sup>45</sup> Their presence did not result in complete withdrawal of the indigenous middlemen, however, as a number of the latter acted as agents for these outsiders.<sup>46</sup>

The newcomers were shrewd businessmen who did not accept bad business. As the records indicate, they were fond of snatching their rivals' agents. When their agents defaulted or decided not to trade with them, they had them arrested and refused to appear in court; they

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with Malama Laraba Wellman, Gimi Dabosa, 25 May 2011.

<sup>40</sup> NAK ZarProf MKT vol. 1, Groundnut Buying Stations and Points.

<sup>41</sup> Yusuf, *Impact of the Railway*, 129, 148.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Okediji, "Economic History", 141, 199.

<sup>44</sup> Hogendorn, *Nigerian Groundnut*, 141.

<sup>45</sup> T. Falola, "Money and Informal Credit Institutions in Colonial Western Nigeria", in: J. I. Guyer, *Money Matters, Instability, Values and Social Payments in Modern History of West African Communities*, (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995), 162-107, 163.

<sup>46</sup> Okediji, "Economic History", 191; Hogendorn, *Nigerian Groundnut*.

even seized their donkeys. Prominent Syrian and Arab groundnut traders in Madobi and Yako in the 1940s were Saleh Bugren (*mai gashin baki*), Sadiq Tahir, Habib Deik, and Jamil. As Table 5.3 also indicates, there were also some European residents at some of the centres, even though they were not many.<sup>47</sup>

As the archival records indicate, the social life of the migrants was generally characterized by upward social mobility, to the extent that some of their names appeared on the wealthy individuals' tax list. In the 1950s and 1960s, some of them earned as much as £1,700 or as little as £150 annually.<sup>48</sup> For instance, in the 1950s, Michael Nwankwo was listed as the richest person not only in Madobi but in Kura District as a whole. Also, Abdul Rauf Fashola was reported as the richest person in Kiru District.<sup>49</sup> As the oral and archival sources suggest, the Yoruba and Ibo migrants invested profits from the produce trade in their children's education and in other trade such as livestock trade, retailing, and real estate (e.g. hotels<sup>50</sup> and housing to cater for the migrant populations).<sup>51</sup>

**Table 5.3 List of non-African populations**

Year	Nationality	Male Adult	Occupation	Female Adult	Children	Town	Total
1941	Syrian	3	Traders	2	2	Madobi	7
"	"	2	"	n.a.	n.a.	Yako	2
1942	British	1	Railway staff	n.a.	n.a.	Dangora	1
"	Syrian	2	Traders	n.a.	n.a.	Yako	2
"	"	2	"	2	5	Madobi	9
1943	Syrian & Arab	2	"	2	8	"	12
"	German	1	Trader	1	2	Madobi	4
"	British	1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	Yako	1
1944	"	3	Traders	3	n.a.	Madobi	3
1945	"	3	"	3	10	"	16
1946	Arab	1	"	1	4	"	6
"	Syrian	1	Trader	1	3	Madobi	5
1948	Arab	1	"	1	4	Yako	6

<sup>47</sup> KSHCB Acc. no. 68.

<sup>48</sup> KSHCB KanProf 1/11/11 History of Kiru District, KHCB KanProf 1/11/13 History of Kura District.

<sup>49</sup> KSHCB KanProf 1/11/13 History of Kura District.

<sup>50</sup> For example, there was a Provident Hotel at Gimi and an Alheri Hotel at Auchan.

<sup>51</sup> NAK ZarProf 2015, St. James Anglican School at Gimi Dabosa; NAK KanProf 4171, Elementary School at Madobi; NAK KanProf 6476, Methodist Church Mission Application for Church Site at Dangora; NAK KanProf 6575, Applications to Open School at Yako by Methodist Church Mission.

“	Arab (Tripoli)	1	Trader	1	5	Madobi	7
“	Arab-Tuwaiya (Saudi Arabian)	1	“	1	3	Madobi	5

Note: n.a. = not available

Source: KSHCB BMD/36, Statistics of non-indigenous population.

### ***Livestock trade***

Besides the produce trade which attracted the migrants, a number of them, particularly the Yoruba and Hausa, were also in the livestock trade. Those of them involved in the produce trade also participated in the livestock trade when the opportunity cost in the trade was low or during festival periods. Florence Okediji pointed out that most of the Hausa middlemen who drove the produce trade were also involved in the livestock trade. Just as they reinvested profits from kola nuts into the groundnut trade, so also did they reinvest in livestock trade.<sup>52</sup> As with the produce trade, it was oriented southward. The livestock trade between the North and South dated back to the pre-colonial period, but the trade at that time was constrained by transport difficulties and general insecurity.<sup>53</sup> The establishment of British rule and the completion of the railway gave a new impetus. Expansion in the trade was a result of the steady demand for meat from Southern Nigeria, owing to the increased wealth from cash crop exports and the new transport system. The bulk of the meat consumed in the South was imported from the North.

