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Tamale 1907-1957 : between colonial trade and colonial chieftainship

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Tamale 1907-1957: Between colonial trade and colonial chieftainship

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Tamale 1907-1957:

Between colonial trade and
colonial chieftainship

Sebastiaan R. Soeters

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Preface

When the colonial administration founded its headquarters in Tamale in 1907, it was a small cluster of villages, containing together an estimated 1,435 residents.¹ By the time the British flag was lowered outside the Chief Commissioner's residence in Tamale in March 1957, Tamale had almost 48,000 residents; by a significant margin, the largest urban settlement in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. In the decades which followed Independence, Tamale's population size would increase another 8 times to almost 400,000 today. According to Wyatt MacGaffey – the only other writer who has treated Tamale as distinct object of enquiry – Tamale is today the fastest-growing city in West Africa, although how this growth is measured probably has too-large an impact on the outcome. Nonetheless, Tamale during the colonial period and beyond as a site of profound change – social, economic, and political – can hardly be disputed. An outsider may ask: 'Is it possible to write a

¹ Staniland, M., *The lions of Dagbon: Political change in Northern Ghana* (Cambridge, 1975), 1.

comprehensive account of colonial administration in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast without Tamale as a central actor?’

Is Tamale’s absence from the historiographical landscape of the Northern Territories not strange? Is, for instance, the bit-part role played by Tamale – the single largest economic and social transformation in northern Ghana during the colonial period – in Jeff Grischow’s book on ‘Civil Society’, ‘Community Development’ and ‘Development’ in the colonial northern Ghana, not peculiar, given the major themes of the book?² According to the index, Tamale features nine times, all on separate, non-sequential pages. Perhaps it is more telling that in Staniland’s seminal text on the political change in Dagbon, Tamale is mentioned on 5 separate pages, and once, fairly substantially, in a footnote. In Ladouceur’s book on the politics of regionalism in northern Ghana, Tamale does not feature in the index although there are sporadic mentions of it, albeit very sparse. Carola Lentz gives Tamale slightly more attention. In her 346-page book on the making of history in northern Ghana, Tamale is mentioned on 21 separate pages. Like more contemporary texts on colonialism in northern Ghana, colonialism itself had an equally disinterested approach to Tamale. Within the history of northern Ghana, Tamale features as by-product of colonial administration, not an entity of colonialism in its own right. I do not believe that Tamale’s apparent lack of importance in both the colonial and academic fields is unrelated. Today, one senses a similar sentiment in the development sector: Tamale is a by-product of development rather than an entity of development in its own right. This thesis, generally speaking, hopes to insert Tamale’s historiography within that of the Northern Territories.

² Grischow, J., ‘Shaping tradition: Civil society, community and development in colonial Northern Ghana, 1899-1957 (Brill Publishing, 2006)

‘Tamale is more an administrative and commercial centre within Dagomba than a Dagomba town.’¹

Introduction

The opening paragraph of Staniland’s seminal text, ‘The Lions of Dagon’ reads:

When the British moved their administration to Tamale in 1907, it was a village of 1,435 people. Now it is a sprawling town of 80,000, and the morning plane from Accra swings down to land over shimmering iron rooftops, concrete offices, and a web of asphalt roads, masts, and aerals.²

Despite Staniland’s multi-layered recognition Tamale, he hardly mentions Tamale in the remainder of the book. Tamale’s urban formation is in fact hardly mentioned at all in the otherwise rich historiography of the Northern Territories of the Gold

¹ Staniland, M., *The lions of Dagbon: Political change in Northern Ghana* (Cambridge, 1975), 1.

² Staniland, *Lions*, 1.

Coast. This is peculiar given that, on the one hand, the impact of colonial rule is perhaps the dominant theme in the historiography of the Northern Territories, and on the other hand, Tamale is arguably the single most profound transformation of the colonial period in the Northern Territories. The kind of transformation that Tamale represented has been regarded as rather a non-issue both within academia trends, as well as within the colonial administration of the Northern Territories. One colonial official, referring to Meyer Fortes (who perhaps serves as the most prominent bridge between modern academia and the colonial administration, although he might have resented such a categorisation) wrote:

An anthropologist of unquestionable ability and some repute remarked to the writer how regrettable it was that the Talansi (sic) were becoming money conscious and generally criticised the efforts that are being made to develop trade in the Protectorate.³

The omission of Tamale's urban formation from the historiographical landscape of the Northern Territories, however, says as much about the development of the academic study of the Northern Territories (and colonialism), as it does about Tamale itself. The title of this introductory chapter, a remark, almost in passing, also by Martin Staniland, goes some way to consolidate this fact; in 1960, three years after Ghana had attained its independence, Tamale's population was still over 60 per cent Dagomba, down from over 70 per cent in 1948. The second single largest 'ethnic' group in 1960 were Ewe, with 4.5 per cent, followed by the Asante, with 3.6 per cent.⁴ Furthermore, Tamale's 'traditional' political apparatus was, and is, dominated by Dagomba institutions. The Gulkpe-Na, the chief of the Gulkpeagu subdivision, is a Dagomba chief, as also is the Dakpema, another of Tamale's chiefs.⁵ The Imam of Tamale's Central Mosque is also a Dagomba. And yet, despite an overwhelming ethnic demographic majority, and a political structure which at least until 1957, defined Dagombas as 'natives' and all others as 'strangers', Tamale may still feasibly be regarded as an urban entity which is somehow not of Dagbon.

³ Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD), Tamale, NRG 8/3/49 'Annual Report for the Northern Territories, 1933-1934'.

⁴ Eades, J., *Strangers and traders: Yoruba migrants, markets and the state in Northern Ghana*, Edinburgh, 1993, 57.

⁵ The tension between these two chiefs is a major theme of this thesis.

Within this context, this thesis is fundamentally one about urban formation in Anglophone Africa during the colonial period. It is concerned with an urban settlement in the periphery, which came to exist directly due to, and for the purposes of, colonial administration. The thesis is concerned with how these specific characteristics relate to the dynamics of the urban formation itself.

Central arguments

Present-day Ghana is made up of a distinct north and south. The north stretches from the northern fringes of Asante's cocoa-growing forest belt to the Burkina Faso border. Its landscape is generally of a savannah type, made up of shrub-bush dotted with shea trees. The north consists of three administrative units: The Northern Region, Upper East, and Upper West. They are, however, in a number of contexts often considered as a whole.⁶ The north's economy is overwhelmingly agrarian and largely has a subsistence nature. The principle crops are yams, rice, sorghum, maize, shea, cassava, groundnuts, and cotton. The north possesses strong Muslim influences (except in isolated areas, that is Navrongo and Bolgatanga, where missions have had a strong influence),⁷ in contrast to the south, which is dominated by Christianity. Northern Ghana consists of a plethora of ethnically bound groupings, with diverse socio-political structures. The area is, however, politically dominated by five large centralised kingdoms, namely Dagbon, Mamprussi, Gonja, Wala, and Nunumba. In the years prior to its official inclusion in the British Empire in 1902, northern Ghana was referred to as the 'Asante Hinterland'. In that year the area became recognised as the Northern Territories, a protectorate of the Gold Coast Colony. Since Independence, the area has been referred to as northern Ghana (containing the three aforementioned administrative units). Each of these titles reflects a different relationship vis-à-vis British colonialism, and for the remainder of this dissertation the employment of these terms is expressly linked to those differences. Tamale, the subject of this thesis, is the regional capital of northern Ghana. In 1907, when the British colonial administration moved its administrative

⁶ The Savannah Accelerated Development Authority (SADA) is perhaps the most recent example of this tendency.

⁷ Kimble, D., *A political history of Ghana, 1850-1928*, Oxford, 1963, 79-80.

headquarters from Gambaga to Tamale, Tamale consisted of a cluster of small villages,⁸ with a total population of around 1,435 residents.⁹ Today, a little over a hundred years after the founding of the administrative headquarters in 1907, Tamale's population is somewhere around the 400,000 mark.¹⁰

The argument presented by this thesis is that Tamale's socio-political and socio-economic urban dynamic was informed profoundly by the cleavage between a colonially motivated, traditional political and administrative focus on the one hand, and an economic structure which relied almost entirely on the motorable road between Tamale and Kumasi, without any regard for traditional political centres such as Yendi, on the other. In this way, Tamale was a by-product of the colonial purpose. Although the nature of colonialism changed through the colonial period from pre-indirect rule, to indirect rule, to the second colonial occupation, all three colonial periods had one thing in common: Each strongly favoured the maintenance of African social structures as they were perceived by the British colonial administration. This thesis argues that the cleavage outlined above had the effect of firstly, disconnecting Tamale from traditional Dagbon structures, and secondly, creating a multitude of socio-political frameworks in Tamale which were regularly played off against each other in local disputes and claims, especially over land. More specifically, the thesis argues that:

1. Tamale was isolated, in that its economic centrality was not matched by any real traditional political significance within the politics of Dagbon. In other words, Tamale's urban growth must be understood in the context of a disconnection between a colonial discourse that emphasised legitimate traditional authority on the one hand, and on the other hand, an economic and administrative spatial framework that ignored that authority.
2. The lack of traditional focus in Tamale, which itself was the result of the coincidence of Tamale's lack of traditional importance coupled with its economic centrality, led to a local political structure in which many different

⁸ MacGaffey, W., 'A history of Tamale, 1907-1957 and beyond', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, New Series*, No. 10 (2006-7), 121.

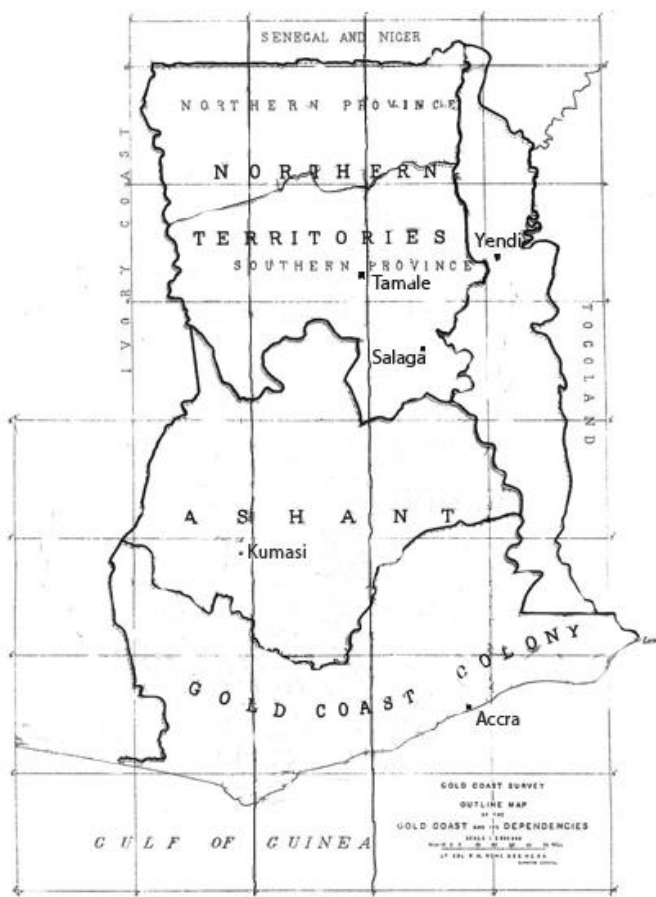
⁹ Staniland, *Lions*, 1.

¹⁰ See Ghana Districts, Tamale. www.ghanadistricts.com (accessed on 15 March 2009).

claims to authority could be, and often were, legitimated. Furthermore, Tamale's political structure functioned in a climate of profound ebbs and flows in economic activity, the commercialisation of a number of key institutions, including land, and increasing ethnic and religious heterogeneity. This climate both increased the number of claims and raised the stakes further, which both placed enormous strain on Tamale's ill-defined political structure and enhanced and consolidated its ill-definition.

3. The conditions arising out of unique historical urban trajectories inform the social interactions in the city in question. The thesis thus argues that Tamale's disconnection from traditional political structures, as well as its institutional multiplicity (arguments 1 and 2 above), shaped and informed socio-political interactions within Tamale during the colonial period

1.1. Protecotrate of the Northern Territories, Ashanti Colony, and the Cold Coast



Source: Chipp, T.F., 1923. *The Gold Coast forestry problem*. Empire Forestry Journal: 1-11.

The thesis situates the formation of Tamale's internal socio-political and socio-economic layers within four interrelated historical narratives, namely, (i) the development of Dagomba political structures, (ii) colonial administration, (iii) north-south trade, and (iv) new developmentalism and the emergence of nationalist politics in northern Ghana. These narratives, and how they have served as drivers of change in Tamale, form the frames of reference for the remainder of this thesis. The subsections below discuss each of these narratives and briefly how they relate to

Tamale's urban development. Before doing so, however, it is useful to situate Tamale within cross-cutting themes in contemporary interpretations of northern history, not only to contextualise Tamale's urban development, but also to contextualise the major thrust of this thesis and its contribution to the academic study of northern Ghana. To a considerable extent, the most dominant discourse within the study of northern Ghana is that relating to 'underdevelopment'. Two inter-relating themes in particular are used to prop up this 'agenda', namely, north-to-south labour migration, and the Northern Territories railway that never was. The following subsection locates Tamale within those existing themes.

Tamale and the 'underdevelopment' narrative

The 'underdevelopment' narrative that underpins much of the historiography of the Northern Territories has its foundations within the colonial period. Seasonal hunger in the north created very early in the colonial period an imagination of 'backwardness' in the minds of the colonial administration.¹¹ However, there is a marked distinction between the perception of an existing backwardness and the active 'underdevelopment' and 'neglect' which came to dominate much of the northern historiography.

Northern 'neglect' arose as a point of serious dissatisfaction in colonial debates between 'northern' and 'southern' administrations, and it was later taken-up and extended by historians reflecting on regional relationships in Ghana generally. Carola Lentz notes that the talk of 'neglect' was '... adopted by the educated elite of the North, and Marxist-inspired authors (who) spoke not only of neglect, but of a deliberate policy of protracted "under-development", pursued by the colonial government for the express purpose of sustaining in the North a reservoir of labour'.¹² Indeed, works by N.J.K. Brukum,¹³ Nii-K. Plange¹⁴ and R. B. Benning¹⁵

¹¹ Destombes, J., 'From long-term patterns of seasonal hunger to changing experiences in everyday poverty: Northern Ghana c. 1930-2000', *Journal of African History*, 47: 2(2006), 189.

¹² Lentz, C., *Ethnicity and the making of history in Northern Ghana*, Edinburgh, 2006, 146.

¹³ Brukum, N.J.K., 'Studied neglect or lack of resources? The socio-economic underdevelopment of Northern Ghana under British colonial rule', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana (New Series)*, 2(1998), 117-31.

sought to apportion blame for the north's lack of development not to a lack of natural resources but to the colonial administration, and later, to southern-dominated governments. Ironically, there is a more or less straight line between such works and sentiments expressed by many early northern colonial administrators, especially those who had held northern posts before 1930. This thematic trajectory emphasised the impact on northern societies of north-to-south labour migration, especially to the mines, and the policies that encouraged it, particularly the decision not to build a railway. Interestingly, migration to the cocoa sector, which in terms of pure numbers was probably a larger and more sustained catchment of northern labour, has been less frequently incorporated into the 'underdevelopment' theme. There are some obvious reasons for this imbalance. The centralised nature of gold mining in terms of labour and labour recruitment makes it an easier study than, for instance, the cocoa sector. Sutton notes of the cocoa sector: 'Labour ... has come in ones and twos to work on farms of several acres ... farmers probably employed more labour than the mines and other European enterprises, although because it was scattered it was less obvious a group than the concentrated labour force at the mines'.¹⁶ But there was certainly also something less-coercive about the migration to cocoa farms than the migration to the mines. The case that this kind of migration (not directly coercive, and less centralised) made for the active 'underdevelopment' or 'studied neglect' of the Northern Territories was weaker than those where the emphasis lay on a centralised policy of labour recruitment, such as for the gold mines. Gold mines as a labour pool were legitimated as an object of enquiry also by what Lentz and Erlmann called the 'workerist tendency': Studies were inclined to focus on 'those aspects of African labour, such as miners ... that best seem to illustrate such a

¹⁴ Nii-K. Plange, "'Opportunity coast' and labour migration: A misinterpretation of proletarianisation in Northern Ghana', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 17: 4 (Dec. 1979), 655-76 and 'Under-development in Northern Ghana: natural causes or colonial capitalism?', *Review of African Political Economy*, 4: 15-16 (1979), 4-14.

¹⁵ Benning, R.B., 'Colonial development policy in Northern Ghana, 1898-1950', *Bulletin of the Ghana Geographical Association*, 17(1975), 65-79.

¹⁶ Sutton, I., 'Colonial agricultural policy: The non-development of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 22: 4(1989), 482-3.

concept of an African working class'.¹⁷ In other words, in the gold mines in Tarkwa and Obuasi, leftist northern and southern historians seemed to find common ground and could engage in discussion about the development of the Ghanaian nation-state, which transcended regional histories.

Adjacent to the theme of the labour migration, at the core of the 'underdevelopment' theme is a discussion about transportation – more specifically, the Northern Territories Railway. This debate has been dominated by the argument that the colonial administration decided to 'indefinitely postpone' the building of a Northern Territories railway in order to secure a labour supply for the priority industries in the south. The main trend of this argument is that by the administration's ensuring that transportation was prohibitively expensive in terms of northern farmers gaining access to southern markets, northerners were robbed of remunerative opportunities and were thus forced to head southwards to offer themselves as labour.¹⁸ This linkage between the decision not to pursue the construction of a Northern Territories Railway and purposeful underdevelopment in order to secure a labour supply for priority industries in the south, also has its roots in the colonial period. The District Commissioner for Eastern Dagomba wrote that,

The large number of labourers that go south each year will not in my opinion leave the Northern Territories as soon as they can obtain work and make money by growing food locally.¹⁹

Another Northern Administrator wrote that, 'The movement of labour would diminish as soon as the demand for exports provided local employment with a remunerative return.'²⁰ As transportation was generally regarded as the prohibiting

¹⁷ Lentz, C. & V. Erlmann, 'A working class in formation? Crisis and strategies of survival among Dagara mine workers in Ghana', *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 29: 113(1989), 70.

¹⁸ Benning, R.B., 'Colonial' development policy in Northern Ghana, 1898-1950', *Bulletin of the Ghana Geographical Association*, 17, (1975), 65-79 & N.J.K. Brukum, 'Studied neglect or lack of resources? The socio-economic underdevelopment of Northern Ghana under British colonial rule', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana (New Series)*, 2(1998), 117-31.

¹⁹ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/238. 'District Commissioner for Eastern Dagomba, Government Railways, Reports on Railway from Kumasi to the Northern Territories'.

²⁰ Ibid.

factor, such statements referred directly to the impact on labour of the decision not to construct a railway to the Northern Territories.

Where is Tamale situated within the ‘underdevelopment discussion? Chapter 3 of thesis argues that Tamale’s demographic growth spurts were positively correlated with surges in north-to-south labour migration, especially those related to migration to the cocoa farms. For instance, in the late-1920s, during the cocoa boom, the population growth of the Northern Territories, largely on account of out-migration, returned rapid year-on-year declines. Simultaneously, Tamale recorded its fastest demographic growth during the colonial period. Tamale’s demographic mechanism is thus negatively correlated to that of the Northern Territories more generally. The emphasis on ‘underdevelopment’ and the arguments which prop up this argument, coupled with the negative correlation between the drivers of Tamale’s urban growth and those of the Northern Territories more generally, has had the effect of writing Tamale out of the underdevelopment discourse, a dominant component of northern history.

Having outlined the major cross-cutting themes of northern Ghanaian historiography, we turn now to the four aforementioned frameworks within which this thesis situates Tamale’s urban transformation, namely (i) Dagbon political structures, (ii) colonial administration, especially in its influence over chieftaincy, (iii) north-south trade, and (iv) new developmentalism and the emergence of nationalist politics in northern Ghana. The following subsection discusses each of these historical narratives and how they relate to Tamale’s socio-political and urban development.

Frames of reference

The thesis locates Tamale within a number of frames of reference. The following subsection discusses each of these frames of reference.

Dagbon political structures

Tamale is located within the kingdom of Dagbon, perhaps politically the most powerful of the north's ethnic groups. Dagon covers an area of 15,467 square kilometers and is divided into eight administrative districts. Its accounts for more than half of the total population of northern Ghana. Dagbon was established by conquerors from the north prior to the fifteenth century.²¹ Dagomba folklore relates the origins of Dagbo to *Tohadzie*, the Red Hunter, who hailed from the area that is today northern Nigeria. According to this version of Dagbon's history, *Tohadzie* settled within the Mali Empire somewhere between the thirteenth and fifteenth century. The village in which *Tohadzie* settled relied on a river for water, a river which had been taken over by a wild bush cow. According to the legend, the bush cow was believed to be an evil spirit who killed anyone who ventured to the river to draw water. *Tohadzie* led the villagers to kill the wild beast, making the river accessible. *Tohadzie*, by defending the village against attacks from rival villages, gained the reputation of a capable warrior and leader. Through his various military victories, he was able to marry *Pagawugba*, a princess from the area. *Pagawugba* gave birth to a son, *Kpognambo*. After the death of *Tohadzie* and *Pagawugba*, *Kpognambo* travelled westwards from the Mali Empire to *Biun* in *Fadan Grumah*, where he became chief. *Kpognambo* ruled the kingdom of *Biun* until his death. *Kpognambo* married two women: *Sihisabiga* and *Suhuyini*. *Suhuyini* gave birth to *Gbewaah*, and *Sihisabiga* gave birth to *Malgimsim*, *Nyelgili*, and *Namzisheli*. After the death of *Kpognambo*, there was constant war between his sons for the chieftainship of *Biun*. In response, *Gbewaah* and his followers migrated to *Pusiga*. *Naa Gbewaah* established the kingdom of Greater Dagbon, which he ruled until his death. Of the other sons of *Kpognambo*, *Nyelgili* founded the chieftainship of *Nangodi*, and *Namzisheli* founded the chieftainship of *Tongo*. After the death of *Naa Gbewaah*, there was once again a power struggle among his sons, which led finally to the break-up of the Greater Dagbon kingdom. *Tohagu* founded the Mamprussi

²¹ MacGaffey, W., 'Death of a king, death of a kingdom? Social pluralism and succession to high office in Dagbon, Northern Ghana', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 44: 1(2006), 79-99.

Kingdom, *Mantambo* the *Nanun* Kingdom, and *Sitobu* the modern Dagbon Kingdom. With superior military organisation, sons and grandsons of *Sitobu* expanded the modern Dagbon kingdom, destroying existing hierarchies and installing their own kin as chiefs. In time, Yendi, a former Konkomba settlement called *Chare*,²² was established as the seat of the paramount of the modern Dagomba kingdom, and the paramount was entitled the Ya Na.

Contemporary references to Dagbon political structures point to the political crisis which reached its zenith with the murder of the Ya Na Andani II in March 2002. The crisis itself however predates the formation of modern Ghana. In the period 1824-1849 the primogenital tradition of unilateral family succession to the Ya-Na Skin was changed to an alternation of succession between the Abudu and Andani families.²³ These family lineages are referred to as 'gates. This 'alteration system' was introduced to incorporate the male descendants of Ya Na Yakubu I's two wives.²⁴ Ya Na Yakubu I's two sons, Princes Abudu and Andani, rebelled against their father. The princes prevailed in the war but spared the life of their father and allowed him to remain Ya Na until his death. Princes Abudu and Andani upon their victory seized and ascended the royal skin, or kingship, of Mion and Savulgu skins, respectively. After the death of Ya Na Yakubu I, the kingmakers of Dagbon decided on Mion Lana, Prince Abudu, as the successor to Ya Na. The system of alteration between gates was complicated by polygamy, and complicated succession protocols, and forms the root cause of the current Dagbon crisis. The system was further complicated by a number of colonial interventions. The relevancy of Dagbon's 'gates' to Tamale is discussed in Chapter 7.

Tamale is located about 95 km to the west of Yendi. There are many versions of this tale. Although Tamale possesses a number of Dagomba local shrines, Ta'ha, whose earth priest is the *Bugulana*, is perhaps the only one of Tamale's traditional assets

²² Staniland, *Lions*, 5.

²³ West Africa Civil Society Institute (WACSI), 'Governance and security in Ghana: The Dagbon chieftaincy crisis', 2011, 10.

<http://www.wacsi.org/images/public2/b32n865uDagbon%20Crisis%20Report%20WACSI.pdf> Accessed 02-10-2011.

²⁴ Ibid.

that relates to Dagbon more broadly. A.W. Cardinall, who became District Commissioner (DC) for Yendi in 1917 and later Superintendent for Education, notes that the Ta'ha was apparently visited not only by local people 'but by Dagomba from all over the country'.²⁵ But generally speaking, drummers tend to relate Tamale to the larger Dagbon history only if or when prompted, and the ways in which Tamale's political structures may be incorporated into Dagbon are often unconvincing. Put bluntly, despite Tamale's current significance, its role in Dagbon political history is not particularly prominent.

The same is true for Dagomba economic history. In most traditional historiographies, it is of course very difficult to separate the distribution of political authority and the distribution of economic activity. In terms of northern Ghana, this relates especially to trade routes.

According to Ferguson and Wilks, in the century prior to the start of the Asante Wars in 1821, the Dagbon political structure was well developed and relatively robust.²⁶ However, the defeat of Asante in 1874 had implications far beyond Asante itself. Since Asante had defeated Dagbon in 1744/5, Dagbon had served as peripheral of Greater Asante. For Kumasi, because Yendi lay on an important trade route between Salaga and Hausaland, political stability in Yendi was a priority for Asante royal elites. As a result, in the late eighteenth century the Ya Na's armies were modernised with the assistance of the Asante. *Kambonse*, Asante musketeers, were included in the Ya Na's army for the first time. The relationship between Asante and the Yendi certainly strengthened and centralized the authority of the Ya Na. The centripetal effect that Asante domination had on Dagbon political structures had a cost: Dagbon paid (with some resentment) an annual fee to the Asantehene in the form of slaves. When the British first launched attacks on the Asante in the 1820s and 1830s, the Gonja, who like Dagbon paid an annual fee to the Asantehene in recognition of his authority, revolted, killing a number of Asante officials in

²⁵ Cardinall, A.W., *Tales in Togoland*. Oxford: University Press, 1931, 68.

²⁶ Ferguson, P. & I. Wilks, 'Chiefs constitutions and the British in Northern Ghana'. In: Crowder, M. & O. Ikime, eds, *West African chiefs: Their changing role under colonial rule and independence*. New York, 1970.

Salaga. The result was that Asante royalty redirected trade away from Salaga, through Kintampo. Wilks notes:

The early nineteenth century Ashanti, then in command of almost all of what is now Ghana and the eastern Ivory Coast, deliberately re-routed its trade away from the north-west and to the north-east, through Salaga, Yendi, and Sansanne-Mango to the Bussa crossing of the Niger.²⁷

Both Gonja and Dagbon political centres suffered dramatically as a result of being starved of Asante trade. Dagbon central authority declined dramatically after the fall of Asante, either because Yendi's commercial significance severely declined, or because without the support of Asante, Dagbon political structures lost much of their strength. Ferguson and Wilks note that, '(t)he collapse of Ashanti control over northern Ghana appears to have presaged a period of considerable chaos in Dagbon'.²⁸ In the period after the final defeat of the Asante between 1874 and the arrival of the British at around the turn of century, Yendi lost much of its authority over much of Dagbon.

In contrast to Yendi, Tamale's position in the Asante trade was not prominent. K. B. Dickson states that Tamale lay on a major trade route.²⁹ MaGaffey notes that 'a map of the north in 1887 showed Tamale market as the destination of cattle trails from Kumbungu, Savelugu and Daboya'.³⁰ The pre-European commercial importance of Tamale must be related, however, to the size of its population (1,435), which suggests that Tamale's centrality in terms of trade may be overstated. Paul Lovejoy has noted three north-south trade routes, none of which pass through Tamale.³¹ Furthermore, a number of maps of the north produced around the turn of the twentieth century do not include Tamale (see Map 1.2). Thus, not only did Tamale

²⁷ Wilks, I., 'The Northern factor in Ashanti history: Begho and the Mande', *Journal of African History*, 2: 1(1961), 340-1.

²⁸ Ferguson, P. & I. Wilks, Chiefs, 'constitutions and the British in Northern Ghana'. In: Crowder, M. & O. Ikime, eds, *West African chiefs: Their changing status under colonial rule and independence*. New York, 1970, 343.

²⁹ Dickson, K.B., *A Historical geography of Ghana*. Cambridge University Press, UK., 1969, 264

³⁰ MacGaffey, W., 'A history of Tamale, 1907-1957 and beyond', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, New Series*, No. 10 (2006-7), 121.

³¹ Lovejoy, P.E., 'Polanyi's "Ports of Trade", Salaga and Kano in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of African Studies*, 16: 2(1982), 245-77

lack traditional political status before the arrival of the British colonial administration in 1907; it was also not a significant economic focal point in terms of Dagbon's political and economic systems.

Tamale thus entered the colonial period without any real significance in terms of Dagbon more generally. It was, indeed, colonialism itself that gave Tamale its significance, even if it did so reluctantly. That being said, that Tamale was not a significant Dagbon centre did not mean that it was unaffected by changes taking place, also on account of colonialism, within broader Dagbon traditional structures. As a result, Dagbon's political and economic structures form the first frame of reference for this thesis.

Colonial chieftainship and its implications for Tamale

The colonial annexation of the Asante Hinterland began slowly after the defeat of Asante in 1874. Very little was known about Dagbon before about 1880. Some Europeans had created accounts based on reports from local travellers. Ludwig Ferdinand Romer, who based his account of Dagbon on Ga informants from Accra who had travelled to the north, was the first to describe Dagbon. Romer himself had never been to Asante, never mind its 'hinterland'.³² Later, Bowditch reported on Dagbon, based on information from Muslims resident in Kumasi. In 1881 Lonsdale visited Yendi and was perhaps the first European to report on Dagbon, having actually been there.³³

Before long, a 'scramble' between German, French, and British interests threatened to erupt, putting increasing pressure on each of the European powers to stake their claim. But competition from other European powers was not the only threat faced by Britain in the annexation of the Asante Hinterland. In fact, the British were fundamentally faced with *three* threats in annexing the Asante Hinterland. The first was the threat from outside powers, namely from competing European powers and

³² Weiss, H., 'European images of Islam in the Northern hinterlands of the Gold Coast through the Early colonial period', *Sudanic Africa*, 12(2001), 95.

³³ Ferguson, P. & I. Wilks Chiefs, 'Constitutions and the British in Northern Ghana'. In: Crowder, M. & O. Ikime, eds, *West African Chiefs: Their changing status under colonial rule and independence*, (New York, 1970), 343.

from forces of the *Mandingo* warrior, *Samory*, which were invading the region. Second was the threat from local actors assimilated to the invasions of *Samory*, such as *Babatu*, a Songhai horseman. Third, as Jack Goody puts it, ‘there were struggles between ... the tribal peoples, continual eruptions of violence in attempts to settle scores by feud or by threat of feud.’³⁴

In terms of threats from European powers, the British feared that if French or German interests came to occupy the Asante Hinterland, the Gold Coast would be dependent on those European powers for important components of its food supply, perhaps most notably meat, which was supplied primarily by long-haul trades from the Niger Bend.³⁵ Martin Staniland notes that the Northern Territories was annexed by the British ‘... not because of any intrinsic value they possessed, but because it was strategically undesirable to let the French or the Germans take them ...’.³⁶ From 1874, after the defeat of Asante, British, French, and German explorers increasingly began to map the area north of Asante, threatening transit trade down to the British-controlled coast.³⁷ The British sent Gouldsbury north in 1876, and in 1892 George Ekem Ferguson went north on behalf of the British colonial administration. In the same year as Gouldsbury’s expedition in 1876, M.J. Bonnat, a French trader, came up the Volta to Salaga, and in 1888 the French explorer Louis-Gustave Binger passed through Mamprussi, Karaga, Salaga, and Kintampo on his way from Bamako to the coast. The Germans were represented in 1886 by G.A. Krause, who travelled from Accra to Ouagadougou, and in 1888 Curt von François visited Yendi and Gambaga. The increased competition for influence in the West African savannah led to the establishment of a Neutral Zone in 1888, in which it was agreed that no European authorities would initiate the signing of trade treaties with chiefs. Salaga, Yendi, and Tamale all lay within the Neutral Zone. In 1895, Britain and Germany tried, but failed, to agree on a solution by which Yendi would fall

³⁴ Goody, J., ‘Establishing control: Violence along the Black Volta at the beginning of colonial rule’, *Cahiers d’Etudes Africaines*, 38: 150/152(1998), 227-8.

³⁵ This proved indeed to be the case during WWII, when, on coming to power, the Vichy government closed the Northern border, creating a crisis in the livestock sector.

³⁶ Staniland, *Lions*, 39.

³⁷ Agbodeka, F., *African politics and British policy in the Gold Coast, 1868-1900: A study in the forms and force of protest*. Northwestern University Press, US, 1971, 165.

under German jurisdiction and Salaga under British administration. A year later in 1896, a German explorer, von Carnap-Quernheimb, passed directly across the Neutral Zone, inciting protests from London and increasing the instability of the Neutral Zone. In that same year, the Neutral Zone was abandoned.³⁸

Another serious threat to British domination of the Asante Hinterland were the forces of Samory, the Mandingo warrior. In September 1895, Samory's forces attacked Wa, Sankana (in Dagarti), and Bole (Gonja). What was of concern to the British colonial administration was not only the destruction and instability which Samory and his forces were causing in large swaths of the Asante Hinterland, but also the possibility of Samory linking up with either French or German troops.³⁹ Finally, after a rather long run-up, the occupation of the area by German, French, and British interests was effectively settled in a rush during the final days of 1896. The occupation of the Asante Hinterland has been described by Martin Staniland:

The partition finally took place in a rush at the end of 1896, with British, French, and German expeditions converging on the neutral zone in the last weeks of December. The German force, under Grunner and von Massow, moved up from Kete-Kratchi, defeated the Dagomba at Adibo, and then went on to occupy Sansanne-Mango before a French mission could get there. The French arrived too late, on Christmas Day. But when a German detachment moved on Gambaga, they in turn found that a British expedition under Captain Stewart had arrived before them. The French withdrew to the east, while Stewart entertained the German commander over Christmas.⁴⁰

The borders between French, German, and British troops stabilized relatively quickly. In 1902 the Anglo-German border was finally formalised.⁴¹ It was to run along the Daka River, to the ninth parallel, and thereafter to pass northwards through

³⁸ Staniland, *Lions*, 10.

³⁹ Goody, J., 'Establishing control: Violence along the Black Volta at the beginning of colonial rule', *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 38: 150/152(1998), 227-8.

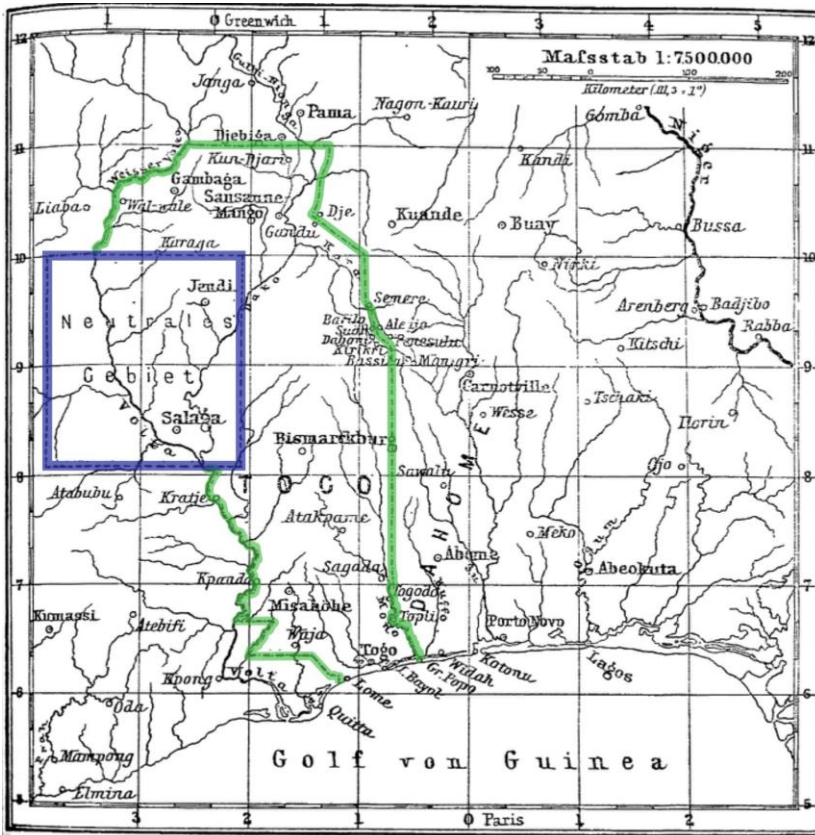
⁴⁰ Staniland, *Lions*, 10.

⁴¹ In 1902 the Northern Territories order in council came into effect, marking the formal integration of the Northern Territories into the British Empire.

a point twenty kilometres west of the centre of Yendi.⁴² Four years previously, in 1898, Samory had been captured by the French administration, further stabilising the area.

The Anglo-German border bisected Dagbon such that Yendi, the seat of the Ya Na, the paramount chief of Dagbon, fell within German territory, whilst second-tier chiefs of Mion, Karaga, and Savelugu all fell under British jurisdiction.

1.2. German Togoland and its protectorates, 1897 (showing 'Yendi')



Source: Geographischer Monatsbericht. In: Dr. A. Petermann's Mitteilungen aus Justus Perthes Geographischer Anstalt (Gotha), 43 (11), 1897, p.270f.

⁴² PRO, Kew, CO 879/54/7 (Correspondence on Anglo-German Boundary 1896-195).

The splitting of Dagbon into Western (British) and Eastern (German) components was not considered especially problematic by the colonial administration. Even the Ya Na himself could not convince the British to take an interest in negotiating the position of the Anglo-German border such that Yendi would remain united with Dagbon. The Ya Na had written to the British authorities as early as 1898 stating that, ‘I am King of Yendi ... I want to be English not German ... I am king of Yendi for the English not the Germans. I trust in God and the English’.⁴³ Although archival sources suggest a number of sensitivities in terms of the location of the border, the fact that Yendi was excluded from British Dagbon does not appear to be amongst them. Colonel Morris, a veteran of northern military operations, declared famously to an assembly of Dagomba chiefs that, ‘... since the Ya-Na was now in German Territory, he (Colonel Morris) and not the Ya-Na was henceforth their Head Chief’.⁴⁴ The division of Dagbon, such that the authority of the Ya Na was excluded from much of Dagbon, including that part containing Tamale, created a significant political upheaval also in British Dagbon. Various chiefs in Western Dagbon took advantage of the Ya Na’s absence and advanced their chiefdoms. Tamale, along with Mion, Karaga, and Savelugu, found itself on the British side of the Anglo-German border, isolated from the authority of Yendi, and it is to this that we now turn.

For Tamale, the re-unification of Dagbon in 1922 was as significant as its division between British and German jurisdictions in 1902. Indeed, the reunification of Dagbon and the re-introduction of the Ya Na at the apex of Dagbon authority largely shaped Tamale’s internal politics. During the period in which Dagbon was divided, the Dakpema, which translates as ‘head of the market’, had established himself as the chief of Tamale.⁴⁵ He managed to do so by gaining the sanction of the colonial administration. In 1919, following the end of World War I (WWI), when the Anglo-German border was on the verge of collapse, the colonial administration began talks

⁴³ Public Records Office (PRO), Kew, CO. 879/52, African (West) 549, p. 110: Dispatch by Capt Kenny-Herbert, encl., Translation of letter from Ya Na, Jan. 6th, 1898.

⁴⁴ Staniland, *Lions*, 57, quoting Major Morris.

⁴⁵ There are a number of versions of the origins of Dakpema, which are discussed in Chapter 3.

with the Ya Na to negotiate his return to the British Dagbon political fold. One of his first demands was that, on the grounds that the Dakpema was not the legitimate chief of Tamale, the Dakpema be replaced by the 'rightful' chief of Tamale, the Gulkpe-Na. His claim was that at the moment at which the Anglo-German boundary was established, the Gulkpe-Na was visiting Yendi and was ordered to remain there. In that time, the Dakpema presented himself as the chief of Tamale and, being uncontested, received the backing of the colonial administration. The colonial administration agreed that upon the death of the Dakpema, his successor would receive reduced powers, and the Gulkpe-Na would be reinstated as the chief of Gulkpeagu. In 1930, when the Dakpema suffered a stroke, the colonial administration moved to reinstate the Gulkpe-Na in Tamale. It is hardly surprising that those within the Dakpema's house sought to prevent the reintroduction of the Gulkpe-Na. The British operation was deemed a success, and given the introduction of indirect rule around the same period, deemed utterly necessary for the successful administration of Tamale. However, the result was a traditional system in Tamale continually plagued by confusion over the authority and legitimacy of the Gulkpe-Na and the Dakpema. Whilst the Gulkpe-Na had the authority of Yendi and the colonial administration behind him, the Dakpema had strong local support. This tension was a hallmark of Tamale's local politics both during the colonial period and beyond.

Chieftaincy was central in all forms of colonial administration, both before and after indirect rule, and, as Grischow notes, also under the new developmentalism (see Chapter 6). Instructions given to officers in charge of northern districts in 1899 noted that '... officers will act through the native chiefs as far as possible ...'.⁴⁶ In 1906, Acting Governor H. Bryan echoed existing northern administrative sentiments when he wrote to the Secretary of State that '(t)he policy of supporting and emphasising the position of the paramount native chiefs while, at the same time, making them realise their responsibility, appears to me to be the only practicable

⁴⁶ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/35. 'Instructions to Officers in Charge of Districts re Administration of the Northern Territories, March, 1899.

system of administering this country'.⁴⁷ Furthermore, in the annual report for 1906, it was noted that moving the headquarters to Tamale was favourable as it lay within Dagbon, and 'Dagomba country is the most advanced from a civilised point of view in the whole protectorate'.⁴⁸ The perceived strength and functioning of organisation of the Dagomba traditional political system fed into the use of chiefs as auxiliaries of colonial administration. It was felt that in such instances where chiefs had managed to retain some semblance of pre-European significance, they served as a more effective colonial tool, in contrast to those chiefs amongst peoples where traditional systems had lost much of their legitimacy. This also allowed for a 'thinner' British administration. Colonial chieftaincy thus provides the second important frame of reference for this thesis. Colonial chieftaincy was not static and certainly changed through the colonial period.

Commerce and Tamale

The British annexed the Asante Hinterland largely for the purposes of securing north-south trade to and from the British-controlled coast. Trade was thus central to colonial policy in the north even prior to the formal annexation of the 'Asante Hinterland'. George Ekem Ferguson, an explorer from the coastal town of Anomabo, was sent to the north by the British in 1892 with a mandate to negotiate 'treaties of friendship and freedom of trade' between the Crown and the leaders of indigenous polities'.⁴⁹ Chalfin notes that Ferguson's 'sights were set on a central object: The unobstructed movement of goods in and out of the savannah zone'.⁵⁰ The Asante Hinterland was not believed to possess any significant economic potential beyond the trade that passed through it. Staniland notes that '... the NT had very few of the assets which had made colonialism elsewhere such an uplifting and profitable enterprise'.⁵¹ This is supported also by Sutton, who notes that '... the Northern Territories was acquired belatedly, and added almost as an afterthought to

⁴⁷ PRO, Kew, CO 98/14 Letter by Ag Governor Bryan to Secretary of State, 13th July, 1906.

⁴⁸ PRO, Kew, CO 96/16. (Report on the Transport Department for the Year 1906).

⁴⁹ Chalfin, B., *Shea butter republic: State power, global markets, and the making of an indigenous commodity*. Routledge, 2004, 96.

⁵⁰ Chalfin, *Shea*, 96.

⁵¹ Staniland, *Lions*, 39.

the Gold Coast Colony'.⁵² But the Asante Hinterland was annexed by the British colonial administration owing to the transit trade which passed through it en route to and from the coast. Brenda Chalfin notes that the colonial administration harboured ambitions to establish a 'massive trade corridor where Britain was the sole imperial power'.⁵³ The corridor was to run several hundred miles north from the boundary of the Gold Coast into Mossi territory and east through the jurisdiction of the Niger Company.⁵⁴ The strongest statement in this direction was the abolishment of the caravan tax in 1908. The southern administration felt that the tax on caravans passing north-south was hindering the volume of trade down to the coast. As a result of the abolishment of the caravan tax, the northern colonial administration was left without any revenue, which was believed, especially by southern administrators, to be inconsequential: Revenue for development was not important as long as there was nothing to develop.

Tamale's demographic and economic prominence may be reduced to two developments. The first was the decision by the colonial administration to establish a colonial headquarters at Tamale, and the second was the uptake of motorised transportation by local and 'Syrian'⁵⁵ entrepreneurs, following the completion of the Great North Road in 1920. The argument is not so much if one or both of these developments provided the catalyst for Tamale's demographic growth and economic centrality, but how the two related to one another in order to produce Tamale's urban growth. The demographic pull that the administrative headquarters alone provided was limited. Monies to build the new headquarters pulled some labour towards Tamale. The chiefs were encouraged to provide labour for the construction of the new headquarters at Tamale, in return for gifts proportionate to the amount of labour provided. The cost of building the headquarters was estimated at £8,935, but

⁵² Sutton, I. 'Colonial agricultural policy: The non-development of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 22: 4(1989), 637.

⁵³ Chalfin, *Shea*, 95.

⁵⁴ Chalfin, *Shea*, 95.

⁵⁵ 'Syrian' and 'Lebanese' are used interchangeably in the colonial records.

two years later the cost had risen to £15,000.⁵⁶ The demographic impact of this financial focus was significant but not defining. Tamale grew from 1,435 residents in 1907 to 3,901 in 1921. Although this growth is certainly significant, Tamale did not grow much faster than settlements such as Savelugu. In 1921, Navrongo, where a provincial and headquarters was based, had a population of 14,798, whilst Bawku also had a much larger population than Tamale in 1921, with 7,710 residents.⁵⁷ However, that the colonial headquarters were built in Tamale meant that in 1920, the Great North Road was built between Kumasi and Tamale and not elsewhere in the Northern Territories. From the moment the Great North Road was completed, it was the local commercial energies that prompted Tamale's economic and demographic growth.

The introduction of motorised transportation provided a huge impetus for trade and traffic between Tamale and Kumasi. As Kumasi was linked by rail to the coast, northern producers were able to access new demands at the coast. Furthermore, the road, being the only motorable road that connected the north and the south, monopolised the route through Tamale, and as a result, Tamale flourished. The increase in trade passing through Tamale on account of the adoption of the lorry created new, non-agrarian remunerative opportunities in the Northern Territories. The number of petty traders in Tamale boomed, as also did markets in car parts, auto-related services, oil, and petrol. The increase in lorry traffic is an indication of the increase in trade and human traffic which passed through Tamale. In 1927, only seven years after the Great North Road was completed, 4,420 lorries crossed the Volta River at Yeji in both directions, 2,462 of them with trailers.⁵⁸ Tamale's population grew correspondingly. In 1921 Tamale had a little under 4,000 residents, not significantly bigger than several other northern settlements. In 1931, eleven years after the Great North Road had been completed, Tamale's population was 12,901.⁵⁹ During this period, Tamale grew faster than both Kumasi and Accra. By 1948, Tamale's population had grown to 16,055, and in 1960 it was around

⁵⁶ MacGaffey, 'History', 110.

⁵⁷ The Gold Coast Handbook, 1928.

⁵⁸ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/310 (Yeji Ferry Trade Statistics).

⁵⁹ Ibid.

48,000.⁶⁰ In economic terms, Tamale became increasingly connected to southern demands and supplies. Syrian traders set up stores, retailing consumer goods such as sugar, soap, bicycle tyres, and flour. In the 1930s and 1940s large foreign-owned trading firms began to take interest in Tamale's markets. Yoruba traders settled in Tamale and bicycled United Africa Company (UAC) goods to rural markets.⁶¹ The amount of beer taken northwards increased from zero in 1925 to a little less than 1,400 cases in 1929.⁶² Livestock, especially sheep, goats, and chickens, were taken southwards on lorries, as also were agricultural surpluses such as shea butter, bundles of corn, and groundnuts.⁶³ These kinds of local economic activities were not perceived by the colonial administration to add value in the way an export crop would. As a result, they were relatively ignored, at least until after 1945.

Both literally and figuratively, Tamale was linked to its Great North Road. Tamale's population grew as trade volumes grew, and Tamale's growth declined when, as during World War II (WWII), the volume of motorised trade declined. This statement must be understood, however, in the context of the Northern Railway which was never built. The railway (the lack thereof) in turn was (and still is) the ultimate symbol of northern underdevelopment at the south. It coloured colonial sentiment, and the motorised transport driving Tamale's urban expansion was never regarded as a successful colonial economy. Despite the pervasiveness of a sense of commercial failure, trade statistics kept at the ferry crossing at Yeji tell a much different story, a story in which Tamale's urban transformation is perhaps the protagonist. Motorised trade forms the bedrock of Tamale's demographic and economic growth.

"New Developmentalism" and the rise of party politics in Tamale.

The end of WWII saw a great change in the method and purpose of colonial administration. Indirect rule was replaced by local government structures in order to absorb African intelligentsia, who might be tempted to engage in growing anti-

⁶⁰ Population Census of Ghana 1960.

⁶¹ Eades, *Strangers*, 112.

⁶² PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/310 (Yeji Ferry Trade Statistics).

⁶³ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/310 (Yeji Ferry Trade Statistics).

colonial nationalist movements, into a local political structure in which they would work alongside chiefs. Furthermore, land planning and mechanisation replaced mixed farming. However, Grischow argues, in contrast to Cooper, that unlike the development ideology set forward by Chamberlain around the turn of twentieth century, the new developmentalism was intended to ensure large-scale economic development without decimating existing African social structures.⁶⁴ In this sense, the Northern Territories, on account of having large tracts of uncontested land, which in any case was vested in the Crown, and only a small African intelligentsia to absorb, was seen as an ideal playing field for the new developmentalism. This framework, however, wholly excluded Tamale, as Tamale's social fabric, largely on account of the resettlement of ex-servicemen in Tamale, was undergoing profound urban processes. The contradiction between the aims of the post-war new developmentalism and Tamale's urbanising process worked to further isolate Tamale from the north more generally, a major theme of this dissertation.

It was in this context that party politics entered the north. Nationalist politics came relatively late to the Northern Territories, and the inclusion of the north in the political forces which led finally to independence was not unproblematic. An important starting point for a discussion about nationalist politics in the Northern Territories is that the north's original inclusion in the state apparatus in the south was orchestrated by colonial intervention and conducted within the colonial vision. That meant primarily that chiefs and/or those aligned with chieftaincy were given the lead in integrating the north into nationalist politics. This was done through the creation in 1945 of the Northern Territories Council (NTC). Later, in 1953, in the run-up to the 1954 elections, the leadership of the NTC formed the Northern Peoples Party (NPP), to run as a northern interest group in the upcoming elections. The rivalry between a tradition-laden, conservative NPP and a southern dominated, progressive Convention People's Party (CPP) forms the most significant political dichotomy of the nationalist political narrative of the Northern Territories. Although other political actors feature in the narrative, such as the Muslim Association Party

⁶⁴ Grischow, J.D., *Shaping tradition: Civil society, community development in colonial Northern Ghana, 1899-1957*, African Social Studies Series, (Brill, 2006), 170.

(MAP), they broadly align to one or other side of the dichotomy. Although the staunchly conservative MAP won the Tamale constituency in 1954, in the 1956 election, the CPP recorded a resounding victory. The manner in which the CPP worked to win over Tamale's electorate, especially through (mis)use of the Tamale Urban Council, is an interesting feature of Chapter 7. Equally important for this thesis was the alignment of traditional actors in Tamale, such as the Gulkpe-Na and the Dakpema, especially in relation to the positioning of the Ya Na in Yendi, and how such alignments affected Tamale's internal socio-political dynamic. The introduction of party politics to Tamale not only shaped Tamale's socio-economic and socio-political fabric going into the post-colonial period; it also reveals Tamale's position within the Northern Territories more generally. It provides the fourth and final of the frames of reference in which this thesis situates Tamale's urban development.

Theoretical frameworks

There are a number of theoretical perspectives that need to be unpacked in this introductory chapter. The theoretical frameworks employed in this dissertation relate to why cities come to exist, how they are sustained, and how the forces which prompted a city's creation relate to the socio-economic and socio-political landscape within the city. Throughout the thesis, these theoretical perspectives are related to Tamale as a colonial city.

Economic considerations

How and why do cities created for and by colonial commercial aspirations thrive beyond the colonial period? The continued existence of cities is a theoretical question at the centre of a number of economic sub-disciplines, for instance New Economic Geography (NEG), launched by Paul Krugman in the 1990s. Although NEG is not customarily applied to the case of colonial cities, there is no reason why it should not be. Its arguments for the ongoing existence of individual cities, even in situations of changing political and/or economic conditions, are as relevant for colonial cities in the post-colonial context as they are for Chicago, London, or New York. The novelty of NEG is that whilst most theories preceding that of Krugman

suggest that the location of cities is a rational economic outcome, the NEG models suggest that urban development is rather characterized by path dependence, whereby historical accidents may have long-term cumulative consequences. In terms of Tamale, this encapsulates both its colonial underpinnings and its continued existence (expansion) during the post-colonial period.

NEG makes a strong argument for why cities grow. In short, market-size effects (such as economies of scale) make it desirable for firms to locate close to one another, which simultaneously has the effect of increasing wages, and thus pulling labour. Once the process of agglomeration has started, it continues because, up to a point, the larger the city, the more beneficial it is for firms to locate there (cumulative causation). However, after 'that point', it is no longer beneficial for firms to move to the city. This is determined by centrifugal forces, which include land rents and immobile factors, such as natural resources and congestion. For instance, once land rents and/or congestion outweigh the benefits of market-size effects, firms will no longer locate to that agglomeration. As in Von Thunen's work, transportation is another fundamental component of the NEG models. High transport costs result in less trade. In such instances, regions⁶⁵ will be isolated and differ little from each other. Workers and firms will be evenly divided across regions. However, a drop in transport costs changes the distribution of both firms and workers across regions.⁶⁶ Transportation is thus a critical variable of city growth within the NEG models. Despite its strong colonial origins, Tamale's existence beyond the colonial period, as is the case with most colonial cities, is theoretically explained in this way.

NEG is, however, subjected persistently to two primary criticisms. The first is that it lacks the tools to cater effectively for empirical application of its models.⁶⁷ The second persistent criticism, perhaps more relevant to this thesis, is that although NEG models may well explain why firms locate to existing cities, the models have

⁶⁵ The word 'region' refers to any spatial entity – communities, localities, towns, cities, conurbations, etc.

⁶⁶ Krugman, P., 'What's new about the new economic geography?', *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 14: 2(1998), 7-17.

⁶⁷ Martin, R., 'The new geographical turn in economics: Some critical reflections', *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 23(1999), 65-91.

far more difficulty in explaining why agglomerations come to exist in the first place. Krugman's rebuttal to this accusation is simply to state that if we are to understand the location of cities, 'history matters'. Krugman argues that the initial spark of urban growth is 'an accident of history'.⁶⁸ Tamale's emergence as a truly urban space is the result of such an accident of history. What is the accident of history that created Tamale, and what are the implications for Tamale of the nature of that accident of history? Although this has been touched on previously, it deserves more attention.

Urbanising the Gold Coast

Another important aspect of agglomeration is how cities emerge in relation to one another. In understanding Tamale's urban formation, it is thus useful to understand a little about the formation of other urban spaces in the Gold Coast, and how the emergence of such cities relate to Tamale's own historical narrative. What follows is a brief discussion of the urbanisation of Ghana. This overview is then linked to Tamale's urban emergence.

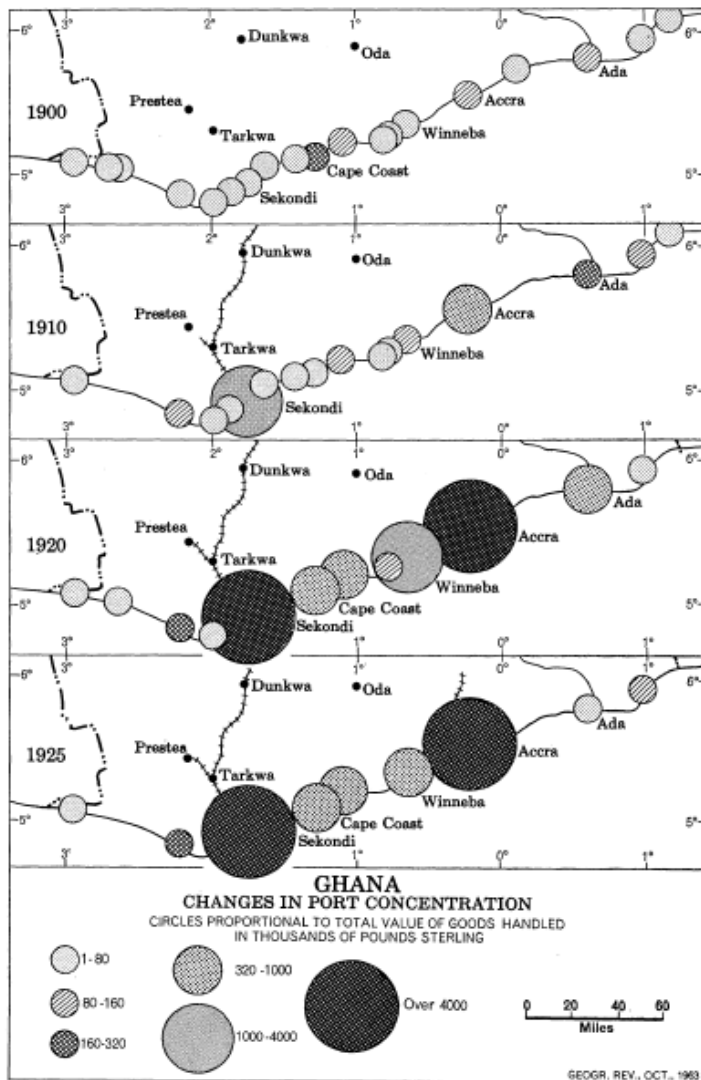
Today Ghana possesses perhaps four genuine urban centres (Accra, Kumasi, Tamale, and Sekondi-Takoradi). Accra and Sekondi-Takoradi both possess ports. The 'historical accident'⁶⁹ which produced each of these cities is different. Accra was first inhabited by the Ga, who moved there during the fifteenth century. The Ga evolved economically as fisherman, making use of their location on the coast. That alone, however, does not explain the emergence of Accra as the primate city it is today. The figure below is taken from Taafe, E., Morrill, R. & P. Gould, 'Transport Expansion in Underdeveloped Countries: A Comparative Analysis'. It shows the total value of goods handled at Gold Coast ports for the period 1900-25. The figure reveals that in 1900, economic activity was distributed fairly evenly along the length of the coast of the Gold Coast. The only variation in concentration is at Cape

⁶⁸ This reference to 'historical accidents' refers to chance locational circumstances.

⁶⁹ This term is particularly popular with economic geographers in explaining why an agglomeration takes off in the first place: An accident of history. Paul Krugman noted in terms of spatial agglomeration that 'history matters'. It refers usually to location advantages, such as along rivers, or on the coast, or closer to trading partners than other potential sites for such agglomeration.

Coast. In 1877 Accra replaced Cape Coast as the capital of the Gold Coast colony largely because Accra had a drier climate than Cape Coast and was not plagued by tsetse fly. After 1877 there was an influx of Europeans as administrative functions moved to Accra. In 1905 the motorcar was introduced to the Gold Coast. Lorry chassis were imported and assembled in the Gold Coast, and during the 1920s, the cocoa sector started to blossom. Increasingly, cocoa traders brought goods to the Accra port by lorry. Although such developments significantly increased Accra's demographic, it was the construction of a railway between Accra and Kumasi in 1923 which really sparked Accra's rapid growth in economic activity and, subsequently, population size.

1.3. Changes in port concentration, Gold Coast, 1900-1925



Source: Taafe, E., R. Morrill., & P. Gould, 'Transport expansion in underdeveloped countries: A comparative analysis' in the American geographical society Vol. 53, No. 4 (Oct., 1963), pp. 503-529

Construction on the Kumasi-Accra railway began in 1908 and was completed in 1923. A year later in 1924, cocoa was Ghana's largest export and the Accra port was the primary focus of the cocoa industry. In short, the 'accident of history' which

created Accra was the interaction between possessing a port, on the one hand, and European commercialism (specifically the demand for cocoa), on the other. Accra's harbour is no longer competitive, with harbours at Tema and Sekondi-Takoradi both physically better-endowed than that of Accra. However, in line with contemporary economic geography, Accra's current and continued urban dominance is primarily due its size (market-size effects). Its initial demographic advantage (sparked by the number of activities centred primarily on Accra's port) has been maintained, in the same way that Chicago has continued to exist as a urban heavyweight long after its role as a port between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River had diminished on account of technological innovation in the way of transportation.⁷⁰

Like Accra, Sekondi-Takoradi is also a coastal city possessing a port.⁷¹ Although the settlement stemmed from seventeenth century Dutch, Swedish, and English forts, its urban character has more contemporary origins. The tract of land between Sekondi-Takoradi and Kumasi is Ghana's most lucrative in terms natural resource endowment. Ghana's gold deposits are concentrated in this area. In 1903 a railway was built to Kumasi, directly north of Sekondi-Takoradi, for the purpose of transporting gold to the port before being shipped to Europe. Until recently, however, Sekondi-Takoradi's prominence has been on the decline. The railway between Sekondi-Takoradi and Kumasi has since stopped working, owing largely to disrepair and poor maintenance, and its distance from Accra (coupled with high transportation costs) meant that Sekondi-Takoradi lost much of its economic *raison d'être* in the period after Independence. Sekondi-Takoradi's fortune has, however, changed in recent years. The discovery of oil off Ghana's coast, especially in the Western Region, looks set to re-establish the importance of Sekondi-Takoradi. In line with spatial economic models, because Sekondi-Takoradi (once again) straddles both a location near to natural resources (oil reserves) on the one hand, and a

⁷⁰ Polèse, M.. *The wealth and poverty of regions*. Chicago, 2009, 11-12.

⁷¹ Initially Sekondi & Takoradi were two separate settlements, very near to each other. The port was at Sekondi, and the railway to Kumasi completed in 1903 ran from Sekondi. In 1928, a deepwater harbour was built at Takoradi. During the 1940s, the two cities fused, to become Sekondi-Takoradi. Today it is referred to primarily as Takoradi.

location near to a deepwater harbour on the other, it will, almost without question, emerge as one of Ghana's most prominent cities in the years to come.

Kumasi is, of course, not a port city. Its urban existence is explained by two inter-related circumstances: its proximity to gold deposits, and its location on a major pre-European trade artery from Begho through Tafo and Adansi.⁷² Gold, unlike the ports of Accra and Sekondi-Takoradi, was a commodity with economic value before the arrival of a European presence. Thus, Kumasi did not require Europeans, as the port in Accra did, in order for gold to create centripetal forces. It makes sense thus that the location of Kumasi is the political centre of a large and powerful *pre-European* kingdom, namely Asante. A centralised politic at Kumasi accelerated Kumasi's urban process as regional wealth was centred towards the apex of political hierarchy. Kumasi, unlike both Accra and Sekondi-Takoradi, has a genuine pre-European urban history because gold had a genuine pre-European value. That said, after the defeat of Ashanti in 1874, the building of two railway lines down to the coast, first to Sekondi-Takoradi (1903) and then to Accra (1923), and finally a motorable road northwards (1920), certainly contributed significantly to Kumasi's contemporary urban character.

In each of the cases above, there is a clear connection between physical and locational geography – 'an accident of history' and urbanity. Tamale's urbanisation is somewhat more obscure than Ghana's other urban centres. Tamale does not possess a seaport like Accra or Sekondi-Takoradi and is also not located near to any immovable natural resources such as gold, as in the case of Kumasi. There is, in fact, almost nothing noteworthy about the location of Tamale. What then is the 'accident of history' which created Tamale, a city with around 400,000 inhabitants today? The answer lies in the introduction of motorised transportation and, indirectly, in Tamale being selected as the centre of British administration in the Northern Territories (based on the mistaken idea that Tamale possessed a good water supply, itself an accident of history). In 1907 the British moved its

⁷² Wilks, I. A medieval trade-route from the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea', *Journal of African History*, 3: 1(1962), 337-41.

administrative headquarters from Gambaga to Tamale. That alone, however, was not enough to ignite urban growth, as transport costs were too high to create long-term spatial variations in economic activity. This is best illustrated by the example of the British Cotton Growers Association (BCGA), who built a ginnery in Tamale in 1908 but left the Northern Territories in 1911, citing 'prohibitive transport costs' as the reason why their cotton initiative in the Northern Territories failed. In 1920, 13 years after the opening of the administrative headquarters, Tamale's population was less than 4,000, about the same size as other Northern settlements such as Salaga, Savelugu, Bawku, and Wa.⁷³ In April 1920, however, the Great North Road between Tamale and Kumasi was completed. Together, these two centripetal forces (transportation and administrative hegemony) ignited Tamale's urban growth. The 'accident of history' which created Tamale was entirely man-made: it served as road head, and thus as transport hub (not unlike a sea-port), and as a centre of administration. In the first years after the completion of the Great North road, northern trade made its way to Tamale, to be loaded onto lorries and taken southwards, and conversely, south-to-north trade was lorried to Tamale, offloaded, and head-loaded to northern market systems. That Tamale served as a road-head for north-south trade explains why it emerged, as a result of the Great North Road, as the economic centre of the Northern Territories.

Patterns of urbanisation and the distribution of risk

It has been noted that the effect of transportation on Tamale's urban development was instant. In 1920, the year in which the Great North Road was completed, Tamale's population was approximately 3,900, not larger than many other northern settlements. Ten years later, once the introduction of the motorised transportation had gathered momentum, Tamale's population was almost 13,000.⁷⁴ Innovations in transportation redistribute both economic activity and demographic agglomerations. In the case of the Gold Coast, we have seen how the construction of railways from Kumasi to Sekondi-Takoradi and Accra changed the concentration of economic activity at the coast. Transportation thus shapes the geographical patterns of a

⁷³ Population census of the Gold Coast and its protectorates 1921.

⁷⁴ Population census of the Gold Coast and its protectorates 1931.

national (colonial) economy. NEG models employ wage differentials to explain how this may work. But there are other ways in which we may model the impact of transportation innovations. Peter Gould, Edward Taafe, and Richard Morrill provide a good conceptual illustration of the impact of innovation in transportation through the employment of the concept of 'risk'. In their article, 'Transport Expansion in Underdeveloped Countries: A Comparative Analysis',⁷⁵ they employ a game theory model to create a hypothetical scenario of the impact of a road on cattle traders who operate in the area between the Niger Bend and Kumasi. The argument goes as follows: Cattle traders who drive cattle down on the hoof from Ouagadougou are faced with decisions about whether to sell their bullocks in Navrongo, Tamale, Prang, or Kumasi. Cattle fetch the highest prices at Kumasi and the lowest at Ouagadougou, owing to the distance the cattle have to travel from their origins in the Niger Bend. The trade-off is risk and works as follows: if the season turns out to be a dry one, many bullocks will not make the journey all the way to Kumasi, and so, despite lower prices, traders will be better off selling their bullocks closer to the place of origin, at for instance Ouagadougou, Navrongo, Tamale, or Prang. The drier the season, the more risk involved in travelling and the closer to Ouagadougou traders will sell their stock. The illustration provided by Taafe, Gould, and Morrill suggests that cattle traders are best off selling 53.4 per cent of their cattle at Ouagadougou and the rest (46.6 per cent) should be driven through Navrongo, Tamale, and Prang to the Kumasi market. The authors then suppose that a road is built between Tamale and Navrongo, so that cattle no longer need to be driven on the hoof between these two points and are instead transported by lorry from Navrongo to Tamale. They repeat the same analysis as above, this time with the inclusion of the new road. In this instance, cattle traders are best off if they sell 62.5 per cent of their bullocks at Tamale, 25 per cent at Prang, and the remaining 12.5 per cent at the Kumasi market.

⁷⁵ Taafe, E.J., R.L. Morrill & P.R. Gould, 'Transport expansion in underdeveloped countries: A comparative analysis', *The American Geographical Society*, 53: 4(1963), 503-29.

The model, although applied to the same region as this dissertation, takes as its example a different road. While it is concerned with the road between Tamale and Navrongo, this dissertation has as its starting point the construction of the Great North Road between Tamale and Kumasi. The Great North Road was the first motorable road to enter the Northern Territories and monopolized the north-south trade route through Tamale. There were no other motorable roads southwards, and the advantage of travelling by lorry was substantial (two days to Kumasi, instead of two weeks). The risk distribution model presented above is itself useful. The completion of the Great North Road had implications for the decision-making process of traders. The initial effect of the completion of the Great North Road meant that Tamale had come to be closer to Kumasi (in nominal terms). For the distribution of trade, this meant an increase in the economic incentives to reach Tamale from, for instance, the Niger Bend. By reaching Tamale, traders were suddenly also close to Kumasi, and only a further one-day journey from Accra, where the goods fetched higher prices, without huge increases in the risks involved in travelling. Viewing the completion of the Great North Road as changing risk distribution is conceptually useful. According to the model, the Great North Road brought trade to Tamale, trade which otherwise perhaps would not have come that far south or north.

Political considerations

Until now, all theoretical considerations relating to agglomeration have been economic. But cities are more than simply a dense population of firms of labour. A city is also a set of ideas. A city may receive cultures from its surrounding hinterland, digest, transform, and then transmit an urban version of those cultures. Rayfield notes, for instance, that cities along the West African coast became ‘... points from which Western culture traits were transmitted throughout West Africa.’⁷⁶ Politics is one such transmission. In other words, we may expect that cities, by and large, are spaces where not only economic activity is concentrated but also political power. There is much less theoretical modelling of such spatial

⁷⁶ Rayfield, J.R., ‘Theories of urbanization and the colonial city in West Africa’, *Journal of the International African Institute*, 44: 2(Apr. 1974), 181.

distributions. It is possible, however, to highlight a few political considerations in terms of the development of urban centres.

There exists a dynamic and constantly negotiated relationship between the distribution of economic activity and that of political power. This relationship between economic and political distributions is illustrated perhaps most famously by Rome. Rome lies on the banks of the Tiber River, about 25 kilometres from the sea. Its original existence is contested and mainly lies buried (both literally and figuratively) under the more prominent historiography of the Roman Empire (except perhaps for the myth of Romulus and Remus). Although recognising that Rome's history is of course both long and complex, however, a short illustration will suffice here.

Briefly, Rome's location may be attributed to the fact that the Tiber River has only two islands, one at the mouth of the river and the other where Rome is located. The latter island made crossing the river far easier than in other places along the river – Tiber Island is thus Rome's 'accident of history'. The ability to cross the river relatively easily concentrated farming along the banks on both sides at this location, with human traffic drawn to this location in order to cross the river. That original agglomeration developed into the capital of the Roman Kingdom and then the Roman Republic (from 510 BC) and, finally, the Roman Empire (from 27 BC). Around 20 BC, Emperor Caesar Augustus commissioned the construction of the Milliarium Aureum. All roads within the Roman Empire were considered to begin from this monument and all distances in the Roman Empire were measured relative to that point. In the case of Rome, therefore, economic agglomeration created also a concentration of political power, which then employed this political power to further consolidate economic agglomeration. The same was true of Yendi. Staniland states that '... one of the main caravan routes from Ashanti to Hausaland passed through Yendi.'⁷⁷ He notes further:

The rise of the administrative class in Yendi coincided with this period of prosperity, and conversely, the weakening of the kings' authority appears to have

⁷⁷ Staniland, *Lions*, 35.

followed the collapse of Ashanti power and the resulting disruption of commerce.⁷⁸

The same is also true of Kumasi: Control over commerce centred power politically at Kumasi, power which in turn sought to consolidate commerce for its political benefit. What happens, however, when the initial economic agglomeration does not succeed in the creation of political concentration? Attention has been given to converse instances where political relevance is not matched by any economic significance, such as Yamoussoukro, Abuja, and Brasilia. But what about cities with economic relevance without any political relevance? Perhaps the cities on the Zambian Copperbelt are an example? But those cities, unlike Tamale, developed an organised labour force, which itself translates to political authority. Whilst Tamale, through an accident of history, has emerged as an economic centre of the north, political authority in Dagbon is (and was actively) concentrated at Yendi, a much smaller settlement which lies 95 kilometres to the east of Tamale. Despite Tamale's unprecedented economic and demographic hegemony, political power today remains vested in Yendi, where the Ya Na is seated. The discontinuity between political and economic distributions serves more specifically as the thematic cornerstone of this dissertation.

Methodological Considerations

A methodological note may be useful. Very little has been written on the history of Tamale. As a result, I was very reliant on archival sources. In order to investigate these themes, I undertook a fieldwork period of a little over one year. In August 2007 I spent a period of one month in the archives in Kew, and between December 2007 and December 2008 I worked between archives in Accra and Tamale. To my knowledge, only one of the prominent actors in Tamale's history is still alive, Ebenezer Adam, a prominent CPP member during the post-war period. As a result, although a number of interviews were conducted, I found only three to be particularly useful: interviews with Ebenezer Adam, the secretary to the regent of the Gulkpe-Na, and a representative of the house of the Dakpema.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Three questions provide some methodological insights. The first is how I arrived at the observation that Tamale was disconnected from the north more generally? The second is how I arrived at the observation that Tamale possesses an institutional anatomy characterised by multiplicity? The third is why I think these two characteristics inform the socio-political and socio-economic fabric of Tamale's urban population.

The first observation – that Tamale came to be disconnected from Dagbon traditional structures – was born first out of the notion of 'isolation'. Through reading the exhaustive material on northern Ghana, especially its history, Tamale is notable especially due largely to its absence. Northern Ghana indeed has a very rich academic tradition. Rattray was followed by Fortes. Later Ivor Wilks, Martin Staniland, and Paul-Andre Ladoucer added to the growing canon, as also did Davis Killingray, Jean Allman, R.B. Benning, Roger Thomas, Carola Lentz, Nii-K Plange, Jeff Grischow, K.B. Dickson Inez Sutton, and Wyatt McGaffey – to name but a few. Despite the academic attention given to Tamale since the 1930s, Tamale has never been identified as an object of enquiry. This is peculiar, I would argue (although I do not expect everyone to agree with me), as Tamale's urban growth is the single most profound transformation that has taken place in northern Ghana in the last one hundred years. Out of this absence rose the notion of isolation, especially in terms of the Northern Territories. Later, I would find in a footnote to Staniland's *Lions of Dagbon* the assertion that 'the degree to which Tamale kept to itself politically is interesting'.⁷⁹ Signs of Tamale's disconnect from Dagbon traditional structures were suddenly everywhere. Later still, I came across a report on Dagbon Native Authorities that compared the Dagomba chiefs' attitude towards Tamale townsmen to their attitude towards Konkomba farmers, with whom tensions have on many occasions escalated to open conflict. The report noted:

⁷⁹ Staniland, *Lions*, 217, Footnote 26.

The Dagomba chiefs have thereby found themselves stabilised by government backing in a position of superiority alike over the vigorous Konkomba farmer and the progressive ... wage-earner of Tamale Town.⁸⁰

Not only was Tamale, as an urban space, disconnected from Dagbon traditional structures, but Tamale's urban dwellers themselves also somehow did not 'belong' to the imagery of Dagbon tradition. This emerged as the first line of enquiry.

The second observation came first during an interview with the secretary of Gulkpe-Na in Tamale in March 2008.⁸¹ He explained the origins of the Dakpema to me as follows: The Dakpema originated from Kumbungu. He arrived in Tamale after fleeing from Kumbungu because he had murdered a man. In Tamale he impregnated the mentally handicapped daughter of the fetish priest, the Bugulana, and for fear of shame, the Bugulana gave him the title, the Dakpema. The emphasis which my informant placed on the themes of physical or mental handicaps⁸² and shame, coupled with the fact that I know that such themes are often so loaded in Dagbon folklore, called immediately for attention. After interviewing a number of members of the Dakpema's house and getting a far more 'noble' version of the Dakpema's origins, it was clear at the very least that rivalry existed between the two chiefly houses in Tamale. Later I would learn from archival sources that the newly appointed Ya Na in 1920, Abdulai II, informed the colonial administration that the Dakpema was not the 'rightful' chief of Tamale and demanded that the rightful chief, the Gulkpe-Na, replace the Dakpema as chief of Tamale, and that the colonial administration was quick to oblige. Having found in the archives the moment that the Dakpema replaced the Gulkpe-Na in what was clearly perceived by the colonial administration as an emphatic end to the matter, correspondence seemed to dry up for a number of years. From the record of a number of complaints, it was clear that the Dakpema house continued to play an active role in Tamale's socio-political landscape after the emphatic return of the Gulkpe-Na. The study of the redevelopment of Ward D, in Chapter 4, revealed more legitimate political actors:

⁸⁰ PRAAD, Tamale. NRG 8/2/91 (Dagomba Native Affairs) Report by D.C. Eastern Dagmoba, *Dagomba Native Administration*, 4th November, 1944.

⁸¹ Interview with the secretary of the Gulkpe-Na's palace, Tamale, 3 March 2008.

⁸² For instance, physical deformities, by custom, disqualify a person from occupying the seat of the Ya Na.

The Mallam of the central mosque, the colonial administration, and both the Dakpema and Gulkpe-Na all had agendas and influence and appeared to possess some form of legitimacy. All the documentation on indirect rule seemed to promote a rigid, local, traditional structure. But every local claim or dispute I came across in the archives showed that one or more parties manoeuvred politically between the different nodes of authority. It occurred to me, prompted by the work of Sara Berry, that the manner in which claims were made in Tamale, especially with regard to property, in many instances through the referencing of a number of political actors and institutions, was a dialogue about the constitution of authority and, also, about the form which societal interactions were to take.

The third argument – that these two characteristics of Tamale shape also the socio-political interactions within that town – I found difficult to articulate. I spent several weeks travelling to a number of Dagomba villages outside Tamale to see how Dagomba social relations in Tamale were different from those in the rural hinterland. It turned out to be an impossible comparison to make. Later I spent some time in Kumasi, and then a year in Accra. I compared also my observations of social lives in Tamale with those I had seen in Cape Town, London, and Amsterdam. Of course each of these cities felt entirely different, but how were they different, and what made them different was difficult to formulate. Later I stumbled across the work of Aiden Southall, and his distinction between Type A and Type B cities. Southall argues that Type A cities represent those cities which have long, pre-European urban histories, such as Kumasi, while Type B cities are those created for and by the colonial economy. Southall argues that in Type B cities, where the occupational structure is based on clear distinctions between unskilled workers, skilled workers, and clerical staff, aspirations find expression in trade unions, and political parties and associations. He notes, ‘... there are no traditional institutions to provide a focus.’⁸³ Southall himself noted of his dichotomy between Type A and Type B towns that, ‘... no writer on the subject, including me, has found this

⁸³ Southall, A., ‘Social change, demography and extrinsic factors’. In: Southall, A., ed., *Social change in modern Africa*. Oxford, 1961, 7-13.

classification entirely satisfactory, yet none has escaped from it'.⁸⁴ What attracted me to Southall, however, was not so much in the typology that he produced, but rather in the link that he observed between different types of African cities and the social relationships within those cities. Southall thus made the connection between the specific historical development of a city and the social relations within it. Southall's model suggested more specifically that a given city 'type' produced a number of 'extrinsic factors' such as 'relationship to outlying hinterland', 'occupation structures', and 'wage differentials'. These 'extrinsic factors' in turn shape the social relations within a city. Whether Tamale is a Type A or a Type B city is thus irrelevant. What matters is the revelation that Tamale's specific urban formation affects the character of a number of 'extrinsic factors', and these factors, in turn, affect the social relations within Tamale. Through Southall I found a number of other useful texts, such as that of Anthony O'Connor and Catherine Coquery-Vidrovitch. In the end, the question was less whether the connection existed between urban historical trajectories and social relations, than it was whether I could set out that connection in the case of Tamale. I felt I had enough evidence to argue that through the colonial period, Tamale became increasingly disconnected from Dagbon, and also to argue that Tamale's institutional anatomy was characterised by multiplicity, in part as a result of that isolation. The final task is to show how these two characteristics of Tamale's historical trajectory shaped socio-political interactions within Tamale.

⁸⁴ Southall, A., 'Review article: The African port city: Docks and suburbs', *Economic development and Cultural Change*, 38: 1(Oct. 1989), 167.

Founding Tamale: Between European capitalism and African peasantry

Introduction

The establishment of a colonial administrative headquarters at Tamale in the first decade of the twentieth century coincided with a shift in colonial development policy. Joseph Chamberlain's vision – advocating a colonial development approach which relied primarily on European capitalism and 'destroying "unprogressive" African political and social systems, imposing direct taxation, and encouraging the development of landlordism and agrarian capitalism'¹ – was replaced by a liberal agenda which sought to link existing African socio-economic structures with global economic forces, through European merchant capital. This chapter argues that Tamale's founding is best understood within the transition between these two colonial development strategies. By situating Tamale's founding within larger

¹ Grischow, *Shaping*, 20.

colonial development processes, this chapter argues that Tamale proved an uncomfortable choice as an administrative centre and trade hub within the colonial development approach. Furthermore, the chapter argues, as a result of the absence of a railway and the uptake of motorised transportation, a trade-based economy was created after 1920 (with Tamale at its centre), which neither enticed European traders nor consolidated the systems and structures of the African peasantry in Tamale. Moreover, the rise of the single owner/driver model and petty traders, and the subsequent lack of trade centralisation which a railway might have provided, made it difficult for the colonial administration to derive financial benefits from the increases in trade that motorised transportation was inducing. The single lorry-owner/driver model at the heart of north-south trade also created individual accumulations of wealth, which were regarded by the liberal agenda as the antithesis of the African social and political systems through which the colonial administration was attempting to operate.

Founding Tamale

Christine Oppong notes that Tamale ‘... owes its present prominence (to) being chosen as the district headquarters of the British Colonial administration in the first decade of the century’.² What does Tamale’s founding reveal about the colonial developmental strategy for the Northern Territories more generally? One assumes that the choice of location of a regional headquarters is a strategic decision. Identifying why Tamale was selected thus should reveal something about northern colonial strategies and aspirations more generally. However, sources which relate to the reasons why Tamale emerged as a regional centre paint a confused picture of colonial development strategy in the Northern Territories, and trying to link the strategic sentiments contained within colonial citations to larger colonial policy and practice creates a number of contradictions. But, as this subsection argues, there are a number of lines that may be drawn to explain the founding of Tamale in terms of larger colonial processes. Those lines are to be found not in one or other colonial strategy but in the transition from one such strategy to another. More specifically,

² Oppong, C., *Growing up in Dagbon*. Ghana, 1973, 16.

the choice of Tamale as a regional administrative headquarters is situated in the transition from a developmental approach that focused on the economic utility of European capitalism and direct taxation, to one that focused on the African peasantry and how it may be linked to global economic forces.

In beginning to attempt to understand the founding of Tamale as an administrative headquarters and a trade hub, one is struck by the absence of advantages that Tamale offered the colonial administration. Tamale possessed very few identifiable advantages for the purpose of administration as it emerged in the decades after its founding in 1907. Tamale's lack of traditional political significance has been discussed in the introductory chapter. Furthermore, Tamale was not of any particular economic importance. It was a village of 1,435 at its founding, reflecting its relative economic irrelevance. Although there was a rotational market system in and around Tamale, Tamale was not an integral part of a much more valuable north-south transit trade. Tamale also had no obvious physical benefits. The water supply was a perennial problem throughout the colonial period – Tamale is not located adjacent to any rivers – and it has no obvious defensive features. Gambaga, which preceded Tamale as the base for colonial activity, was believed by Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories (CCNT), Lt. Colonel H.P. Northcott, to be the centre of the Mamprussi dynasty.³ The choice of Gambaga as a colonial base reflects the colonial administration's focus on, firstly, the 'pacification' of peoples like the Tallensi, who continued to resist British rule after 1900, and secondly, on consolidating the structures of states, like Mamprugu, that were felt to have been relatively unaltered by the slave-raiding activities of Samory and Babatu.

Only very few attempts have been made, directly or indirectly, to address the question of how colonial administrative activity came to be centred in Tamale around the turn of the twentieth century. The colonial administration had initially considered Lungbunga as the site for the new headquarters and went as far as to invite the chief of Lungbunga, together with the chief of Savelugu, to tour Accra.⁴ MacGaffey notes that 'legend has it that it was the Dakpema, Nsung-Na, who went

³ Grischow, *Shaping*, 31.

⁴ MacGaffey, 'History', 110.

to the military headquarters in Gambaga and persuaded the British to chose Tamale'.⁵ Martin Staniland elaborates on this 'legend'. He argues that the headquarters of the Northern Territories were moved to Tamale largely on the initiative of the Dakpema, Nsung-Na.⁶ According to Staniland, the Dakpema had managed to assert himself as chief of Tamale after 1902, when the Anglo-German border was formally established. At the time of partition of Dagbon into British and German jurisdictions and the establishment of the Anglo-German boundary, the Gulkpe-Na was visiting Yendi and was ordered to remain there. Staniland notes that the Dakpema made the journey to Gambaga (then the headquarters of British colonial administration) to persuade the colonial administration to establish a colonial headquarters at Tamale. Staniland states that the Dakpema,

... seized the opportunity (of the Gulkpe-Na's absence) to increase his own power and importance, actually making the journey to Gambaga ... to invite the Government to build a station in his town where there was plenty of water.⁷

In support of this argument, albeit with a slightly different emphasis, the DC for Yendi, Blair,⁸ noted in the early 1930s that according to conversations he had with the prominent members of Tamale's community, notably the Serekin Zongo (Hausa Headman in Tamale), '... when the English were at Gambaga, they summoned all Dagomba Chiefs ... Foremost amongst these was the Dakpema of Tamale ...'.⁹ Blair noted from his own research that '... when the N.T. headquarters were moved to Tamale ... the Da-Kpema arrogated all the powers of a chief, being safely cut off from Yendi and the Gulkpe Na'.¹⁰ But relating these facts to the decision by the colonial administration to house their headquarters at Tamale seems to be a stretch. The Dakpema had been described only a few years prior to the founding of Tamale

⁵ *Ibid.* 110.

⁶ Staniland, *Lions*, 100.

⁷ *Ibid.* 62.

⁸ Blair is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

⁹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/2/28 (Dagomba Native Affairs). 'Note by District Commissioner for Eastern Dagomba Blair'.

¹⁰ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/2/28 (Dagomba Native Affairs). 'Note by District Commissioner for Eastern Dagomba Blair'.

as ‘... one of the poorest men in Tamale, and apparently has no following’.¹¹ His influence over colonial policy was, in all likelihood, limited. Paul André Ladouceur notes simply, ‘In 1907 ... the capital was moved to Tamale, which was better situated for purposes of communication’.¹² Ladouceur is also certainly not incorrect, but ‘communications’ alone cannot explain the establishment of a regional headquarters at Tamale as a base for colonial administration.