Livestock traders purchased their stocks, particularly rams and goats as well as fowl, from the communities and their environs and then transported them to the South. As mentioned in Chapter 3, livestock freight featured prominently in rail-borne traffic from the localities studied (see Appendix 1: Table 3.7). The peak of the trade was during the festival periods, especially the *Eid al adha* (the Greater Eid or festival of sacrifice) and Christmas time, when demand for animals was high. In the 1960s, the livestock trade between the North and South was disrupted by the Civil War, and then again by the drought of the 1970s, the latter causing heavy mortality among cattle herds.<sup>54</sup> From the 1970s onwards, the livestock trade was transported by road owing to the decline in importance of the railway.

<sup>52</sup> Okediji, “Economic History”.

<sup>53</sup> F. A. Okediji, *The Cattle Industry in Northern Nigeria, 1900–1939*, (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1973), 2-3; Umiunu, “Role of Transportation”, 3-16, 6.

<sup>54</sup> Olaniyi, *Diaspora*, 126.

### *Textile and cosmetic trade*

While men dominated the produce and livestock trades, women's involvement in trading was also important and should not be overlooked. Despite the critical role women played in informal trade, they were seen as a group requiring integration into the mainstream economy.<sup>55</sup> Many Yoruba women migrants engaged in the textile and cosmetic trade. Though men also engaged in this trade, the majority were women. The trade was called *osomalo*, an Ijesha word, coming from the saying: "*Oso ni ma a lo ki mo fi agba omi, or Oso ni ma lo gba' owo mi loni o*" ("I shall remain standing here, squatting or stooping, until I am paid").<sup>56</sup> The term originated in the fact that the trade itself was based on a credit or hire purchase system. The women always called on customers to buy from them on credit and pay at a later date. Toyin Falola pointed out that the trade was similar to the trust system introduced by the European traders in the coastal trade with Nigerians during the nineteenth century.<sup>57</sup> Many of the women traders were either wives of railway workers or produce traders, and some were independent traders themselves. As with the male migrants, they were attracted by the profits to be made. Their ambition was to use their profits to educate their children, to invest in houses, and to retire to a large store.<sup>58</sup> The women purchased their wares from the cities and hawked them in the countryside where the firms could not penetrate.

The *osomalo* women were the most prominent southern traders in the localities, given the practice of seclusion (*kulle*) in Hausaland, which restricts women to the home front.<sup>59</sup> In Yorubaland, women entrepreneurship has a long history, pre-dating the colonial period. Yoruba women engaged in trade to supplement family incomes, usually starting on a small scale, using capital from personal savings or relatives and then expanding gradually.<sup>60</sup> Though their influence was constrained by distance and insecurity, the restoration of peace by

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<sup>55</sup> M. L. Swantz, "Women Entrepreneurs in Tanzania: A Path to Sustainable Livelihood", in: Small Global Employment, vol. 1, (1995), *Development: Journal of the Society for International Development*, 55-60.

<sup>56</sup> P. A. Ogunipe, *Up-Country Girl: A Personal Journey and Truthful Portrayal of African Culture*, (Bloomington, IN: Authors House, 2012), 91; Olaniyi, 138-9; T. Falola, "Money and Informal Credit", 172.

<sup>57</sup> Falola, "Money and Informal Credit", 172.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> B. J. Callaway, *Muslim Hausa Women in Nigeria: Tradition and Change*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 68-9.

<sup>60</sup> Falola, "Money and Informal Credit", 173.

colonialism, the development of the export trade, and the construction of the railway offered them enormous opportunities to diversify and extend their trade to the North.<sup>61</sup>

One interesting aspect of this trade was connected to persuasion, which was a key component of doing business. The *osomalo* often identified their customers or anybody requiring credit and then tricked them into buying, either through persuasion or peer-group networks. When a customer was not interested in one of their products, they suggested another.<sup>62</sup> Their hosts nicknamed them *adodoka* or *dauki dauki ba fada*, “pick pick without fight”, owing to the way they advertised or attracted their customers. The price of an article was always doubled. Informants noted that buyers seemed to continue to service their debts endlessly. Buying on credit allowed villagers to live on credit and keep in touch with current trends and tastes, especially where textiles were involved.<sup>63</sup> The *osomalo* saved the villagers the trouble of going to the city. But they had better not default in their repayments; otherwise, the *osomalo* could get quite provocative.<sup>64</sup>

The *osomalo* profited from the scarcity of imported textiles during the 1930s and 1940s by selling at higher rates. Their hold over the trade was challenged by the Hausas in the 1970s. The increased involvement of the Hausas in the textile trade and the emergence of modern textile mills eventually undermined the *osomalo* hold over the trade.<sup>65</sup> Although the *osomalo* are still very much around, they now sell mostly plastic materials.