The superficial nature of the explanations as to why Tamale was selected reflect the apparent randomness of the choice of Tamale within larger colonial development policies. A more holistic account of how and why the colonial administration selected Tamale as its base must take into account broader changes and contestations within colonial development visions and aspirations. In 1895, Joseph Chamberlain sounded the call that the British had a duty to develop the colonial possessions. In terms specifically of the Gold Coast, Chamberlain’s call reflected a desire to open up the territory to British commercial interests in order to extract raw materials and develop consumer markets for British goods. Jeff Grischow notes:

Chamberlain set out to achieve this goal by nationalising African lands, building state-sponsored infrastructure, destroying what he considered to be “unprogressive” African political and social systems, imposing direct taxation, and encouraging the development of landlordism and agrarian capitalism on African soil.¹³

Chamberlain’s vision was, however, abruptly ended around 1906 by a liberal reaction to what was seen to be the exploitation of the West African colonies. During the period 1906-12, the colonial development of West Africa shifted from encouraging the development of agrarian capitalism to blocking its growth in favour of preserving peasant production and African community.¹⁴ Coincidentally, Tamale was founded in 1907, at the very beginning of this transition.

¹¹ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/60 (Report on Sites for New Headquarters, Tamale). Report by Capt. Kineally.

¹² Ladouceur, P.A., *Chiefs and politicians: The politics of regionalism in Northern Ghana*. Longman Group Ltd., 1979, 41.

¹³ Grischow, *Shaping*, 20.

¹⁴ Grischow, *Shaping*, 20.

Tensions in colonial discourse

The period 1906-12, when the transition from an emphasis on European capitalism to an emphasis on preserving peasant production took shape, coincided with crucial years for Tamale's early development. We have noted that Tamale's founding is best understood within this transition. The colonial sources underpin this assertion. The following subsection discusses a number of the colonial references to the founding of Tamale within the themes set out in this subsection.

Only a few sources relate specifically to the founding of Tamale. The Annual Report in the year 1906 mentions Tamale on a number of occasions. The other two sources are a note by the CCNT, Lieutenant-Colonel Watherston, and his address to 57 chiefs to mark the opening of Tamale. The following subsection analyses each of these sources. In 1906, the Annual Report for the Northern Territories notes:

The new headquarters have been selected at Tamale in place of Gambaga. The latter place, situated as it is in the north-east corner of the Protectorate, was most inconvenient for communication with the outstations, whereas Tamale occupies a more central position.¹⁵

This reflects the point raised by Ladouceur: Tamale was selected as an administrative centre owing to the communication benefits which it offered. Such reasoning alone, however, over-simplifies the complexities of colonial economic ambitions. Communication is not all. The Report of the Transport Department for 1906 noted:

When the headquarters of the Northern Territories are moved from Gambaga to Tamale, which lies in the centre of this district, a very great impetus to trade is expected.¹⁶

In the same year of 1906, CCNT Lieutenant-Colonel Watherson wrote to the Governor, noting of Tamale as follows:

Situated on a ridge, with very extensive views to the east and west in open park-like country, excellent water supply, and reported amongst the natives as being extremely healthy for men, cattle and horses ... it is doubtful if a better situated

¹⁵ PRO, Kew, CO 98/16 (Annual Report for the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast for the Year 1906).

¹⁶ PRO, Kew, CO 96/16. (Report on the Transport Department for the Year 1906).

station exists in West Africa. Plenty of excellent sites exist for European residences, should traders settle later on.¹⁷

Watherston's note appeals largely to Europeans. The references to European traders, and especially their 'residences', is particularly revealing in this regard. It points loosely to a liberal agenda, where African peasantry, through European traders, is connected to global economic forces. Tamale would serve as the hub of such an economic system. There is only one source that reveals how the colonial administration reasoned the founding of Tamale to (representatives of) the African peasantry they were attempting to coerce. This comes in the form of the address of the CCNT at the opening of Tamale in 1907. The opening of the new headquarters at Tamale came finally on Friday, 10 April 1907, and was declared a holiday. Only the telegraph office and the treasury remained open, the telegraph office for one hour in the morning and one in the afternoon to receive mail from England and Accra, and the treasury to collect caravan taxes from traders passing through. Following Watherston's address, 'a telegraph of loyalty to the king' was to be sent to His Excellency, the Governor. At 5 p.m. horse races were to commence. Fifty-seven Dagomba, Mamprussi and Gonja chiefs gathered to mark the opening of the new headquarters. Amongst the chiefs was Mahama of Savelugu, Dakpema Nsung-Na of Tamale, Bukari of Sanerigu, Yisifu of Nanton, Suleman of Choggu, Naena of Kanvilli, and Yaya of Kasuli. Watherston addressed the 57 chiefs in the refurbished market-place. He told them:

... we have no doubt (that Tamale) will very soon form the distributing centre of trade in the Northern Territories, ... (which) extends to Sokoto, Kano, the Upper Niger, Tenkodogo, Morocco, and Tripoli, in fact to everywhere where the Kola nut is in demand. To help yourselves you must produce things that traders will buy. You have enormous herds of cattle which you keep to look at. There are plenty of Kumasi traders ready to buy them, and give you money for them or cloths. Your cotton can be improved, and I hope shortly to be able to give out cotton seeds to people round here, who will be able to sell their cotton to traders in this town. Shea-butter nuts and Shea-butter will all bring you money ... Some of your youngmen should come here for permanent work and learn carpentering, blacksmith and stone-mason, trades in all of which they can earn money in the future ...

¹⁷ Ibid.

He also noted:

When European traders come here they will want men who can talk English and Dagomba, English and Mamprussi, English and Wala, English and Gonja and those youngmen who can do this will get work and good wages at once.¹⁸

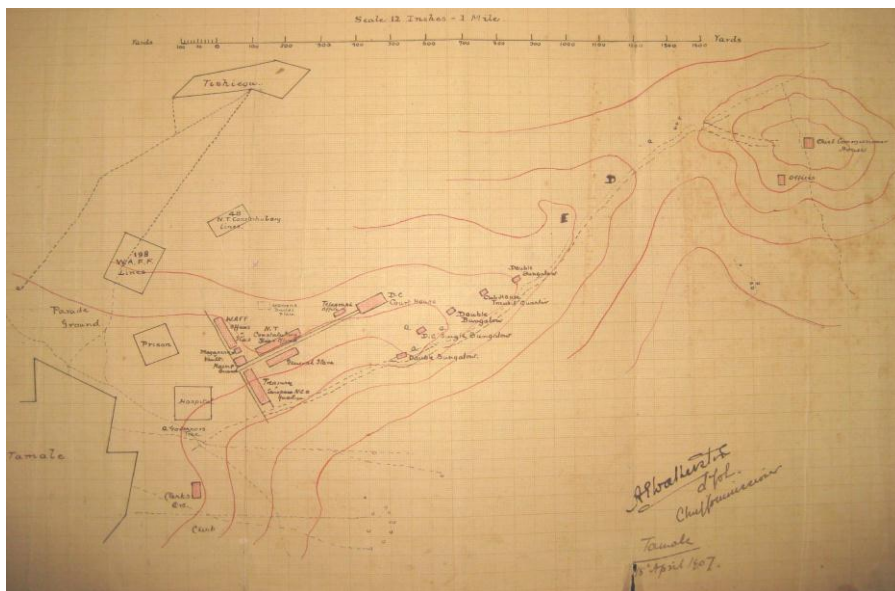
The contradiction is obvious: despite the liberal agenda in which African peasantry was to play a central economic role, by locating the centre in Tamale, which had no real political or economic relevance in the socio-economic and socio-political structure of the African peasantry, no regard was given to existing African spatial systems. Trade to and from Tamale had to be motivated. This contradiction reflects the tension created by the transition between the two colonial development paradigms outlined above.

Rethinking the transportation history of the Northern Territories

To date, the transportation historiography of the Northern Territories has concentrated primarily on the Northern Territories railway, or the lack thereof. This framework, created by this concentration, brings certain histories into focus whilst ignoring others. This subsection is concerned with demarcating a different transportation history for the Northern Territories, one that emphasises the presence of motorised transportation rather than the absence of a railway. Through the adoption of such a transportation history, Tamale's urban formation becomes a central component of northern historiography more generally.

¹⁸ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/73 (Opening of New Headquarters at Tamale), Address to Chiefs by C.C.N.T. Watherston at the opening ceremony of the new administrative station at Tamale.

2.1 Proposed station at Tamale, 1907



Source: PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/60 (Report on Sites for New Headquarters, Tamale)

Transportation emerged as a central concern for the northern colonial administration. In 1908, the BCGA initiated a cotton industry in the Northern Territories. They distributed various seed types and built a ginnery at Tamale. Attempts were made also to develop a tobacco and shea-butter industry.¹⁹ Such initiatives served as quintessential models of the liberal agenda. In 1911, however, citing poor yields and transportation difficulties, the BCGA handed their buildings over to colonial government and left the Northern Territories.²⁰ Much of the failure was put down to a lack of adequate transport facilities, which later projected itself in the railway debate.²¹ The new emphasis on northern trade meant that transportation was central not only to Tamale's success as a trade hub and administrative centre but

¹⁹ Grischow, *Shaping*, 47.

²⁰ PRO, Kew, CO96/26, (Annual Report for the Northern Territories, 1916).

²¹ Gold Coast Handbook, 1937.

also to the economy of the Northern Territories more generally. Watherston, in his address, noted that '(a) big road is being built from Kumasi to Tamale, through Salaga. And a road to Yapei, on the river, so that goods can be brought up to Tamale by cart or by canoe'.²² He also urged that '... all chiefs in the country ... clear their roads to Tamale 12 feet clear of all trees, stumps, roots, so that carts drawn by horses can go along them'.²³ A year later, in 1907, the Annual Report for the Northern Territories noted '... the future development of these territories depends so largely on cheap and reliable transport facilities which at present do not exist'.²⁴

The Northern Territories railway debate

The construction of a Northern Territories railway had initially been an assumed eventuality by the northern colonial administration when they moved to Tamale.²⁵ The initiative, however, soon encountered some resistance, especially from the south. In 1912, Governor Thorburn noted that 'until the colony and Ashanti have been thoroughly opened up and developed, the Northern Territories must be content to wait their turn and any extensive programme designed to render the area more accessible must be suffered to stand over for a long time to come'.²⁶ The outbreak of WWI put any talk of development on hold as resources were largely directed towards the war effort. At the outbreak of the war, it was noted that 'the object of Government in the immediate future must be to reduce not to increase expenditure, especially in the Northern Territories'.²⁷ The economic slowdown was exacerbated in the Northern Territories by the fact that within the wartime political and economic

²² PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/73 (Opening of New Headquarters at Tamale), Address to Chiefs by C.C.N.T. Watherston at the opening ceremony of the new administrative station at Tamale.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ PRO, Kew, CO96/17, (Annual Report for the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast for 1907).

²⁵ Plans were drawn for a railway station at Tamale and approved by the Sanitation Board.

²⁶ Governor J.J. Thorburn, quoted in D. Kimble, *A political history of Ghana, 1859-1928*. Oxford University Press, 1963, 534.

²⁷ Letter from Colonial Secretary to CCNT, 1914, quoted in Kimble, *Political*, 534.

framework, the Northern Territories were to supply men not only to the Gold Coast Regiment but also to the gold mines.²⁸

After the war, the Northern Territories railway debate resumed, and the appointment of Guggisberg as governor of the Gold Coast was cause for optimism for pro-railway elements within the colonial administration. Jeff Grischow puts Guggisberg's pro-northern affinity down to a staunch commitment to the liberal agenda that was defining the colonial agenda more broadly. Grischow notes, 'the Northern Territories provided Guggisberg with a clean slate for his experiment in development without denationalisation'.²⁹ That Guggisberg was committed to the liberal agenda is not in question. But Guggisberg also saw in the Northern Territories the potential to diversify an economy that he felt was overly-reliant on cocoa and gold. In his vision, the Northern Territories railway would be heavily loaded with groundnuts, shea-butter, corn, and cattle'.³⁰ In Guggisberg's ten-year plan, the north featured prominently, and a budget was set aside for the building of a Northern Territories railway.

Despite Guggisberg's optimism for the northern economic potential, questions about the financial feasibility of a Northern Territories railway continued. It was felt, especially by some southern administrators, that the north did not possess the economic potential to justify such a railway. Northerners argued that the very reason that surpluses were so difficult to generate was because of the difficulties of market access, and this was attributed to the lack of a Northern Territories railway. Northern Nigeria was pointed to as an example where a railway northwards had initiated a successful groundnut industry.³¹ The rebuttal to this argument by those opposed to a Northern Territories railway was that on account of the population disparities

²⁸ The Northern Territories provided 69 per cent of the men enlisted for the Gold Coast Regiment during 1914 and 1918.

²⁹ Grischow, *Shaping*, 62.

³⁰ Konings, P., *The state and rural class formation in Ghana: A comparative analysis*. London, KPI Limited, 1986, 164.

³¹ PRO, Kew, CO96/693/8 (Papers Relating to a Project for the Construction of a Railway between Kumasi and the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast 1927-1928).

between the Northern Territories and Northern Nigeria, a comparison between the two could not be considered feasible.

In 1926, when Guggisberg's term as governor ended, no start had been made on the Northern Territories railway. The end of Guggisberg's governorship also ended much of the northern colonial hope for a railway. Three years later in 1929, Secretary of State Lord Passfield finally ended the debate surrounding the Northern Territories railway. He stated categorically:

I cannot but agree with you that circumstances ... do not justify the construction of such a railway which must accordingly be postponed and need no longer be regarded as a project to be taken up in the near future.³²

The uptake of motorised transportation

The only other modern transport variation on the railway was motorised transportation. In 1920 the Great North Road, which linked Tamale to Kumasi, was completed, and for the first time, motorised transportation was introduced to the Northern Territories. The potential offered by motorised transportation was revered within colonial circles. It allowed officers to trek through their jurisdictions without prejudice to office duties. The Annual General Report for 1929-30 noted that colonial administrators,

... can now visit various places and the tours, which usually occupied weeks are now only a matter of days. A tour taking ten days with carriers, can now be done easily in a day. This leaves Political Officers more time to attend to their office work, besides reducing enormously the burden of head carriage on the community.³³

As a result, the northern colonial administration was certainly gratified when Guggisberg entered Tamale in a motorcar in April 1920. Not only did the introduction of motorised transport assist directly with administration within the Northern Territories, it also greatly increased the convenience of the transportation

³² Secretary of State Passfield in Despatch to Governor, 1929, Despatches relating to a project for the construction of a railway between Kumasi and the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, Sessional Paper no. XIV, 1929-30. In: Kay, G.B., ed., *The political economy of colonialism in the Gold Coast: A collection of documents and statistics 1900-1960*. Cambridge, 1972, 166.

³³ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/3/26 (Annual General Report 1929-30).

of stores to and from Kumasi, transportation which had been a perennial problem for the northern administration. In lieu of the fact that the road would not be completed in the foreseeable future, a new system of transportation was employed to get government stores to Tamale: goods were taken by lorry from Kumasi to Ejura (one hundred kilometres from Kumasi), where the road stopped; from Ejura to Yeji by carrier gangs, where they would be put on canoes and then taken up-river to Tamale Port (Yapei); and from Tamale Port they would once again be taken by carrier gangs to Tamale.³⁴ Stores often arrived late, or not at all, and quite frequently they had been ruined by water while being taken up-river from Yeji to Tamale. The Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories complained in 1913:

I regret to say that the new system of transport has worked so far, most unsatisfactorily. An unprecedented amount of looting of loads ... many losses were caused by breakages, and by water which permeated the contents of boxes placed in leaky canoes that transport them from Yeji to Tamale Port. The delivery of stores was in no way expediated, in fact loads very frequently arrived at Tamale from two to three months after they had been despatched from Coomasie.³⁵

Interestingly, in the same year, the Transport Officer at Kumasi wrote of the new system, that '... no loss of loads by any of the permanent gangs has been reported' and 'the service is working satisfactorily and is a great saving of time'³⁶.

The introduction of motorised transport also put an end to head-porterage. Prior to the introduction of motorised transportation, head-porterage had been widely employed in order to get stores from the south to the north. Head-porterage was considered expensive and inefficient in terms of the opportunity cost of labour. The Northern Territories could not, it was generally agreed, develop if it had to rely on head-loading as its economic motor. Per ton-mile, head porterage had been shown to be more expensive than both motorised transportation and railway. Although the colonial arguments against head-porterage were primarily economic, it was also

³⁴ PRO, Kew, CO96/17 (Annual Report for the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast for 1907).

³⁵ PRO, Kew, CO96/22 (Annual Report for Northern Territories of the Gold Coast Report for 1913).

³⁶ PRO, Kew, CO 96/22 (Report on the Transport Department for the year 1913).

recognised as a brutal means of transportation. Governor Guggisberg described it as '... an injurious form of occupation'.³⁷ In 1908, the report for the Transport Department noted:

With constant walking for a twelve-month averaging 400 miles a month ... the majority (of carriers) had their soles almost completely worn through, to say nothing of the cracks. The experiment was then tried of tarring the carriers' feet.³⁸

Apart from being injurious, colonial administrators also regarded head-porterage as primarily slow and inefficient.

Motorised transportation thus provided a number of new advantages: Colonial stores moved easily between the coast and Tamale, officers could be much better acquainted with their respective jurisdictions, and it put an end to head-porterage, which was slow and expensive, but also regarded as inhumane. But the lorry was not considered a direct economic development tool. In that respect, the lorry was not seen by colonial administrators to have been an adequate substitute for the railway. In 1924, in his address to the legislative assembly, Governor Guggisberg echoed mainstream colonial thinking when he stated:

Motor transport is not a paying proposition, it certainly seems that railway is the only solution ... on long haul trunk roads ... they (lorries) are not a practical proposition ... It is obvious that motor lorries can only be regarded as temporary and inadequate measures in meeting the general demands for trade in this country'. With more railways we shall be safe for all time; without them our future is not only imperilled, it is doomed.³⁹

Two years later, in 1926, W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies (1922-29), made a tour of West Africa and noted in a report:

The Northern Territories may be suitable for the cultivation of groundnuts and American cotton. The bulk of the area is free of tsetse fly. The meat supply of the Gold Coast Colony is obtained from the Northern Territories and French

³⁷ Sir F.G., Guggisberg, *The Gold Coast*. Accra, 1927, 84.

³⁸ PRO, Kew, CO 96/22 (Report on the Transport Department for the year 1908).

³⁹ Governor's Annual Address, Legislative Council Debates, 1924-5, p18-21. In: Kay, G.B., ed., *The political economy of colonialism in the Gold Coast: A collection of documents and statistics 1900-1960*. Cambridge, 1972, 144

territory ... the present wastage of cattle driven down on the hoof is at least 50 per cent.⁴⁰

Ormsby-Gore prioritised the Northern Territories railway, calling its non-existence '... the chief problem before the Gold Coast railway department ...'⁴¹ He noted regretfully that '... the greater part of the territories is outside the economic radius of the railway'.⁴² Ormsby-Gore stated in conclusion:

The Gold Coast cannot be said to have fully developed until the railway to the Northern Territories has been constructed. That it is the duty of the Government to construct such a railway ... I think, is clear.⁴³

In colonial circles it was felt that in order to unlock economic potential, a railway was a prerequisite. In the context of this pervasive sentiment, the fact that the Northern Territories railway was never built was thought, in the vision of the colonial administration, to spell the end of any ambition to create a northern economy. Thus, the outcome of the Northern Territories railway debate has not only informed much of the transportation history of the Northern Territories, it has also, through themes aligned to the underdevelopment topos, shaped the Northern Territories historiography more generally. By implication, a different emphasis within the transportation history of the Northern Territories radically affects the historiography of the Northern Territories. Furthermore, there is more than enough evidence that suggests that an alternative transportation history exists. During the years of the railway debate, in which motorised transportation was routinely overlooked as a (economically) feasible mode of transportation, the number of lorries that crossed the Yeji ferry rose from zero in 1919 to over 3,000 in 1926,⁴⁴ of

⁴⁰ Report by the Honourable W.G.A. Ormsby-Gore on his visit to West Africa during the year 1926, Cmd 2744, London 1926, p 48-55. In: Kay, G.B., ed., *The political economy of colonialism in the Gold Coast: A collection of documents and statistics 1900-1960*. Cambridge, 1972, 141-2.

⁴¹ Report by the Honourable W.G.A. Ormsby-Gore on his visit to West Africa during the year 1926, Cmd 2744, London 1926, p 48-55. In: Kay, G.B., ed., *The political economy of colonialism in the Gold Coast: A collection of documents and statistics 1900-1960*. Cambridge, 1972, 142.

⁴² *Ibid.* 142.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 42.

⁴⁴ The fact that the road was not motorable during the rainy season, which lasts four to six months a year, inflates the relative value of the number of lorries crossing the Yeji ferry.

which over 1,400 had trailers.⁴⁵ Since, by definition, a northern transportation history focussing on the availability of motorised transportation – instead of the absence of a railway – has at its centre the Great North Road between Tamale and Kumasi, such a revised history brings Tamale firmly into the centre of northern historiography. In 1907, Tamale was a village of 1,435 people.⁴⁶ By 1921 Tamale had a little under than 4,000 residents⁴⁷, not significantly larger than Savelugu, Kumbungu and Salaga.⁴⁸ In 1931, eleven years after the completion of the Great North Road, Tamale's population had increased more than three-fold, to almost 13,000⁴⁹ residents, making it by a considerable margin the largest settlement in the Northern Territories.

The Great North Road and its implications for Tamale

The Great North Road was the first motorable road to enter the Northern Territories. Governor Guggisberg ceremoniously drove into Tamale in April 1920, followed by five lorries carrying his stores. Largely outside of the colonial purview, the impact on north-south trade was almost immediate, as also was its impact on Tamale's own internal economy and demographic growth. But the trade which drove Tamale's demographic growth seemed to be, like Tamale itself, ill-fitting within the liberal colonial development programme. The single owner-driver model which emerged was juxtaposed to colonial policy in that the model, firstly, created a private accumulation of wealth which was seen to be counterproductive in the attempts to consolidate African peasant structures, and secondly, it was difficult, beyond ferry dues, to derive any financial benefits from it. Furthermore, in the absence of the railway, European merchant capital was impossible to entice to the north. As a result, both the trade increases that emerged as a result of the introduction of motorised transportation, as well as the demographic growth it induced in Tamale, carried within colonial circles an illegitimate undertone. Such developments served as a reminder that,

⁴⁵ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/310 (Yeji Trade Statistics).

⁴⁶ Staniland, *Lions*, 1.

⁴⁷ Population census of the Gold Coast and its protectorates for the year 1921.

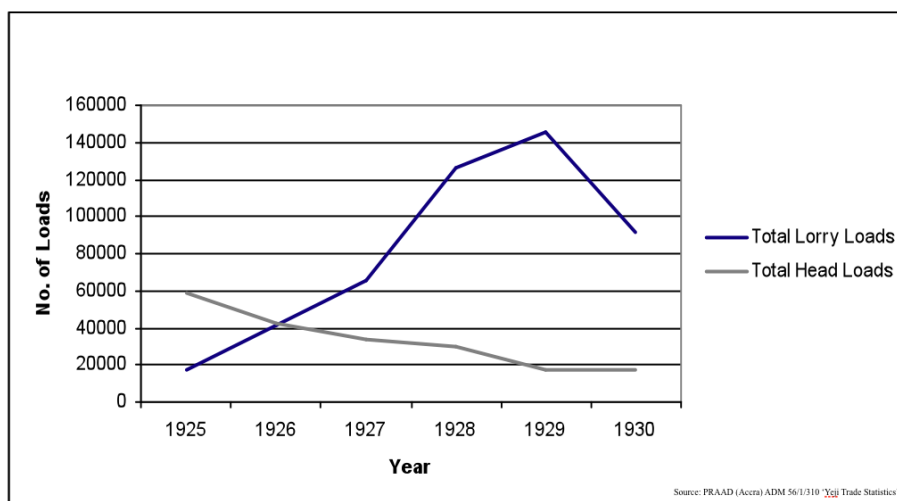
⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Population census of the Gold Coast and its protectorates, for the year 1931.

What Europeans encountered in the colonies was not an open terrain for economic domination, but people capable of circumventing and undermining the principles and practices on which extraction or capitalist development was based.⁵⁰

The Great North certainly induced increases in trade volumes. The lorry-driven trade went well beyond simply replacing hitherto relied upon head-porterage. The chart below represents the volume of head-loaded goods against the volume of lorry cargo for the period 1925-30.⁵¹ The increase in absolute trade volumes implies also that the northern farmers responded to demands for agricultural goods in the south by producing surpluses, a point of contention throughout this period, mostly expressed in terms of the debate about whether to build a Northern Territories railway.⁵²

2.2. Total Lorry Loads vs. Total Head Loads, 1925-1930



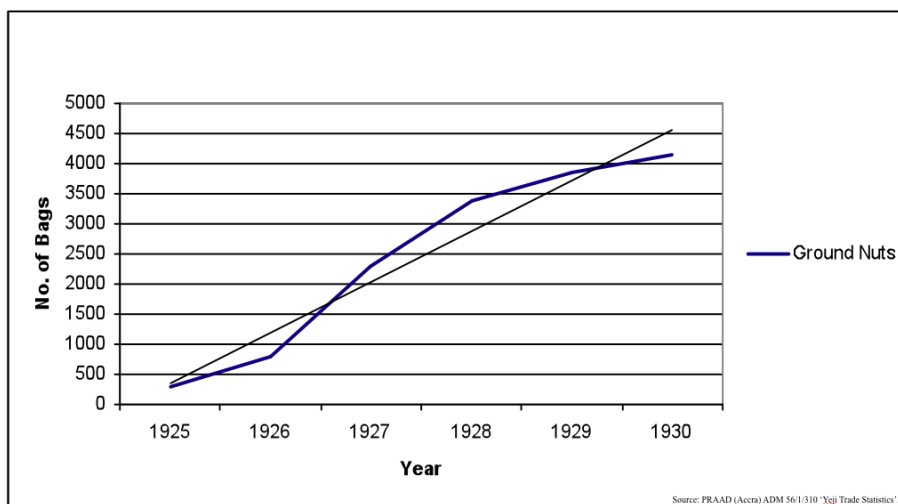
⁵⁰ Cooper, F. & A. L. Stoler, *Tensions of empire: Colonial cultures in a Bourgeois world*. University of California Press, 1997, 5

⁵¹ All data is taken from records taken at the Ferry in Yeji. Although each station kept its own trade data, they were notoriously inaccurate as traders who travelled at night were not required to register their goods. Furthermore, the crossing at Yeji was the gateway to the Northern Territories.

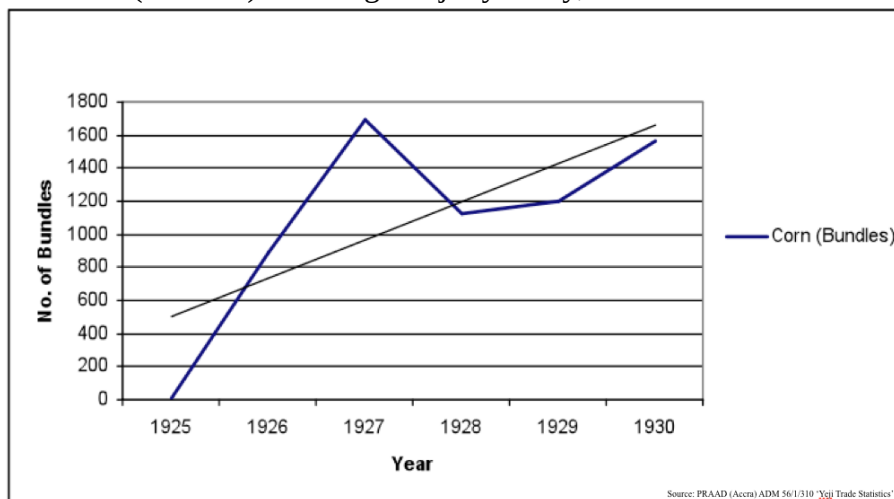
⁵² In the debate whether or not a Northern Territories railway was to be built, pro-railway lobbyists argued that a lack of transportation (access to markets) created disincentives for the production of surpluses. Anti-railway lobbyists argued the opposite and suggested there was nothing of any particular value in the Northern Territories in any case.

The increases in trade were seen across the spectrum, in both northbound and southbound directions. The following graphs illustrate the trend in a variety of northbound and southbound goods during the period 1925-30. Groundnuts, fowls, and corn represent southbound goods (Figures 2.2-3), and beer, European salt, and flour represent northbound goods (Figures 2.5-6). In all instances, trade peaked around the end of the decade.

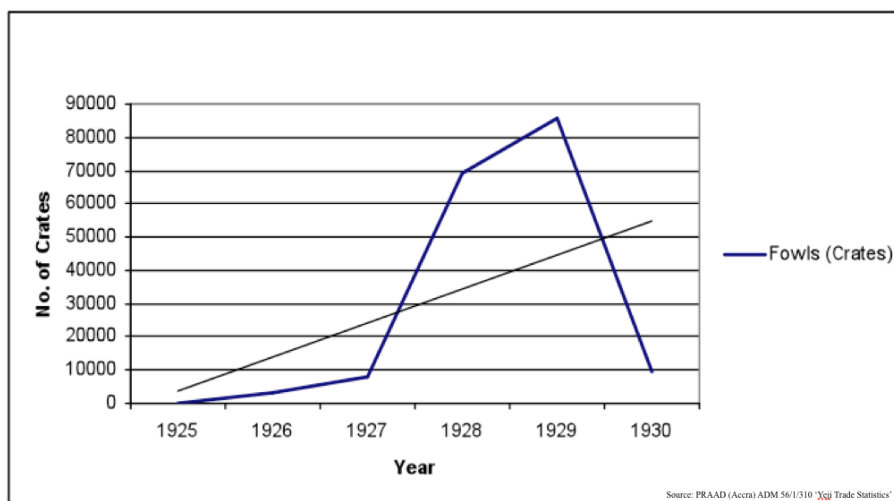
2.3. Ground Nuts (Bags) Crossing Yeji by Lorry, 1925-1931



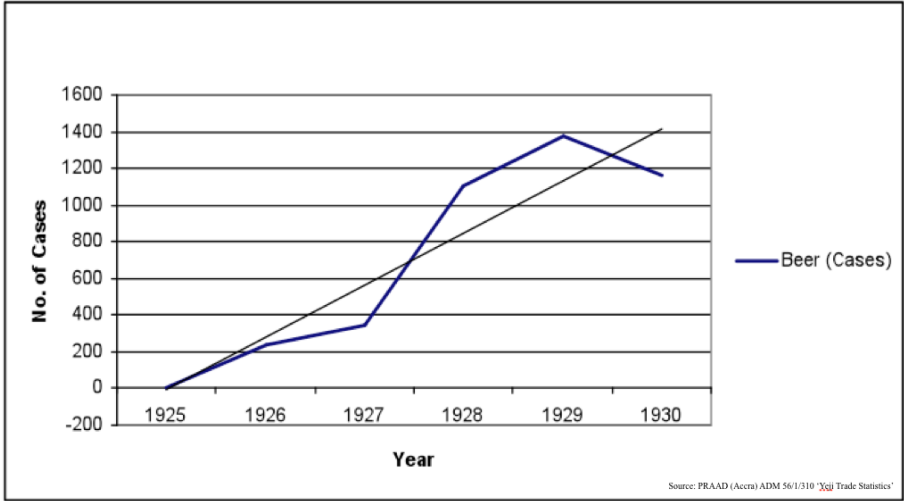
2.4. Corn (Bundles) Crossinge Yeji by Lorry, 1925-1931



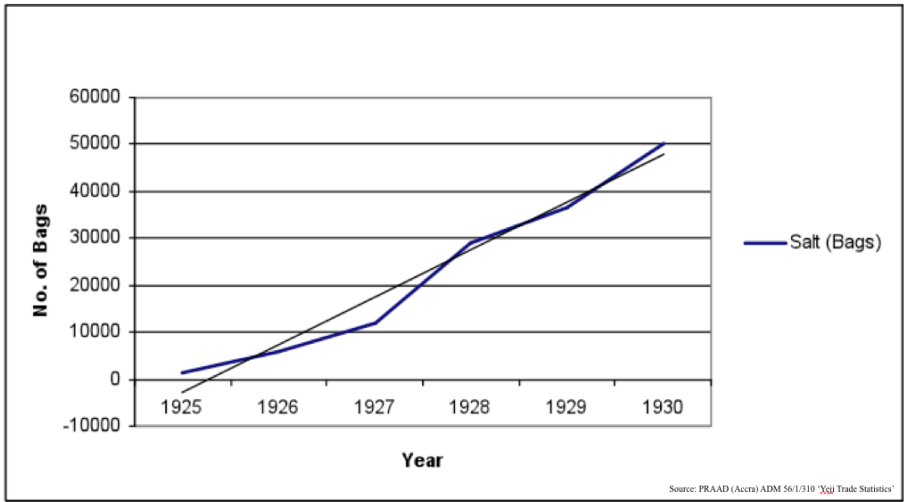
2.5. Fowls (Crates) Crossing Yeji by Lorry, 1925-1931



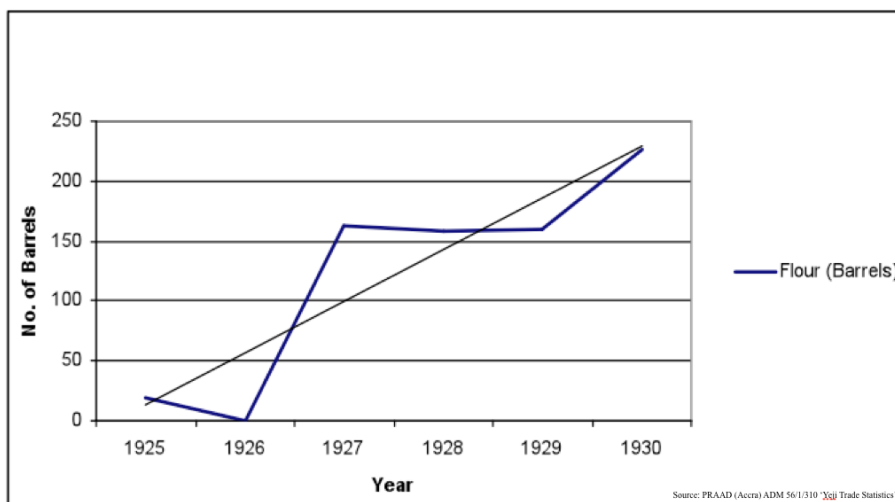
2.6. Beer (Cases) Crossing Yeji by Lorry, 1925-1931



2.7. European Salt (Bags) Crossing Yeji by Lorry, 1925-1931



2.8. Flour (Barrels) Crossing Yeji by Lorry, 1925-1931



The increases in trade as a result of the completion of the Great North Road in 1920 effected significant change in Tamale's local economy. In 1910 the stores and shops in Tamale, built by Watherston, failed to cover their costs.⁵³ In contrast, in 1929 it was noted:

There is also a good sale for petrol, oil and tyres among lorry drivers which ply to and fro from Tamale ... many small stores are being opened, and ... traders, who formerly did not bother about Tamale, are beginning to open up branches here.⁵⁴

The economic activity being generated in Tamale as a result of the uptake of motorised transportation also drove demographic growth in Tamale. The population by 1931 was a little under 13,000. Of these, 1,286 were listed as traders, 866 as market traders, and a further 385 as hawkers.⁵⁵ Thus, over 2,500 of Tamale's 13,000 residents were traders. Ten years previously, very few of Tamale's residents were not farmers.⁵⁶ Even the much-revered European traders came to Tamale. In the early

⁵³ Grischow, *Shaping*, 47.

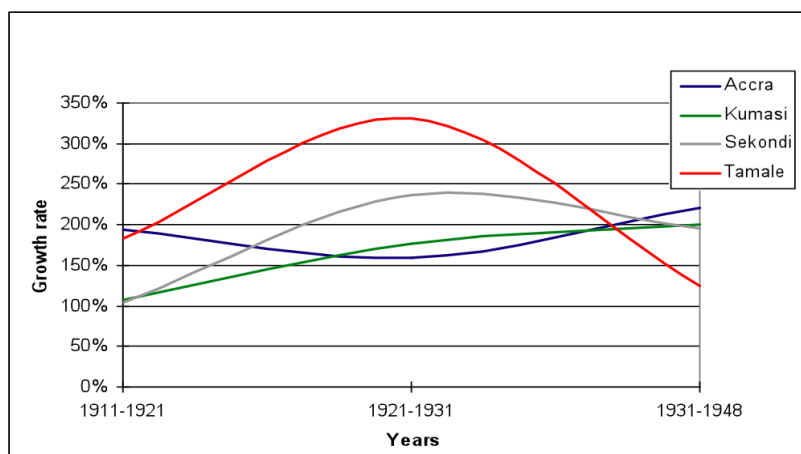
⁵⁴ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/3/26. (Annual General Report for the Year 1929-1930).

⁵⁵ Census report of the Gold Coast and its protectorates, 1931.

⁵⁶ Eades, J., *Strangers and traders: Yoruba migrants, markets and the state in Northern Ghana*. Edinburgh University Press, UK, 1993, 33.

1930s, the United Trading Company (UTC) opened a trading store, as also did a Syrian trader, Ziady.⁵⁷ A 1932 map of Tamale shows two garages. Tamale's demographic growth during this period was remarkable, even in terms of other urban centres in the Gold Coast. The chart below compares Tamale's population growth between censuses to Accra, Kumasi, and Sekondi. During the decade 1921-31, Tamale's demographic growth was by far the highest relative to other urban centres in the Gold Coast and its Protectorates.

2.8. Growth rates between censuses, Gold Coast cities, 1911-1948



Source: Based on data from Census Reports of the Gold Coast, 1911, 1921, 1931 and 1948

By the end of the 1920s, the Annual Report stated that '(p)eople are asking for roads to be made, and lorries are to been seen everywhere, loaded with trade and passengers'.⁵⁸ But the majority of the trade increases southwards came largely in the form of food staples, servicing the non-European demands in the south. Increases in the trade of good such as fowls, corn, groundnuts, and yams were neither centralised nor seen as an integral part of the larger colonial project. The result was, despite

⁵⁷ Before 1924, the area which comprises Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria was known as Syria. The Syrians referred to were in fact Lebanese. See E.K. Akyeampong, 'Race, identity and citizenship in Black Africa: The case of the Lebanese in Ghana', *Journal of International African Institute*, 76: 3(2006), 297-323.

⁵⁸ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/3/26. (Annual General Report for the Year 1929-1930)

economic progression, that the ramifications of the trade increases were not regarded as denoting northern development. Tamale formed a part of the increasingly negative discourse that defined the northern economy. One official complained: 'Tamale itself has grown enormously in the last few years ... and it is still increasing ... most of the increase in population are non-productive and are chiefly petty traders relying on the native population for their food'.⁵⁹ Tamale, as an urban site, was little more than a by-product of what the colonial administration regarded as progress, an unfortunate and unavoidable manifestation of colonial administration.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Tamale, as a colonial creation, straddled two development paradigms: one, set forward by Joseph Chamberlain, advocated for European capital and direct taxation at the expense of African social structures; the other, the liberal agenda which replaced Chamberlain's vision of colonial development advocated for the consolidation of the African peasantry and connecting, through European traders, to the global market. That Tamale held no specific political or economic relevance within the existing African socio-political and socio-economic structures which the colonial economy was attempting to coerce appears to align with Chamberlain's vision. What came afterwards was indeed a focus on the African peasantry. That Tamale's founding straddled these two development paradigms had the affect of making it in all respects an uncomfortable fit within the increasingly liberal programme. The more 'successful' colonialism was in the Northern Territories, the more of a 'by-product' Tamale became. This forms the basis of discussion in the following chapter.

⁵⁹ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/238, (Report on Railway to the Northern Territories), 'District Commissioner for Western Dagomba, 1928'.

Tamale and the Northern Territories: Contrasting histories of demographic change

Introduction

The previous chapter has situated Tamale's founding within a regional framing. This chapter continues that discussion. But the chapter also begins to reach into Tamale itself, revealing the changing demographic and economic configurations arising out of the uptake of motorised transportation after 1920. This chapter presents three interrelated arguments. The first is that during the decade after the introduction of motorised transportation, Tamale's demographic growth was negatively correlated to that of the Northern Territories generally. In short, while Tamale's demographic growth was a positive function of increased mobility arising out of the introduction of motorised transportation after 1920, the population growth rate of Northern Territories declined during this period. As a result, as the colonial and post-colonial historiography of the Northern Territories is dominated by themes aligned to northern out-migration, and Tamale's demographic mechanisms worked against that of the north more generally, Tamale is not visible within this dominant discourse.¹

¹ See N.J.K. Brukum, 'Studied neglect or lack of resources?: The socio-economic underdevelopment of Northern Ghana under British colonial rule', *Transactions of the*

The second argument presented in this chapter relates strongly to the first: Tamale's economic change was driven by ex-servicemen returning from WWI and migrants moving between the north and cocoa farms in the south. Note that the emphasis on economic change as distinct from demographic change is purposeful. Indeed, the third argument suggests that the economic reconfigurations induced by non-Dagomba, ex-servicemen and cocoa migrants was far more significant than their direct contribution to Tamale's demographic growth. The challenge in understanding change in Tamale during the period after WWI is separating economic and demographic change. That sources which relate to demographic change, such as census reports, are much more accessible than sources which relate to specific economic changes taking place within Tamale's local economic structures, can be misleading. In 1907, when Tamale was founded, in all likelihood Tamale's 1,435 residents were close to 100 per cent Dagomba. In 1960, when Tamale's population had grown to over 48,000, over 75 per cent were Dagombas. Despite the relatively small percentage change in Tamale's ethnic composition, a demographic analysis alone betrays a number of economic realities – notably, that local economic innovation was largely driven by a relatively small group of non-Dagombas in Tamale (primarily ex-servicemen and migrants to cocoa farms).

From revenue to labour

The pacification drives in the Northern Territories had put pressure on northern revenue, and in the years following 1906, the northern colonial administration looked for ways to boost northern revenue.² The cotton, shea-butter, and tobacco initiatives mentioned in the previous chapter were outcomes of the search for northern revenue. Within the colonial administration, the failure of each of these initiatives served to worsen the colonial perception of the north's prospects. Prior to 1908, a caravan tax on trade passing through the Northern Territories served as the

Historical Society of Ghana (New Series) (1998), 2; Nii-K. Plange, 'Underdevelopment in Northern Ghana: Natural causes or colonial capitalism?', *Review of African Political Economy*, 6 (1979), 4-14; I. Sutton, 'Colonial agricultural policy: The non-development of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 22: 4(1989)

² Grischow, *Shaping*, 47.

primary source of revenue for the Northern Territories. In 1908, however, with Accra concerned that on account of the caravan tax, traders were redirecting their trade through French and German territories, west and east of the Gold Coast, respectively, the caravan tax was abolished. The northern revenue fell from an average of £13,800 for the period 1904-08 to £2,525 for the period 1909-13.³ In 1910, Chief Commissioner Arthur Festing wrote that ‘one must be possessed of great optimism to be able to throw out hopes of much export trade from the Northern Territories’.⁴ In the years that followed, this sentiment was consolidated, especially within colonial circles in the south. It was a sentiment that more or less dominated northern colonial economic thinking for the remainder of the colonial period.

Gold mines, cocoa farms, and WWI

Before discussing the drivers of demographic and economic change in Tamale, a number of points regarding labour migration need to be clarified. There is a distinction to be made between labour migration to the gold mines and labour migration to the cocoa farms. The recruitment process for the former was centralised and highly coercive – while for the latter, to cocoa farms, it was significantly more voluntary: labourers came down to cocoa farms in ones and twos. To date, the majority of the work on labour migration during the colonial period has focussed on labour for the gold mines. But the numbers of men who went to the gold mines is far less than that which went to work on cocoa farms. This is in line with the argument presented by Inez Sutton. She notes:

... although officials emphasized the role of the north as a labour reserve, the drain of labour itself was itself not a significant factor in the northern economy as is sometimes implied. Rather, the vision of the north as a supplier of labour conditioned colonial investment, or lack of it, in northern agriculture, especially infrastructure, so that little was done to create alternatives to labour migration when cash was demanded.⁵

³ Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 45.

⁴ CCNT Author Festing, quoted in Grischow, *Shaping*, 47.

⁵ Sutton, I., ‘Colonial agricultural policy: The non-development of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast’, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 22: 4(1989), 638.

Sutton concludes that the north was not ‘drained of its surplus (here, in terms of labour) ... Northern agriculture changed little during the colonial period, and did not on the whole deteriorate’.⁶ Sutton of course is not disputing that a large number of men went southwards in search of remunerative opportunities, but that the affect of this migration on northern agriculture was not as destructive as previous authors have suggested. Furthermore, the northern colonial disillusionment with the labour initiative that emerged from about 1915 arose out of – not the supply labour itself – but the frustration of the implications for colonial capital of being identified as an economy that supplied labour. Certainly, when CCNT Watherston first agreed to supply labour to gold mines in 1905, it was not the intention that labour alone would define the role of the Northern Territories. Sutton’s observations are economic in focus. The recruitment of labour, however, had a number of important socio-political implications. Notably, recruiting labour for gold mines, because it was so coercive, as was the case with soldiers between 1914 and 1918, affected relationships between chiefs (especially ‘whiteman’s’ chiefs) and their subjects. Thus, to say that labour migration to the mines was not significant in terms of northern agriculture is not to suggest it had no impact at all.

Tamale and labour migration to gold mines

In August 1905, CCNT Watherston received a request from Tarkwa mine managers for labourers.⁷ Given that certain guarantees were met, the first request was met with enthusiasm: large parts of the Northern Territories, especially in the far north adjacent to the French and German borders, were densely populated and, if carefully controlled, northern men could head southwards without any sacrifice to the colonial aspirations of the Northern Territories, such as the development of agricultural surpluses for export. Watherston demanded from the mine managers that men from one village should work at the same mine, that they should be able to communicate

⁶ Sutton, I., ‘Colonial agricultural policy: The non-development of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast’, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 22: 4(1989), 667.

⁷ Thomas, R., ‘Forced labour in British West Africa: The case of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast 1906-1927’, *The Journal of African History*, 14: 1(1973), 80. (Secretary for Mines to Chief Commissioner, Northern Territories (CCNT), 15 Aug. 1905, quoted in CCNT to Secretary for Mines, Sept. 1905).

with their chiefs at all times, and that a political officer should escort them south as far as Kumasi. Watherston's careful approach was borne out of his observation that chiefs were reluctant to let men go to the mines, particularly during the farming season.⁸ Nevertheless, in September 1906 the DC for Navrongo and the DC for Wa were both instructed by the CCNT to send 30 specially selected men south to inspect the mines, in the hope that the prospect of regular work and wages would induce increasingly large numbers of men to seek employment in the mining districts. The men arrived in Tarkwa in December 1906 and were reported to have enjoyed their trip. The reaction by all parties to the visit was, in fact, generally positive. A year later in 1907, for the first time, 271 northern men from Bawku were recruited for the mines in Tarkwa.⁹ The mines, however, were not the only sector desirous of northern labour. Three to four hundred labourers were requested to work on an extension of the railway from Tarkwa to Prestea,¹⁰ and an additional three hundred men were required to construct the new Accra-Kumasi line.¹¹ Mine managers complained that the railway was poaching mine labour and felt obliged to ask for 1,000 labourers.¹² Despite increasing calls from the mines for more labour, by mid-1908 a definite labour shortage was emerging in the Gold Coast.

Between 1905 and 1909, the initiative to recruit labour for the mines was generally unsatisfactory in that it failed to remedy labour supply problems in the mines.¹³ Recruitment was complicated and politicised, often carried out through sceptical or self-interested chiefs. Furthermore, where labourers found themselves mistreated by mine managers or taken advantage of by southerners, they refused to go, or did so

⁸ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/3. (CCNT reply to Secretary for Mines, Nov. 1905).

⁹ Thomas, R., 'Forced labour in British West Africa: The case of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast 1906-1927', *The Journal of African History*, 14: 1(1973), 81.

¹⁰ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/5 (Acting CCNT to Consulting Engineer, F. Shelford, London, 12 Aug. 1908).

¹¹ PRO, Kew, CO 96/484. (Acting Governor Bryan to Lord Crewe, June 1909).

¹² PRAAD, Accra ADM 56/ 1/5 (CCNT to Commissioner North West Province, Apr. 1909).

¹³ As a result of the failure of 'the Northern Territories experiment', the colonial administration sought to employ the 'South African Solution', a far more sophisticated system of labour recruitment, through Native Recruitment Agencies, on behalf of the mines. The negative impact the South African Solution would have on labour supplies in other industries caused the Government of the Gold Coast to abandon the idea of the South African solution in 1912.

reluctantly.¹⁴ Many labourers were also reluctant to do underground work owing to the adverse working conditions.¹⁵ The increasing number of men who ‘deserted’ was evidence that northern men were not particularly inclined to work in the mines. In June 1909, 540 labour recruits left Gambaga, 200 of whom deserted at Tamale, and a further 82 disappeared on the way to Tarkwa.¹⁶ In 1910, the ‘Northern Territories Labour Experiment’ was abandoned.

A year later, however, the fortune of the gold mines, in terms of labour supply, began to change – albeit temporarily. Owing to worsening local conditions in the French Territories further north, where both conscription and taxation had been implemented, French ‘subjects’ began to cross the border in significant numbers.¹⁷ Crisp notes that voluntary labour from the Northern Territories also increased during this period, despite the reluctance of previous years. In 1917 migrant workers accounted for 47 per cent of the mining industry’s 19,000 workers and over 64 per cent of the 8,600 underground workers, an increase of over 20 per cent since 1911.¹⁸

Tamale and labour migration to cocoa farms

The boom in mining labour ended abruptly in 1918. In that year the Spanish influenza epidemic broke out. It is estimated to have killed 60,000 people in the Gold Coast, including 28,000 in the Northern Territories,¹⁹ although Tomkins put the number at 80,000-100,000.²⁰ Not only did this reduce the supply of able-bodied

¹⁴ Crisp, J., *The story of an African working class: Gold miners’ struggles, 1870-1980*. UK, 1984, 35-54.

¹⁵ Crisp, *Story*. See also R. Thomas, ‘Forced labour in British West Africa: The case of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast 1906-1927’. In: *The Journal of African History*, 14: 1(1973).

¹⁶ Crisp, *Story*, 36.

¹⁷ Crisp, *Story*, 41.

¹⁸ Crisp, *Story*, 42.

¹⁹ Thomas, *Forced Labour*, 90. Thomas notes: ‘This was conservatively estimated to have caused at least 28,000 deaths in the Northern Territories alone, and the havoc was increased by the fact that the period of infection was concentrated in the months between September 1918 and January 1919. See Annual Report Northern Territories, 1918 and David Scott, *Epidemic Disease in Ghana 1901-1960* (London, 1965), Chapter 7. Scott estimates that the epidemic killed 60,000 people out of an estimated Gold Coast population of 1.5 million.’

²⁰ Tomkins, S.M., ‘Colonial administration in British Africa during the influenza epidemic of 1918-19’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 28: 1(1994), 60-83.

men who potentially could migrate from the north, but many mine workers were also killed by the epidemic.²¹ In 1920, among other measures, the administration placed a guard on the route between Navrongo and Zuarungu and banned infected persons from travelling to Tamale.²² The end of the war also marked the end of conscription in French territory, and the stream of French labour, although not drying up, diminished. Furthermore, in 1919 the newly appointed Governor of the Gold Coast, Frederick Guggisberg, announced his 'Ten-Year Development Plan', in which he proposed several large infrastructural projects, including the deepwater harbour at Takoradi. Guggisberg estimated that in order to achieve his goals he would require the employment of a further 27,000 labourers, reducing the amount of labour available for the mines. But perhaps the biggest threat to mining labour during the 1920s came from the cocoa sector. In the 1920s the production of cocoa soared, inducing large numbers men to head south to work on cocoa farms. The cocoa sector was generally preferred as work was better paid and the conditions were far more favourable than those of the mines. During the 1920s, the mining companies were effectively squeezed out of the market for labour by cocoa and government projects. By the mid-1920s, the government had stopped sending men to the mines. In 1922, 3,079 labourers went to work in the gold mines, and in 1923, no labour at all was sent southwards. By the close of the 1920s, owing largely to labour shortages, '... many gold mines had either relapsed into a moribund condition or had disappeared altogether'.²³

Between 1921 and 1930 several attempts were made to increase the amount of labour going to mines. But such attempts became increasingly coercive. On receiving a request for mining labour, the DC in Bole wrote, '... if I am ordered to send men I can do so of course – but it will be forced labour'.²⁴ The problem of labourers 'deserting' increased during this period, another indication that labour was

²¹ Patterson, D., 'The influenza epidemic of 1918-19 in the Gold Coast,' *Journal of African History*, 24(1983), 488-91.

²² Grischow, J., 'Globalisation, development and disease in colonial Northern Ghana, 1906-1960', WOPAG - Working Papers on Ghana: Historical and Contemporary Studies Nr 9 (January 2006), 19.

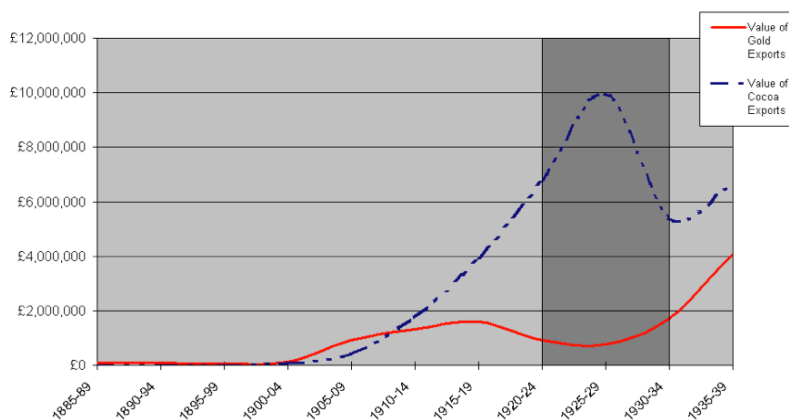
²³ Crisp, *Story*, 56.

²⁴ Crisp, *Story*, 47, (Acting DC Bole to PC Southern Province, 7 July, 1921).

not as voluntary as the government and the mines had hoped. In November 1922, 48 of the 90 recruits from Savelugu deserted, and in March 1923, 2,524 men were sent to the mines, of which 483 deserted prior to reaching the south.²⁵

During the period 1920-30, the cocoa industry emerged as the major destination of northern labour. In 1927-28, shortly before the onset of the Great Depression, the cocoa output of the Gold Coast peaked (Figure 3.1).

3.1. Total value of gold vs total value of cocoa, 1895-1939



Source: Colonialism and underdevelopment in Ghana, R.E. Howard

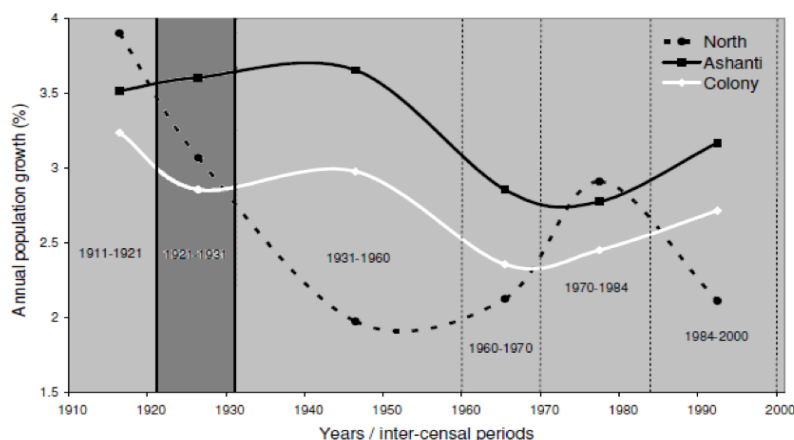
Figure 3.1 above presents the total value of cocoa output and the total value of gold output for the period 1895-1939. The darker-shaded area represents the period 1920-34. Although the production of gold fell during this period, the booming cocoa industry went well beyond simply attracting reluctant mining labour. Thus, despite the mines' problem in securing northern labour, during the 1920s the volume of casual-labour migration rose steadily. The volume of labour heading southwards corresponded with the increase in cocoa output. Although the available data is not particularly accurate in terms of casual-labour migration, the 1922-3 Northern Territories Annual Report records 16,816 men headed south.²⁶ That of 1924-5 states

²⁵ Crisp, *Story*, 48.

²⁶ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 5-1-62 (Annual Report for the Northern Territories 1922-23).

that 33,111 men went south in the year.²⁷ The impact on the demographic of the Northern Territories of out-migration has been illustrated by Kees Van der Geest. Van der Geest has employed the population growth rate over time of the Northern Territories, coupled with ‘out-migration’ statistics from 1931, to make some general observations about the demographic details of labour migration (Figure 3.2).²⁸

3.2. Annual Population Growth by Region, 1911-2000



Source: Van der Geest, K., ‘North-South Migration in Ghana: What Role for the Environment’, 2008. Inter-censal population growth (1911-2000). The figure is based on population figures from Engman (1983) and Ghana Statistical Service (2005). Census years: 1911, 1921, 1931, 1960, 1970, 1984 and 2000. Figures for 1948 are excluded.

The chart above presents the population growth rates over the period 1911-2000 of the three territories: The Colony, Ashanti, and the Northern Territories. The darker-shaded area represents the period 1921-31. The steep, negative gradient of this period indicates a sharp falling off of the Northern Territories’ growth rate, whilst

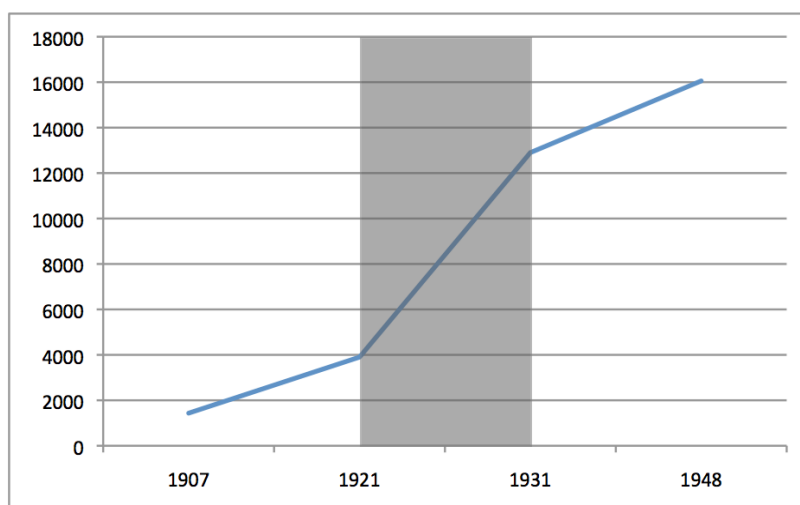
²⁷ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 5-1-63 (Annual Report for the Northern Territories 1924-25).

²⁸ Van der Geest, K., ‘North-South migration in Ghana: What role for the environment’, October, 2008. http://geest.socsci.uva.nl/publications/vd_geest_2008a.pdf (accessed 5 March 2009).

during the same period, the growth rate of both the Colony and Ashanti are relatively flat or decrease at a much lower rate than is the case for the Northern Territories. Van der Geest comments on the finding: ‘From the figure, one can read the trend in migration propensity in Northern Ghana. Declining population growth indicates increasing out-migration’.²⁹

It is logical that the period in which cocoa production boomed coincided with a period of intense out-migration from the Northern Territories. However, in stark contrast to this trend, the population of Tamale grew at an unprecedented rate during the 1920s. The chart below shows the population growth of Tamale for the period 1907-31 (Figure 3.3).

3.3. Tamale, Population growth rate, 1907-1948



Source: Based on data from census reports of the Gold Coast: 1911, 1921, 1931, and 1948

The darker-shaded area shows the period 1921-31. Tamale’s population more than tripled during this period from 3,901 to almost 13,000. If we compare the ‘darker-shaded’ areas (1920s) for the three graphs above, we may conclude that the greater the cocoa production, the greater the fall in population growth rate of the Northern

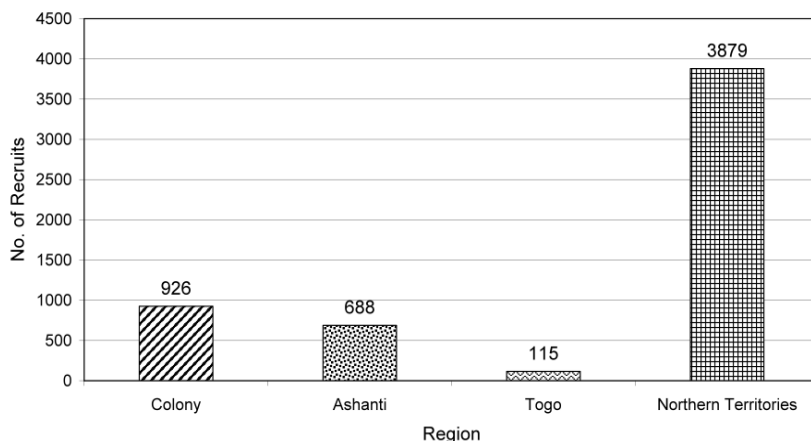
²⁹ Ibid.

Territories, and the more rapid the level of urbanisation in Tamale. In short, Tamale's demographic is a function of north-south mobility. The completion of the Great North Road monopolised the north-south trade route through Tamale. Thus, whereas before the completion of the Great North Road migrants may have taken any number of routes southwards and northwards, after 1920 migrants funnelled through Tamale to the south. However, whilst the introduction of motorised transportation explains a significant part of the increase in mobility, it does not explain all of it. As has been explained above, the cocoa boom during the 1920s is the first addition in explaining the increase in mobility. The second important addition is the conclusion of WWI and the discharge of soldiers. This is the subject of the following section.

The impact of ex-servicemen during the aftermath of WWI

In 1914, the Northern Territories became directly involved in the WWI when an offensive was launched to seize control of German Togoland. In the years that followed, as the war escalated, the Northern Territories would play an increasingly important role, largely in the supply of soldiers. According to Thomas, a total of 9,890 Gold Coast soldiers (differentiated here from carriers and drivers) were used during the war, of which 5,608 were recruited during the period 1914-18. Of the 5,608 men recruited during the period 1914-18, 3,879 or 69 per cent were recruited in the Northern Territories, an overwhelming regional majority when compared with the 17 per cent recruited in the Colony, 12 per cent in Ashanti and 2 per cent in Togo. The figure below reveals the number of men enlisted between 1914 and 1918 by region.

3.4. Number of recruits by region, 1914-1918.



Source: From Data in Thomas, 'Military Recruitment in the Gold Coast during the First World War', in *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, Vol. 15, Cahier 57, 1975, pp 57-83

In reality, the number of northern men employed in the Gold Coast Regiment during the war is likely to have been even higher. Governor Hugh Clifford stated in 1918 that '(t)he Northern Territories has rendered an even more important service to the Gold Coast by providing, by voluntary enlistment, *ninety per cent* of the rank and file of the Regiment which bears this Colony's name' (emphasis mine).³⁰ Many men recruited in Ashanti were known to be northerners who had migrated to Ashanti prior to the outbreak of the war in 1914. There were examples of some northerners who '... were paid by the Ashanti Chiefs sums ranging from £5 to £25 to induce them to join the Gold Coast Regiment in their (the Chiefs') names.'³¹

Roger Thomas has illustrated in an excellent article how soldiers were recruited in the Northern Territories. He argues that although forced recruitment is a phenomenon largely attributed to French colonial administrations, in the Northern Territories recruitment policies were also highly coercive. The high rates of

³⁰ PRO, Kew, CO 98/30, (Annual Report for the Northern Territories, 1918), 'Governor Clifford'.

³¹ PRO, Kew, CO 98/30, (Annual Report for the Northern Territories, 1918).

desertion amongst recruits en route to the training centre at Tamale is an indication that the 'voluntary' nature of British recruitment was perhaps not so 'voluntary' at all. In October 1915, the Acting Chief Commissioner wrote: 'it is difficult to understand why if recruits were desirous of enlisting so many should have bolted and I cannot help thinking that the terms of enlistment was (sic) not understood by the recruits.'³² Recruitment was carried out through the chiefs. The effect was in many places a breakdown of an already tenuous relationship between chiefs and their subjects. Thomas lists a number of examples, including in Bole and in Bongo.³³

Despite a military training base at Tamale, for Tamale the end of WWI was perhaps more significant than its commencement. In 1918, after the conclusion of the war, a relatively large number of soldiers were demobilised. It was noted in the Annual Report for 1918 that on

'... the 1st January 1918 there were 429 rank and file stationed at Tamale. 1,595 recruits were enlisted during the year ... The signing of the Armistice in November was followed by instructions to discharge all recruits who had enlisted for the period of the War ...'³⁴

Although no direct data is available for the resettlement patterns of ex-servicemen, the colonial administration in Tamale frequently referred to ex-servicemen. In the Annual Report of the Northern Territories for 1918, ex-servicemen were referred to as a '... large body of high-spirited young men ... who possessed more money than they knew what to do with'.³⁵ There are also other indications that suggest that soldiers came to settle in Tamale after being discharged and that they had a significant impact on Tamale's local economy.

The first indication is obtained through a comparison between the ethnic breakdown of enlisted men and the ethnic breakdown of non-Dagomba leaseholders. The

³² Acting CCNT Mountray-Read, quoted. In: Thomas, R., 'Military recruitment in the Gold Coast during the First World War', *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 15: 57(1975), 57-83.

³³ Thomas, R., 'Military recruitment in the Gold Coast during the First World War' *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 15: 57(1975), 62.

³⁴ PRO, Kew, CO 98/30, (Annual Report for the Northern Territories for the Year, 1918).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

recruitment of men for WWI in the Northern Territories was not simply random.³⁶ Significantly in this respect, the colonial administration relied on a distinction between 'martial' and 'non-martial' peoples. Whether a people were regarded as 'martial' or 'non-martial' was often based on little more than historical coincidence, but to colonial administrators these types of distinction were real and informed policy. Hausas, for instance, were considered to be a particularly 'martial' people. This sentiment was born first due to the fact that in the early 1860s in present-day Nigeria, runaway slaves were recruited into a local constabulary. Interestingly, not all of these men were Hausa, but Hausa was adopted as the lingua franca. Hausa troops become known as Glover's Forty Thieves and in 1872 were added to the garrison of the Gold Coast and employed successfully in the Anglo-Ashanti war in 1874, consolidating the imagination of the Hausa as being a particularly 'martial' race. In 1916, General J. C. Smuts, Commander in Chief in East Africa, for instance, requested 4,000 Hausa carriers to join the Nigerian Regiment. The Colonial Office responded to Smuts stating that the Hausa were a 'combative race' and could not be spared as carriers, which instead should come from 'non-combative' peoples such as the Mende and Temne of Sierra Leone.³⁷ A correspondent writing to the *London Times* described Hausas as 'all pure blooded negroes, and, as a rule ... fine, tall, and soldierly ... they walk with a good deal of swagger.'³⁸ The high incidence of Mossi men enlisted in the Northern Territories for the Gold Coast Regiment had its own incidental history. In 1898 Major Morris, an early pioneer of the 'Northern Hinterland', began recruiting Mossi into a cavalry corps known as the 'Moshie Horse'. These men were used in expeditions against the Tallensi and the Dagomba. Through these campaigns the Mossi gained a reputation as excellent fighters and horsemen. Major Morris wrote that '... without their (Mossi men) most valuable assistance these expeditions could not have been brought to so successful an

³⁶ A breakdown of men enlisted by ethnicity does not correspond at all with the relative population sizes of each ethnicity, suggesting that there were other, mitigating factors in the enlistment process.

³⁷ Killingray, D., 'Imagined martial communities: Recruiting for the military and police in colonial Ghana, 1860-1960'. In: Lentz, C. & P. Nugent, eds, *Ethnicity in Ghana: The limits of invention*. Macmillan, 2000, 121.

³⁸ Killingray, D., *Imagined Martial*, 121.

issue'.³⁹ Furthermore, Killingray notes that '... coastal and southern peoples were regarded by political and military officials as non-martial and often useless even for carrier work'.⁴⁰ Thomas explains the high incidence of acephalous groups amongst the enlisted men as reflecting the invented nature of the chiefs that came to possess power over them. According to Thomas, that the colonial administration had installed such chiefs meant that such chiefs were reliant on the colonial administration for their legitimacy. In turn, they were far more receptive to the coercive recruitment methods of the colonial administration than other chiefs. According to Thomas, 64 per cent of recruits came from what are today the upper regions of Ghana. 'This was also the area – apart from Mamprussi proper – where chiefs had been imposed by the British upon a basically “acephalous” population'.⁴¹

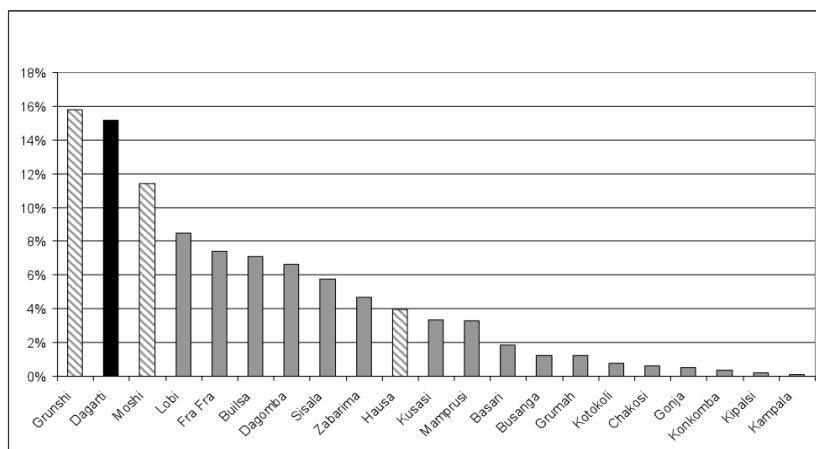
For the reasons given above, Mossi, Dagarti, and Grunshi made up the bulk of recruits (11, 16 and 15 per cent, respectively). A number of other acephalous peoples, such as the Fra Fra and the Sissalla, also contribute significantly (Figure 3.5). This is in contrast to the number of Dagomba recruits (only 7 per cent), which is rather low considering the large demographic of Dagbon and the fact that the training base was at Tamale.

³⁹ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/2 (Morris to Secretary of State, Dec. 21st, 1900).

⁴⁰ Killingray, D., 'Beast of burden: British West African carriers in the First World War'. In: *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 13: 1(1979), 90.

⁴¹ Thomas, R., 'Military recruitment in the Gold Coast during the First World War', *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 15: 57(1975), 72

3.5. Ethnic breakdown of northern men enlisted, 1914 -1918 (per cent of total)

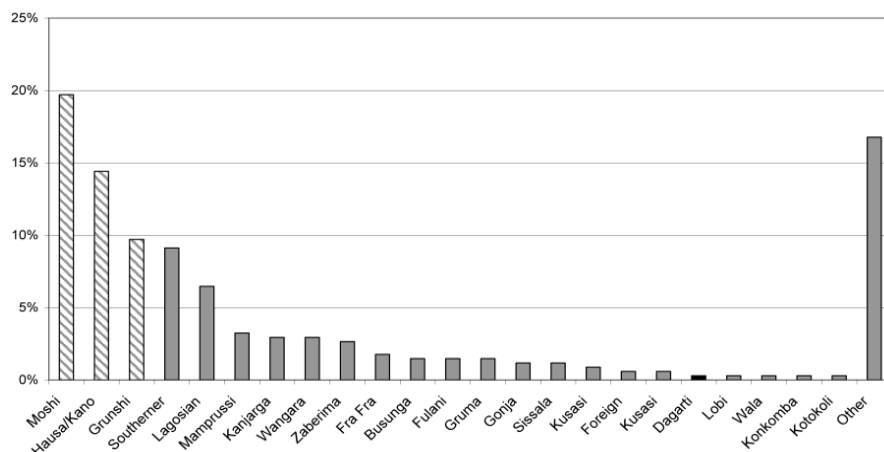


Source: Thomas, R., 'Military recruitment in the Gold Coast during the First World War'. In: *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, Vol. 15, Cahier 57 (1975).

Whilst the chart above shows the ethnic breakdown for men enlisted during the period of the 1914-18 war, the chart below shows the ethnic breakdown of non-Dagomba leaseholders in Tamale from 1935.⁴²

⁴² In 1935, for the first time, 'stranger' leaseholders in Tamale were broken down by ethnicity. Dagombas were not required to pay rent and were thus not included in the breakdown, despite being the majority. But the stranger living in Tamale may be more interesting than the Dagomba majority in terms of drivers of social and economic change. Furthermore, although this list was compiled for the year 1935, the slowdown of the economy as a result of the onset of the Great Depression and the corresponding slowdown of demographic growth suggest that little changed in terms of leaseholders between 1928 and 1935. As a result, an ethnic breakdown of leaseholders in 1935 provides at least some indication of who was migrating to Tamale during the 1920s.

3.6. Ethnic breakdown of non-Dagomba leaseholders, 1935-1944



Source: List of non-Dagomba leaseholders, Tamale Land Allocations, NRG 2/1/3

The coincidence of the two charts is noteworthy. The Moshi and the Grunshi are particularly prominent in both. The Grunshi and the Moshi rank first and third, respectively, in terms of the numbers of men who were recruited for military service during the period 1914-18, and rank second and first in terms of number of leaseholders in Tamale in the period 1935-9. In the 1920s, the Mossi Zongo (Ward A) was built in Tamale to house ex-servicemen, next to the transport yard. The Fra Fra and the Zabarima also feature fairly prominently in both charts. One notable exception is that of the Dagarti. Although the number of Dagarti recruited in 1914-18 is high, they accounted for only a very small component of Tamale's population in 1935. On the whole, however, there is enough evidence to suggest that ex-servicemen, after the conclusion of WWI, settled in Tamale. It is not yet clear, however, why they settled in Tamale, or why they did not settle in other large towns such as Kumasi or Accra.

The overwhelming majority of the northern men who served during the period 1914-18 had spent some time at the Tamale military training base. Tamale was thus not entirely new to them. Most also returned to the Tamale training base after the war and were discharged from there. Armed with money in the form of gratuities,

Tamale served increasingly as a much more natural place for (northern) ex-servicemen to settle than Kumasi or Accra. Furthermore, through the recruitment methods employed during the war, the relationship between chiefs and their subjects, especially in acephalous communities, had broken down. This created a hostility towards chiefs, exacerbated by the macho and anti-establishment attitudes of young men who had experienced a world largely unknown to their parents and grandparents, and later returned home. In the Annual Report for the Northern Territories for the year 1918, it was noted that:

... in some cases, the chiefs were insulted and informed that they were mere 'bush-men' – if not worse – and their authority flouted. Quarrels also arose between the returned recruits and their brothers who had elected to stay at home and who were roundly jeered at by the former ...⁴³

Economic versus demographic change

I noted earlier in the chapter that the direct ethnic sources of demographic and economic change in Tamale should be viewed differently. Irvine Gass, DC for Tamale in the early 1930s, noted:

The Dagomba in Tamale ... have behind them the power and authority of tradition and although constantly subject to the influence of change, tend to retain their traditional political systems and a social equilibrium – both factors which encourage conservatism.⁴⁴

Although Gass' observation was a political one, the same was true, if not more so, in an economic sense. That is not to say that the Dagomba had no economic function in Tamale at all. Many Dagombas worked as petty traders, catering to food demands of the new human traffic passing through Tamale. But much of the innovative economic change in Tamale, such as the uptake of motorised transportation, was driven by non-Dagombas.

There were a number of reasons for this development. Roger Thomas notes: '... the First World War provided (for the first time) an important ... introduction to a wider

⁴³ PRO, Kew, CO 98/30, (Annual Report for the Northern Territories for the Year, 1918).

⁴⁴ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/2/91 (Dagomba Native Administration) Report by Colonial Administrator, Irvine Gass, The traditional authority in urban administration in West Africa, 1931.

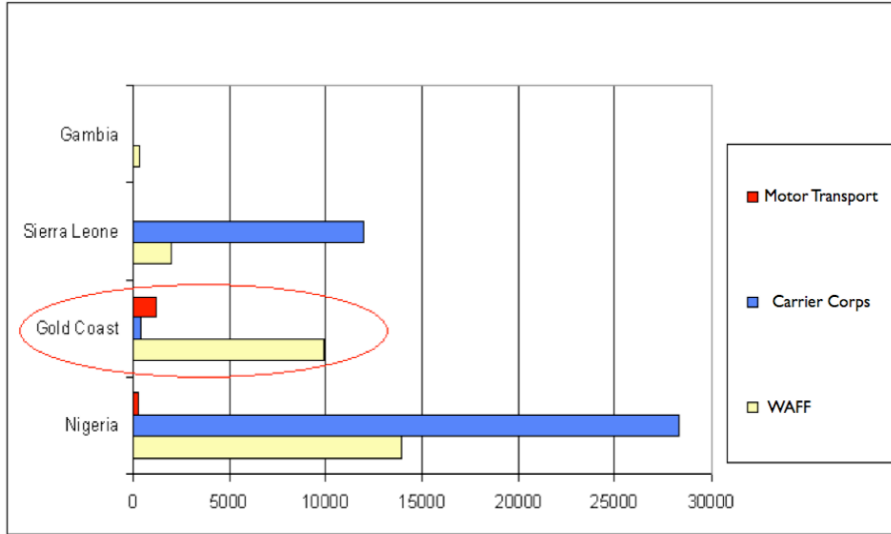
world for thousands of ordinary West Africans'.⁴⁵ Similarly, Killingray asserted that '... the war provided Africans with new technical skills that contributed to the economic development of the Gold Coast in the 1920s'.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the Gold Coast administration resisted, fairly successfully, demands from the East African campaign and the War Office to provide carriers and labour for Inland Water Transport Service in Mesopotamia. The Gold Coast administration, however, did agree to the recruitment of non-combatant motor transport drivers for the East Africa campaign. Between November 1916 and May 1918 about 760 Gold Coast men were recruited. The following table, taken from the work of Roger Thomas, breaks down the function of recruited men by West African country of origin. Nigeria clearly provided the majority of the rank and file of the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) and the Carrier Corps.⁴⁷ Sierra Leone provided, especially in terms of the total population, a significant number of men to the Carrier Corps. The Gold Coast, compared with other West African Anglophone territories, provided relatively few carriers, an average number of soldiers for the WAFF, and a large number of drivers.

⁴⁵ Thomas, R., 'Military recruitment in the Gold Coast during the First World War', *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, Vol. 15: 57(1975), 57.

⁴⁶ Killingray, 'Repercussions', 48.

⁴⁷ Ghana probably provided a larger portion of its population to both the WAFF and the Carrier Corps.

3.7. Men enlisted per colony by occupation



Source: Killingray, D. 'Repercussions of World War I' in the Gold Coast

As the majority of ex-servicemen and migrants to cocoa farms were non-Dagombas, Dagombas profited relatively less from the skill-sets acquired during military service. Once the Great North Road was completed in 1920, Tamale became a logical location for ex-servicemen to settle because they could employ their newly acquired skills there, especially in the form of driving, without being too far from home. Today in Tamale, driving is something particularly associated with Moshis.⁴⁸ This corresponds with the coincidence of having established pre-WWI trade networks⁴⁹ and serving as soldiers during WWI (and was supported also by the establishment of the Ward A in 1920, which became known as the Moshi Zongo after a large number of Moshi ex-servicemen settled there). Furthermore, 'strangers' – all non-Dagombas – were forced to pay economic rent for their leases in Tamale, while Dagombas had to pay only peppercorn rent, which amounted to a symbolic gesture, such as a fowl given to the chief if the chief demanded it.⁵⁰ The need to pay

⁴⁸ Thanks to Ntewusu Agnিয়ে for pointing this out to me.

⁴⁹ Schildkrout, E., *People of the Zongo: The transformation of ethnic identities in Ghana*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.

⁵⁰ This is discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

rent had the same impact as the introduction of taxation. ‘Strangers’ in Tamale were forced to find remunerative opportunities, while the Dagombas could rely on a relatively subsistence existence, even in Tamale.

Accumulation and individualism

The ex-servicemen and cocoa migrants driving Tamale’s local economy posed an ideological and policy dilemma for colonial administration more generally. Jeff Grischow notes that ‘(t)he colonial office did not want to produce agrarian capitalism through its West African development policy’.⁵¹ That Grischow refers to the agrarian context does not discount its relevance in the urban context. Wealth accumulation was seen as undermining efforts to ‘preserve’ African peasant structures and systems. This was a crucial component of the liberal development approach. In this sense, after 1920, Tamale really began to represent an antithesis to development in the Northern Territories more generally. More specifically, the gratuities and skill-sets of soldiers, coupled with the economy of motorised transportation as it was manifesting itself in Tamale, drove individual accumulation of wealth, seen very much as the antithesis of the African peasantry which the colonial administration was attempting to create. It was noted in the Annual Report for 1929-30:

Transport is increasing in efficiency and in cheapness, as competition of private firms becomes more acute ... there are always plenty of lorries ready to take on any available work ... One private individual ... is given most of the Government transport to do as he only charges one way, whereas it was usual to charge for the return of empty lorries ...⁵²

Migrants returning from the cocoa farms and also from the mines, just like ex-servicemen, possessed money. The individual accumulation of wealth in Tamale, made possible by an increasingly urban economy, served as yet another way in which Tamale contradicted the colonial development approach to the Northern Territories. Tamale’s socio-economic stratification ran counter to the colonial development policy of the Northern Territories that was (increasingly) to consolidate

⁵¹ Grischow, *Shaping*, 149.

⁵² PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/3/26 (Annual General Report for the Year 1929-1930).

African social structures. This sentiment was pervasive at least until the mid-1930s. Referring to Meyer Fortes, one colonial official of the Gold Coast echoed this sentiment in 1933. He wrote:

An anthropologist of unquestionable ability and some repute remarked to the writer how regrettable it was that the Talansi (sic) were becoming money conscious and generally criticised the efforts that are being made to develop trade in the Protectorate.⁵³

Conclusion

In Tamale's history, the 1920s was a period of profound demographic and economic change. This fact has been lost in narratives of labour migration and the Northern Territories railway debate. Tamale's early urban growth was a function primarily of migration to cocoa farms and the discharge of soldiers after WWI. In short, Tamale's demographic is a function of north-south mobility. From the completion of the Great North Road in 1920, as north-south mobility increased, so too did Tamale's population. This demographic mechanism was negatively correlated to the Northern Territories more generally, where increased mobility led to out-migration and a decline in population growth rates. Furthermore, this chapter has argued that ex-servicemen and cocoa migrants, both possessed of money, also drove significant economic changes in Tamale. The transportation sector itself especially presented new types of employment, with concomitant socio-political implications, perhaps most notably the rise of individualism through the accumulation of wealth.

⁵³ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/3/49 (Annual Report for the Northern Territories, 1933-1934).

4

From Dakpema to Gulkpe-Na: Introducing indirect rule in urban Tamale

Introduction

In the years before and after 1930, indirect rule was introduced across much of British Africa. On paper, this meant a new emphasis on creating native institutions, taking account of the historical dimensions of native affairs. The introduction of indirect rule set in motion a movement to resurrect ‘tradition’ across much of Anglophone Africa, with the intention of endowing chiefs with a broader range of political, judicial, and financial tools in order to regain public legitimacy. The first steps of indirect rule were to unearth traditional trajectories and re-establish them where such trajectories were felt to have been altered by, amongst other things, the European presence. In some instances, traditional trajectories were felt to have been only fractionally changed by the European arrival. In such cases, indirect rule aimed to consolidate chiefly authority. But in other instances, the traditional political system was felt to have been profoundly altered and thus needed to be structurally and fundamentally restored. In short, the system rested on the extension of chiefly

jurisdiction to include both a powerful native tribunal and a native treasury. The relationship between chiefs and their subjects was to be guided by these two institutions. In exchange, adherence to the traditional laws, recognition of the jurisdiction of the native tribunal, and the payment of taxation were motivated by the chief's power to allocate tracts of land. In other words, customary rights in land were seen as flowing downward. 'They were derived from political authority, rather than residing in the African peasantry'.⁵⁴

In line with what was happening across Africa more generally, in 1929 an explicit policy of indirect rule was introduced to the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, including Tamale. This chapter argues that both in Tamale and in the Northern Territories more generally, the introduction and implementation of indirect rule was rather a damp squib, albeit for somewhat different reasons. In many instances in the Northern Territories, the potency of both native tribunals and native treasuries was undermined by the colonial administration itself.

But the failure of indirect rule in Tamale, judged by the criteria of indirect rule itself, was spectacular. This chapter is concerned with the reasons for the spectacular failure of this indirect rule. The chapter argues that the failure of indirect rule in Tamale was the result both of an equally spectacular underestimation on the part of the colonial administration of how chiefly legitimacy functioned in an environment of rapid economic and demographic change, and of Tamale's increasingly urban, heterogeneous character.

Indirect rule and its 'imposition' in the Northern Territories

There were essentially two arguments that promoted the introduction of indirect rule in British Africa: A financial one, and an ideological one. The financial consideration was essentially a response to the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. The Depression limited the resources available for colonialism, and the policy of indirect rule, with its reliance on chiefs and native institutions, addressed the new restrictions without having to abandon colonialism altogether. As Christian Lund

⁵⁴ Chanock, M., 'Paradigms, policies and property: A review of the customary law of land tenure'. In: Mann, K. & R. Roberts, eds, *Law in colonial Africa*. James Curry, 1991, 64.

puts it, the recognition of chiefs as native authorities in turn meant that chiefs could act as ‘mediators between government and the population’.⁵⁵ This in turn reduced the expense of having a large administration. But although Sir Donald Cameron (the co-initiator of indirect rule along with Lugard) ‘acknowledged that the initial attraction of indirect rule was administrative and financial expediency, he stressed that it represented that “will of the people”, the “natural authority” of chiefs and the established customs of the people’.⁵⁶ Ideologically, indirect rule suggested that the maturity of African political systems could be achieved through the creation of local governments. Devolution would provide for chiefs an education in the proper administration of their jurisdictions. As Ladouceur notes, ‘it was hoped that chiefs would learn to exercise political authority within a simplified framework of modern local government’.⁵⁷ In contrast to direct rule, indirect rule thus meant the recognition not only of the institution of chieftaincy but also its historical dimension and the rules by which it operated. Native authorities would be presided over by a chief, one determined by custom. Each native authority would possess a native court and a native treasury. The major source of revenue was to be taxation. The native authority would also have the power to distribute land.

The introduction of indirect rule to the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast led to a conflict between northern and southern administrators, with severe consequences for the staffing of the northern colonial administration. Wholesale staff changes followed the conclusion of the ‘conflict’. Staniland calls this the ‘Battle of Watherston Road’.⁵⁸ The ‘Battle of Watherston Road’ was, according to Staniland, a short and bitter conflict between long-serving northern colonial officials (he calls them the ‘northern interest’) and mostly southern colonial administrators determined to introduce fully, indirect rule (he calls them the ‘Indirect Rule Team’). The

⁵⁵ Lund, C, *Local politics and the dynamics of property in Africa*. Cambridge, 2008.

⁵⁶ Spear, T., ‘Neo-traditionalism and the limits of invention in British Colonial Africa’, *Journal of African History*, 44: 1(2003), 8,

⁵⁷ Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 54.

⁵⁸ Watherston Road in Tamale is the road where the political apparatus is concentrated. Furthermore, the colonial administrators lived in bungalows along Watherston Road. At the western end of the road (the opposite end to the ‘Tamale Township’ side) was the CCNT’s offices and residence.

striking thing about the tension between the ‘northern interest’ and the ‘Indirect Rule Team’, however – in the transition from direct rule to indirect rule in the Northern Territories – is that while discussion about the introduction of indirect rule was heated and the personnel implications profound, the change in form of administration was only incremental. This apparent incongruence is understood only if the analysis of the transition to indirect rule and the discussions surrounding the transition take account of deteriorating north-south relations over a longer period. This subsection argues that the ‘southern’ imposition of indirect rule on the northern colonial administration and the disputes that arose within that discussion were the result of a deteriorating relationship between the northern colonial administration and ‘Accra’, rather than a fundamental and deal-breaking difference of opinion on the method of administration.