### ***Foodstuffs trade***

The trade in the staple foodstuffs was another economic activity performed by some of the migrants. As with the produce trade, those involved in this trade were of mixed ethnicity, comprising Ibo, Hausa, and Yoruba (including women). They purchased cereal or grains such as beans, maize, and millet, as well as onions and peppers from the communities and transported them to the South and the urban centres in Kano and Zaria, where they were scarce. As mentioned in Chapter 3, foodstuffs featured prominently in rail-borne traffic (see Tables 3.2–3.6, 3.10–3.12, and 3.14–3.15 in Appendix 1) despite the food deficit in some of

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<sup>61</sup> O. Akinwumi, “Women Entrepreneurs in Nigeria: Notes on the Yoruba ‘Alajapa’ and ‘Alarobo’”, *Africa Updates News Letter, Nigerian Culture and Society*, (Summer 2000): vol. VII, Issue 3, available at <http://web.ccsu.edu/afstudy/upd7-3.htm> [accessed on 30 August 2012]; Falola, “Money and Informal Credit”, 163.

<sup>62</sup> Falola, “Money and Informal Credit”.

<sup>63</sup> Falola, “Money and Informal Credit”, 173.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Olaniyi, *Diaspora*.

the communities. The foodstuffs trade was also a part of the service industry of the railway, which catered for the railway workers and the southern populations. Since the migrant did not engage in food production, unlike their counterparts in the cocoa belt of south-west Nigeria, they increased the food deficits in some of the communities. The food traders profited from this food deficit. As highlighted in the previous chapter, most of the communities were deficient in foodstuffs and had to rely on such traders. As Oshin and Umiunu asserted, the railways facilitated foodstuffs trade between the North and the South, which resulted in each region specializing in the production of foods for which they were best endowed by nature. This singular factor created inter-dependence among the various Nigerian groups.<sup>66</sup>

In the 1960s, the foodstuffs trade was affected by the Civil War. The war disrupted the inter-regional trade and transportation between the North and the South and created a vacuum which was immediately filled by the Hausa.<sup>67</sup> The disruption of the transport system during and after the war also meant that the foodstuffs were transported by road transport.<sup>68</sup>

### ***Prostitution***

Prostitution (*karuwanci*, a term denoting both sexual and economic independence) was another economic activity performed by some of the single female migrants. Prostitution was one of the service industries of the railway, and it provided single and unattached females some degree of social and economic mobility and independence.<sup>69</sup> The prostitutes (*karuwai*) were predominantly Hausa from across the North and the localities, with a few other groups such as Tiv, Idoma, and women from southern Zaria. As with other migrants, they came in response to the economic opportunities presented by the railway and the presence of populations of single or unattached males. They concentrated mostly at those centres with high economic opportunities and large populations (such as Madobi, Gimi, Dangora, Yako, and Auchan). The increasing number of unattached railway labourers and other migrants who required sexual relations boosted demand for the prostitutes' services. As one informant commented, "wherever you see labourers, there must be prostitutes".<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Oshin, "Railways and Urbanization", 115; Umiunu, "Role of Transportation", 9-10.

<sup>67</sup> Watts, "Brittle Trade", 95.

<sup>68</sup> Zukerman, "Nigerian Crisis", 50.

<sup>69</sup> S. Aderinto, "Colonialism and Prostitution in Africa", in: Melisa Hope Ditmore (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Prostitution and Sex Work*, 1 (UK: Greenwood Press, 2006), 110-112; S. Aderinto, "Sexualized Nationalism: Lagos and the Politics of Illicit Sexuality in Colonial Nigeria, 1918-1958", (PhD Thesis, University of Texas, 2010), 21-22.

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Malam Mohammadu Nayi, Gidan Radiyo Madobi, 27 September 2005.

Although economic factors were one cause of prostitution, divorce was also a contributing factor. Most women entered prostitution to escape marriage.<sup>71</sup> Kenneth Little asserted that all Hausa prostitutes had previously been married.<sup>72</sup> Although prostitution is an acceptable way of life, it is disapproved of by society, because a good woman is expected to be married or live with relatives and avoid multiple sexual relations; otherwise, she will be labelled a prostitute.<sup>73</sup>

Although prostitution is an ancient practice, it became more lucrative with the advent of the railway. The severity of construction and railway work and the fact that the labourers were mostly single boosted demand for sex workers. During the time of the railway's construction, prostitutes were permitted at the construction camps to sell sex to labourers.<sup>74</sup> As the construction work was completed, brothels (*gidan magajiya*) and hotels sprang up along the rail line, including in the studied communities, to serve the unattached male populations.<sup>75</sup> The prostitutes did not evoke opposition from the public, as they were seen as doing legal work. Unlike the form of prostitution practised by other Nigerian groups, the Hausa prostitutes lived and solicited in a house called *gidan magajiya*. The houses were situated in the migrant quarters and were mostly owned by a *magajiya* (madam of the prostitutes) and the southern migrants from whom she rented and sublet to her girls. An informant, Alhaji Yakubu Likoro, stated that prostitution was not the only work they did; some also sold food, cigarettes, and kola nuts.<sup>76</sup> These additional activities, together with the existence of other prostitution-related activities such as hotels and beer parlours, provided avenues for sexual networking and the secrecy required by clients. Although it has been argued that Hausa prostitutes elsewhere were patronized only by the Hausa,<sup>77</sup> the evidence from the communities suggests that they were patronized by diverse groups, including married men, most of whom were labourers. An informant, Malam Muhammadu Nayi, stated that "most labourers spend their money on prostitutes".<sup>78</sup> Although it is difficult to determine the profitability of prostitution, some of the prostitutes earned enough to invest in real estate.

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<sup>71</sup> Callaway, *Muslim Hausa Women*, 44.

<sup>72</sup> K. Little, *African Women in Town: Aspect of Africa's Social Revolution*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 90.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Nigeria, *Further Correspondence*, 135.

<sup>75</sup> Aderinto, "Colonialism and Prostitution" and "Sexualized Nationalism".

<sup>76</sup> Interview with Alhaji Yakubu, Likoro, 11 August 2012.

<sup>77</sup> Aderinto, "Sexualized Nationalism", 22.

<sup>78</sup> Interview with Malam Muhammadu Nayi.

As mentioned earlier, some of the houses in which they operated were owned by the *magajiyas* themselves, suggesting that prostitution was profitable.<sup>79</sup> An informant also pointed out that one of the *magajiya* built a mosque at Yako Sabon Gari.<sup>80</sup>

In the 1940s and 1950s, there were efforts to control divorce and prostitution in the country. The prevalence of child prostitution, venereal disease, and consummation of marriage with underage girls during the war led to a plan to tax prostitutes and discourage divorce, with a view to curtailing prostitution.<sup>81</sup> The decline of the railway and the decline of the migrant communities in the 1970s undermined the activities of the prostitutes. Many relocated to the capital cities and the new hubs on the Kano–Zaria road, such as Kwanar Dangora and Tashar Mayere.<sup>82</sup>

### *Others*

In addition to these activities, there were also artisans such as tailors, bicycle repairers, and goldsmiths. There were also casual labourers who earned their living from the trains, loading and unloading goods.

## **5.3 Socio-cultural changes**

Despite attempts by the colonial authority to isolate the migrants into a rigid compartment (through a segregation policy), social relations brought them into direct contact with their hosts communities, a development which eroded both traditional and official barriers. The fact that no human society is self-sufficient also made interactions between migrants and hosts very necessary. Besides the trade which fostered physical interactions, inter-ethnic relations were fostered through language, religion, and marriage. In their various capacities as traders, middlemen, government workers, and artisans, the migrants interacted with their hosts through the local language (Hausa), even if the spoken Hausa of many of them was not particularly good. This was important because the hosts did not understand the newcomers’

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<sup>79</sup> Interviews with Malams Yahaya Audu, Yau Jibrin, Hussain Inusa, and Yusuf Inusa, Tudun Wada Madobi, 2 October 2005; with Lawan Akawun Kwalli, at Madobi, and Isa Namairo, at Auchan, 14 March 2011; with Ali Tela (village head of Gimi Tasha), Gimi Tasha, 7 March 2011; and with Alhajis Ado Yahuza and Shehu Audu, Yako, 5 March 2011.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Malam Ado Yahuza, Yako, 20 May 2012.

<sup>81</sup> NAK ZarProf C1/1944 Child Prostitution (2) Purdah (3) Control of Prostitution under Moslem Law 1944–51; NAK KanProf 5050 Prostitution Tax 1942-3.