In his analysis of the ‘Battle of Watherston Road’, Martin Staniland distinguishes between those who supported the introduction of full indirect rule, the ‘Indirect Rule Team’, and those who did not – the ‘northern interest’. The disagreements about indirect rule itself were less polarised than the title ‘Battle of Watherston Road’ suggests. Indeed, the northern colonial administration had always been relatively reliant on chiefs as instruments of colonial rule, even before the formulation of indirect rule. In 1898, even before the formal annexation of the Northern Territories, Captain Northcott had written:

... the agency employed will be that of the native chiefs, and their power will, during good behaviour, be uniformly supported, except in matters of their relationship with neighbouring chiefs and of offences of a capital nature.⁵⁹

In 1906, Acting Governor Bryan echoed Northcott’s sentiments, when he wrote of the Northern Territories to the Secretary of State:

The policy of supporting and emphasising the position of the paramount native chiefs while, at the same time, making them realise their responsibility, appears to me to be the only practicable system of administering this country.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 41.

⁶⁰ PRO, Kew, CO98/14 (Letter by Acting Governor Bryan to Secretary of State, 13th July, 1906).

The formulation of indirect rule as ‘ruling through the chiefs’ was thus not something which northern colonial officials regarded as radical. During the ‘Battle of Watherston Road’, the DC for Eastern Dagomba, W. E. Gilbert, commented:

... indirect rule ... has been my policy ever since I have been stationed here, all civil cases and all orders concerning the Dagomba country have been sent to the Na, so that the proposed innovation under the heading Indirect Rule will change in detail only.⁶¹

That the perceived difference between direct and indirect was not as large as the argument surrounding the transition suggests does not mean that there were no differences at all between the two systems of administration. The manner in which ‘ruling through the chiefs’ had been carried out prior to the introduction of indirect rule is well illustrated by an entry in the diary of CCNT Armitage. On 15 May 1918 Armitage recalled a letter he had received from Captain Hobart regarding the succession of the Karaga ‘Stool’:⁶²

... This morning I endeavoured to hold an election but I regret to say that I was unsuccessful. All the Chiefs and Headmen stated that they wished the appointment to be made direct by the Government ... in the old days the claimants to a stool appeared before the big Chiefs, presided over by the King of Yendi, and their choice was final. Now-a-days it was their wish that the Chief Commissioner should appoint new Chiefs.

Hobart stressed in his letter to the CCNT that,

Addressing the Chiefs I told them that it had always been my policy to interfere as little as possible with native custom and that I learnt with some regret that they had been unable to bring forward a candidate for the Karaga Stool on their own initiative.⁶³

Under pressure from the chiefs to elect a new Karaga-Na, Hobart obliged, describing his decision-making procedure as follows:

⁶¹ Staniland, *Lions*, 80.

⁶² ‘Stool’, as it is used here, referred to the seat of chief. It was a term taken from the south, especially from Asante, where the golden stool of the Asantehene is sacred. In colonial terminology, ‘Stool’ was used as a synonym for chieftaincy in the south and also in the north. In the north, however, chiefs sit on ‘skins’ rather than stools. Later on in the colonial period, the term ‘skins’ generally replaced the term ‘stools’. Interestingly, the department for local lands in Tamale continues to refer to ‘Stool Lands’.

⁶³ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/252. (Tamale District Native Affairs), ‘Extract from the Informal Diary of the CCNT Armitage, 15th May, 1918’.

Of the seven candidates, one was immediately ruled out. I referred to Mahama, ex-Chief of Savelugu, who had once held one of the most important chieftainships in Dagomba but who lost his head and committed acts that brought about his de-stoolment in 1910, and subsequent imprisonment. He could never again expect to be appointed a chief under our administration ... I considered Zibbrim, Chief of Pisigu, and eldest son of the late Chief, to be the best man to place on the stool of Karaga. I had watched him for some years and had found him to be an energetic and just man, and one whose loyalty to the Government was beyond dispute. In electing Zibbrim chief of Karaga, I was not only paying a tribute to his father's memory, but was giving to the people a man who would, I was convinced, rule over them wisely and well.⁶⁴

Finally, Hobart wrote:

It was extremely gratifying to the P.C. and myself to witness the unanimity with which the chiefs accepted my decision ... not a single note of protest against it was struck and the chiefs returned to Tamale on the best possible terms with each other.⁶⁵

But northern colonial administrators struggled to see how the attitudes expressed in this type of administration differed from those set out by indirect rule. The DC for Tamale, Rutherford, stated that 'indirect rule is an established fact and has been so for years ...'⁶⁶

The key issue was the extent of chiefly authority and on this point there were certainly a number of disagreements. The northern administrators argued for a limited amount authority with which chiefs would be endowed. Members of the 'northern interest' cited a lack of education and other 'northern conditions', of which they felt 'Accra' was not aware, as the reasons for curtailing the power of chiefs. But these were not more than technicalities, albeit significant ones, and can hardly explain the obstinacies displayed by northern colonial administrators. On 16 December 1929, Governor Thomas announced categorically that 'indirect' rule is the policy of the government',⁶⁷ bringing to an end the 'Battle of Watherston Road'.

⁶⁴ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/252. (Tamale District Native Affairs), 'Extract from the informal diary of the CCNT Armitage, 15th May, 1918'.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Staniland, *Lions*, 80.

⁶⁷ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/238, (Memorandum of Native Administration in the Northern Territories by Acting Chief Commissioner).

Wholesale changes of northern colonial staff followed, as the northern interest was replaced by the 'Indirect Rule Team'.

There is important sub-text in the discussions about the introduction of indirect rule in the Northern Territories. The 'northern interest' comprised men who had served long terms as northern officials and, against the backdrop of a desire amongst the northern colonial administrators to create a northern *raison d'être* beyond the supply of labour, had developed a degree of hostility towards the 'southern administration', or 'Accra', on account of a series of setbacks. The negative attitude towards the north more generally has been dealt with in previous chapters. The sentiment contained in the advice in 1898 of Governor Hodgson – 'I would not at present spend upon the Northern Territories ... a single penny more than is absolutely necessary'⁶⁸ – had not significantly changed in the thirty years since the annexation of the Northern Territories in 1900. The abolition of the caravan tax in 1908, stripping the Northern Territories of the lion's share of its revenue, had served as a reminder of the general attitude. In 1910 colonial administrators in Tamale submitted a request for funds from the colonial treasury for the building of a clubhouse in Tamale. To the great dissatisfaction of the northern colonial administration, the funds were not granted, a refusal regarded by a number of colonial administrators not only as indicative of the negative perception by southern administrators of the northern contribution to larger colonial aspirations, but also as an underestimation of the brutal conditions under which northern administrators were forced to work. The increasingly tiresome debate about the Northern Territories railway was running alongside the discussion about the introduction of indirect rule. It was, in fact, in the same year that the 'Battle of Watherston Road' was concluded that the railway project was indefinitely postponed. Such setbacks had soured the northern view of 'Accra'. One official from within the 'Indirect Rule Team' noted retrospectively that there was

⁶⁸ Eades, J.S., *Strangers and traders: Yoruba migrants, markets and the State in Northern Ghana*. Edinburgh University Press, UK, 1993, 29.

... a definite attitude of hostility to the Coast emanating from the N.T.s headquarters. Officers were allowed to speak and write openly of 'Accra' (the name by which all authority was known) in a most contemptuous way.⁶⁹

The 'Accra' view of the northern administration was at least contemptuous. A dim view was taken of the feeling that the 'northern interest' had become, as a group, isolated from the central administration in Accra. Governor Shenton Thomas, who replaced Guggisberg in 1926, wrote:

... so far as I can ascertain, this Government is completely in the dark as regards the native Administration policy in the Northern Territories; there seems to be no clear-cut statement of policy; we do not know what is being done or what our administration is intended to bring forth.⁷⁰

Finally, the CCNT after 1930, referring to the few northern administrators who were not re-posted after the introduction of indirect rule, noted that 'the use of this administration as a dump for unsuccessful officers is not obsolete'.⁷¹

By the time the 'Battle of Watherston Road' took place over the transition from direct to indirect rule, hostilities between northern and southern administrators had soured to such an extent that it is difficult to separate exiting frustrations from the discussion about indirect rule itself. Put differently, the 'Battle of Watherston Road' was as much about existing frustrations as it was about the introduction of indirect rule. Furthermore, the manner in which indirect rule would be implemented rendered the heated nature of the 'Battle of Watherston Road', and the consequences thereof, even more nonsensical. Most of criteria outlined by Lugard's manifesto were never realised in the Northern Territories, despite the ambitious intentions. This was especially true of Tamale.

Duncan-Johnstone & Blair

Changes in the staffing and character of the Northern Territories colonial administration followed the 'Battle of Watherston Road'. In 1929 members of the 'Indirect Rule Team' such as Duncan-Johnstone and Blair replaced long-serving members of the Northern Territories' administration such as Major Walker-Leigh,

⁶⁹ Staniland, *Lions*, 78.

⁷⁰ Staniland, *Lions*, 80.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* 78.

who was CCNT between 1924 and 1929, but had first served in the north in 1907.⁷² Before turning to Tamale itself, a brief discussion on prominent personalities amongst those who took over the northern colonial administration is illustrative of the colonial context in the Northern Territories after the introduction of indirect rule. Two men were particularly influential: Duncan-Johnstone and Blair.

The members of the 'Indirect Rule Team' were, generally speaking, more integrated into the colonial centre at Accra. They comprised men such as A. C. Duncan-Johnstone, who became Provincial Commissioner (PC) for the Southern Province after the introduction of indirect rule, and Blair, who became DC for Eastern Dagomba after 1930. The approach to colonial administration changed rather radically with the change of personal. Administrators such as Duncan-Johnston and Blair immersed themselves in understanding 'native affairs'. Blair gained the nickname 'Dagbon-bia', which translates from Dagbani as 'son of Dagbon'. He spoke Dagbani and was revered for spending days in the field, investigating Dagbon history and tradition. Duncan-Johnstone's career reads as an ode to the British Empire, and his approach and attitude towards administration also reads as an ode to indirect rule, both its ideological underpinnings and its financial necessity.

Duncan-Johnston began his career serving with the British Red Cross expedition in Turkey in 1912. In 1913 he first arrived in the Gold Coast, assuming the duties in the Southern Province, Ashanti. A year later in 1914, he became the DC for Sunyani. He served with the British forces in Togoland during WWI and in 1917 joined the administration of the Northern Territories, serving as DC for Lawra. In 1922 he was transferred to Akim, again in the Ashanti region, and spent a year in the Seychelles arranging the repatriation of the exiled Asantehene, Prempeh. In 1925, the year in which he became engaged to a niece of Lady Guggisberg, wife of Governor Guggisberg, he served as Acting Chief Commissioner of Ashanti. Thora Williamson notes:

⁷² *Ibid.* 48.

The career and reputation of Duncan-Johnstone are said to have advanced considerably during the 1920s when he became engaged to a niece of Lady Guggisberg, wife of Governor Guggisberg.⁷³

In 1928 he returned to the Northern Territories, serving as PC, and in 1936 he served as acting CCNT. On a day in August 1930, he noted in his diary that he spent 'the afternoon and evening on the Arabic manuscript I got from Kpandai. From the dates given the chronicle begins about 1693 A.D. or the 1093 ... It is full of information'.⁷⁴ He felt strongly that administrators had a duty to be very close to their subjects, in order to improve the quality of colonial administration. He wrote that '(t)he first thing I did here was to strafe the District Commissioners for not travelling ...'.⁷⁵ He also wrote: 'It is of paramount importance that they (Political Officers) should be in touch with their Chiefs and people and should know every inch of their Districts and the characteristics of their villages'.⁷⁶ He deplored the 'tendency to discourage' what he called the 'personal elements of government'.⁷⁷ He noted in his diary:

Reading a delightful book entitled "The India We Served" by Sir Walter Lawrence. He remarks that in British India there is now very little personal touch between the people and the British members of the administration ... increasing office work, decreasing opportunities for going on tour, the use of motor cars which rarely leave the high road and the disuse of languages of the people, all combined, are destructive of that touch of nature which leavened and lightened the heavy regularity of our rule. We are following a somewhat similar road out here, but can we read the writing on the wall?⁷⁸

In a similar vein, he wrote in his diary in August 1930:

There is a good article in *Elders Review* for July by a former Nigerian resident, Hastings, entitled 'Nigeria Revisited'. He says, head transport is slow and expensive and economically unsound and is rightly superseded. But it had one

⁷³ Williamson T. & T. Kirk-Greene, *Gold Coast diaries: Chronicles of political officers in West Africa, 1900-1919*. London, 2000, 389. Thora Williamson notes: 'The career and reputation of Duncan-Johnstone are said to have advanced considerably during the 1920s when he became engaged to a niece of Lady Guggisberg, wife of Governor Guggisberg.'

⁷⁴ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/4/53. (Informal Diary of Duncan-Johnstone, Commissioner, Southern Province), 'June, 1930'.

⁷⁵ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/4/53. (Informal Diary of Duncan-Johnstone, Commissioner, Southern Province, June, 1930).

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

value which was, and still is incalculable and its disuse will be disadvantageous to all administrative officers. They used to trek their twenty miles a day along bush roads, halting continually to talk with hamlet headmen and even the folk who passed them on the track. They would interview all sorts and conditions of men while breakfasting by the road side, make notes, notice small things in every mile and above all they were moving at the peoples own pace living in an atmosphere of calm unhaste. Today, they flash past villages and wayfarers on motor cycle ... sometimes too impatient to reach camp a hundred miles ahead. They have become strangers to the people they are supposed to know. The old liaison between them is broken; the old confidence weakened. A night's camping – six or seven of them in a hundred miles – did very much to familiarise both with each other. It may be true that far more ground is covered and far more often, but nowadays a village gets no more than a whiff of petrol to remind it that the District Officer had come and gone.⁷⁹

Duncan-Johnstone was not only intensely engaged with ideological and moral aspects of indirect rule, he was also intensely engaged with the financial restrictions which had been ushered in with indirect rule. He boasted: 'On my last two trips I have travelled without a lorry cramming everything into the car in order to save money, uncomfortable but necessary as we are so hard up',⁸⁰ and juxtaposed this with Rutherford, DC for Tamale, a member of the 'northern interest'. In a June entry, he wrote of Rutherford:

'The District Commissioner, Tamale (Rutherford), is going on tour today for three days, the first time he has left the station for a long time, in fact since the beginning of April ... I noticed a lorry outside his house this morning ... as the District Commissioner is only to be away for four days I cannot see why he wants a lorry ...'⁸¹

He was especially hard on Rutherford, writing, 'I have to push the District Commissioner continually to do something. The trouble is he is lacking in ability and initiative ...'⁸² Rutherford was one of the few surviving members of the 'northern interest', having first served in the north in 1924, the same year that Walker-Leigh became CCNT. But Rutherford was certainly not the only one. Mr. Plange, a new administrator who was on his way to his new post at Navrongo, could

⁷⁹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/4/53. (Informal fiary of Duncan-Johnstone, Commissioner, Southern Province, August, 1930).

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

not complete the journey as a result of his lorry getting stuck. Duncan-Johnstone wrote disapprovingly in his diary:

Mr Plange presented himself having given up his attempt to get to Navaro. Said the lorry could not get along after leaving Wulugu. Apparently he made no attempt to get carriers to take him on to Pwalugu but came straight back on the lorry ... If you want something done in Tamale ... you have to do it yourself.⁸³

In contrast, Duncan-Johnstone noted of Blair, then DC for Yendi:

I have a high opinion of Blair, an earnest, keen, highly principled young man. When he has gained a little more experience he should grow into a very fine type of Political Officer.⁸⁴

Blair particularly impressed his seniors with the energy with which he engaged with his 'subjects', their history, and the local customs. Duncan-Johnstone noted enthusiastically in his diary: 'He (Blair) tells me that he has spent three days at Gushiegu getting the drummers to drum out the old Dagomba history'.⁸⁵ Duncan-Johnstone boasted regularly about his own fluency in Hausa, while Blair was fluent in Dagomba. Together, Blair and Johnstone embodied the new colonial administrator. They were men who prided themselves on getting their hands dirty and knowing their 'subjects'. And certainly, they were indirect-rule men, through and through.

The new northern administration, embodied by men such as Duncan-Johnstone and Blair, was thus fiercely dedicated to indirect rule and its introduction and implementation. Indirect rule was to be based on the Nigerian system.⁸⁶ Furthermore, the historical basis for the introduction of indirect rule was based on the fieldwork carried out by Rattray for the purposes of writing *Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*.⁸⁷ In a car, on the road between Yendi and Tamale, the Governor of the Gold Coast asked Duncan-Johnstone, the Commissioner for the Southern Province

⁸³ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/4/53. (Informal diary of Duncan-Johnstone, Commissioner, Southern Province, June, 1930).

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 53.

⁸⁷ Rattray, R.S., *Tribes of Ashanti hinterland*, Volume II. Clarendon Press, 1932.

of the Northern Territories after the introduction of indirect rule, if he had ever visited Nigeria:

... to which I replied in the negative and I thought we ought to see the Northern Nigeria Courts, Treasury and native Authority Ordinances before framing our own ... and he agreed and said the Nigerian were very good and thorough.⁸⁸

But the dedication of Duncan-Johnstone and Blair to understanding native customs did not equate directly to a significant devolution of power to chiefs, as indirect rule demanded. There were without question a number of changes in the new approach to colonial administration. Clear attempts were made to identify the traditional domain, and every attempt was made not to intervene in matters which were regarded as being within that domain. In one instance, a young woman was seen 'hobbling through Tamale with her feet in leg irons'.⁸⁹ After an enquiry, it turned out that the woman was a young wife of the Savelugu Chief (Yo Na). She had eloped from Savelugu to the house of a Steward Boy in Tamale. The Steward Boy, fearing punishment for the seduction of the wife of a chief,⁹⁰ had sent her back to Savelugu, where the Yo Na, displeased with her actions, beat her and fettered her legs. At midnight she had once again escaped from the Yo Na's compound and returned to Tamale, this time in leg irons. Duncan-Johnstone responded to the incident by noting that 'although to our ideas it is repugnant to us to see a woman in leg irons, it is not so to the native, and according to Native Custom the Chief of Savelugu was acting within his rights'.⁹¹ He went on to state that 'to have taken action against Savelugu would have served no good purpose ... it would not have been in accordance with the Policy of Ruling Indirectly through the Chiefs'.⁹² A week previously, on the arrival of the Governor in Tamale, Duncan-Johnstone had noted

⁸⁸ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/4/53. (Informal Diary of Duncan-Johnstone, Commissioner, Southern Province) July, 1930.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ There were strict punishments handed out for those of guilty of seducing the wife of a chief. This too was part of the indirect rule paradigm: the seduction of the wife of a chief undermined the chief's authority. As a result, heavy fines were imposed on those who seduced the wife of a chief.

⁹¹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/4/53. (Informal diary of Duncan-Johnstone, Commissioner, Southern Province, June, 1930).

⁹² *Ibid.*

in his diary of the chief in question that '(t)he Na of Savelugu marred the proceedings by turning up very drunk and being violently sick before His Excellency's arrival.'⁹³ The Yo Na was a regular source of disruption. A month previously, Duncan-Johnstone, on hearing that the Yo Na had contracted Guinea Worm in his Stomach and one in each thigh, remarked that he could not 'understand how he got them as he lives on Peto'⁹⁴ and sometimes, I suspect, something stronger'.⁹⁵ Despite the ill-repute of the chief, he was still allowed to act, unhindered, within the domain which the colonial administration deemed to be 'customary'.

But such inactions were superficial, especially in terms of what indirect rule was essentially about, namely native institutions – most prominently, the native treasury and native courts. Native institutions, with some kind of legitimated authority, were to form the bedrock of the new policy, satisfying both ideological and financial requirements. In practice in the Northern Territories, however, such native institutions never attained the kind of autonomy which indirect rule propagated, despite the enthusiasm with which they were pursued. The native treasury was one source of chiefly authority. But the potential revenue streams of the Dagomba native treasury were limited: monies came from court fees, fines, and cattle kraals and were by and large meagre. As a result, the Dagomba native treasury in Yendi (the monies available to the Ya Na) never possessed the funds to carry out any real 'development' projects or command significant authority (the Ya Na got authority from other sources). In 1933 it had only £593. Taxation was introduced only in 1936, and even then, there were serious problems with revenue collection. Furthermore, the colonial administration retained all manner of rights over chiefs, which worked to de-concentrate traditional authority, specifically in terms of the judicial powers of chiefs. The Native Tribunals Ordinance of 1932, which was supposed to empower chiefs in judicial terms, was laden with restrictions. It

⁹³ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/4/53. (Informal diary of Duncan-Johnstone, Commissioner, Southern Province, June, 1930).

⁹⁴ Peto is a locally brewed beer, derived from Guinea corn.

⁹⁵ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/4/53. (Informal diary of Duncan-Johnstone, Commissioner, Southern Province, June, 1930).

empowered the colonial administration to establish native tribunals as it saw fit, and colonial administrators had the right of access to all courts and their records. The DC could also order the transfer of a case from the native court to his own. Innez Sutton notes that 'by the 1930s, the British felt that more effective supervision of traditional tribunals was necessary',⁹⁶ largely on account of local challenges to chiefs' courts. She notes, 'gradually the traditional courts came more closely under government control ... a great deal of litigation was carried on through the British court system in the Gold Coast, more so than in East Africa'.⁹⁷ Sutton states further that 'it was difficult to fit new urban centres and new social and economic classes into the structure of indirect rule; in this situation, more direct British rule, and the English court system had to be applied'.⁹⁸ In this sense, the compromise with the authority of Tamale's Gulkpe-Na was heightened, compared with other northern native authorities.

Despite the enthusiasm to introduce indirect rule by the administrators who were posted to the north after 1930, indirect rule did not, in many instances, really empower chiefs. There were a number of changes, some more significant than others. But the changes to the institution of chieftaincy were often cosmetic rather than structural. Essentially, indirect rule had the same motivation as direct rule: A response to the 'native question' – how a tiny minority can effectively maintain control over an oppressed mass.⁹⁹ And it functioned in much the same way: At its apex a colonial administration concerned with maintaining control.

Indirect rule in Tamale: From Dakpema to Gulkpe-Na

An inherent tension within indirect rule was that between chiefly control over land and control over people, and if and how such powers should be separated. In many rural settings this nuanced distinction was often unproblematic. But in the urban setting, where the question of control over land and people was often difficult to

⁹⁶ Sutton, 'Law', 46.

⁹⁷ Sutton, 'Law', 46.

⁹⁸ Sutton, 'Law', 46.

⁹⁹ Mamdani, M., *Citizen and subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of colonialism*. Princeton, 1996, 4.

separate, indirect rule was especially problematic. That urban centres did not easily fit into the indirect-rule framework did not mean that Tamale was exempt from its application. On the contrary, the introduction of indirect rule in Tamale served as a type of test case for colonial administrators.

It was noted in Chapter 2 that Tamale's 'traditional' political structures had been confused by the partition of Dagbon into British and German Territories in 1902. British chiefs were ordered to abstain from any form of contact with the Ya Na at Yendi and faced punishments if such orders were breached. The argument presented by those who supported the Gulkpe-Na's return to Tamale was that the Gulkpe-Na, chief of the Gulkpeagu subdivision, in which Tamale is located, was in Yendi at the time of the partition and was ordered to remain there.¹⁰⁰ As a result, between 1907, when the administrative headquarters were moved to Tamale, and 1932, when the Gulkpe-Na was (re)instated as the highest chief in Tamale, the Dakpema consolidated his position as the apex of 'traditional' authority in Tamale.

Staniland states that the colonial administration 'discovered the falsity of the Dakpema's claims to paramountcy in the district at the end of the twenties, during investigations connected with the establishment of indirect rule'.¹⁰¹ Although this version of facts makes for a logical correspondence between the introduction of indirect rule and the change from Dakpiema to Gulkpe-Na, the return of the Gulkpe-Na to Tamale began in 1920, when the British colonial administration first sought contact with the Ya Na at Yendi, after it became increasingly likely that Germany was going to lose its colonial possessions, and talk of a united Dagbon began to surface. The Ya Na lodged a complaint with the colonial administration regarding the position of the Dakpema in 1920, a number of years prior to the introduction of indirect rule. According to the Annual Report of the Northern Territories for the years 1921-2:

The status of the Chief of Tamale was challenged by the Head Chief of the Dagombas who lives at Yendi. It appeared on investigation that during the

¹⁰⁰ Staniland, *Lions*, 62.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

separation of the Dagbombas into English and German he had been given powers in excess of those allowed him by old custom.¹⁰²

The report stated that ‘an agreement was come to by which he (the Dakpiema) was allowed to retain his powers until his death, when his successor would revert to his proper position’.¹⁰³ The Commissioner for the Southern Province wrote a letter to the DC for Yendi on 15 April 1922, explaining:

The Chiefs of Tamale, Choggu and Kanvilli are proceeding to Yendi for the Paramount Chief to explain to them personally the result of the palaver ... Tamale is to remain in its present position during his (the Dakpiema) lifetime and that afterwards the ancient custom of placing the villages under Gupero (sic) will be revived.¹⁰⁴

He stated that with immediate effect, ‘any village stools becoming vacant from now on will be appointed by the Gupero (sic)’.¹⁰⁵ The Ya Na’s version of Tamale’s political history (corroborated by Blair) did not go uncontested. A. H. Chandler, then Superintendent for Education, challenged the Gulkpe-Na’s legitimacy. According to his source,¹⁰⁶ within Dagomba tradition, the origins of the Dakpema were as follows:

... a very long time ago a Na of Yendi came to Tamale to fight a rebellion of some of the adjacent village, and after a struggle he conquered them during this civil war Tamale was actually loyal to Yendi ... The day after the decisive action the Na was taken ill of a head-ache. He retired to the shade of a tree and there the pain became so acute that he decided to leave this earth ... he rose and shook himself whereupon the earth opened and swallowed him. Consequently the earth of Tamale still contains his spirit. To guard this the next Na had a house built on the spot and entrusted Gupiena (sic) with its care. The latter lives close to Yendi so he had to make a local representative. This he did and called him the Dakpiema. Every year the Na still sends a present of a cow to the Dakpiema.¹⁰⁷

Chandler’s informant was J.S. Kaleem, a teacher from Tamale. Blair noted of Chandler’s memorandum in a private letter to Commissioner for the Southern

¹⁰² PRAAD, Accra, ADM 5/1/62, (Annual Report NT 1922-23).

¹⁰³ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 5/1/62, (Annual Report NT 1922-23).

¹⁰⁴ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56-1-252, (Tamale District Native Affairs). ‘C.S.P. letter to DC Yendi, 15th April, 1922’.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Chandler’s source was J.S. Kaleem, a teacher. As it turned out, he was in line to succeed the Dakpiema. He later became a prominent member of the CPP branch in Tamale.

¹⁰⁷ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/2/28 (Dagomba Native Affairs), ‘Memorandum submitted by Chandler, 1930’

Province, Duncan-Johnstone, that 'it must be remembered that Chandler's informant was Mr Kaleem, School Teacher, and possible heir to the present Dakpema'.¹⁰⁸ Blair rejected Chandler's version of the origins of the Dakpiema. According to Blair, the line of the Dakpiema was started by Dabila, who was an elder of the chief of Kumbungu (Kumbungu-Na), a village some 21 kilometres north-east of Tamale. According to Blair, Dabila was driven from Kumbungu because he was charged with murder and fled to Tamale. Once in Tamale, he married into Tamale's local elite. His first son was then placed in charge of the market.¹⁰⁹ In a thorough response to Chandler's memorandum, Blair stated that 'the Dakpema was a petty elder, not an elder of Dagbon at all'.¹¹⁰ He went on to speculate that the Dakpema 'would not stand for a month if we left the country'.¹¹¹ The Dakpema was, according to Blair, 'an excellent example of a "white-man's chief"'.¹¹² In yet more correspondence on the matter, Blair noted, perhaps rather dramatically, that '(t)he loss of the Gulkpe-Na's regime around Tamale has caused much discontent against our rule'.¹¹³ The standing of Blair within the colonial administration rendered the discussion rather a no-contest.

The Dakpema Nsung-Na's successor, Lag'mbu, himself objected strongly to the Gulkpe-Na's position in Tamale. He wrote to the District Commissioner that 'it has never occurred that the chief of Yendi has interfered with the business of Gukpeogu,

¹⁰⁸ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/2/28, (Dagomba Native Affairs), 'Letter by Commissioner for Western Dagomba, H.A. Blair to Duncan-Johnstone'.

¹⁰⁹ In an interview with the current secretary of the Gulkpe-Na in 2008 (there is no Gulkpe-Na at present on account of the Yendi crisis) the secretary offered a variation of this account. He informed me that the said Dabila indeed did come to Tamale from Kumbungu. On arrival in Tamale, he proceeded to have an illegitimate affair with the mentally handicapped daughter of the Bugulana. In the course of the affair, the daughter of the Bugulana fell pregnant, and to prevent shame, the Bugulana consented to a marriage between Dabila and his daughter. As a result, he was forced to appoint Dabila to the head of the market, the Dakpema.

¹¹⁰ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/2/28, (Dagomba Native Affairs), 'Blair's response to Rev Chandler'

¹¹¹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/2/28, (Dagomba Native Affairs), 'Note by District Commissioner for Western Dagomba Blair, 'Da-Kpema of Tamale'.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/2/28, (Dagomba Native Affairs), 'Chieftainship (Nam) and the Dagomba Constitution compiled primarily by District Commissioner for Western Dagomba, H.A Blair'.

the Tamale area. This area has never been under the rule of any prince of Yendi'.¹¹⁴ The Dakpema was forced by the colonial administration to retract his assertion and apologise. He denied writing the letter and blamed his court clerk, J.S. Kaleem, a recent graduate of Achimota, the same Kaleem who had informed Chandler. Although the administration accepted the Dakpema's apology, J.S. Kaleem was sent into exile as a punishment, to teach at a school in Yendi.¹¹⁵

The return of the Gulkpe-Na was further complicated by a series of taboos. There was, for instance, a taboo on the Gulkpe-Na's coming west more than three times. The last holder was said to have died from the effects of a fourth visit to Tamale.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, the Gulkpe-Na was reportedly 'very frightened of the local fetishes and taboos, to take over the reigns of government from the Dakpiema and begin to seriously organise Gulkpiego himself'.¹¹⁷ The Ya Na, on the consultation of the colonial administration, claimed that the taboo was only operative if the Gulkpe-Na actually entered Tamale township and set eyes on the Dakpema, and he made the suggestion that the Gulkpe-Na make his headquarters just outside Tamale in Zoguyili.¹¹⁸ Finally, in April 1932, the colonial administration took advantage of a stroke suffered by the Dakpiema to reinstate the Gulkpe-Na. In a report on the progress of native administration, Blair noted:

'On this date (April, 1932), the newly appointed sub-divisional chief of Gulkpiego, the Gulkpe Na was persuaded to come to Tamale ... This takeover was facilitated by the Dakpiema unfortunately having a stroke from which he is still suffering'.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Dakpema Lag'mbu letter to District Commissioner, Tamale, October 1930, quoted in MacGaffey, 'History', 112.

¹¹⁵ MacGaffey, 'History', 112.

¹¹⁶ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/2/28 (Dagomba Native Affairs), 'Memorandum submitted by Chandler, 1930'.

¹¹⁷ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/2/91, (Dagomba Native Administration), 'Note by H.A. Blair, 1932'.

¹¹⁸ MacGaffey, 'History', 112.

¹¹⁹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/2/91, (Dagomba Native Administration), 'Note by H.A. Blair, 1932'.

Blair concluded rather categorically that ‘the controversy that the Dakpiema was an important chief was laid to rest’.¹²⁰ To Blair, the appointment of the Gulkpe-Na as chief of Tamale marked the opening of the way for the introduction of indirect rule to Tamale. Indeed, within a relatively short period, the Gulkpe-Na, with the assistance of the colonial administration, was able to assert some authority in Tamale. He built a house in Tamale and extended his house in Zoguyili. In June 1932 he went on tour to Accra, taking along with him an entourage of 16 subordinate chiefs, paying all the expenses. Furthermore, five years later in 1937, the Ya Na and council stated that, ‘the Ya Na holds the ultimate control over land in Dagomba and may remove any person from such land. The right of removal, however, is not exercised in practice save in cases of extreme insubordination’.¹²¹ In such ways, as the Ya Na’s authority over Dagbon increased, so too, it was felt, did the authority of the Gulkpe-Na, whose authority came directly from Yendi. However, while the Gulkpe-Na drew his authority from Yendi, the Dakpema had the advantage of deep and extensive political and marital alliances in the local population, and so the rivalry continued.¹²² Thus, the matter of the Dakpema/Gulkpe-Na was not laid to rest as Blair had anticipated. In 1932, Lag’mbu was replaced by Dakpema Allassani, who managed to assert some authority over parts of Tamale, especially Dagomba Fong (which translates in Dagomba to ‘area of men’, an area in the heart of Tamale which served as a mausoleum for local royals). He was paid a salary of £20, and extracted rent in parts of Tamale. The Dakpema continued to have a strong local following, while the Gulkpe-Na was seen as someone who belonged to both Yendi and the colonial administration. Fifteen years after the Gulkpe-Na replaced the Dakpema as chief of Tamale, in 1947, the DC for Tamale, on drawing up a scheme for the establishment of a Tamale Urban Council wrote: ‘The Chief problem seems to be the relation between the proposed council and the N.A. as well as the position of the Gulkpena and the Dakpema in the

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Mahama, I., *History and traditions of Dagon*. GLLBT, 2004, 60.

¹²² MacGaffey, ‘History’, 118.

future'.¹²³ After 1957, the tension between the Dakpema and the Gulkpe-Na would again lead to the intervention of the national government and the Ya Na. The result was a political structure riddled with ambiguities. Frequently, authority overlapped, especially when disputes over land arose. Such disputes worked to legitimate either the Dakpema or the Gulkpe-Na, despite colonial support of the Gulkpe-Na. The colonial administration either overestimated the value placed on 'tradition' by Tamale's increasingly urban community or underestimated the importance of claims legitimated by the Dakpema prior to 1932.

Tamale's institutional multiplicity manifested itself primarily in how contested claims were made and settled in Tamale. Usually such claims related to land, but not always. For instance, in 1948 Niendow Dawuda claimed that plot 6 in Ward D was given to his father by the late Dakpema, Nsung-Na, 'during the time the white men were at Gambaga'.¹²⁴ Niendow Dawuda had gone to Accra to work as a cook. On his return a Mallam, Alidu Nyobaliga, was residing in his house. The Mallam claimed that the Dakpema had said that he could stay in the house until Niendow Dawuda returned. Niendow Dawuda, who was on a short visit to Tamale, went with the Mallam to the Dakpema to ascertain if that was indeed the case. The Dakpema confirmed that it was, so Niendow Dawuda returned to the south leaving the Mallam in his house. While Niendow Dawuda was in the south, the Gulkpe-Na was enskinned as chief of Tamale. The Gulkpe-Na reallocated the house. Niendow Dawuda notes that 'the Gulkpe-Na came from Yendi and put his people in the house'.¹²⁵ Niendow Dawuda put his claim to Mr Barker, the Commissioner of Lands. Mr Barker referred the case back to the Gulkpe-Na, who ruled that Niendow Dawuda 'should quit his house'.¹²⁶

In another case, in 1946 Emmanuel Bawah had consulted the DC for Tamale, Irvine Glass, regarding a dispute about plot 27 in Ward B of the town. The DC sent

¹²³ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/7/2, (Informal Diary, District Commissioner, Tamale), May, 1947.

¹²⁴ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 19/1/17, (Ward D), 'Letter from Niendow Dawuda to District Commissioner, 1948'.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

Emmanuel Bawah to see the Gulkpe-Na. According to Emmanuel Bawah, the Gulkpe-Na told him that if he paid the Gulkpe-Na £6, he would be granted the plot. Emmanuel Bawah claimed to have paid the money but was not awarded the plot and so wrote a letter to the District Commissioner stating that, 'the Gulkpe-Na is selling justice for money, I therefore humbly and respectfully beg to appeal to you to re-hear the case please'.¹²⁷ Irvine Glass, after carrying out some investigations, concluded the case by judging that 'there is a clear attempt by Bawa to bribe the court'.¹²⁸

The cases above (of which there were many) were not simply disputes about facts, but a debate about the control and, consequently, the constitution of authority and legitimacy in Tamale. They called into question the authority of the District Commissioner, the authority of the institution of chieftaincy in Tamale, and the legitimacy of 'traditional customs', on which indirect rule relied, and confused the traditional focus which they were attempting to create. Christian Lund has noted that 'the process whereby rights over land ... are settled and contested, are fundamental to how public authority is established and challenged'.¹²⁹ The colonial administration was compelled to side with the Gulkpe-Na, as in the cases above, in order to consolidate his authority. By doing so, however, men like Emmanuel Bawah, and especially Niendow Dawuda, sought alternative sources of authority. In this way, the Dakpema remained a figure of political concentration in Tamale. Chiefs were also far more than simply settlers of disputes. They were regarded by most as possessors of wisdom and capable of providing useful advice in the case of domestic or other problems. The Dakpema did not suddenly lose these characteristics on the arrival of the Gulkpe-Na. He continued to gain the respect of many of the residents of Tamale, thereby maintaining the presence of his authority. As long as there were people in Tamale who legitimised the authority of the Dakpema, the institution of the Dakpema would continue to exist. This was an oversight of the top-down approach taken by the colonial administration. Thus,

¹²⁷ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/2/91. (Dagomba Native Authority), 'Letter from Emmanuel Bawah to District Commissioner Tamale'.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Lund, C., *Local*, 3.

despite the efforts of the colonial administration, the claim of the institution of the Dakpema to at least some authority in Tamale persisted – and for indirect rule, remained problematic.

Furthermore, such disputes frequently induced the colonial administration to wade into jurisdictions which under indirect rule were intended to be dealt with within the ‘traditional’ domain (as in both the examples cited above). The persistent involvement of colonial authority in such domains set precedents which further undermined ‘traditional’ authority and, importantly, ran contrary to the tenets of ‘ruling indirectly’. Duncan-Johnstone had hoped that ‘the Political Officers of this Province will act as sympathetic advisors and councillors to the Paramount Chiefs, keeping in the background as far as possible so as not to lower the Chief’s prestige’.¹³⁰ This was rarely the case in Tamale, where the colonial administration was in many instances looked to settle claims. Tamale’s increasingly urban population was well aware that the colonial administrators held the ultimate authority.

To conclude, that the Gulkpe-Na’s authority did not replace that of the Dakpema is clear, and as a result Tamale’s traditional focus developed as a confused hierarchical system, accommodating several ill-defined centres of traditional authority. The constant interference of the colonial administration in domains regarded as ‘traditional’ by indirect rule further weakened the native institutions in Tamale, which the colonial administration was trying to create.

The politics and economics of an urban space under indirect rule

Paul Nugent does an entertaining job of highlighting a number of symbols of power in Accra. In Tamale, symbols of power are perhaps less overt than they may be in Accra.¹³¹ But certainly, behind a low-key façade, they are there; what is more, with a few exceptions, many have been there since the 1930s. On the corner, opposite Tamale’s first underground petrol tank, built by Lebanese businessman, P. K.

¹³⁰ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/4/53, (Informal diary of the Commissioner, Southern Province, Duncan-Johnstone) July, 1930.

¹³¹ Nugent, P. Big men, small boys and politics: Power, ideology and the burden of history in rawlings’ Ghana, 1982-1994. UK, 1995, 1.

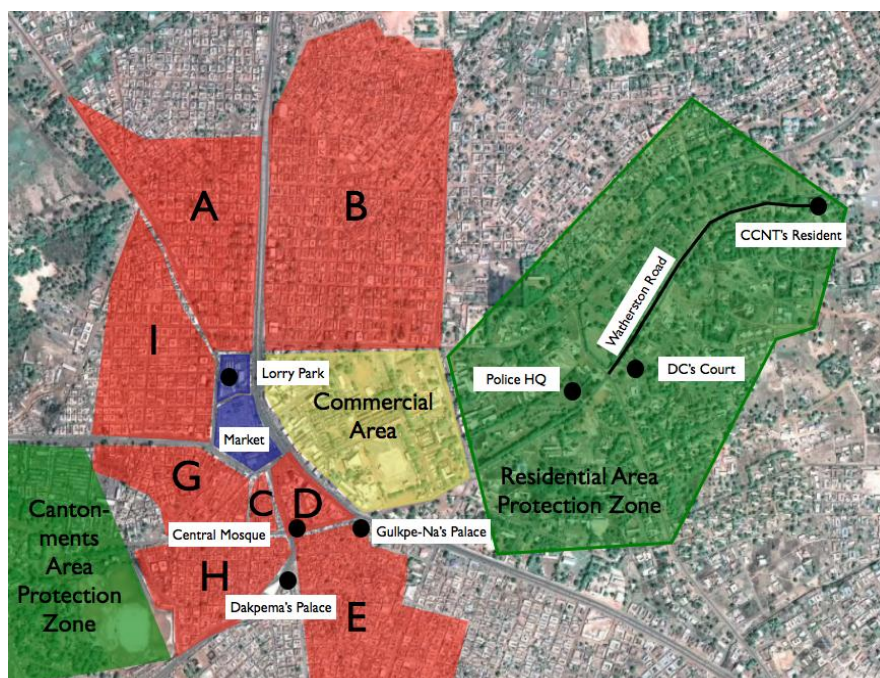
Kassardjan, is the palace of Gulkpe-Na. A little to the west is the central mosque, perhaps the most prominent building on the Tamale skyline. To the north of the mosque lies the taxi-rank and the central market, while to the south of the central mosque lies the palace of the Dakpema (it is somewhat grander than that of the Gulkpe-Na). Far to the west, along Watherston Road, lies the administrative heart of Tamale. Heading eastwards along Waterstone Road, the first striking presence is that of the Parade Ground. It is not comparable to Independence Square in Accra, but somehow, relatively speaking, its presence is equally powerful. Further down Waterston Road, on the right-hand side, is Tamale's police headquarters. One then approaches a traffic circle. The traffic circle has, through its centre, gates on both the eastern and western side. Apparently, it was built when Nkrumah came, so that his motorcade could cross straight over the circle, without slowing down to go around it. Then, on the right-hand side, lies Tamale's High Court. It was first the court of the administration, and later, when the Gulkpe-Na was re-introduced to Tamale, he established his native tribunal there. Then, on both the right and left, one comes across a series of dilapidated, colonial-style houses. These served as the residences for colonial administrators and medical officers. Finally, right at the end of Watherston Road, by now some distance from the town centre, lies the largest residence of all, with military guards at the gate, under a giant Ghanaian flag – the former residence of the Chief Commissioner of the Gold Coast, now the residence of the MP for northern Ghana. How these symbols of power relate to one another spatially is more than a simple metaphor. Their location is rather the result of those relationships. Tamale's constellation of authority had a spatial dynamic. Andreas Eckhert notes:

Relations of power and social stratification are reflected in space ... we can discern in the order of space something of a lived map of daily life. Space is an important and contested area of colonial and post-colonial daily life. Power structures are inscribed in space, and space reflects social organisation and defines the people in it.

A spatial analysis of Tamale thus helps not only to further delineate the centres of power in Tamale, it also provides insights into how each of these related to one

another in daily life. This subsection is concerned with the power and the politics of urban space in Tamale under indirect rule.