<sup>82</sup> Interviews with Malams Yahaya Dangora, Federal College of Education (FCE) Kano, 30 March 2011; Shehu Yusuf and Alhaji Adamu (Sarkin Fulanin Kyrana), Kyrana, 4 March 2011.

own languages. The migrants also had a further motivation, which was the quest for acceptance.<sup>83</sup> Just as they learned the host language, some of the locals in turn learned to communicate with them in pidgin English, which was the *lingua franca* among the migrants. Pidgin English itself is a language of commerce.

Religion also played a critical role in fostering social relations between the two groups. A number of the migrants, especially the Yoruba, Nupe, Igala, Syrians, and Arabs were Muslims and so shared the same faith as their hosts, even if their daily prayers were irregular. They observed their prayers in the midst of the hosts and even contributed funds to charity. Informants noted that the migrants donated to mosque building and some even single-handedly built mosques.<sup>84</sup> As the record also indicates, one of the prominent Syrian individuals in Madobi, Saleh Bugren, established an Islamic school at Kanwa, near Madobi.<sup>85</sup>

Marriage also assisted in fostering social relations between the Muslim migrants and their hosts. A number of the Yoruba, Nupe, Igala, and Syrian migrants married women from the localities. Muslims are always liberal when it comes to marriage; after all, Islam encourages inter-ethnic marriages among the faithful. As oral and archival sources generally indicate, the migrants married women from the localities to reinforce their economic and political status.<sup>86</sup> For instance, Saleh Bugren, the prominent Syrian trader mentioned above, married a woman from Madobi to reinforce his economic activities.<sup>87</sup> Also, Abdul Rahimi Ogunlade, the village head of Madobi Sabon Gari mentioned earlier, secured the village headship because he married Turaki Many, the district head of Kura's daughter, a development which facilitated the integration of his children into mainstream Hausa society.<sup>88</sup> Informants pointed out that marriages involving railway workers were not very successful, as the migrants in question either abandoned or divorced the local women only to bring in women from their home towns.<sup>89</sup> Marriage between the female migrants and members of the host communities was not common during the period considered, perhaps

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<sup>83</sup> This is the agreed opinion among all the informants; Yusuf, *Impact of the Railway*, 144.

<sup>84</sup> Interviews with Malam Hussaini Abdu, Malam Adamu Zaki, Malam Yusuf Inusa Dan Madaki, Malam Chindo Mohammed, Idi Inusa, and Malam Muhammad, Auchan, 6 April 2011.

<sup>85</sup> KSHCB Acc. no. 68.

<sup>86</sup> Interviews with Malam Muhammadu Nayi, Madobi, 3 June 2006 and Alhaji Yakubu, Likoro, 11 August 2012; KSHCB Acc. no. 68.

<sup>87</sup> Yusuf, *Impact of the Railway*, 144, 164.

<sup>88</sup> Yusuf, *Impact of the Railway*, and "New Approaches".

<sup>89</sup> Interviews with Malam Muhammadu Nayi, Malam Muhammadu Sani, and Alhaji Yakubu, Likoro, 11 August 2012; Malam Haruna Audu (ward head of Unguwar Likoro Tasha), 24 March 2011; Malam Haruna Audu (ward head of Tashar Likoro), 24 March 2011; Malam Muhammadu Maraya, Auchan, 30 June 2012.

partly due to what A. F. Usman and A. Bako described as the Hausa's divorce syndrome (*saki-uku*).<sup>90</sup> Nevertheless, in the 1980s and 1990s, a number of such marriages were recorded in some of the communities

It should be pointed out that despite the networks the migrants had established over years of residence, many of them did not assimilate. This is because they developed a plural identity with regards to the host communities. In other words, they did not see migration as their final objective. Toyin Falola has argued that not every migrant wanted to integrate; some preferred to play the politics of outsider, in which their "outsidedness" was also a source of power. According to this argument, migrants who perceive migration as a final objective find it easier to integrate than those who see it as a temporary situation.<sup>91</sup> Although many of the migrants did not integrate, there were some who did, as did their children. As Malama Laraba, wife of Wellman Warri Opufou mentioned earlier, stated: "we have no other home than Gimi". Laraba, now advanced in years, still lives in Gimi Tasha, even though her husband now lives with their eldest son (Mr Innocent), who teaches at the polytechnic in Zaria.<sup>92</sup>

Not only did the migrants assimilate; some of them went on to hold important positions in mainstream Hausa society. For example, the late Abdu Abdu Rahim—a chartered accountant-*cum*-politician, who was appointed Commissioner for Finance in Kano State (1979–1983)—and Alhaji Usman Abdurrahim—who served as Registrar of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (1981–1992) and also of Kano State University of Science and Technology (2001–2005)—were the sons of Abdul Rahimi Ogunlade, mentioned above. Also, Dr Habibu Saleh of Physics Department, Bayero University was the son of Saleh Burgren mentioned above. There are also a couple of migrants from the north who despite the decline of the railway still lives within the communities while some maintained contact with the communities having relocated elsewhere.<sup>93</sup> If the Rahimis and Salehs and others found it easy to integrate because of their maternal connections, it was less easy for other young migrants with no parental linkage in the localities, due to what an informant described as the

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<sup>90</sup> A. F. Usman and A. Bako, (2006), "Yoruba–Hausa Relations in Gusau During the 20<sup>th</sup> Century", in: Olayemi Akinwumi, Okpeh Ochayi Okpeh, Jr and Gwamna, D. Je'adayibe (eds), *Inter-Group Relations in Nigeria During the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*, (Makurdi: Aboki), 671-680.

<sup>91</sup> T. Falola, being a talk at the Black Atlantic Lecture titled "Historicizing Black Atlantic, Comparative, Colonialism, Transnational and Citizenship", at Vanderbilt University, 10 February 2011. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGvu-p1c0j0> [accessed on 12 March 2013].

<sup>92</sup> Interview with Malama Laraba Wellman Opufou, Gimi Tasha, 5 April 2011.

<sup>93</sup> Yusuf, *Impact of the Railway*, 145, and "New Approaches", fn. 65, 223.

politicization of citizenship and the notions of rights and opportunities in post-colonial Nigeria.<sup>94</sup>

One prominent development arising from the presence of migrants was the proliferation of community and home town associations in the communities. The most prominent were the community associations, which were established in order to foster understanding and interactions among themselves and between them and their hosts. The associations performed diverse functions, but at their core they had the development and advancement of the migrant quarters. Membership cut across regional ethnic groups.<sup>95</sup> For instance, the migrants in Gimi established the Gimi Community League (GCL). In 1953, the executive members of the GCL comprised the following: Mr. Opufou as President, and B. Owulah, E. F. Omgbge, Alhaji M. Ilori, and G. O. Adebayo (positions not indicated) as members.<sup>96</sup> The meetings were used as platforms for addressing issues of common interest and settling disputes, as well as for social interactions. The associations were also instrumental in the establishment of schools, postal agencies, and churches at Madobi, Gimi, Yako, Dangora, and Auchan.<sup>97</sup>

The migrants did not lose touch with home; they also maintained contact through the home town associations. The home associations were established in part as a response to the problem of adjustment to the new environment, and they brought together migrants from the same town. Their core mission was the physical development of the home town and the strengthening of ethnic consciousness.<sup>98</sup> They also functioned as channels through which monetary remittances were sent home or invested in development projects at home. Although the remittances were rarely seen physically, they were sent through the postal agencies.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> E-mail communication with Dr. Theophilus Adeyinka Shittu, 13 December 2012.

<sup>95</sup> C. W. Abbott, "Home Towns Associations and the Ethnic Unions in the Twentieth Century Nigeria: A Geographical and Historical Interpretation", (PhD Thesis, University of Iowa, 2006); Olaniyi, *Diaspora*.

<sup>96</sup> NAK ZarProf 1923/S.1, Postal Agencies 1949-53.

<sup>97</sup> NAK KanProf 4171, Elementary School at Madobi; NAK ZarProf 2015, St. James Anglican School at Gimi Dabosa; NAK KanProf 6476, Methodist Church Missions Application for Church site at Dangora; NAK KanProf 6575, Application to Open School at Yako by Methodist Church Mission; NAK KanProf 4705, Postal Agency at Kwankwaso; NAK P&T/3 Postal Agency at Madobi.

<sup>98</sup> Udo, "Internal Migrations", 135; C. W. Abbot, "Home Towns Associations"; Usman and Bako, "Yoruba-Hausa Relations"; Olaniyi, *Diaspora*.

<sup>99</sup> Madobi postal agency was established in 1928 and upgraded to a departmental postal office in 1953. The postal agency in Gimi was established in the 1930s. Attempts to influence its upgrading, as in Madobi, to a departmental post office by the migrants failed. Kwankwaso and Yako postal agencies were established in the 1940s. NAK P&T/3 Postal Agency at Madobi; NAK KanProf 4705 Postal Agency at Kwankwaso; NAK ZarProf 1923/S.1 Postal Agencies 1949-53; KSHCB R.518 Postal Telegraph Dept. Miscellaneous (complaints) and Postal Agency.