4.1: Map of Tamale showing wards as they were in 1932



Apart from the problems arising from a lack of traditional focus in Tamale, indirect rule was severely undermined by the increasingly urban character of the town. Indirect rule assumed geographically bound, mutually exclusive, ethnic units. Tamale's increasingly heterogeneous character contradicted these assumptions. In order to cater for Tamale's heterogeneous character, wards were intended to be ethnically bound, although this was not enforced by law. In some instances, a narrow street was all that separated wards. The Moshie Zongo, for instance, lay adjacent to the old Dagomba area of Tamale (Central Mosque or Ward D) to the north, and to the South of Ward D lay the Hausa Zongo. The Gold Coast had a longer history of attempts at ethnically bound urban planning, when the British first

began 'planning' Accra. While the Ga community claimed the area around Korle Lagoon to be sacred, the British created Agbogbloshie (from Ga, meaning 'site of the Agbogblo shrine') for the Ga, and Fadama (from the Hausa, meaning 'floodplains') for northern migrants.¹³²

Despite these attempts, the kind of heterogeneity created by urban settlements caused a plethora of administrative problems. This is best illustrated in a note in his informal diary of the Commissioner for the Southern Province. He reported that

... trouble originated with certain Hausas who lived in the Hausa Zongo going to live in the Moshi Zongo ... If the Sarikin Zongo (Hausa Chief) called them for work ... they replied they were not under him but under the Moshi Chief because they lived in the latter's Zongo. If the latter called them for labour they replied they were Hausa and not Moshis.¹³³

Thus, apart from the ongoing confusion between the authority of the Dakpema and that of the Gulkpe-Na, the large communities of non-Dagomba residents posed other problems for Tamale's 'traditional' structures under indirect rule. It was, for instance, problematic that the Gulkpe-Na, a Dagomba, presided over a native tribunal which heard cases often involving non-Dagombas. As a result, a system of 'headmen' was established. Under the system, each 'stranger' community elected a headman, who would act as an advisor to the Gulkpe-Na in cases where members of their community were involved. These headmen became powerful members of Tamale's community, although the Gulkpe-Na was regarded, at least by the colonial administration, as the apex of Tamale's 'traditional' political system. Furthermore, there was the large community of southern clerical employees of the colonial administration. The Twi-speaking element of this community already numbered over fifty in Tamale in 1913. The 'little colony' rejected any initiatives to be integrated into Tamale's northern communities. Kimble notes that they 'must have lived like expatriates, with their own amusements and church services'.¹³⁴ They

¹³² Myers, G., *African cities: Alternative visions of urban theory and practice*. Zed Books, London, 2011, 91.

¹³³ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/4/53, (Informal diary of the Commissioner, Southern Province, Duncan-Johnstone), 'February 21st, 1930.'

¹³⁴ Kimble, D., *A political history of Ghana, 1850-1928*. Oxford University Press, 1963, 535-6.

seldom intermarried. In 1913 the Twi-speaking element formed a society, 'The Foreigners' Arbitration', 'in order to avoid being summoned before local tribunals'.¹³⁵ The colonial administration refused to officially recognise the society, but it serves as an illustration of southerners' aversion to local political elites in Tamale, thereby creating yet another extra-colonial constellation of authority in Tamale.

Before reflecting on Tamale's urban space, several groupings need to be considered, some of which have been mentioned previously in this chapter. There is a strong distinction between the colonised and the coloniser. This distinction may be less relevant than in comparable East African towns as a result of larger European populations, but the distinction is relevant in the case of Tamale nonetheless. The fact that segregation in the West Africa was underpinned by medical theories has a long history.¹³⁶ In the case of Tamale, as in many East African examples, the distinction between Europeans and Africans, despite only a small European population, had a strong spatial dynamic. But racial distinctions were not the only urban socio-cultural distinctions; ethnic distinctions form another important framework within which to understand the daily politics of urban space. These too had a spatial dynamic, although perhaps not as vivid as the racial distinction. Within the ethnic distinction, an important distinction needs to be made between natives and strangers, or between Dagombas and non-Dagombas. In Tamale, religious distinctions also has a spatial dimension. Finally, there was the large aforementioned community of southerners. A spatial analysis of Tamale under direct rule reveals a number of insights into the relationships between these categories. It also reveals something about the manner in which chieftaincy operated in Tamale. The remainder of this subsection is concerned with these revelations.

Thomas Spear, regarding colonial town planning in colonial cities, notes:

European headquarters usually overlooked and physically dominated 'native settlements', while Europeans preferred to live in picturesque hillside locations

¹³⁵ Kimble, D., *Political*, 535-6.

¹³⁶ See, for instance, Leo Spitzer's article, 'The mosquito and segregation in Sierra Leone', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 2(1968), 49-61.

with 'a breeze and a view' that dominated those below them, socially and culturally.¹³⁷

Although Thomas Spear was especially interested in East African towns, he did not limit his description to East African towns. During the planning of Tamale, there was indeed evidence of Spear's 'colonial vision'. In 1907, the colonial offices and residences were to be built 'not windward of the town'.¹³⁸ Everything was done to create the type of 'Garden City' feel which colonial administrations across Africa were trying to create. Watherston Road, along which the colonial residences were built, was lined with *Neem* trees, which originate from the Indian subcontinent. At the end of Watherston Road, furthest from Tamale Township, stood the residence of CCNT, by some distance the largest residence in Tamale. The employment of the phrase 'protection zone' to denote the colonial residential area on the 1932 map of Tamale is also interesting. This type of discourse was employed in the urban planning of many African cities which possessed a colonial administration, and it points to prevailing medical theories as vindications of segregation. Perhaps the most well-documented of urban planning underpinned by medical arguments is that of Free Town, where a similar discourse was used to justify urban segregation owing to malaria.¹³⁹ The police headquarters and the court were situated at the beginning of Watherston Road, between Tamale Township and the start of the colonial 'protection zone'. Thomas Spear notes: 'Colonial planning was further marked by European iconographies of status ...'.¹⁴⁰ Although the examples of this in Tamale are relatively few (I suggest not due to a lack of intent, but due to a lack of resources), the location of the police headquarters and the court in relation to European and African residences does provide an excellent example of this kind of

¹³⁷ Spear, T., "A town of strangers" or "A model modern East African Town"? Arusha & the Arusha'. In: Anderson, D.M. & R. Rathbone, eds, *Africa's urban past*. James Currey, 2000, 109.

¹³⁸ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/60 (Report on Sites for New Headquarters, Tamale), 'Report by Capt. Kineally'.

¹³⁹ Spitzer, L., 'The mosquito and segregation in Sierra Leone', *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 2 (1968), 49-61.

¹⁴⁰ Spear, T., "A town of strangers" or "A model modern East African Town"? Arusha & the Arusha'. In: Anderson, D.M. & R. Rathbone, eds, *Africa's urban past*. James Currey, 2000, 109

thinking. The police headquarters was situated as a kind of gateway between Tamale township and the colonial offices and residences (see Map of Tamale above).

Natives and strangers

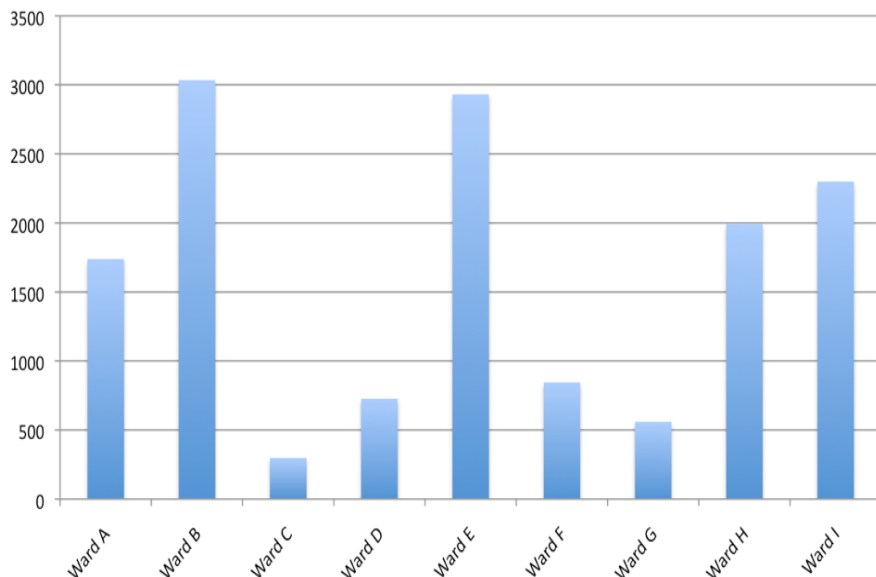
The wards which were created to house Tamale's growing population were intended to have an ethnic dimension, but there were no legal rules as to who could lease land where. However, that there were no legal rules regarding the ethnic settlement in wards did not mean that wards did not possess strong ethnic inclinations. Newer wards tended to be larger than older ward. Ward C, D and G, the oldest wards, were also the smallest in terms of number of persons, whilst newer wards, such as B and E, and H and I, were larger.

The oldest and original settlement in Tamale is Ward D, illustrated on the map above. In 1935, Ward D comprised almost entirely Dagomba leaseholders. It was the most homogenous ward in Tamale. Apart from 49 Dagomba leaseholders in Ward D, there was one Mamprussi leaseholder, 1 southerner, 1 Bamzaberima, and 1 other. Ward D lies close to the market. It also contains all the prominent political and religious intuitions: The central mosque is located in Ward D, as also is the palace of the Gulkpe-Na and that of the Dakpema. Interestingly, in 1948, Ward D had the second least educated persons as a percentage of total persons in the ward.¹⁴¹ Only Ward G, also an old ward, had a lower percentage of educated persons. Ward C, like Ward D, was both an old ward of Tamale and had a largely Dagomba demographic, albeit slightly more heterogeneous. Ward C had 4 southern leaseholders, 3 Mamprussi, 1 Hausa, and 1 Grunshi leaseholder, the remainder being made up of Dagomba tenants. The concentration of political and religious apparatus in and around Ward D and C, more or less in the centre of Tamale, is highly suggestive of the manner in which both colonial and local politics operated in Tamale: Politically, Tamale was a Dagomba town. Irvine Glass, DC for Tamale in the early 1930s, noted:

¹⁴¹ Population census of the Gold Coast and its protectorates for the year 1948.

The Dagomba in Tamale ... have behind them the power and authority of tradition and although constantly subject to the influence of change, tend to retain their traditional political systems and a social equilibrium – both factors which encourage conservatism.¹⁴²

4.2. Tamale Wards, Number of Persons, 1948



Source: Population census of the Gold Coast and its protectorates for the year 1948

Wards A and B were demarcated after WWI, when a number of ex-servicemen, mainly Moshis, settled in Tamale. Ward A unsurprisingly later became known as the Moshi Zongo,¹⁴³ consisting overwhelmingly of Moshi leaseholders, although there were also a number of Hausa, and Grunshi leaseholders. It is not coincidental that these ethnic groups formed prominent components of the men recruited for WWI. Of all the wards, the ethnic breakdown of Ward A most strongly resembles the ethnic breakdown of soldiers employed in WWI and WWII. This is hardly surprising, given that Ward A was specifically built to house returning soldiers.

¹⁴² PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/2/91 (Dagomba Native Administration) Report by Colonial Administrator, Irvine Gass, The traditional authority in urban administration in West Africa, 1931.

¹⁴³ Eades, J.S., *Strangers*, 17.

Ward B, adjacent to Ward A, resembles Ward A and was inhabited primarily by Moshi, with a strong Hausa presence. Ward D also housed a ‘foreigner’, probably a Lebanese trader. Wards G and I, which later became known as ‘Sabongida’, housed a number of Yoruba, the subject of Jeremy Eades’ book, *Strangers and Traders*.¹⁴⁴ The Yoruba had a very prominent economic role in Tamale: They served as ‘bulk-breakers’ and were also often to be seen bicycling consumer goods purchased from colonial trading firms out to rural areas. As a group, the Yoruba are distinguished by a degree of urbanisation altogether exceptional in tropical Africa.¹⁴⁵ Ward E housed many southerners, the majority of whom were employees of the colonial administration. Finally, Ward F, which later became known as the ‘Zongo’, housed Hausa traders.

The political conservatism of the large Dagomba community in Tamale is reflected also in the spatial constellation of Tamale’s political apparatus. Financially, however, the opposite was true. Of all the wards, Ward D had the largest number of persons per household. Political hegemony thus had little if no relations to financial or economic hegemony. Furthermore, the distinction between ‘native’ and ‘stranger’ was not only important for how politics in Tamale functioned but also in terms of the native treasury. ‘Natives’ would pay only ‘peppercorn rent’,¹⁴⁶ which amounted to a small tribute to the chief, and only if called upon to do so, while ‘strangers’ paid ‘economic rent’, which was fixed by the colonial administration. Half of all ‘economic rent’ went to the native authority, while the other half went to the colonial government. This financial arrangement empowered the ‘stranger’ communities in Tamale, both within the native authority and within the colonial government. Duncan-Johnstone noted, for instance, that he ‘issued permits to the Limam of Tamale, the Serikin Zongo, the Sarikin Moshi and the Sarikin Yoruba to

¹⁴⁴ Eades, J.S., *Strangers*, 29.

¹⁴⁵ Law, R., ‘Towards a history of urbanization in pre-volonial Yorubaland’. In: *African Historical Demography*, 1977, Centre of African Studies University of Edinburgh.

¹⁴⁶ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240 (Tamale Ward D New Layout), ‘Letter to CCNT by DC, Tamale, 3rd July, 1946’.

sacrifice sheep in their houses on the feast of the Zulhadj on May 10, the first day of the Moslem New Year'.¹⁴⁷ However, he noted that '(t)he Principal Veterinary Officer (Stewart) has written protesting against this and insists that the animals must be killed in the slaughter house'.¹⁴⁸ Duncan-Johnstone noted that 'Stewart asks why we should study the wishes of aliens with an alien religion'.¹⁴⁹ He stated that the grounds for his refusal to renege on his word were, in his own words, '(t)he so-called aliens have been settled here for years and it is from them that we draw the town revenue'.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, the economic activity generated by groups such as the Yoruba was extraordinarily valuable. Albeit much later, in the 1960s, Yoruba traders occupied over a third of all stalls in the Tamale Central Market.¹⁵¹ But even in 1931, 305 Yoruba were residing in Tamale and injecting significant entrepreneurial energy into the town.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/4/53. (Informal Diary of the Commissioner, Southern Province, Duncan-Johnstone), 'May 1930.'

¹⁴⁸ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/4/53. (Informal Diary of the Commissioner, Southern Province, Duncan-Johnstone), 'May 1930.'

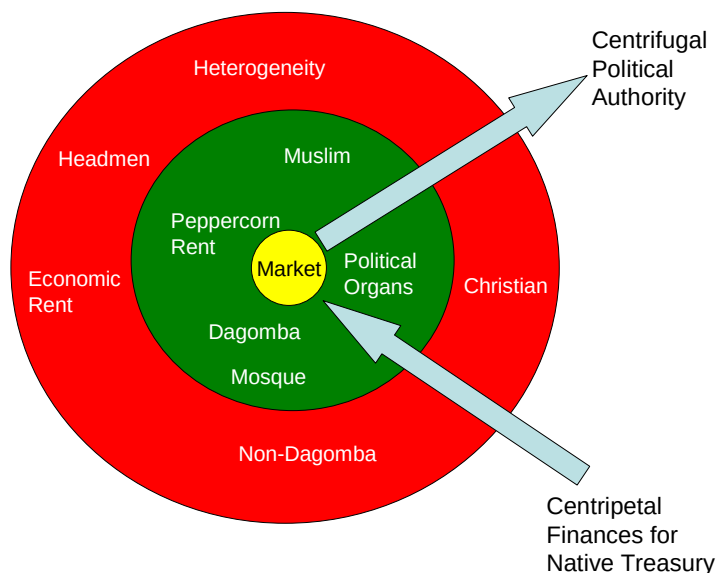
¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Eades, J.S., *Strangers*, 33.

¹⁵² *Ibid.* 34.

4.2: Centrifugal political authority versus centripetal finances for native and colonial treasury



In Tamale there thus emerged an inverse relationship between the spatial distribution of political concentration on the one hand, and economic and financial concentration on the other. This is illustrated by the image above (Figure 4.2). As far as the system of indirect rule was concerned, on paper at least, this contradiction was devastating. It further exacerbated the tension between Dagomba and stranger communities. The relationship between chiefs and their subjects under indirect rule was intended to be through a kind of patronage system, where payments in the form of taxation or rent ensured a degree of ‘belonging’, and on the basis of ‘belonging’, one could access land and profit from other institutional functions, such as protection. In Tamale, especially before the introduction of taxation, the inverse was true. Those who filled the native treasury profited the least from Tamale’s political arrangements. As the town became increasingly populated, pressure on land also increased. This raised the stakes, and the number of land disputes rose. Such

disputes were not only between individual leaseholders, but between the colonial administration and local communities. The most notable of such disputes arose out of the plans to redevelop Ward D. This case study is explored in the following chapter.

Conclusion

The implementation of indirect rule in Tamale, judged by the criteria of indirect rule itself, was a failure. Tamale did not emerge from indirect rule with a strong traditional political structure, as had been the intention of the 'Indirect Rule Team'. Instead, it emerged with several ill-defined centres of authority. In 1930, ambitious administrators keen to introduce indirect rule in the Northern Territories replaced those administrators who had served long terms in the north. The new administrators, represented by men such as Duncan-Johnstone and Blair, put much energy into unearthing the 'tradition' which they hoped to resurrect, in line with the indirect rule mandate. This did not translate into the establishment of effective native institutions, however, as indirect rule demanded. This chapter has argued that for a number of reasons, this failure was particularly felt in Tamale. Underpinning this failure was the replacement of the Dakpema with the Gulkpe-Na in 1932. In attempting to establish a 'traditional' chain of command in Tamale, the colonial administration (re)introduced the Gulkpe-Na's authority at the expense of the Dakpema. The authority of the Dakpema, however, lingered on, despite attempts to legitimise the Gulkpe-Na. This bi-nodal power construction had implications for the manner in which chieftaincy functions in Tamale on a daily basis, illustrated by the two distinct land disputes in Tamale. The problem of urban chieftaincy in Tamale under indirect rule was further exacerbated by the diversity of urban life. Tamale's multi-ethnic composition also resulted in the introduction of headmen, which further diluted authority in Tamale.

Tamale from the east, 1910



Source: Basel Mission Image Archive

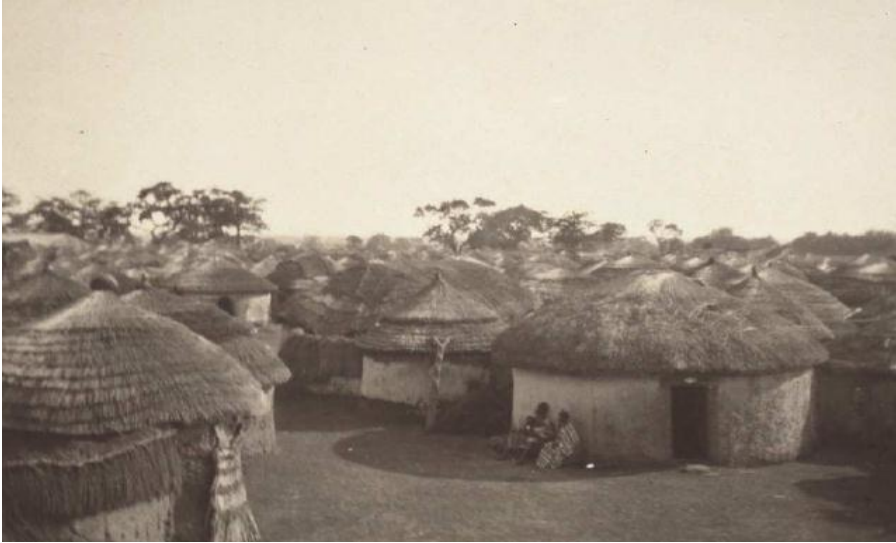
Government station, Tamale, 1910



Source: Basel Mission Image Archive

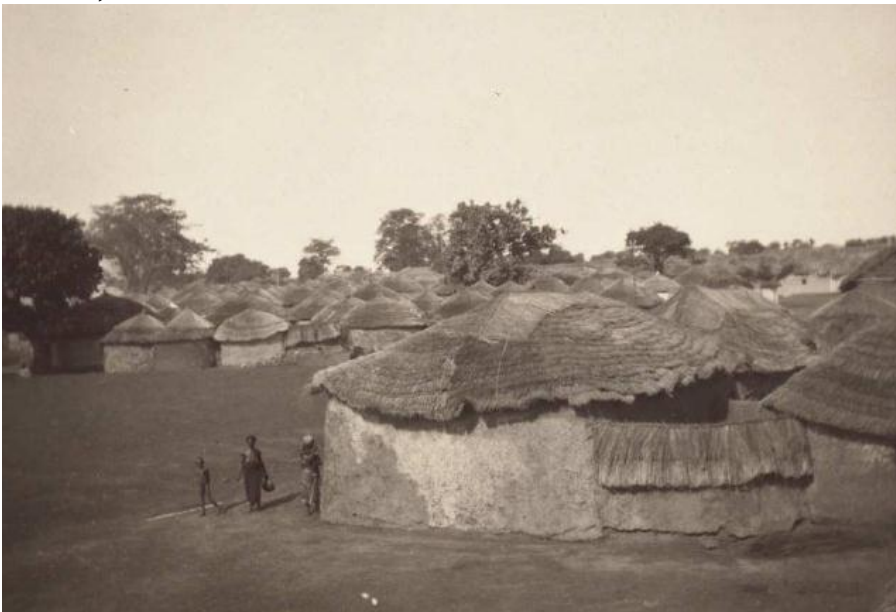
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Tamale, 1928



Source: Basel Mission Image Archive

Tamale, 1928



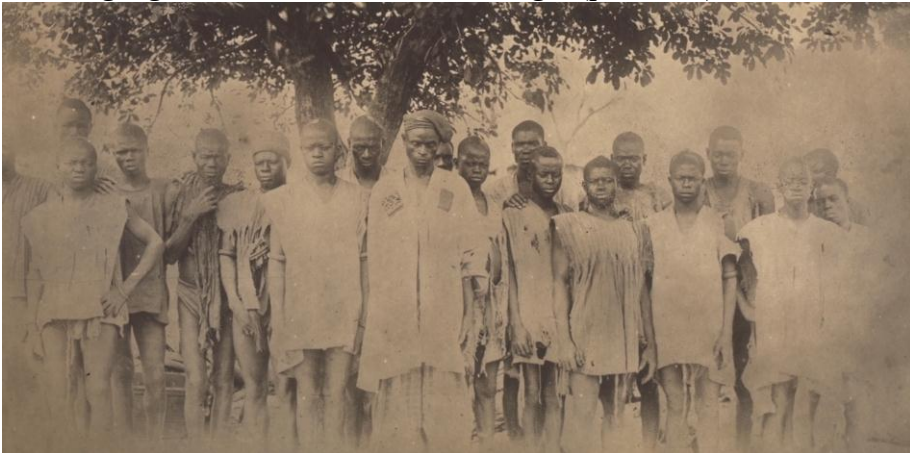
Source: Basel Mission Image Archive

The Ya Na and followers, visiting Tamale, 1936



Source: Basel Mission Image Archive

Carrier gang between Tamale and Savelugu, (pre-1920)



Source: Basel Mission Image Archive

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Government postman, 1906



Source: Basel Mission Image Archive

Tamale high street, 1955



Source: Information Services, Ghana, Accra

Tamale Central Market, 1955



Source: Information Services, Ghana, Accra

Tamale Lorry Park, 1955



Source: Information Services, Ghana, Accra

‘The whole of Tamale within the town boundaries is the property of the crown’: Urbanism, land and authority

Introduction

The previous chapter argued that the colonial administration failed to create an effective traditional political structure in Tamale under the Gulkpe-Na as indirect rule had intended. This failure had a number of practical implications, perhaps the most visible of which was in terms of land. As a result, this chapter is concerned with Tamale’s land. The chapter intends to show how Tamale’s complex political matrix worked. It also employs Tamale’s land as an informative and analytical tool in order to unpack broader implications of Tamale’s lack of traditional focus. The use of land in this way is not wholly novel.¹ However, as Andreas Eckert points out,

¹ See, for examples, works by Sara Berry, Carola Lentz, Michael Crowder, Mahmood Mamdani, Richard Rathbone & Inez Sutton.

‘the literature on issues such as control over land, land conflicts and land law has almost exclusively dealt with rural areas ... only a very few scholars have used land issues as a tool to explore broader questions of urban development during the colonial and post-colonial periods’.² The chapter focuses specifically on the plans to redevelop Ward D, the heart of Tamale Township. Ward D was the oldest (original) settlement in Tamale. It was also located on the road as one enters Tamale from Kumasi and adjacent to the Lorry Park and the market, making it commercially desirable land. Ward D was thus the intersection between ‘traditional’ values and commercial ambitions. As a result, the political and economic colonial aspirations were, in Tamale, nowhere else as profoundly contradicted. The redevelopment of Ward D exposes both Tamale’s lack of traditional focus and the resulting institutional multiplicity. The chapter argues that the exploitation of Tamale’s institutional anatomy by traditional elites, the colonial administration, businessmen, and religious leaders consolidated and maintained Tamale’s institutional multiplicity.

Legislating land in the Northern Territories

There were fundamentally two dimensions to the administration of land in the Northern Territories. The first was land as a source of power in order to legitimise chieftaincy. As it emerged from colonial investigations into what constituted ‘the customary’, the political dimensions of land came to be regarded as central. In short, obligations and benefits were to flow in large part from control over, and access to, land. Kojo Sebastiaan Amanor states:

‘chiefs had powers ... to regulate and allocate land ... Land rights were acquired through citizenship and citizenship created a series of “customary” obligations, which were determined by the chiefs. These involved obligations to provide the polity with various forms of revenues and taxes as well as the obligation to perform communal labour’.³

² Eckert, A., ‘Urbanisation in colonial & post-colonial West Africa’. In: Acheampong, E.K., ed., *Themes in West Africa’s history* (2006), 208.

³ Amanor, K.S., ‘Conflicts and the reinterpretation of customary Tenure in Ghana’. In: Derman, B., R. Odgaard & E. Sjaastad, eds, *Conflicts over water and land in Africa*. (2007), 36.

Thus, in recognising the authority of any given chief, subjects accrued certain benefits such as access to land and other forms of both economic and social security. In return, subjects had certain obligations: They were required to pay taxes, sometimes in the form of labour, and they were obliged to recognise laws as they had been defined by 'custom'. From the perspective of the colonial administration, that chiefs controlled land was necessary in order to underpin their authority, which, amongst other things, might be employed for the procurement of labour for road-building, mining in the south, or the military.

The second dimension concentrated on the intersection between land and the cost of development. Governor A. R. Slater noted that the 'protection of the natives from exploitation is only one of the objects at which we are aiming, namely ... to secure for legitimate outside enterprises sound titles to any land that they wish to take up in the Northern Territories'.⁴ Land for commercial purposes, as well as transport infrastructure such as roads and railways, it was feared, would be prohibitively expensive if the colonial government, or private enterprises such as the UAC, needed to pay compensation for land commercially desired. Lund points out: 'One philosophy ... was that the government should seize control over all lands in the North to keep costs of development down and eliminate speculation in its wake'.⁵ And as Amanor states: 'Its (the colonial administration's) main concern was to prevent the evolution of land markets which it could not control'. Thus, the colonial administration desired a mechanism within land legislation which allowed for the appropriation of land by the colonial administration for the sake of development and commercial initiatives.

Together, these dimensions of land posed a conundrum for the colonial administration. On the one hand, indirect-rule policies employed land as a primary source of power for chieftaincy (and thus the possession of authority to procure labour), and on the other hand, the colonial administration wanted to maintain

⁴ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/6, (Land and Native Rights Ordinance), 'Minute by Governor A.R. Slater, unknown date (July 1927 to April 1932)'.

⁵ Lund, *Local*, 26.

control over land so as to be able to initiate development initiatives without requiring large capital investments in the form of land acquisitions or compensation. This contradiction has been summed by Sara Berry. She notes, 'it was not enough for Europeans to claim exclusive ownership of land and natural resources: They also needed to mobilise African labour to work them'.⁶

The rhetoric employed to resolve this contradiction focussed on the 'alienation' of land. It was suggested that 'natives' needed to be protected against the affects of the imminent development of the Northern Territories and that the colonial administration was to provide such protection. Acting Governor J. Maxwell noted in 1927: 'the development of the resources of the Northern Territories will begin at an early date and will be rapid once it is begun',⁷ and as a result, 'it is necessary to provide for ... the influx of non-natives of the Northern Territories. This influx will introduce factors which the natives themselves are not competent to deal with so as to safeguard their own interests ... government must be able to control these factors'.⁸ In reality, the concern was the same as the concern surrounding colonial appropriation of land: if chiefs were to sell off land to non-natives (including the colonial administration), they would undermine their own authority, which meant they would be less effective as tools of colonial administration. In other words, the purpose of land legislation in the Northern Territories would be aimed at addressing the ill-effects of potential speculation, and yet, it was itself a speculation. The negative experiences faced by the colonial administration in Ashanti and the Colony, where land markets had developed before the government legislated land in order to control it, served to heighten the importance of effective land legislation in the Northern Territories. Thus, in terms of land legislation, what the colonial government sought was a legal apparatus which would make the acquisition of land cheap in instances when and where roads, railways, and other land-intensive initiatives needed to be built in order to encourage and facilitate economic

⁶ Berry, S., 'Debating the land question in Africa', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 44: 4(2002), 642.

⁷ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/6, (Land and Native Rights Ordinance), 'Confidential Memorandum, Acting Governor Maxwell, 7th April, 1927'.

⁸ Ibid.

development, while not undermining chiefly authority in order to, amongst other things, provide labour and collect rent.

The first of a series of elaborate land ordinances were passed, beginning in 1922. Thereafter, amended ordinances were gazetted in 1927, 1928, 1930, and 1934. The ordinances differed from one another in detail, but all offered the same basic framework: in order to solve the above contradiction, all lands in the Northern Territories were to be entrusted in the Governor, who would exercise his powers ‘with due regard to native customary law existing in the locality in which such lands are situated’.⁹ The ordinances prevented ‘the alienation of native lands to any person not a native of the Protectorate without the approval of Governor’.¹⁰ The Governor would be entitled to appropriate land if he could illustrate he had ‘good cause’, and ‘good cause’ included, amongst other things, ‘requirement of the land for public purposes’ and ‘requirement of the land for mining purposes or any purpose connected therewith’.¹¹ The colonial administration thus retained all powers to allocate land, with very little real power left to chiefs. The previous chapter has noted the safeguards and restrictions within colonial legislation (relating especially to native tribunals and the meagre state of the native treasuries), which inhibited the devolution of any real power to chiefs in order for indirect rule to function. In terms of land allocation (another pillar of indirect rule in terms of establishing chiefly legitimacy), such restrictions and safeguards clearly also applied. However, in practice, much of the land of the Northern Territories was allocated by chiefs without colonial interference, and when the colonial administration required land, there was no need to resort to legal disclaimers because land appropriations by the colonial government were rarely contested. The CCNT noted in 1938: ‘Since we first arrived in the Northern Territories the people have allowed the seizure of

⁹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/6, (Land and Native Rights Ordinance), ‘Note in ‘The Northern Territories Land and Native Rights Ordinance, 1930’.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/6, (Land and Native Rights Ordinance), ‘Note in ‘The Northern Territories Land and Native Rights Ordinance, 1930’.

thousands of acres without ever demanding compensation or making a complaint'.¹² Because the anticipated development of the north largely did not occur, the land legislation was hardly relevant.

In the few instances in which colonial acquisition of land was contested, the legal frameworks confronted moral reservations. Once such instance was the rebuilding of a 13-mile stretch of road between Bolgatanga and Pwalugu (NT2) in the late 1930s. The Commissioner of Lands responded to the suggestion that compensation was to be paid for the land on which the road was to be built by stating: 'I think there must be some misunderstanding, in the first place, as no compensation is of course payable in connection with an acquisition in the Northern Territories'.¹³ He went on: 'I am informed that the crops upon the land which it is proposed to take have been harvested already and there would therefore appear to be nothing payable in respect of such crops ... the word "improvements" ... must be taken to be ... in the nature of buildings or works and would not extend to compensation for improvements to the "soil"'.¹⁴ The CCNT responded, stating that the issue of the new road '... is certainly not a case in which Government should rely on its legal rights'. He reminded those against the payment of compensation that 'in Great Britain compensation for arable land is generally assessed at a higher rate than that for pasture land, presumably on the ground that some improvement to the former has been affected'.¹⁵ This tension, between legal and moral frameworks, was a constant theme in the colonial administration of land in the Northern Territories.

The land legislation implemented in the Northern Territories was designed to resolve tensions between controlling land and indirect rule. The colonial desire to control land markets contradicted the colonial desire to endow chieftaincy with a legitimate source of authority. Because the north remained in most places a land-

¹² PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/6, (Land and Native Rights Ordinance), 'Note in 'The Northern Territories Land and Native Rights Ordinance, 1930'

¹³ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 19/5/9, (Acquisition of Land for Road Sites), 'Senior Executive Engineer to CCNT, Jones 3rd October, 1938'.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 19/5/9, (Acquisition of Land for Road Sites), 'Senior Executive Engineer to CCNT, Jones 3rd October, 1938'.

abundant region, land ordinances very rarely came into question. There were, however, exceptions, one of which was Tamale, where a changing urban climate pitted political and economic aspirations against each other in a more pronounced way than elsewhere in the Northern Territories. The following section is concerned with land legislation and land practice in Tamale.

Legislating land in Tamale

Land legislation in the Northern Territories was designed to reconcile two seemingly contradictory objectives, namely to provide chieftaincy with a solid foundation (as indirect rule argued that land was a primary source of traditional legitimacy), on the one hand, and controlling (and enabling) economic development on the other. In Tamale, where arguably both the desire to induce an indirect rule framework and the desire for economic development were most concentrated, this contradiction was perhaps most apparent, and as result, the legislation was most extreme. The result was that Tamale's traditional focus was profoundly undermined.

The rapid growth of Tamale's population during the 1920s led to an increase in the competition for land, whilst the (re)introduction of the Gulkpe-Na prioritised the need to uphold and strengthen his public legitimacy. Despite increasing competition for land in Tamale, the land market in Tamale was subject to the same strict, non-market controls as the rest of the Northern Territories. The Attorney-General, R. W. H. Wilkinson, noted that 'the only distinction now appearing in the draft Ordinance between urban and rural lands is that contained in section 16; namely with respect to the appropriation of rents'.¹⁶ As Tamale's land became increasingly a commercial asset, questions about rights to allocate land became more complex. Within colonial circles, the fear – that by appearing to be controlling land, they undermined the authority of the chiefs – was genuine. This was especially the case in Tamale, where the authority of the newly-introduced Gulkpe-Na still needed to gather momentum.

Owing to such fears, the ultimate control by the colonial administration over Tamale's land came about as a result of an administrative error, rather than by

¹⁶ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/6. (Land and Native Rights Ordinance), 'Minute by attorney-General R.W.H Wilkinson.'

design. In April 1930, it was noted by the DC for Tamale in a note to the Chief Commissioner that:

The following is the position regarding Tamale Town Land. In 1922 ... In preparing the schedule for Tamale, the Chief Commissioner asked for a plan of Tamale shewing the land occupied by Government. What he got, so it seems, was a plan of Tamale accompanied by a schedule of Government buildings. This was sent to the Surveyor General, who, not unnaturally in ignorance of Tamale, took it for what it purported to be, a plan of Government land. The whole of Tamale was thus certified as being Government land.¹⁷

The revelation set off a series of objections within colonial circles. The Chief Commissioner wrote: 'As there is no moral right for claiming more land than was in use for public service we now have to rectify the mistake'.¹⁸ He noted further: 'It will be observed that the whole of the Township has been acquired and I venture to think such an acquisition is not in accordance with Government policy'.¹⁹ Half a year later in November 1930, with the matter still not settled, the Chief Commissioner dispatched a letter to the Acting Commissioner for Land, Mr. Stacpoole, in Accra stating: 'I feel sure you will see how ridiculous the present situation is, and give early instructions permitting your representative to act on my requests without reference to the Provincial Surveyor'.²⁰

Although it was initially felt imperative on moral grounds – and of course, on account of the policy of indirect rule – to rectify the administrative error, and plans were made to do so, the initiative began to stagnate when Mr Stacpoole, the Acting Commissioner of Lands, replied:

whilst not entirely disagreeing that such an enquiry as suggested by the Solicitor-General is desirable, I suggest the undesirability of throwing a doubt upon the appreciation by the Chief Commissioner of his special responsibility, a doubt which might I anticipate conceivably be exploited to such a degree as would

¹⁷ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 19/1/4, (Lease of Government Lands), 'Note by Chief Commissioner, 1930'.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 19/13/14, (Estates Crown Land Tamale), 'Correspondence, Chief Commissioner, 1930.'

²⁰ Ibid.

embarrass Government in its reliance upon the titles evidenced in a similar manner.²¹

Stacpoole advised further that, at least for the time being, no action should be taken. He suggested that any measures to rescind the legislation that entitled the 'Crown' to the ownership of all of Tamale should wait until the Land Ordinance of 1934 was gazetted. However, the condition that Tamale in fact belonged to the Crown turned out to be convenient, especially as Tamale was growing rapidly and claims to land were increasingly contested. By 1933, one year prior to the publication of the Land Ordinance of 1934, the government's legal possession of all of Tamale's land had become a matter of policy. The Commissioner of Lands wrote to the treasurer, stating as a matter of policy: 'The whole of Tamale within the town boundaries is the property of the Crown'.²²

That the colonial government thus controlled Tamale's land was not only an academic matter. On the contrary, the colonial government exercised its control over land in Tamale, even if it did so (at times) reluctantly. In the previous chapter, two such examples were highlighted. But there were many. Yakubu Dagomba, a resident of Tamale, who claimed to be the owner of house 46 in Ward D,²³ wrote to the District Commissioner for Tamale, claiming that 'my late father (Mahama) was the owner of the above house. He built the said house with his own money without anybody's assistance'. He requested that the colonial administration evict Derimann Gangbaraga, who was residing in the house. He wrote: '(I) humbly beg to appeal you to quit the said Derimann Gangbaraga because I inherited the said house after the death of my father'.²⁴ The colonial administration immediately agreed and set about evicting the tenant. The Dakpema, on hearing the settlement of the case in favour of Yakubu Dagomba, wrote an exhaustive appeal to the District Commissioner on behalf of Derimann, stating that, 'The above house was not

²¹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 19/13/14, (Estates Crown Land Tamale), 'Dispatch to Chief Commissioner by Acting Commissioner of Lands, Stacpoole, 1932'.

²² PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/58, (Tamale Commercial Area), 'Acting Commissioner of Lands, Stacpoole, 1933'.

²³ Although these letters were written in 1949, this dispute spans the entire period, 1909-49.

²⁴ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 19/1/17 (Ward D), 'Letter to District Commissioner, Tamale by Yakubu Dagomba, 4th July, 1949'.

belonged to the late Mahama as according to the explanation given to you by those people who came to your office'.²⁵ The Dakpema claimed:

The house was built by my grandfather and handed over to one Afa Imoru for him to stay in and live there ... after his death the house was inherited by one Afa Yakubu Gangbaraga being the younger brother, but Afa Yakubu was having his own which he cannot leave it to stay in another house. For this reason Afa Yakubu has promised the house to one of his nephews Derimann Gangbaraga. Derimann was trader and does not stay at home at all. To keep the house in good order, Yakubu has allowed strangers to occupy the house and keep it clean. At last the late Mahama arrived from Salaga and preparing to build house and stay in Tamale. He was in search of a good site when he was told by some people that he shouldn't bothered to build a new house but could try to approach Dakpema Nsungna and beg a house which belonged to Afa Yakubu Gangbaraga as at present there is no permanent man staying there except strangers. He did so according to their advice by sending a small present consisted of 12/- cash, 100 kola nuts and one pair of sandals according to custom. Dakpema told him that the house does not belong to him but Afa Yakubu. He (Dakpema Nsungna) sent one of his boys with the present in accompany with Mahama to Afa Yakubu to beg the house. Afa Yakubu could not refused the Dakpema's orders accepted the present ... Mahama to stay in with the understanding that the house can be restored to him at any time he asks for it. The terms were accepted. Yakubu Gangbaraga died 6 years ago. Derimann was all this time stay abroad until in 1948, he came home. He did not forget to mention about the restoration of his house to him. During this time Mahama was seriously ill and fortunately he died few days after. Derimann waited until after the performance of Mahamas funeral when he reported the matter.²⁶

In the end, the Lands Commissioner, Mr Barker, settled the issue. He wrote a report, which stated that

There are no records in this office to show that the house and the land in question now marked D46 belongs to the Dakpema, nor Mermani, nor Afa Imoru. I am informed that Afa Imora Dagomba stayed in Tamale for a couple of years and that he possessed a small house of 4 rooms on the land in question ... after Imrou's death the whole house became dilapidated and the later Mahama Gbanzaba asked Dekpema Nsungna for the dilapidated house and the land. Mahama began building during this time the present Dakpema and Derimann were all in Tamale but they neither came to see Mahama nor showed any interest in the house and land, and Derimann stayed elsewhere in Tamale.²⁷

²⁵ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 19/1/17 (Ward D), 'Letter to Dakpema, Derimann Gangbaraga, House No. 44, Ward D, 12th July, 1949'.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 19/1/17, (Ward D) 'Report of House No. 46, Ward D, written by Commissioner of lands, Barker. 13th July, 1949'.

Barker finally suggested that ‘neither the Dakpema, nor Dermani has claim to the house and the land i.e. if the house really belongs to the grandfather of the Dakpema or Afa Imoru, or Derimani, I think that they would not have neglected it for such a long period 1909-1949’.²⁸

With that the matter was closed, and the land was officially leased to Yakubu Dagbomba. These were not simply disagreements about land. They were discussions about authority: Who was in charge, why, and how. The power of the colonial administration to settle such claims within a judicial system in which the colonial administration possessed the legal right to make such decisions (albeit enshrined in a land policy which was the result of an administrative error) had consequences for the constitution of traditional authority in Tamale. Certainly, it undermined Tamale’s traditional focus.

The redevelopment of Ward D

‘Rethinking colonial power requires a more imaginative anthropological approach – shifting in a sense, from the plan itself to planning as social process’.²⁹ The plans to redevelop Ward D and the manner in which the initiative was undertaken reveal much about the practice and constitution of authority in Tamale during the period of indirect rule. This analysis of the redevelopment of Ward D exposes contradictions in ‘the colonial rhetoric between preserving the past, promoting economic development and protecting Africans from the traumas of modernity’.³⁰ The case of Ward D exposes Tamale’s lack of traditional focus, institutional multiplicity, and the resulting legal plurality. Lund suggests that in analysing land-tenure conflicts, it is useful to distinguish between three types of confrontation: A confrontation between different land users over access to land; a confrontation between different political authorities over the jurisdiction to allocate land access rights; and a confrontation between land users and the politico-legal authorities over the extent of the

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Bissell, W.C., *Urban design, chaos and colonial power in Zanzibar* (Indiana, 2011), 219.

³⁰ Speaar, ‘Neo-Traditionalism’, 4.

jurisdiction of authorities to allocate land.³¹ In analysing the redevelopment of Ward D, these three confrontation levels are taken into account.

The land on which Ward D was situated was unique in many respects. In addition to being adjacent to the Lorry Park and in close proximity to the central market, Ward D was conveniently situated on the north–south road through Tamale, providing thus, in commercial terms, an ideal location. ‘If there should be any facilities afforded for such extensions they should be within the vicinity of the main market and the lorry park and this in my view is the Ward D new layout’.³² Furthermore, by being situated adjacent to the north–south road, Ward D provided a ‘shop front’ for Tamale. However, despite its undoubted commercial value, Ward D was also the oldest settlement in Tamale. It was to the Dagomba residents of Tamale what the ‘Zongo’ was to the Hausa community and the ‘Moshi Zongo’ was to the Moshi community. Of the 43 plots affected by the redevelopment programme, 40 were leased to Dagombas, and only 3 were leased to non-Dagombas.³³ There were other Dagomba-dominated wards in Tamale, but Ward D, being the original settlement, was the most overwhelmingly so. Ward D appears on the 1912 map of Tamale as the only occupied land in Tamale, prior to the founding of an administrative headquarters in 1907. The Central Mosque was also located within Ward D, and the both the palace of the Gulkpe-Na and the palace of the Dakpema lie adjacent to Ward D (but not in it, and thus not subjected to threats of eviction as a result of the redevelopment). Ward D thus emerged as a site where traditional claims to land (as formulated by the colonial administration) were challenged by the commercial interests of the colonial state.