The migrants were also instrumental in the establishment of churches and Western-education schools, as many of them were Christians. Although missionary activity was not the primary motive for their migration, it was one area where their activity was most felt. Churches of different denominations were established in the host communities, as Table 5.4 indicates.<sup>100</sup> These churches were established between the 1930s and 1940s (see first column on year in the table), a period of intense proliferation of missionary activity in the North.<sup>101</sup> Contrary to the claim that indigenous African churches did not exist in the North,<sup>102</sup> one was actually established at Madobi Sabon Gari.<sup>103</sup> European missionaries did not establish missions in the communities, partly because of opposition from the colonial authority and partly because Muslim-populated areas were not attractive to the missions. The churches were pastored by the migrants themselves. As the evidence indicates, membership of the churches in Gimi and Dangora was hierarchized along ethnic lines, with the Yoruba and Ibo establishing separate churches. E. P. Crampton argued that wherever the Anglicans were sufficient in number, they would establish a separate church of their own.<sup>104</sup> Also, contrary to the claim that southerners did not engage in direct evangelism in the North,<sup>105</sup> oral accounts suggest that they were instrumental in the conversion of some non-Muslim Hausa populations (*Maguzawa*) around Dangora, Gimi, Auchan, Likoro, Gubuci, Ikara, and Nassarawan Doya, due to the neglect of these communities by the Hausa Muslim aristocrats.<sup>106</sup> Although the numbers involved were insignificant, the bulk converted in the 1980s through the activity of the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA).<sup>107</sup>

The missions also established Western-education schools (*makarantun boko*), most notably elementary schools (see second column on year in Table 5.4). This is understandable, given that Western education arrived with Christianity. The missions always set up schools wherever they were established. The schools were initially accommodated in the churches

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<sup>100</sup> NAK ZarProf 2015 St. James Anglican School at Gimi Dabosa; NAK KanProf 4171, Elementary School at Madobi; NAK KanProf 6476, Methodist Church Mission Application for Church site at Dangora; NAK KanProf 6575 Application to open school at Yako by Methodist Church Mission.

<sup>101</sup> Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*; C. N. Ubah, "Christian Missionaries in Muslim Emirates of Nigeria, 1900-1928", *Journal of African Studies*, 3/3, (1976): 351-371; Barnes, "Evangelism".

<sup>102</sup> Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 142.

<sup>103</sup> NAK KanProf 4171.

<sup>104</sup> Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, 139.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.* 140-1.

<sup>106</sup> Interviews with Reverend Bawa Sanmako, Dangora, 10 April 2011; Malama Laraba Wellman, Gimi Tasha, 5 April 2011; e-mail communication with Innocent Opufou, 13 March 2013.

<sup>107</sup> Interviews with Pastor Yohanna Musa, Pastor of the Dangora Church, 30 April 2011; Reverend Bawa Sanmako, Dr. Theophilus Adeyinka Shittu, and Malam Yahaya Dangora, 30 March 2011.

until permanent structures were constructed. Although the schools were established and administered by the church, they were funded by the migrant populations, irrespective of their religious affiliation. As indicated earlier, many of the migrant workers were not educated but wanted to see their children educated.<sup>108</sup> As late as the 1930s, the colonial authority in the North was still not interested in the education of migrants, although it supported the schools through irregular monetary grants.<sup>109</sup>

While the schools were established by migrants and for migrant children, they also benefited the hosts, as some of them enrolled their children. The colonial authority was not opposed to Muslims enrolling in mission schools as long as the parents were informed at the beginning that it was a mission school. Mission schools always signed an undertaking at the time of registration to explain to Muslim parents who wished to enrol their children that it was a Christian school.<sup>110</sup> The hosts were at first opposed to their children attending the schools, for fear of conversion to Christianity and of losing control over the children. An informant, Abdullahi Ibrahim, reported that he withdrew from the Anglican School in Gimi because of the Christian Religious Knowledge subject they were being taught. According to him, only children from the ruling family in Gimi (the indigenous settlement) enrolled their children in the school.<sup>111</sup> The schools existed up until the 1970s, at which point government primary schools were established in some of the communities. The earlier schools were not closed but were taken over by the government.

**Table 5.4 List of churches and schools in some of the studied communities, 1930s–1949**

Church	Year established	School	Year established	Location
United Native African Church	Early 1930s	United Native African School	1941	Madobi
St. James Anglican Church	1938	St. James Anglican School	1948	Gimi Dabosa
(1) Methodist	1948	Methodist Mission	1948	Dangora
(2) Anglican	n.a.	School	n.a.	

<sup>108</sup> NAK ZarProf 2015; NAK KanProf 4171; NAK KanProf 6476; NAK KanProf 6575.

<sup>109</sup> NAK ZarProf 2015; NAK KanProf 4171; NAK KanProf 6476.

<sup>110</sup> Ubah, “Christian Missionaries”, 113.

<sup>111</sup> Interview with Abdullahi Ibrahim, Sarkin Gimi Tasha, 7 March 2011.

(3) Baptist	n.a.		n.a.	
Methodist	1949	Methodist Mission School	1949	Yako

Note: n.a. = not available

Sources: NAK ZarProf 2015; NAK KanProf 4171; NAK KanProf 6476; NAK KanProf 6575; KSHCB 7094, Annual Report Kano Province, 1949.

The migrants also helped in the diffusion of occupational skills such as tailoring, barbering, photography, and bicycle repairs, and in the cultural diffusion of staple foods such as gari, fufu, palm oil, and fruits. The process of adoption went both ways between migrants and hosts. However, migrants also popularized drinking and gambling cultures, which were copied by some of the hosts, despite the fact that Islam prohibits such acts. As mentioned earlier, the migrants established hotels, beer parlours, and brothels, which provided avenues for promoting drinking, gambling, and prostitution in the localities.

Many of the migrants fled in the 1960s, owing to the pogrom against the Igbo in the North. Although there were no attacks in the studied localities, the passing of fleeing Ibos in trains and the rumours circulating that mobsters were coming to attack migrants forced many to flee.<sup>112</sup> Not everyone fled, however; some stayed behind, as the hosts discouraged them from fleeing. Malama Laraba, one of the few that stayed behind in Gimi, reported that “nobody was molested or attacked”. Laraba, whose husband fled during the crisis, recounted that “the village head of Gimi and *Fagacin* Makarfi appealed to her to stay, and assured her of her safety”.<sup>113</sup> The departure of the migrants had negative repercussions on socio-economic activities in the localities, as many things came to a virtual standstill. When they returned at the end of the war in the 1970s, they found that the vacuum their absence had created had been filled by the hosts.

Over time, the export trade, which was the main magnet for migrants to the communities, ran into difficulties owing to the Sahelian drought and the shift in government priority to oil exports. Added to this was the decline of the railway. In consequence, many migrants relocated back to their home towns or moved to the newly developed state capitals,

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<sup>112</sup> Wiseman, “Structural and Ideological”, 2; Yusuf, *Impact of the Railway*; interviews with Malama Laraba, Alhaji Yakubu, Likoro.

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Malam Laraba.

which offered better economic opportunities. The state capitals offered the adventurous migrants opportunities to work either in government or in industry. J. A. Wiseman, who visited Gimi Tasha in the late 1970s, reported that it was “in a state of decay”.<sup>114</sup> This also applied to the other settlements.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has underlined the effects of the railway on population movements, the emergence of new settlement patterns along the rail line, and the implications of these migrations for national development. The advent of the railway facilitated the movement into the studied communities of diverse Nigerian cultures—peoples, languages, goods, and ideas—and the intermingling and reciprocal influence of different ways of life. Migrant populations were attracted by employment opportunities in the railway and the commercial firms, as well as by trade. As was noted, the migrants concentrated in those centres with the greatest economic opportunities, which were where the firms concentrated.

Attempts to control the migrant influx led to the establishment of segregated settlements for their exclusive use along the rail line. Of the several migrant settlements, Madobi Sabon Gari was the largest. It was established as an independent village unit, with a Yoruba man appointed its village head. Despite the measures taken by the colonial authority to isolate the migrants, inter-ethnic relations developed between the migrants and their hosts. It was shown that factors such as trade, language, religion, and marriage facilitated interactions between the two communities. In spite of the networks they established over years of residence, many of the newcomers did not assimilate because they saw their new home as temporary. A number of their children, especially those with maternal linkage in the host communities, became physically and culturally assimilated to the extent of holding important positions within mainstream Hausa society.

As the chapter has shown, the migrants were agents of social and cultural changes. They established churches and schools, which though meant for their own use benefited their hosts. They helped in diffusing occupational skills, foods, and culture, while also adopting from the localities. The outbreak of the Civil War in the 1960s had a devastating effect on the migrants, as many of them fled during the crisis. By the time they returned at the end of the war, the export trade, which was the main attraction to the communities, had been taken over by members of the host communities. The Sahelian drought of the 1970s negatively impacted

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<sup>114</sup> Wiseman, “Structural and Ideological”, 2.

agriculture, and increased revenue from oil exports also shifted government priority away from agricultural exports. By this time the railway was also in decline. The repercussions were that the communities lost their attractions, and many of the migrants relocated elsewhere in search of better livelihoods.