In the 1940s a scheme to redevelop Ward D had been put before the Northern Territories Health Board (NTHB). The redevelopment of Ward D was born largely

³¹ Lund, C., ‘Struggles for land tenure and political power: On the politicisation of land tenure and disputes in Niger’, *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 40 (1998) 1-2.

³² PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240, (Tamale New Layout Ward D), ‘Note by District Engineer, Mr. Cuppy, to C.C.N.T., September 23rd, 1948’

³³ See Annex for ethnic breakdown of Wards in Tamale.

out of a lack of commercial facilities within Tamale. In September 1948, one official noted:

The town of Tamale is growing rapidly and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future, both as regards population and trade – as a result of development in all directions both government and commercial ... At present there are no more plots available in the main commercial area for leasing to big trading firms who wish to expand their business e.g. the C.F.A.C., or who desire to extend their activities to the Northern Territories, such as the S.C.O.A. and some reputable Syrian or Lebanese Traders of Accra and Kumasi.³⁴

By the 1940s, Ward D was densely populated and had become rather dilapidated. Dickson notes that by the end of the 1930s, ‘Tamale had assumed the drabness of a single-storeyed ironed-roofed township’.³⁵ The scheme involved first the relocation of residents to a new ward which was to be built especially for the purpose, Ward J, and the building of six new commercial plots, D1 to D6. On 25 May 1946, the NTHB passed the scheme, and ten days later, on 5 June 1946, the Acting Chief Commissioner, O. C. Butler, wrote to the District Engineer at the Public Works Department, regarding the ‘redevelopment’ of Ward D, that ‘the new layout of the above mentioned Ward (Ward D) ... (has been) approved by the N.T.H. (Northern Territories Health) Board at its meeting 25th May last’.³⁶ Once the layout was superimposed onto existing copies of the Tamale Town sheets, he said quite simply, ‘(t)he scheme will ... be explained to the Chief and the owners of buildings now standing on the plots’.³⁷

Several foreign firms applied for the new plots. Some southerners also applied for the plots (notably two businessmen, Kwaku Atakra and Kwabina Tufuor), and from the north, R. B. Braimah, a Gonja transport owner and later a prominent CPP member, and Nassam Dagomba, a tailor who owned the leases for plots D12 and D13 (which would be affected by the redevelopment scheme) applied for one of the new commercial plots to be built. The selection process was not particularly

³⁴ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240, (Tamale New Layout Ward D), ‘Note by District Engineer, Mr. Cuppy, to C.C.N.T., September 23rd, 1948’.

³⁵ Dickson, K.B., *A historical geography of Ghana* (Cambridge, 1969), 301.

³⁶ PRAAD (Tamale) NRG 8/1/240, (Tamale New Layout Ward D), ‘Letter from C.C.N.T to District Engineer, Tamale, 5th June, 1946.’

³⁷ Ibid.

transparent, and archival sources shed little light on the selection criteria. But it may be deduced that ‘grandeur’ was at least one of the criteria. The redevelopment of Ward D was not merely a redevelopment project; it was a vision for Tamale and for the Northern Territories generally. The project emphasised obsessively the requirement for the erection of ‘high-quality’ buildings. The CCNT wrote to the DC for Tamale: ‘It is hardly necessary to remind you that the new plots ... should be allocated with great care i.e. to only Commercial Firms or traders with reputable financial resources who will be able to erect substantial buildings’.³⁸ As a result, Braimah, Nassam Dagomba, Kwaku Atakra, and Kwabina Tufuor were not allocated plots. All plots were allocated to foreigners (Lebanese traders and colonial trading firms). The only correspondence archived is that of Nassam Dagomba. He wrote to the colonial administration, stating that he would, instead of vacating his premises, ‘erect a better house according to a design which ... will meet with the approval of Government’.³⁹ He wrote further that he ‘shall pay with a willing heart the necessary rent that shall be imposed in respect of the said plots ... and maintain the said piece of land together with the buildings thereon ... to the satisfaction of the Government’.⁴⁰ Nassam Dagomba wrote two letters without reply. After his third letter, he received a reply that stated simply that he would not be permitted to remain on the leased land in Ward D. But Nassam Dagomba, the southerners, and R. B. Braimah probably did not form a part of the ‘vision’ which the redevelopment of Ward D was intended to encapsulate: large foreign-owned firms, occupying grand buildings, located at the entrance to Tamale.

It was decided finally that Mr Kassardian, a Lebanese businessman, would be allocated D1 in order to build an underground petrol tank and petrol pump; the Compagnie Francaise de L’Afrique Occidentale (CFAO) would occupy D2 for the purpose of a motor and fitting shop; Paterson Zachonis, a Scottish-Greek entity, would be allocated D3; a Syrian trader, Abudu Ghanem, would be allocated D4; and

³⁸ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG8/1/240, (Tamale New Layout Ward D), ‘Letter by C.C.N.T. to District Commissioner, Tamale, 21st June, 1946’

³⁹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 19/1/17 (Ward D) ‘Letter by Nasam Dagomba, tailor, Plots D12 and D13 to Ass. DC, Tamale, through the Gulkpe Na, 23rd August, 1949’

⁴⁰ Ibid.

the Societe Commerciale L'Quest Africain (SCOA) would occupy D5 and D6. In time, some would fall away and be replaced by others, but the character of the allocations would stay the same: All those allocated plots were 'strangers'.

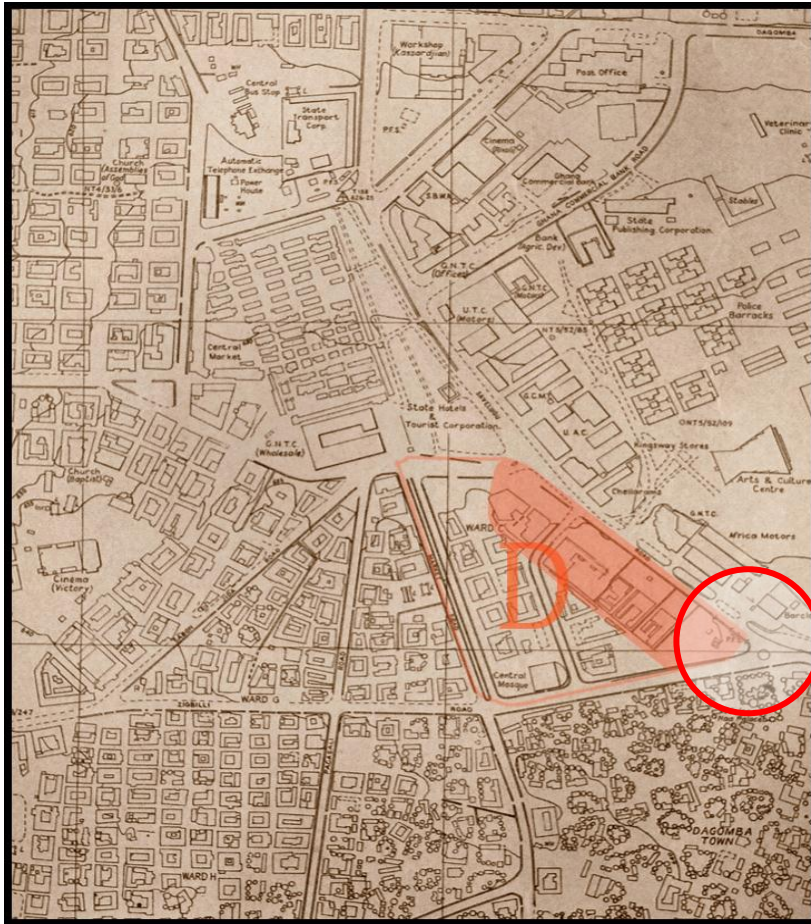
5.1. Ward D, Tamale, 1931 (circle marks the location of palace of the Gulkpe-Na)



Scale⁴¹ 1:5000

⁴¹ This is an approximation made using Google Earth.

5.2. Ward D, Tamale, 1964



Scale⁴² 1:5000

⁴² This is an approximation made using Google Earth.

The politics of urban space in Tamale: The case of Ward D

The redevelopment of Ward D really exposes the manner in which Tamale's complex political matrix functioned. The role of chieftaincy in the plans to redevelop Ward D is peculiar, largely owing to its silent character.

5.3. Applications for sites, Ward D

Date	Applicant	Plots Applied For	Purpose	Plot Allocated
18-10-1946	CFAO	D1, D2	Stores, Wholesale Dept, Motor Shop & Fitting Shop	Yes
29-10-1946	Kwaku Atakra	D4	Petty Trader	No
29-10-1946	Kwabina Tufuor	D3	Applying for Stores Petty Trader	No
11-2-1947	R. B. Braimah	D4	Applying for Stores Stores in Leiu of UAC Stores	No
3-3-1947	Mobarek's Motor Transport	D5, D6	Office, Garage and Stores	No
3-3-1947	Nassar Transport and Trading co.	D1, D2, D3	Office, Garage and Stores	No
7-5-1947	SCOA	D5, D6	Store	Yes
13-1-1949	Abudu Ghanem	D1, D2	Store, Cold Storage and Garage	Yes
13-3-1949	Paterson Zachonis	Any Plot	Store	Yes
9-4-1949	Public Relations Dept, Tamale	D1	Public Relations Information Room	No
22-6-1949	P. Kassardjian	D1	For store with underground petrol tank, petrol pump and air pump.	Yes

Source: PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240 'Tamale, New Layout, Ward D'.

Indirectly, Tamale's chiefs played a slightly sinister role. That the authority of the Gulkpe-Na was legitimised largely by Yendi and the colonial administration, meant

that he was inclined to tow the line, as long the Ya Na and the colonial administration did not disagree with one another. That aside, that the colonial administration would have their way with Ward D served as a tremendous financial advantage to the Gulkpe-Na. To lease large commercial plots to foreigners (instead of Dagombas who paid only peppercorn rents) had advantages that can hardly be ignored. The building of valuable commercial properties would increase the rents paid to the native treasury substantially. To openly declare this desire, however, would have meant further weakening the Gulkpe-Na's already fragile standing amongst Tamale's Dagombas. However, through the Tamale Town Board, he could exert some implicit influence over the outcome of the dispute. Indeed, after passing through the NTHB, the plan was ratified by the Tamale Town Board, of which the Gulkpe-Na was a prominent member. A letter to the CCNT noted: 'I feel that they (Tamale Town Board) have been influenced by vested interests ... you will see from the plan ... the Gulkpena and all the homes in his neighbourhood are not affected'.⁴³ Indeed, the residence of the Gulkpe-Na lay just outside of the area which was to be redeveloped.⁴⁴ The Dakpema did not involve himself directly in the plans to redevelop Ward D, although he appears to have given his support to the Limam of Tamale's Central Mosque, who in turn represented the leaseholders who were to be affected by the redevelopment plans. Of course, everything that strengthened the position of the Gulkpe-Na was a disadvantage to the Dakpema. But the Dakpema was also required to be strategic, for fear of the wrath of the colonial administration. The positions of both the Gulkpe-Na and the Dakpema were so tenuous within changing colonial methods (see Chapter 6) that they conducted a kind of *cold war*, siding indirectly with various parties but not directly confronting one another. The Limam, on the other hand, stepped into the void left by chieftaincy in the discussion about Ward D. On being informed of the plans to redevelop Ward D and move residents to a new ward, Ward J, the Limam wrote a letter, through the Dakpema, to the DC for Tamale. He noted:

⁴³ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240, (Tamale New Layout Ward D), 'Letter to C.C.N.T, 19th October, 1948, Not possible to make out author'

⁴⁴ See maps above. The red circles indicate the site of the Gulkpe-Na's palace.

... we were called by your Worship and you informed us that most of our houses on Ward D would soon be demolished; and our plots would be given to aliens to build stores. We beg to state that most of our homes on that Ward D were built by our forefathers, before the white man. He came as a friend but not as a conqueror. He came to build and not to destroy ... if plots would be used by Government to build Post Office, Treasury, Hospital, or School which would be beneficial to our country would be welcomed. But as it is Government is driving us away from our forefathers' soil and giving it to aliens to build stores. This is unpleasant to us. And we hope that the District Commissioner would reconsider it.⁴⁵

The legal status of Tamale's land as 'Crown lands' provided a considerable measure of legal security. It was noted for instance that '... feeling against eviction is considerable though legally the applicants ... have no case'.⁴⁶ Attempts were made to appease traditional leaders. If only for reasons of public relations, it was better to have the consent of the Limam and other residents of Ward D, rather than relying on legalities. The DC for Tamale wrote in a letter to the CCNT that 'I would like to meet the 43 lessees concerned at Tamale, in a final attempt to persuade them to agree voluntarily to move from their present plots'.⁴⁷ He went on to state, however, that '(i)f they cannot be so persuaded it seems that they must be evicted'.⁴⁸

As the Limam had voiced, on behalf of the residents of Ward D, objections to the plans to redevelop Ward D, the colonial administration sought a compromise with the Limam. In return for the Limam's public approval of the redevelopment scheme, he was offered a residence adjacent to the Central Mosque in Ward D.⁴⁹ On 12 May 1949, the Acting Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories wrote to the DC for Dagomba, stating that '(i)t is gratifying to learn ... that by compromising with the Limam we shall have no serious opposition ... The Limam is to be offered one of the two plots immediately behind the mosque for his own dwelling'.⁵⁰ With the

⁴⁵ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240, (Tamale New Layout Ward D) 'Letter through Dakpema to District Commissioner, Tamale, 26th February, 1947'.

⁴⁶ PRAAD (Tamale) NRG 8/1/240, (Tamale New Layout) 'Letter by Acting Senior District Commissioner, Dagomba to C.C.N.T'. 12th December. 1948'

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ See map above.

⁵⁰ PRAAD, Tamale NRG 8/1/240 (Tamale New layout Ward D) 'Letter by C.C.N.T. to District Commissioner Dagomba, 12th May, 1949'.

approval of the NTHB in May 1946 and the approval of the Limam three years later in May 1949, the colonial administration felt the project could commence without further opposition. The Chief Commissioner wrote: 'I now feel that this matter should drift no longer and that definite steps should be taken to put the scheme into operation ... I therefore have to ask that all lease holders in Ward D may be advised that they will be required to vacate their plots by March 31st 1950'.⁵¹

Compensation

The administration of land in the Northern Territories was designed so as to limit the amount of compensation to be paid by the colonial administration. Compensations were effectively intended as public relations tools, but public relations tool should not incur too great a cost. The compensation payable for the redevelopment of Ward D represents perhaps the biggest lump compensation with which the colonial administration was faced. Interestingly, the Native Authority offered to pay the compensation, which raised questions within colonial circles about what socio-legal ramifications the payment of compensation might have. Again, employing Lund's theorisation that 'the process whereby rights over land ... are settled and contested, are fundamental to how public authority is established and challenged ...',⁵² this subsection employs the matter of compensation in order to highlight the importance which the colonial administration placed on controlling land in Tamale.

The initial line taken by government was that the legal framework regarding land in the Northern Territories did not require the payment of compensation within Tamale, as it was 'Crown lands'. On the matter of compensation, the Chief Commissioner noted: 'The Government would be acting within its legal rights if it were to disclaim liability to pay compensation ...'.⁵³ This position (to rest on legal rights, and thus pay no compensation) was challenged from within the colonial administration itself.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Lund, *Local*, 3.

⁵³ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240, (Tamale New layout Ward D) 'Letter from C.C.N.T to Colonial Secretary, 30th January, 1950'

espite the legal framework, for the sake of sentiment it was felt to be strategically desirable to pay at least some compensation. Regarding the resistance offered by the residents of Ward D, the District Engineer wrote simply and unproblematically to the CCNT:

In my experience these objections are invariably raised at the initial stage of any scheme that involve moving of a portion of the population ... But immediately (after) adequate compensations were paid for houses that had to be demolished and in addition new (plots) were granted to all dispossessed persons free of any rents, these oppositions melted away with great rapidity.⁵⁴

The government finally agreed that it would pay a total compensation of £1,838 to the 43 leaseholders affected by the redevelopment plans. However, in May 1949 the CCNT wrote to the Commissioner of Lands, telling him that '(i)n this respect (of the compensation) the situation has now altered. The Native Authority has decided to pay the compensation and cost of demolition in full and to recoup itself from the in-going tenants'.⁵⁵ By paying the compensation and recouping the rents, the Gulkpe-Na, through the Native Authority, laid claim to the land, the most commercially attractive and financially desirable land in Tamale. Initially, the Chief Commissioner supported the idea that the Native Authority pay the compensation, as it appeared to him that 'this seems to simplify matters as it will not now be necessary to approach Government for the necessary funds'.⁵⁶ Stacpoole, the Commissioner of Lands based in Accra, however, did not agree with the view of the CCNT. He wrote in a letter to the Colonial Secretary:

The Native Authority has no locus standi. To permit the Native Authority to participate in the Scheme in any way would be a dangerous precedent ... this project concerns Government primarily in its capacity as landlord and as such the cost of the re-development must of course fall upon Government in the first instance.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240 (Tamale New Layout Ward D) 'Note by District Engineer, Mr. Cuppy to C.C.N.T', September 23rd, 1948'.

⁵⁵ PRAAD, Tamale NRG 8/1/240 (Tamale New layout Ward D) 'Letter by C.C.N.T. to District Commissioner Dagomba, 12th May, 1949'.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240 (Tamale New Layout Ward D), 'Letter from Commissioner of Lands to CCNT. 25th May, 1949'

The acting CCNT wrote back: 'I have to thank you for your advice ... which I propose to follow'.⁵⁸ The colonial administration and the Native Authority were not the only ones who wanted to claim the right to pay compensation and the rights that flowed there from. On 2 August 1949, the DC for Tamale wrote to the CCNT: 'Mr Kassardjian called regarding his plot in Ward D. He is prepared to pay compensation himself to the evicted tenants, as he is in a hurry to enter the plot he has applied for'.⁵⁹ The CCNT wrote back stating that he should not allow Kassardjian to pay compensation. He wrote that Mr Kassardjian 'was 4th applicant for Plot 1 and unlikely to get it even if he could persuade present owners to sell buildings directly with a view to transferring leases'.⁶⁰ Mr Kassardjian did secure plot D1, but was not permitted to privately pay compensation for it.

The discussions about who would pay the compensation (and who would not) were also essentially discussions not only about the control of land, but also about authority in Tamale. The institution which 'won' the right to pay compensation to the outgoing residents of Ward D gained control over perhaps Tamale's most valuable asset: The piece of land running along the Great North Road. Furthermore, the compensation was to be recouped through the rents paid by the businesses which were to occupy the new commercial lands. Thus, whoever gained control of Ward D, would also, as landlord, not only derive direct financial benefits but also gain at least some leverage within the commercial domain. The colonial administration heeded Stacpoole's advice and applied for funding from Accra (the sum of £1,838) under the heading 'slum clearance'.

Although it had been proposed, on receiving monies for compensation, that residents could be evacuated by March 1951, by September 1950 almost nothing had been done to prepare Ward J for the resettlement. 'Ablutions', for instance, were not yet complete, and as the clearance of Ward D had been financed under slum clearance,

⁵⁸ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240 (Tamale New Layout Ward D), 'Letter from CCNT to Commissioner of Lands. 15th June, 1949'.

⁵⁹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 19/1/17 (Ward D), 'Letter from DC Tamale to CCNT. 2nd August, 1949'.

⁶⁰ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 19/1/17 (Ward D) 'Letter from CCNT to DC Tamale. 2nd August, 1949'.

it was counter-productive to create a new slum elsewhere in Tamale. The Assistant District Commissioner wrote to the CCNT stating that, 'I am disturbed by the possibility of forced evictions ... only when roads, surface water drains, latrines and water are available in Ward J, should the people of Ward D be evacuated'.⁶¹ Almost a year later, the DC for Tamale wrote a scathing letter to the CCNT, stating that 'Government has sponsored the scheme as a measure of slum clearance, which makes the provision of alternative services of even greater necessity ... the development of Ward D depends very much upon the development of Ward J'.⁶² On 7 October 1951, a Health Board meeting decided to suspend the relocation of people from Ward D. It suggested that 'the future expansion and development in Tamale Town cannot be contemplated until an improvement in the water supply system is achieved'.⁶³ The redevelopment of Ward D was thus once again suspended. Writing to the manager of the SCOA, the DC notified him that '(o)wing to unforeseen circumstances, no clearance of Ward D is contemplated until the early part of 1952'.⁶⁴

In October 1952, the scheme to redevelop Ward D was again taken up by the colonial administration. On 14 November 1952, the residents of Ward D, almost five years after the initial protest, were once again told that they were to vacate their premises within six months. The Limam of the Central Mosque, Malam Abdulai, again represented the residents of Ward D. He wrote to the relevant authorities, including the Chairman of the Town Sanitary Board, the Chief Regional Officer, Northern Territories, the Gulkpe-Na, and the Ya Na in Yendi:

Much we appreciate the improvement of Tamale town, but we feel that it is not just for Government to ask its people to leave their homes to where we know not, for another group of people to come to occupy the very spot ... I must point out that the land is traditionally owned by the people, and that any action that is

⁶¹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240 (Tamale New layout Ward D), 'Letter from Assistant District Commissioner Dagomba to C.C.N.T, 30th December, 1949'.

⁶² PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240, (Tamale New Layout Ward D), 'Letter from Assistant District Commissioner Dagomba to C.C.N.T, 8th September, 1950'.

⁶³ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240, (Tamale new Layout Ward D), 'Minute from N.T.H.B Meeting, October 7th, 1951'.

⁶⁴ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240, (Tamale New layout Ward D), 'Letter from Assistant District Commissioner Dagomba to S.C.O.A. Manager, Kumasi, 10th November 1951'.

taken to deprive them of the land will be taken seriously ... the Northerner ... finds it a disgrace to leave his Father's house to go to ruins. We will be committing ourselves to this very charge if we are to allow ourselves to be driven out from the homes of our Ancestors'.⁶⁵

He concluded: 'On behalf of my people, I ask that the whole question affecting this Ward be reconsidered'.⁶⁶ Once again, administrators referred to the legal position of Tamale. The Permanent Secretary wrote to the Chief Regional Officer of the Northern Territories, reminding him that '(t)he land is in fact Crown land and the occupants are only holding on yearly tenancy agreements'.⁶⁷ Finally, on 10 August 1954, the Chief Commissioner for Lands wrote to the District Valuer at Tamale, requesting, on account of resettlement difficulties, that 'The proposed new layout can be removed from the records'.⁶⁸ During the 1960s, when Nkrumah's policies had even less regard for 'traditional' authority than the colonial administration at least pretended to have, Ward D was cleared, and new, commercial plots were built.

The complexions of the redevelopment of Ward D in its entirety reveal a convoluted power matrix within colonial Tamale under indirect rule. The colonial administration sat relatively at apex of Tamale's power structure, and their primary ambition was economic development. However, the desire to be seen as respecting 'custom' forced the colonial administration to create continually a veneer of respect for 'indigenous' authorities. The importance the colonial administration placed on having the Gulkpe-Na and the Limam 'on-board' should not be underestimated, even if it was well known that having such institutions 'on-board' said very little about the sentiments of the people they represented. As Thomas Spear notes, '... administrative transgressions risked undermining the legitimacy of colonial and

⁶⁵ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240, (Tamale New Layout Ward D), 'Letter from Malam Abdulai, Limam (Chief Moslem Priest) to Chairman of Tamale Town Sanitary Board, 19th November, 1952'.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240, (Tamale New Layout Ward D), 'Letter from Permanent Secretary to the Chief Regional Officer, Northern Territories', 12th April, 1954'.

⁶⁸ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/1/240 (Tamale New Layout Ward D), 'Letter by Chief Commissioner for Lands wrote to the District Valuer at Tamale', August 10th, 1954'.

local authorities alike, and so colonial administrators were often reluctant to assert their will heedlessly'.⁶⁹

The upward accountability of local elites is another feature of Tamale's power matrix. The institutions which existed to protect the interests of the residents of Ward D, the Gulkpe-Na and the Limam, both sided rather unsympathetically with the colonial administration. Both institutions evidently felt they had more to gain by siding with the colonial administration than with the interests of the residents of Ward D.

Conclusion

The implication of the 'Dual Mandate' was problematic in Tamale. On the one hand, the colonial administration in Tamale, especially after the 'Battle of Watherston Road', desired to create a 'customary' domain in which colonial participation would be as 'indirect' as possible in order not to undermine the authority of chiefs. On the other hand, there existed also the desire to control the commercialisation of Tamale, including Tamale's land. Indeed, the tension between the political priority of introducing indirect rule on the one hand, and the economic priority of controlling Tamale's growing economy on the other, is seen in Tamale most profoundly in the manner in which land was legislated and controlled. The desire to control land (in order to encourage commercial initiatives, amongst other things), contradicted the desire to uphold the authority of the Gulkpe-Na. Nowhere was this more apparent than in Ward D. This chapter attempted to illustrate Tamale's power structures by unpacking the redevelopment of Ward D. The chapter exposed a number of characteristics of Tamale's authority matrix. There was an alliance between local traditional elites and the colonial administration. This largely undermined the legitimacy of the Gulkpe-Na. In instances in which the authority of the Gulkpe-Na was compromised, the colonial administration sought other concentrations of authority – in the instance of Ward D, the Limam, thereby undermining further traditional authority. The matter of compensation reveals the extent to which the colonial administration prioritised control over land and land markets. Foreign

⁶⁹ Spear, 'Neo-Traditionalism', 9.

businessmen also attempted to make claims to certain plots of land. In the end, the colonial administration failed at both its objectives: The redevelopment of Ward D was not achieved during the colonial period, and chiefly authority was undermined (the Limam had to represent the residents of Ward D, as the Gulkpe-Na had sanctioned the redevelopment scheme through the Tamale Town Board). The case of Ward D shows that the ramifications created by contradictory objectives – and confused ‘traditional’ and ‘non-traditional’ authority – resulted in precisely the kind of alienation which the land ordinances in the Northern Territories had been designed to prevent, and consequently resulted in a weak native authority in Tamale, one which relied much more on colonial sanction than public legitimacy.

New developmentalism in the Northern Territories: The place of Tamale

Introduction

Tamale emerged as a town with a strong military character after WWII. Not only was more than 15% of the town's labour employed in the military and military institutions¹, a large number of ex-servicemen who had served during the war also settled in Tamale. Tamale's ex-servicemen, in possession of money, (in the form of gratuities) invoked profound socio-economic and socio-cultural transformation in Tamale. Largely as a result of the new injection of cash, Tamale's cost of living was estimated to have risen by between 200-300 per cent², the largest increase in the Gold Coast. It was reported that Tamale was the most expensive town in which to live in whole of the Gold Coast, including both Accra and Kumasi. There were increases in alcohol-related complaints, theft and other crimes. Marriage became a more contested terrain, as 'girls' complained about, and resisted, arranged

¹ Population census for the Gold Coast and its protectorates for the year 1948.

² PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/3/124 (Report on the Condition of Labour), June, 1947.

marriages, and wives, complained about the lack of 'chop money' they received from their husbands. There was an increase in the number of divorces. Many of the complaints related to ex-servicemen. These characteristics of Tamale's post-war landscape have been obscured, this chapter argues, by the fact that the Accra riots of 1948, which spread to many of the Gold Coast's (including Asante) urban centres, did not spread to Tamale. Until fairly recently, the Accra riots (seen by most as the centrepiece of Ghana's independence historiography) were perceived to have grown out of a protest by ex-servicemen against high prices. As a result, it appeared that, as the Accra riots did not spread to Northern Territories, one or both of these conditions (price increases and the presence of a significant number of ex-servicemen), must have been absent in Tamale in 1948, when the Accra riots broke out. The following chapter argues that, in contrast to a number of previous authors, a large number of ex-servicemen settled in Tamale, and transformed Tamale's socio-economic landscape. Tamale's post-war, socio-economic transformations were taking place in the context of a new colonial method and purpose; post-war 'new developmentalism'. However, the chapter argues, in line with an argument presented by Jeff Grischow, that, in the Northern Territories, despite the introduction of 'new developmentalism' elsewhere, the colonial emphasis on the preservation of African social structures outlived the demise of indirect rule. The result was a continuation of the uneasy relationship between Tamale's urbanisation, and the larger colonial political and economic framework in Dagbon and the Northern Territories. The chapter also provides an important context for the following chapter (Chapter 7), which unpacks Tamale's internal local politics in the lead up to independence.

'New developmentalism' in the Northern Territories?

On the level Britain's African colonial possessions, post-war 'new developmentalism' has been analysed in fine detail by Frederick Cooper.³ According to Cooper, the British government emerged from the war with an entirely new position not only vis-à-vis the other 'Great Powers', but also with regards to its own electorate. Economic and political contexts had entirely changed. The result

³ Cooper, *Decolonisation*, 203.

was a drastic change in colonial policy and objectives. Bill Freund notes that 'WWII marked a basic break in colonial and managerial thought about Africa with regard to labour.'⁴ The war left Britain with an enormous Dollar debt. The Labour Party, which came to power in July 1945, was faced with a two-pronged problem; Britain lacked the raw materials to produce British commodities which could earn Dollars to pay back the debt, and also lacked the foreign currency to purchase raw materials to kick-start British production (and reduce unemployment). Thus, to solve its post-war economic crisis, Britain needed to find a way of purchasing raw materials within the sterling zone, in order to produce British goods, to sell to the Dollar countries. In that way, the labour government could boost British production (increase domestic employment), and reduce the dollar debt. 'Africa's primary products offered a likely source of Dollar earnings, as well as the most likely means of supplying Britain with raw materials without having to buy them in hard currency markets'.⁵ As a result, the economic focus on the colonial possessions in Africa was never more intense than in the post-war period.

Cooper's analysis of 'new developmentalism' defines it as similar to that formulated by Chamberlain at the turn of the twentieth century. Chamberlain had stated that, '(i)t is not enough to occupy great spaces of the world's surface unless you can make the best of them. It is the duty of a landlord to develop his estate.'⁶ In Chamberlain's vision, as in the case of 'new developmentalism', economic transformations occurred simultaneously to the upheaval of 'inherently inefficient' African social structures. According to Cooper, a core component of the new colonial method was large-scale mechanisation, especially in the agricultural sector, and investment in infrastructure, notably railways and roads. The scale of economic transformation required land planning instead of mixed farming, which in turn required local government instead of native authorities. Thus, under 'New Developmentalism', local government replaced native authorities. Local authorities were not only a move

⁴ Freund, B., 'Labor and labor history: A review of the Literature', *African Studies Review*, 27: 2(1984), 1-58.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Joseph Chamberlain quoted in Blom, P., *The vertigo years: Change and culture in the west, 1900-1914*. Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2008, 24.

away from African social structures, they were also, as Grischow notes, ‘designed to absorb school leavers into village politics and prevent them from joining the nationalist politics of Ashanti and the Colony’.⁷ This was especially important in the southern parts of the Gold Coast, including Asante, which, in the years after WWII, became an explosive site of political, social, and cultural activity.⁸

Indeed, apart from boosting British access to raw materials, ‘New Developmentalism’ was intended to address concerns about the rise of anti-colonial African nationalism amongst the African intelligentsia. The fear of anti-colonial nationalism arising out of WWII had been voiced as early as 1939 when a British member of parliament warned West African governors:

‘It may be that one of the results of the war will be to stimulate the political consciousness of Africans and to give emphasis to the demand for a quickened pace of development towards more representative and liberal institutions of government’.⁹

As a result, ‘self-government’, and ‘raising the standards of living of African’s’, formed important aspects of the discourse of ‘new developmentalism’. But Britain’s post-war relationship with the African intelligentsia, in the Gold Coast, as elsewhere in Africa, was a complicated one: on the one hand, post-war ‘new developmentalism’ claimed to be in search of men who could fulfil the ‘self-government’ rhetoric embedded in the new post-war development ideology, but on the other hand, the British policymakers feared anyone who embodied ‘modern’ African life, had political support, and could potentially lead the Gold Coast towards ‘self-government’.

The complexities of the relationship between the colonial administration and the African intelligentsia were also reflected in the relationship between the colonial administration and African urban centres. Prior to WWII, colonialism sought to

⁷ Grischow, *Shaping*, 170.

⁸ Plageman, N., ‘Accra is changing, isn’t it?: Urban infrastructure, independence, and nation in the Gold Coasts Daily Graphic, 1954-57’, *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 43: 1(2010), 137-59.

⁹ MacDonald quoted in Hargreaves, J.D., ‘Toward the transfer of power in British West Africa’. In: Gifford, P. & W.M Roger Louis, eds, *The transfer of power in Africa, decolonization, 1940-1960*. Yale University, 1982 119.

protect Africans from the traumas of modernity' by preserving the past.¹⁰ In this sense, urban life had been problematic, and cities such as Tamale, were regarded largely as unfortunate by-products of colonial domination. In contrast, under the post-war 'new developmentalism', urban centres were no longer considered aberrations of African life. Sydney Caine of the Colonial Office remarked in the post-war period that 'I have a strong impression that many social evils of urbanisation are developing in Africa because of an unwillingness to admit that the urbanised, de-tribalised native has come to stay and must be properly provided for'.¹¹ In many respects, 'new developmentalism' propagated an abhorrence of the 'backwardness' of rural African social systems, and urban centres, to a large extent, represented the kind of commercial existence which post-war 'new developmentalism' was essentially all about. But there was the simultaneous fear and deep suspicion of urban centres as sites of dangerous anti-colonial sentiments. The threat of anti-colonial nationalism gaining traction was considered an urban problem. In this way, urban centres were narrowly defined; they were places in which anti-colonial nationalism festered, needed to be controlled and, if possible, contained. Conversely, spaces without a certain level of anti-colonial nationalism were not regarded as true urban centres.

Cross-referencing Cooper's analysis of 'new Developmentalism' with the historiography of the Northern Territories is, however, an uneasy exercise. Although local government did replace native authorities, the break with indirect rule in the Northern Territories is in no way as clean as Cooper's analysis suggests. In this light, Jeff Grischow challenges Cooper. Grischow argues that:

Cooper fails to observe that the shift (from indirect rule to new developmentalism) occurred in response to a previous period of development centred around indirect rule ... the focus on African community outlived the demise of indirect rule.¹²

¹⁰ Spear, T., 'Neo-traditionalism', 4.

¹¹ Sydney Caine, head of Colonial Office's economics department, quoted in Cooper, F., *Decolonisation and Africa society: The labour question in French and British Africa*. Cambridge University Press, 1996, 209.

¹² Grischow, *Shaping*, 170.

Grischow notes, in contrast to Cooper:

‘Unlike Chamberlain however, colonial officials in the 1940s remained concerned with the preservation of African community and clung to the idea of economic development without social transformation’.¹³

The resolution of this point is important. Did ‘new developmentalism’ aim to destroy African social structures for the purposes of economic transformation, or were African social structures preserved within the new colonial economic emphasis? The divergence between the argument presented by Cooper and that by Grischow probably has something to do with perspective. On the level of empire, it is difficult to refute Cooper’s argument, with wave-upon-wave of broad colonial citations in his text. But Grischow’s specific geographical focus and a number of concrete cases, most notably the Gonja Development Project, in which attempts were made to relocate 80,000 people wholesale (village by village) from the area around Zuarangu to the uninhabited area around Damango, provide a very compelling argument for the Northern Territories specifically.¹⁴ The north’s *raison d’être* within the ‘new developmentalism’ was to produce foodstuffs for the south in sufficient quantities so as to drive down food prices in the south, and thereby stabilise union and consumer action in Accra and other urban centres. The large-scale mechanisation required for the production of raw materials in order to stimulate British production was not directly relevant in the Northern Territories. The intended economic transformation in for instance, the cocoa sector, was not comparable to that intended for the production of yams. The creation of the Northern Territories Council (NTC), a council of chiefs, in 1946 is evidence of this. So too is the outcome of the Coussey Committee which ensured a large ‘traditional’ presence within local government structures in the Northern Territories (see Chapter 7). The evidence suggests that colonial structures in the Northern Territories thus did not change profoundly with the introduction of ‘new developmentalism’.

¹³ Grischow, *Shaping*, 168.

¹⁴ Hargreaves, ‘Toward’, 205.

As Grischow notes, ‘the agrarian doctrine of development remained consistent after the war, but it assumed the guise of local government rather than indirect rule.’¹⁵ The overall colonial structure continued to focus on chieftaincy as a legitimate source of authority, and land continued to be controlled communally, and Tamale, continued to exist as by-product of colonial administration.

The organisation of labour and the Accra riots of 1948

Authors of the 1970s and 1980s have noted that the protests that led to the Accra riots had started out as a show of dissatisfaction with high prices by a group of ex-servicemen in Accra.¹⁶ Although the Accra riots quickly spread to other urban centres, including Kumasi, Cape Coast and Takoradi, they did not spread to Tamale. One northern colonial official noted, that ‘up here in the Northern Territories ... public opinion is very sound and the people here ... are sensible and law-abiding and do not easily get mislead’.¹⁷ The fact that the grievances of ex-servicemen were seen as the root cause of the Accra riots (coupled with the fact that riots did not spread to Tamale) has blunted discussions about the impact of ex-servicemen in the Northern Territories, including Tamale. David Killingray concludes: ‘In the Northern Territories, ex-soldiers appear to have had little, if any, economic or political impact’.¹⁸ Similarly, P.A. Ladouceur asserts that ‘rapid demobilisation after 1945 did not have any significant effects on the North’.¹⁹ A closer examination of the Accra riots, however, one also conducted by Frederick Cooper, suggests that not ex-servicemen, but labour unions, were largely responsible for the Accra riots. Through the employment of Cooper’s reasoning for the outbreak of the Accra riots in understanding post-war Tamale, we not only reinsert ex-servicemen as a major force of change into Tamale’s historiography, we also delineate a number contours of Tamale’s socio-economic landscape. More specifically, the remainder of this chapter argues that a number of ex-servicemen settled in Tamale, and invoked

¹⁵ Grischow, *Shaping*, 170.

¹⁶ See Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 73.

¹⁷ Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 80.

¹⁸ Killingray, D., ‘Soldiers, ex-servicemen, and politics in the Gold Coast, 1939-1950’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 21: 3(Sept. 1983), 533.

¹⁹ Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 68.

profound socio-economic and socio-cultural change. The flipside of this argument (and by linking it to the Accra riots) is that Tamale's socio-economic landscape did not have powerful unions which could motivate the kind of action which, according to Cooper, initiated the Accra riots in 1948. There were no large, organised industries around which to build labour unions, such as the railway, mines or harbours, as was the case in Takoradi, Accra and Kumasi. This reveals an interesting feature of Tamale's urban process; it was one which occurred without industrialisation or an organised labour force. The following subsection also provides an important context for Chapter 7, which seeks to unpack the introduction of party politics to Tamale's in the lead up to independence.

Until Cooper's publication of *Decolonisation and Africa Society: The Labour Question in French and British Africa*, two conditions generally accounted for the Accra riots of 1948, namely ex-servicemen and high import prices. Although ex-servicemen have been given a large place in the historiography of the Accra riots (which itself is regarded as the cornerstone of Ghana's independence narrative), Cooper's account of the riots suggests that their role may have been overstated. Cooper points out that the Colonial Office refused to regard the riots as a labour problem. This, he argues, explains why the colonial response was not wage increases but political concessions, which were in fact only a response to the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), who had promoted themselves on the back of the riots, rather than inspired them. In other words, although ex-servicemen had an undeniable stake in the Accra riots, the riots had more to do with the organisation of labour in urban centres than with the presence of ex-servicemen. A number of authors on the subject appear to fall into the same trap.

Cooper notes that the Accra riots were born out of unionist action, most notably the railway and mine workers' union. According to Cooper's account, the resolution of the railway and mine strikes of 1947 occurred simultaneously with an outbreak of frustration amongst cocoa farmers who had been angered by the destruction of cocoa trees affected by swollen-shoot disease. Cooper notes, 'then came the boycott of

urban commerce, which focussed on the sorest spot of all, the acute commodity shortage and galloping inflation'.²⁰ Cooper continues:

The boycott ended on 14th of February, just when a group of ex-servicemen in Accra, encouraged by the UGCC were planning a protest march against the government's failure to help them find jobs and the difficult conditions facing urban dwellers generally. They marched on February 28, the same day that price cuts that the boycott movement had negotiated went into effect. Apparently, people in Accra mistook the agreed upon cuts in the merchant's mark up to be a 50-75 percent cut in prices, and felt cheated when they learned the reality.²¹

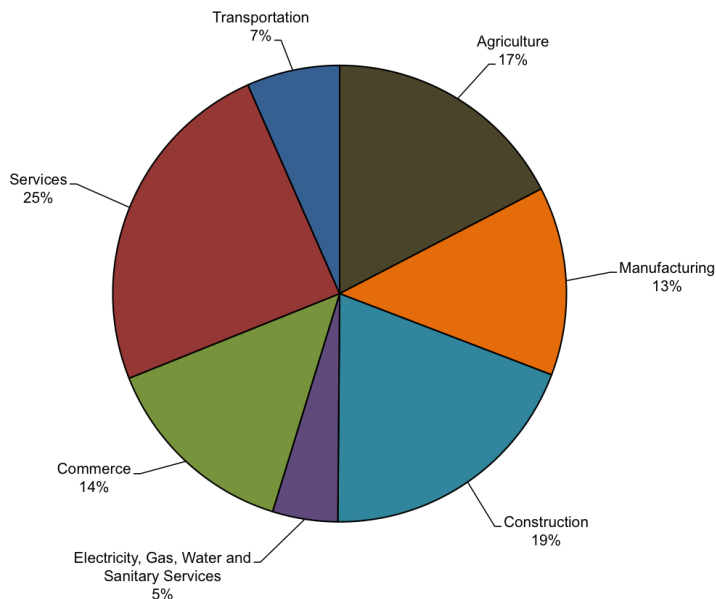
In contrast to Accra, Takoradi and Kumasi, Tamale's economy was built upon different economic foundations, and was more or less void of powerful unions. Tamale had no railway, no mines, and no large-scale industry through which labour could organise. Tamale's economy was held together by individual entrepreneurs, often 'strangers', petty-traders, a number of bar owners, foreign-owned market stalls, and the like. The charts below show a breakdown of Tamale's population by sector. Large sectors such as services, commerce and agriculture were generally not well organised. Furthermore, formal sectors such as 'Electricity, Gas, Water and Sanitary Services' were small, and even if unionised, did not serve as a major political threat. Furthermore, many of those employed in the formal sector were southerners.

That the Accra riots did not spread to Tamale was the result of the nature of Tamale's economy. More specifically, Tamale's economy did not lend itself to labour organisation. Formal employment was both small, and dominated by foreigners. Furthermore, such an analysis, introduces the possibility that ex-servicemen may have been profound drivers of change, in contrast to arguments presented by Killingray and Ladouceur about the non-impact of ex-servicemen in the Northern Territories. The following subsection discusses the impact of WWII on Tamale's economy and the impact of ex-servicemen who settled in Tamale in the period following WWII.

²⁰ Cooper, *Decolonisation*, 252.

²¹ Cooper, *Decolonisation*, 253.

6.1. Tamale: Breakdown of people employed by sector, 1960



Source: Population census of the Gold Coast and its protectorates for the year 1948

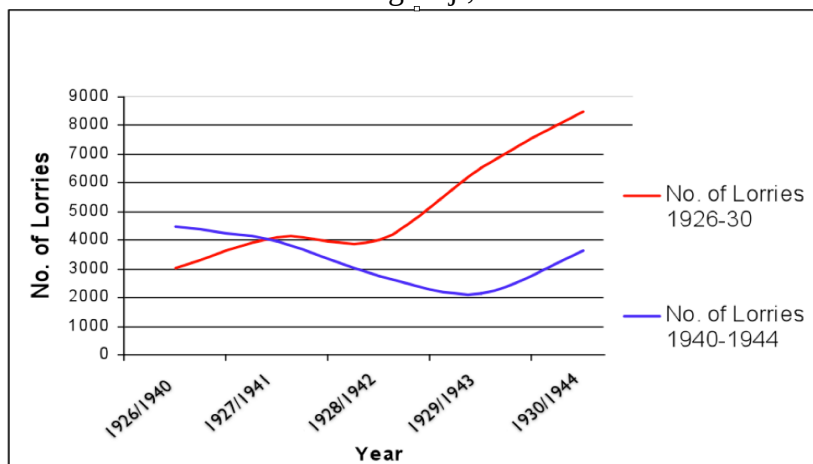
Tamale and the war years

On 26 August 1938, the Gold Coast Regiment (GCR) consisted of about 1,200 men, divided into 2 battalions: 1 GCR based at Kumasi and Accra and 2 GCR based at Tamale. The strength of 1 GCR was about 830. The second battalion, 2 GCR, was at half-strength and made up of the remainder of the 1,200 men (approx 370 men). As a response to the sentiment in Britain that war was now imminent, full mobilisation of the GCR began two days later on 28 August 1938. A month later in September 1938, H. C. Norman, an agent working in the Gold Coast for Paterson Zachonis noted that when he ‘went up to Tamale for training ... battalion was pretty much at full strength’.²² In February 1940 the War Office, which had taken control of all colonial armies, speculated that on the basis of having occupied Ethiopia, Italy was entertaining ideas of invading Kenya. In May 1940, the War Office notified officers

²² Lawler, N.E., *Soldiers, airman, spies and whisperers: The Gold Coast in World War II*. Ohio University Press, 2002, 34.

in West Africa that they, along with their troops, were destined for East Africa to support troops there. As a result, Gold Coast troops began boarding the *Orion* and the *Reina del Pacifico* on 30 May, and 5 days later on 4 June 1940, they set sail.²³

6.2. Number of lorries crossing Yeji, 1926-1930 vs 1940-44



Source: PRAAD (Accra) ADM 56/1/310

On account, in part, of the Great North Road, Tamale was largely tied to the lot of Britain. Tamale was designed and functioned as the distribution centre for north-south trade. Tamale serviced north-south trade, including vehicle repairs, accommodation, petty traders, etc. and its economy (and demographic) was a function of the volume of trade which passed through it. As an indication of slowdown of trade during the war years, in contrast to the period 1921-31, in the period 1931-48 Tamale returned its slowest demographic growth throughout the colonial period. Eades notes: '(t)he end of the war saw the economy in a depressed state. There had been an almost universal decline in real incomes during the hostilities, and the disruption of world trade had made many types of good unobtainable'.²⁴ Furthermore, motorised transportation largely dried-up as lorries,

²³ *Ibid.* 35.

²⁴ Eades, *Strangers*, 53.

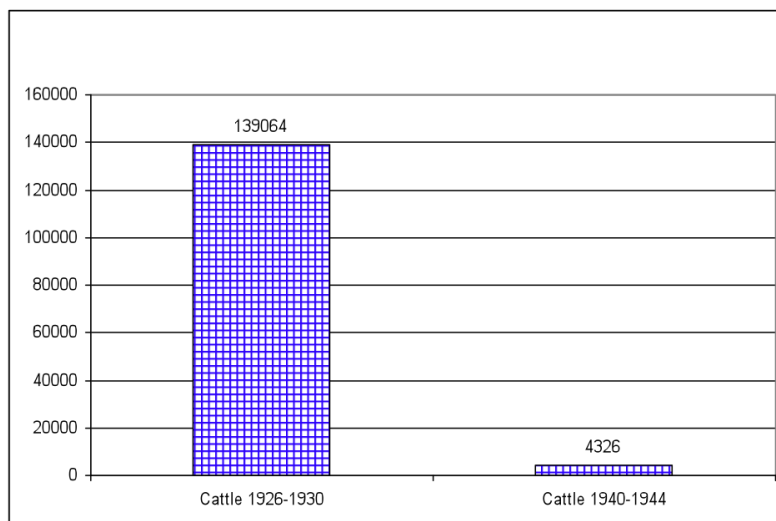
spare parts, and fuel were increasingly difficult to come by. It was noted in the Annual Report for the Northern Territories that motorised transport was ‘until 1946, virtually confined to officials’ vehicles and cars owned by government officers; there were a few dilapidated “market lorries” ... due to a shortage of tyres and spare parts’.²⁵ The number of lorries crossing Yeji Ferry during the period 1940-4 was less than for the period 1926-30. The chart below compares the number of lorries crossing Yeji ferry during the period 1925-9 with the number of lorries crossing the ferry during the period 1940-4. The number of lorries crossing the Yeji ferry during the period 1940-4 clearly fell below 1926-30 levels, suggesting also a sharp drop in trade during the war.

The volume of European salt crossing Yeji ferry in the period 1940-4 was 59.7 per cent less than for the period 1927-31, while in the case of beer, the volume had fallen 85.61 per cent below 1927-31 volumes. The most drastic drop of all came in the trade in bullocks. Meat was an integral part of the northern economy. The majority of livestock that made its way south came from the French territories to the north. The variety of bullock bred in the French territories was considered superior to that bred in the Northern Territories. Since the 1920s, the British colonial administration worked, albeit unsuccessfully, to breed a bullock comparable to that of bullocks which came from the French territories. As an experiment, four bullocks were sent from the UK for the purposes of cross-breeding, but all four died en route to Tamale. Experiments were also carried out with transporting bullocks by lorry to Kumasi, as the death rate for on-the-hoof cattle at times approached 50 per cent. On 22 June 1940, the Vichy Government took office in France, which raised serious fears about, amongst other things, the supply of bullocks. The northern border was indeed eventually closed, and the impact on the meat supply of the Gold Coast was, as predicted, profound. J. H. Stewart, Director of Veterinary Services, wrote that the Gold Coast ‘is thrown on its own resources for livestock ... and these are inadequate ... livestock was imported from French West Africa; with the ... advent of the

²⁵ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/3/222 (Annual Report for the Northern Territories, 1955).

Vichy government, these have been cut off'.²⁶ As a result, the number of bullocks crossing Yeji ferry during the years 1940-4 was very low in comparison with the late 1920s. The chart below compares the number of bullocks crossing Yeji ferry for the years 1926-30 with the period 1940-4. Between 1926 and 1930, almost 35,000 bullocks crossed Yeji ferry. Between 1940 and 1944, the figure stood at less than 5,000.

6.3. Cattle crossing Yeji, 1926-1930 vs. 1940-1944



Source: PRAAD (Accra) ADM 56/1/310

The lack of lorries, spare parts, and fuel also meant that Tamale largely lost its monopoly of the north-south trade route. Goods were no longer funnelled from the north to Tamale and then to the south by lorry, or vice versa. Tamale's demographic growth responded correspondingly: It returned its slowest demographic growth during the colonial period. In contrast to the population growth during the period

²⁶ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/3/115, (Annual Report on Animal Health, 1941-42), 'J.H. Stewart, Director of Veterinary Services'.

1921-31, when Tamale's population almost trebled from 4,000 to almost 13,000, during the period 1931-48 Tamale grew from 12,901 to only to 16,055, a year-on-year growth of 1.4 per cent, compared with 23 per cent for the ten years from 1921-31. WWII and Tamale's economic and demographic reaction to it revealed how tenuous Tamale's economic significance was: Without the lorry, Tamale threatened to return to the village it had been prior to 1907. WWII was a meagre period for the Northern Territories. Most colonial resources were directed towards the war effort, which in the case of the Northern Territories meant that labour directed to the priority industries in the south was encouraged to register as soldiers. The northern trade-economy was affected especially by the shortage of motor cars, spare parts, and fuel. Indeed, the volumes of many of the motorised trades were in 1944 significantly lower than they had been in 1925. The period saw a shift towards alternative trades, especially those which had been prominent in the period before the introduction of motorised transport, and the slowdown in trade also meant a slowdown in Tamale's demographic growth during the 17 years between 1931 and 1948. It was thus in the context of a stagnating local economy that ex-servicemen, with new skills and new expectations, and most importantly, gratuities, settled in Tamale after being discharged.

Ex-servicemen: Drivers of change in Tamale

As was the case during WWI, a significant portion of the soldiers enlisted during WWII came from the Northern Territories. Ladouceur states that 'of the 63,038 Gold Coast Africans in the British forces during the Second World War, probably a high proportion – at least half – were of Northern origin'.²⁷ This statistic is more significant once relative total populations are taken into consideration: in 1948 the total population of the south²⁸ (three million) was three times greater than the total population of the north (1 million). After the war, most soldiers returned 'home',²⁹ as Killingray and Ladouceur have noted. Both equate 'home' simply with the north,

²⁷ Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 68.

²⁸ 'The south' as defined here includes both the colony and Ashanti. According to the 1948 census, the population of the colony in 1948 was 2,217,416 and of Ashanti was 817,782. The Northern Territories, including part of Togoland, had a population of 1,076,482.

²⁹ Killingray in particular seems to define 'home' as simply being 'the north'.

and the north with agrarian livelihoods. However, the Ya Na noted that ‘they (ex-servicemen) preferred life in the bigger towns’.³⁰ Furthermore, a report on the conditions of labour stated: ‘There are, in Tamale, a considerable number of ex-servicemen who are doing nothing’.³¹ The chart below is sourced from the 1948 population census (Figure 6.3). It compares the male population, broken down by age category for Accra, Kumasi, and Tamale. It indicates that a significant number of young adults settled in Tamale directly after the end of WWII. In 1948, 3 years after the war had ended, once the war effort had been significantly reduced, 15.4 per cent of Tamale’s population was still employed in the ‘army or other military institutions’.³² As a result of both large injections of population and money, in the context of a relatively stagnant economy, not only did Tamale’s population swell profoundly – so too did inflation. The report on the condition of labour published in 1947 estimated that Tamale’s cost of living rose by 300 per cent over pre-war levels, compared with 75 per cent in Accra and Kumasi, and Tamale became the most expensive settlement in the whole of the Gold Coast.³³

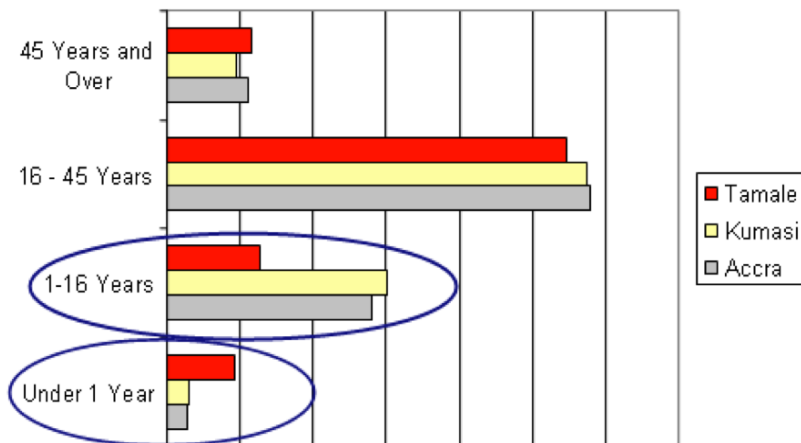
³⁰ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/3/124, (Report on the Condition of Labour). June, 1947.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Population Census for the Gold Coast and its Protectorates for the year 1948.

³³ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/3/124, (Report on the Condition of Labour), June, 1947.

6.4. Male population by age: Tamale, Kumasi, and Accra, 1948



Source: 1948 Census of the Gold Coast

In the chart above, all three cities display a fairly anticipated pattern for Gold Coast urban centres: Significant spikes for the working age of men, 16-45. Tamale, however, differs from both Accra and Kumasi in two noteworthy respects: Firstly, Tamale displays a significantly higher proportion of boys ‘under 1 year’, and secondly, it displays a relatively lower portion of males in the category 1-16 years. Because this census was taken in 1948, males in category ‘under 1 year’ were born after the war, and the relatively high number in Tamale suggests that more young adults settled in Tamale in the years immediately following the war than in Kumasi and Accra. The oldest male in the ‘1-16 years’ category would have been 13 years old when the war ended and thus not have taken part in the war. Tamale’s male population, broken down by age, is unique on account of the fact that a large number of young men settled there after the war, many of whom were ex-servicemen. Many of the ex-servicemen with northern origins undoubtedly settled in Accra and Kumasi. But Tamale was a northern town, and as a result, it is plausible that a number of ex-servicemen were inclined to settle there instead of Kumasi and Accra. Tamale was a largely Muslim settlement, and in many instances, perhaps apart from

Hausa's and Moshis, the networks of ex-servicemen were more developed in Tamale than in Kumasi and Accra. However, the numbers of ex-servicemen, and the identifiable unit they represented, must be seen in relative terms. Unlike in Accra and Kumasi, the potential for the organisation of labour in Tamale was limited, and unions either did not exist or were too small to possess any real political clout. Furthermore, the previous section has shown how meagre Tamale's local economic growth had become due to the war. It was in this context that a relatively large group of ex-servicemen, armed with gratuities that represented a real and profound injection of cash, settled in Tamale.

The most direct impact of ex-servicemen on Tamale's dormant economy was to create inflationary pressures. Although inflation was high everywhere during the years immediately following the war, Tamale was by any measure exceptional. Prices in Accra and Kumasi were estimated to have risen between 50 and 75 per cent.³⁴ In comparison, it was noted of Tamale that 'Tamale (is) one of the most expensive towns to live in the whole of the Gold Coast'.³⁵ The report listed all the trappings of a highly inflationary economy: The emergence of a 'flourishing black market', 'growth in population', 'supply shortages', and a 'large amount of money in circulation'. As a result of the Accra riots, price controls were introduced. Within the Gold Coast, that meant prices were standardised, except for a transport differential of a maximum of five per cent.³⁶ The implementation of the price controls in Tamale was difficult, at least in part due to high levels of illiteracy. In the last three months of 1948, ten people were arrested for not displaying the price-lists in their stores.³⁷ But petty traders and market women were not the only ones abusing the price controls. One government clerk laid an accusation against the UAC. He noted of the UAC, 'instead of this firm (UAC) displaying its wares (cotton prints) on the shelves, for any plebeian to purchase, (it) hides them in the wholesale and appoints a day for the sale. As a result, the buying media of the inhabitants is let

³⁴ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/3/124 (Report on the Condition of Labour), June, 1947.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/15/5 (Trade Price Controls).

³⁷ Ibid.

loose on this day'.³⁸ He continued: 'words would but beggar if I determine to describe the scene on such days; children, men and women elbow one another's way ...'.³⁹ The shortage of supplies in Tamale, along with the presence of monies generated by the gratuities of ex-servicemen, drove up prices in Tamale, despite the price controls. The gratuities received by ex-servicemen posed a structural problem to Tamale's local economy. One report noted that a 'considerable number of ex-servicemen in Tamale ... are getting rid of their money in no mean fashion ... A very large sum of money has been withdrawn from the post office in this area, estimated at about £70 per man. A lot of this has been squandered ...'.⁴⁰ The high prices invited more abuses of Tamale's price controls. Syrians were trading cloth sourced at Kumasi in Tamale at well above the statutory price.⁴¹ They sold like 'hot cakes because they cannot be got from any of the firms in Tamale'.⁴² One journalist wrote '... a piece of ordinary print costs £5 here (Tamale) although the same cloth costs 30s in Kumasi'.⁴³ Certainly, cloth was not the only good to be exploited. Flour was reportedly sold in Tamale at £2 15s per bag, while the price control for Tamale was set at 36s per bag.⁴⁴ The DC for Tamale wrote to the CCNT, saying that it may well be that 'shop assistants save available stocks of scarce goods, such as sugar, for their friends, and these people may be the ones, who ... are receiving more than their share'.⁴⁵ One reporter referred to Tamale as 'the most notorious profiteering Town in the Gold Coast'.⁴⁶ While Syrians and a number of southern businessmen were cornering the markets of a number of goods, selling much of it illegally in the

³⁸ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/15/5 (Trade Price Controls), 'Letter from 2nd Division Clerk, Commodore to CCNT 21st April, 1948'.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/3/124 (Report on the Condition of Labour), June, 1947.

⁴¹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/15/5 (Trade Price Controls) 'Letter from 2nd Division Clerk, Commodore to CCNT 21st April, 1948'.

⁴² PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/15/5 (Trade Price Controls), 'Letter from 2nd Division Clerk, Commodore to The Director of the Water Supply Department, 6th April, 1948'.

⁴³ *The African Morning Post*, 'Is the Northern Territories also part of Gold Coast?', 12th January, 1949.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/15/5 (Trade Price Controls), 'Letter from Asst: District Commissioner Wadsworth to CCNT 19th April, 1948'.

⁴⁶ *The African Morning Post*, 'Is the Northern Territories also part of Gold Coast?', 12th January, 1949.

south (under the price controls this was illegal), the colonial trading firms introduced a passbook system, whereby regular customers could deposit sums of money, usually not less than £50, and obtain goods up to the value of the deposit. Not only was this a way of lending money, the passbook system introduced by expatriate trading firms worked again to hand the market over to a select few who could afford to pay £50, many of them Yorubas. As an indication of how much £50 was, in 1949 any amount over £3 withdrawn from the post office had to be sanctioned by the Post Office Bank in Accra.⁴⁷ The result was general hostility towards the trading firms, who were accused of purposefully limiting the distribution of cloth to a few suppliers in order to take advantage of low supply levels.⁴⁸

The implications of Tamale's profiteering, inflationary, and speculative economy, driven in part by ex-servicemen was, acute supply shortages, especially of foodstuffs but also of cloth and other consumer goods. Seidu Dagomba, a Mallam in Tamale, noted in a complaint to the DC: 'We are dying in the hands of those people who seem to call themselves rich people'.⁴⁹ His claim was that people who possessed sufficient money were holding up food in order to drive up prices by further squeezing supply. He wrote that the intention of 'people who seem to be rich in Tamale' was to 'buy lots of rice, Guinea-corn and all kinds of food stuffs in Tamale and keep this food until food becomes scarce when they will retail it with double profit. This kind of food trading is bringing the shortage of food to Tamale.'⁵⁰ Irvine Gass, DC for Tamale, pointed out that 'general opinion considers that the annual shortage is entirely due to lack of rain'.⁵¹ Gass, however, disputed this explanation. He noted that '(t)here is scarcely a square yard of farmable land in Tamale uncultivated'.⁵² According to Gass, 'the problem is economic rather than climatic'.⁵³

⁴⁷ Gandah, S.W.D.K., *The silent rebel*. Sub Saharan Publishers, Ghana, 2004, 152

⁴⁸ Eades, *Strangers*, 207.

⁴⁹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/4/2 (Complaints). 'Letter by Malam Seidu Dagomba to District Commissioner, Tamale, 26th February, 1947'.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/7/2, (Informal Diary, District Commissioner, Tamale, Irvine Gass), June, 1947.

⁵² PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/7/2, (Informal Diary, District Commissioner, Tamale, Irvine Gass), April, 1947.

Gass suggested that with 'the spread of education there is an increasing flow of individuals from the rural areas to the towns, which resulted in a greater demand for food in the latter without a corresponding rise in production from the former'.⁵⁴ Gass concluded: 'A dry season aggravates the situation but receives the whole of the blame when the shortage is more acute than usual'.⁵⁵

The tension between civilians and ex-servicemen was not limited to the allocation of scarce resources. The DC for Tamale noted in April 1947 that he had 'a deputation of some 20 soldiers, placing a protest of their innocence on record after fracas between serving soldiers and the discharged soldiers with the police'.⁵⁶ There were other examples of conflicts between civilians and the military institution, of a less physical nature, but perhaps not less contested. The Tamale Youth Association, for example, complained that '(m)ost of us reside near the regimental lines and when our sheep, goats, cows, horses and fowls go out to feed and graze the soldiers follow and detained them'.⁵⁷ The DC for Tamale complained to the Certifying and Testing Officer: 'I asked you some weeks ago to stop using the Football Ground and Parade Ground for testing lorries'.⁵⁸ Such incidents were typical of Tamale during this period. These altercations between military and civilian elements were often articulated in spatial terms, but they represented a deeper structural cleavage between those who had joined the GCR and been to East Africa, Burma, or Cameroon, and experienced post-industrial society, and those who had not.

Ex-servicemen in Tamale also initiated a number of socio-cultural transformations. In 1947, the DC for Tamale noted that '(a) young man (Mr Sagoe) recently out of the Army came to town this month to start a cinema. He had his own projecting

⁵³ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/7/2, (Informal Diary, District Commissioner, Tamale, Irvine Gass), June, 1947.

⁵⁴ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/7/2, (Informal Diary, District Commissioner, Tamale, Irvine Gass), April, 1947.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/4/4, (Complaints), 'Tamale Youths Association of Ward H, letter to the Assistant District Commissioner, 15th Sept, 1951'.

⁵⁸ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/4/4, (Complaints), 'District Commissioner, Tamale to The Certifying and Testing Officer, The Gold Coast Police, Tamale, 21st December, 1951'.

apparatus and had rented some films ...'.⁵⁹ The films he had brought with him were 'Trails of the Vigilantes', 'The Naughty Nineties', 'Music for Millions', and 'Destination Tokyo'. Packham noted that Mr Sagoe 'reckons he can make money out of it in Tamale. I reckon he can too'.⁶⁰ Not only is the commercial initiative of Mr Sagoe interesting as a socio-cultural influence: The fact that such initiatives were seen to have a good chance of succeeding in Tamale says something very specific about Tamale's society, namely, that it was at least felt to possess a significant cosmopolitan component. This was of course only a superficial indication of deeper changes taking place within Tamale's social fabric, but the implications were significant. From the late 1940s, discourses began to appear which challenged a number of customary institutions. Especially the 'traditional' understanding of marriage seemed to be subject to challenges. Archival sources indicate a sharp increase in the number of matrimonial disputes in the period after the war. The war had separated men from their wives for long periods. In some instances, soldiers returned to find that their wives had found new partners. In other instances, women were dissatisfied by the financial contributions their husbands had made to their well-being during the war. It was customary that women (wives) who were left behind by soldiers despatched to Burma or East Africa were given monies by those soldiers to support themselves ('chop money'). Chop money acted also as a kind of deposit. It became the practice to reclaim 'chop money' if a woman found another man while her husband was away on duty. In September 1946, Madam Hawa Basare wrote to the DC stating that she had married her husband, Musa Fulani, 'now an ex-soldier', in 1939, and that in 1942 when he was sent to Burma, he agreed to pay her £1 per month 'chop money'. Hawa Basare claimed that when her husband returned from the war in 1946, she returned the £26 he had paid her during the war, money which she saved while working as a tailor in Tamale. In this way Hawa Basare bought herself separation from her ex-husband. She complained only when her husband came and collected many of her possessions. Interestingly, the 'buying out'

⁵⁹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/7/2, (Informal Diary, District Commissioner, Tamale, Packham), October, 1947.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

of matrimonies had emerged as accepted practice in the post-war period, as is clear from the example of Hawa Basare. There were also instances in which soldiers did not pay the 'chop money' during the war. This too had implications for marriage formulations. One case was that of Awenniyelay Grunshi, wife of Sgt. Amadu Grunshi of the 1st GCR stationed at Tamale. After Sgt. Amadu Grunshi was sent 'overseas', his wife went to Accra and admitted to engaging in prostitution in order to make ends meet. She fell pregnant and was unable to identify the father of her child.⁶¹

In June 1952, Asinah Moshie, a Moshi woman from the Moshie Zongo (Ward A), wrote to the DC for Tamale stating that,

I have entirely refused to marry Bukari who is residing at Sabonjida, Tamale, N.T.'s. I was staying with my mother called Mamunata residing at Moshie Zongo, Tamale, N.T.'s where a certain man called Warder Yamba of H.M. Prisons at Tamale saw me and he had a desire to marry me. He asked me as to whether I have a husband but I replied to the negative. I further told him that I was given to one Bukari for marriage by my father, now deceased, but in view of the fact that I was not consulted of the marriage by my father and I refused marriage ... I beg to state that I am living with Warder Yamba in Cape Coast as wife and husband, because I love him.⁶²

Conventional urban externalities also became increasingly prevalent during the 1950s. There was, for instance, a noteworthy increase in the number of alcohol-related complaints in Tamale. Emma Aryeetey, a petty trader in Tamale, wrote to the Assistant District Commissioner, Tamale on 23 April 1952, to complain:

I have a husband who is a tailor and who has taken upon himself to go drinking leaving his work and peoples things, and at anytime I call him to advice him, he takes to anger and then abuse me in the open public to the hearing of the people in our quarter.⁶³

These types of urban discourses seemed to spread beyond marriage. Al Haji Sani, of house number 87 in Ward A, complained on 27 March 1952:

⁶¹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/7/2, (Informal Diary, District Commissioner, Tamale, Irvine Gass), May, 1947.

⁶² PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/4/4, (Complaints) 'Asinah Moshie of Moshie Zongo, Letter to D.C. Tamale, N.T.'s. 14th June, 1952'.

⁶³ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/4/4, (Complaints) Emma Aryeetey, Letter to Assistant D.C. Tamale. 23rd April, 1952'.

I have the honour most respectfully beg to quit one Codjoe Fitter from my house ... he is fond of getting drunk and riding his motor cycle into the house. The house is full of children and grown up ... to protect the lives of the inmates, I am asking him through you to quit my house without further delay.⁶⁴

The number of cases involving 'theft', for instance, increased. Gass noted in 1947, shortly before being replaced by Packham, 'for the first time for years there have been a number of cases of theft from European Bungalows'.⁶⁵ Packham reported a series of fires in the Moshi Zongo. On enquiry, he was told by police that the fires were 'due to grudges among house-owners'.⁶⁶ Whether or not this assessment from the police is true or not is less important than the fact that it was regarded as a plausible suggestion. Criminality not only increased, it also became more varied. Packham heard in his court a notorious case involving a Prison Warder who was caught gambling with prisoners. There was also a case of a Dagomba trader who was 'peddling Lysol as a panacea for all ills'.⁶⁷ Tamale's urbanism also provided increasingly a refuge for those marginalised by rural traditional norms and values. The DC for Tamale noted in his diary: 'Quite a number of lunatics wandering around Tamale ... M.O. suggests sending them back to where they came from ... Not a bad idea, perhaps, except that there can be no compulsion and no means of making them stay put'.⁶⁸

There were still other manifestations of Tamale's increasingly urban character, especially in relation to the outlying rural areas. During the 1940s, people who had fallen foul of traditional norms and values sought refuge in Tamale. For instance, women accused of witchcraft, women who had been forced into marriage, often to chiefs, and those accused of insanity, sought refuge in Tamale. Women who sought the 'protection of the flag' became such a frequent sight at the base of the flagpole

⁶⁴ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/4/4, (Complaints), Al Haji Sani, House A87, Tamale. Letter, 27th March, 1952'.

⁶⁵ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/7/2, (Informal Diary, District Commissioner, Tamale, Irvine Gass), May, 1947.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

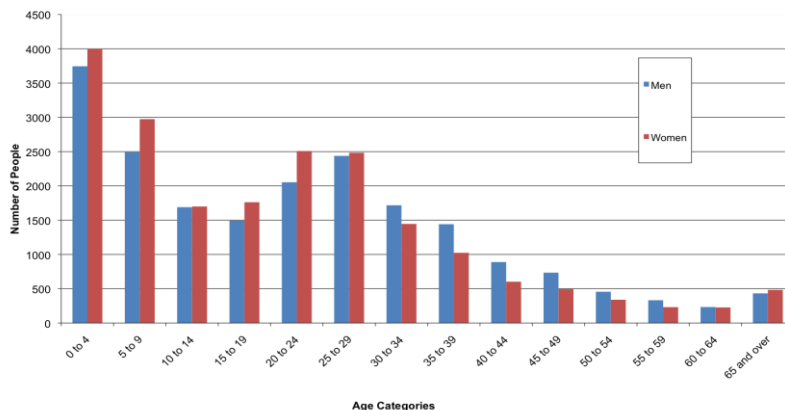
⁶⁷ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/7/2, (Informal Diary, District Commissioner, Tamale, Packham), June, 1947.

⁶⁸ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/7/2, (Informal Diary, District Commissioner, Tamale, Packham), September, 1947.

(flying the Union Jack) outside the CCNT's residence that they became referred to as 'flag girls', and there were discussions about how best to manage the influx of such cases. In Tamale, 'traditional outcasts' found at least some protection.

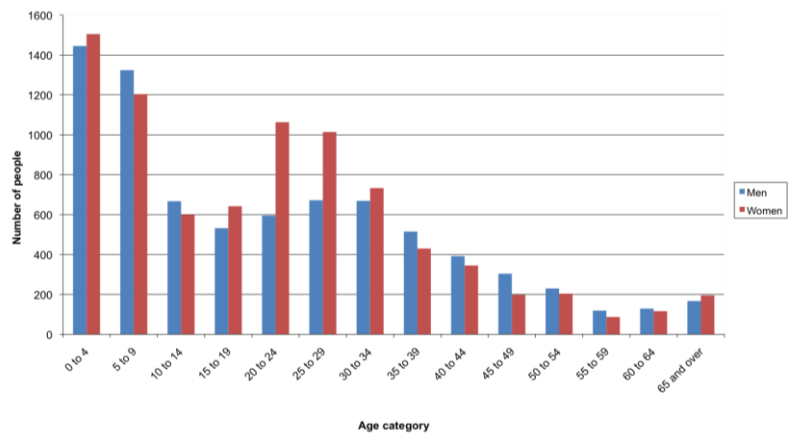
Not only was Tamale's socio-economic landscape increasingly subjected to urban pressures, Tamale's demographic growth accelerated exponentially after 1948. Whereas it had grown from a little under 12,000 in 1931, to 16,055 in 1948, it grew to over 48,000 in 1960. Whilst Tamale's population breakdown by sex shows a typical gender demographic for northern towns – more women than men between the ages of 16 and 44 on account of north-to-south labour migration by a large number of men between 16 and 44 – in the case of Tamale the disparity was far less pronounced than other northern town. Tamale had thus, by 1960, established itself firmly as a destination of northern labour.

6.5. Tamale, population breakdown, men & women, 1960



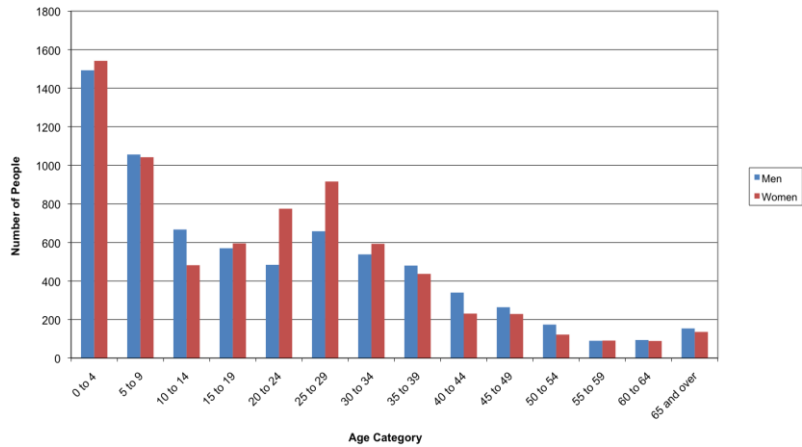
Source: Population Census of Ghana for the Year 1960

6.6. Yendi, population breakdown, men & women, 1960



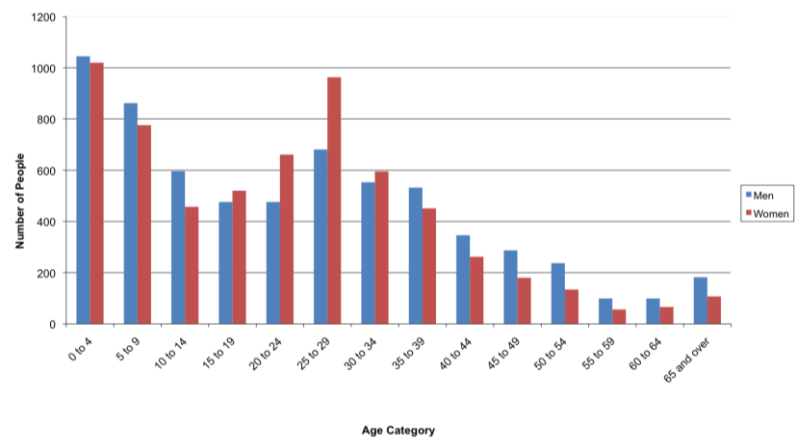
Source: Population Census of Ghana for the Year 1960

6.7. Wa, population breakdown, men & women, 1960



Source: Population Census of Ghana for the Year 1960

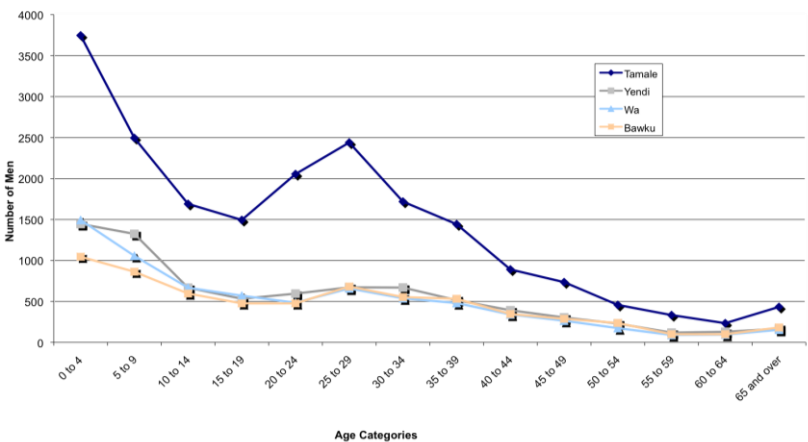
6.8. Bawku, population breakdown, men & women, 1960



Source: Population Census of Ghana for the Year 1960

Furthermore, Figure 6.10 below shows also that the spike of Tamale’s the working men (between the ages of 16 and 44) relative to other ages, and very young children (between 0-14), was more pronounced in Tamale than in other northern towns.

6.9. Tamale, Yendi, Wa and Bawku; population by age, 1960



Source: Population Census of Ghana for the Year 1960

Conclusion:

The chapter has made two interrelated arguments. The first is simply an acknowledgement of Grischow's observation that the colonial emphasis on the preservation of African social structures in the Northern Territories outlived indirect rule, which was replaced by 'new developmentalism' after WWII. This explains why the introduction of 'new developmentalism', which claimed to have little regard for African social structures, did not have the affect of integrating Tamale into the colonial political economy, as might have been anticipated. The result was that Tamale was as ill-fitting within colonial structures in the post-war period, as it had been during the period of indirect rule. The second part of this chapter argues that, largely on account of the presence of ex-servicemen, Tamale underwent a profound transformation during the immediate post-war period. By employing Cooper's analysis of the Accra riots (that they were the result of unionist action, rather than ex-servicemen), more acknowledgement may be given to the role of ex-servicemen in Tamale's historiography is possible. That ex-servicemen were not direct drivers of *political* change, should not be used to suggest that that they had no impact at all. On the contrary, ex-servicemen formed the major driver of change in Tamale in the post-war period. Furthermore, again with a view to Cooper's analysis of the Accra riots, the fact that the Accra riots, did not spread to Tamale, despite spreading to a number of other urban centres, reveals something about the Tamale's socio-economic landscape. Tamale's labour was not organised, as it was in other urban centres. There were no major industries around which labour could organise. This had implications also for the manner in which party politics was introduced to Tamale, as discussed in the following chapter.

‘... a town of little importance...’: Tamale towards independence

Introduction

This chapter is interested in developments in Tamale within the context of Ghana’s path to independence. The period 1948-60 was one in which, as in the 1920s, Tamale’s population grew significantly. Furthermore, by 1960 only 60 per cent of Tamale’s population was Dagomba.¹ Not only did Tamale’s population grow significantly, it also took on a far more ethnically heterogeneous character than hitherto. Like Tamale’s demographic, Tamale’s institutional anatomy also underwent significant transformation. The introduction of party politics and a number of ‘secular’ institutions transformed Tamale’s socio-political landscape. These changes prompted a number of political realignments in Tamale. The horizontal and vertical dimensions between the legitimacy of the Gulkpe-Na and the Dakpema, the colonial administration, Muslim and Christian elites, ethnic headmen, southerners, and finally, new ‘secular’ political apparatuses such as the Tamale Urban Council (TUC) in 1952, dimensions in which alliances were based on a mixture of personal relationships, and local and traditional objectives, created a complex, contested, and often contradictory political landscape. The complexity of

¹ Eades, *Strangers*, 57.

Tamale's political landscape, especially in relation to that of Dagbon and the north more generally, resulted in the isolation of Tamale's local politics from the broader political structures of Dagbon and the Northern Territories. Tamale's inward-looking political dynamic, this chapter argues, was exacerbated by, in some instances, tensions between local political lines, as well as national, regional, and traditional cleavages. In short, this chapter argues that Tamale's isolation from northern politics more generally is in part the result of the complex and contested internal political stratifications and alignments as they developed in Tamale, and in part the result of how the local political alliances arising therefrom related to divisions within the political structures of Dagbon and the north.

A note on political configurations in the Northern Territories

It is tempting to analyse Ghana's independence in terms of dichotomies. The NTC was, for instance, a political organ with its roots firmly entrenched in traditional political systems and thus also worked to maintain those systems. The Northern People's Party (NPP), formed in the run-up to the 1954 election, shared an almost identical leadership to that of the NTC and thus also adopted chieftaincy as a core political priority. The CPP, on the other hand, has been remembered as a party opposed to chieftaincy.² These are neat distinctions that provide at least some indication of the broad political lines of Ghana's independence. But on the local level, such broad lines were frequently undermined. As a result, the broad lines of Ghana's independence politics threaten to obscure more than they expose in a study of local politics. A number of northern chiefs supported the CPP, despite the primarily anti-chieftaincy sentiment within the CPP. In Builsa, A. Afoko, the brother of the Sandemanab, the paramount chief in Builsa, won the constituency in 1954 as a CPP candidate, largely on account of his brother's support. In southern Navrongo another CPP candidate, L. R. Abavana won owing to his influence over the chief of Navrongo, while in Navrongo North, C. K. Tadam (NPP), the brother of a sub-divisional chief, the Pagapio, won the constituency. In such instances, perhaps it

² Rathbone, R., Nkrumah & the chiefs: The politics of chiefly politics, 1951-1960. London, 2000.

may be argued, patrimonial systems overrode rational, political decision-making procedures. These kinds of political ironies were to be seen in many places across the Gold Coast and its protectorates. Furthermore, after each election, many politicians ‘crossed the floor’, further blurring the local political lines of Ghana’s independence. Politicians who championed NPP causes later became prominent members of the CPP. A large number of ‘independents’ during the 1954 elections further confuse potential dichotomies. The political patron phenomenon was clear everywhere in the Northern Territories, and certainly in many constituencies such systems had a profound impact on the election outcome. In Tamale also there is evidence of these kinds of political relations. Where possible, every attempt has been made to highlight personal linkages within the political arena. To overemphasise such relations may, however, work to discredit Tamale’s electorate. Care is thus taken not to overstate the influence of such relationships.

Institutions, actors, and events: The emergence of traditional trajectories in northern politics

Ghana’s independence from colonial rule involved a complex plethora of committees, commissions, councils, authorities, and assemblies. An overview of the birth, death, and operation of the various political apparatuses is (perhaps unfortunately) necessary in order to contextualise both northern and Tamale’s local politics in relation to independence. On a national level, this bureaucratic maze has been studied perhaps most comprehensively by Dennis Austin, while P. A. Ladouceur has done so from a northern perspective. Martin Staniland dedicates several chapters of his book, *The Lions of Dagbon*, to understanding the place of Dagbon within the nationalist politics which took Ghana towards independence. The following overview rests primarily on their work.

The birth of the Northern Territories council

The conservative, pro-chieftaincy element of the north’s political structure was born first out of the NTC, established in 1946. Following WWII, the colonial administration found calls for constitutional change increasingly difficult to ignore. Such calls found their expression specifically in demands for greater African

representation on the Legislative Assembly. In this vein, in January 1945, the Governor of the Gold Coast proposed the formation by the chiefs of a Northern Territories Joint Council, 'to settle among yourselves those problems which are common to you all and to select from amongst you representatives for the central legislature'.³ On 16 and 17 December 1946, the NTC had its first meeting. For the colonial administration, chiefs represented the 'natural rulers', and it was thus hardly surprising that the creation of a regional council, initiated by the colonial administration itself, would have an overwhelmingly chiefly character. Members of the NTC were selected by the Native Authorities – remnants of indirect rule, which, as we have seen in previous chapters, had chieftaincy as its cornerstone. The NTC was the highest 'native' institution in the Northern Territories and, in the years which followed, largely dictated the trajectory of northern involvement in the nationalist politics of independence. Unsurprisingly, it positioned itself as staunchly pro-chieftaincy. Furthermore, the leadership of the NPP, formed seven years later in 1953, was almost identical to that of the NTC. The shift from regional council to political party ensured, as mentioned previously, that northern chiefs were represented within the development of Ghana's nationalist politics. In the 1954 election, the NPP won the second-highest number of votes, behind only the CPP, and thus, in line with the British parliamentary system, formed the official opposition. This laid the foundation for the broad lines of Ghana's independence – non-chieftaincy vs. chieftaincy, and, broadly, south vs. north.

The process of liberating Ghana from colonial rule started in proper in February and March, 1948, with the outbreak of the Accra riots. The immediate causes of the riots were two inter-related issues: The plight of cocoa farmers in the areas affected by swollen-shoot disease, and the increase in real prices of imported goods. What started out as a peaceful march turned violent when police opened fire on the crowd outside Christianborg Castle, killing several protestors. In response, the residents of Accra rioted. Before long, riots broke out in other urban centres, including Kumasi. After quelling the riots, the colonial administration launched the Watson

³ Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 73.

Commission to investigate the causes of the riots. The Watson Commission found that the constitution required reform. More specifically, the Legislative Assembly of the Gold Coast was to have greater African representation. The 'Accra riots' did not affect the Northern Territories, including Tamale. The CCNT noted: 'up here in the Northern Territories ... public opinion is very sound and the people here ... are sensible and law-abiding and do not easily get mislead'.⁴ That the north, including Tamale, showed no interest in expressing severe dissatisfaction in the form of riots as the rest of the colony did, not only reveals something about the political relationship between north and south, it also had profound implications for the trajectory of northern involvement in the national political arena. Northern politics was not born out of mass civil dissatisfaction and unrest, expressed as a political statement, as was the case in the Asante and the Coast. The result was that the trajectory towards 'self-government' set out by the colonial administration was not significantly challenged within the existing colonial political apparatus. The vision of the colonial administration, as mentioned above, saw chiefs as the 'natural rulers', reflected also in the composition of the NTC.

Following the riots, the Watson Commission of Enquiry was established to look into the direct causes of the Accra riots. What was needed, it found, was a new constitution which provided for more African representation on the Legislative Council. Thereafter, the Coussey Committee was launched to set out more concrete steps in order to reformulate the constitution. The CCNT, W. H. Ingrams, asked the NTC to put forward four individuals to serve on the Coussey Committee, while the fifth would be selected by Ingrams himself, formally ending the policy of isolating the north from events in the south.⁵ Including the five Northerners, all forty members of the Coussey Committee were African. Through the Coussey Committee, the north contributed directly to the formation and content of a new constitution. Importantly for this chapter, the manner in which the north entered the national political framework was within the parameters of strong, pro-chieftaincy

⁴ Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 80.

⁵ The CCNT became a member of the Legislative Assembly in 1936, but this did not significantly alter the policy of isolating the north from developments in the south.

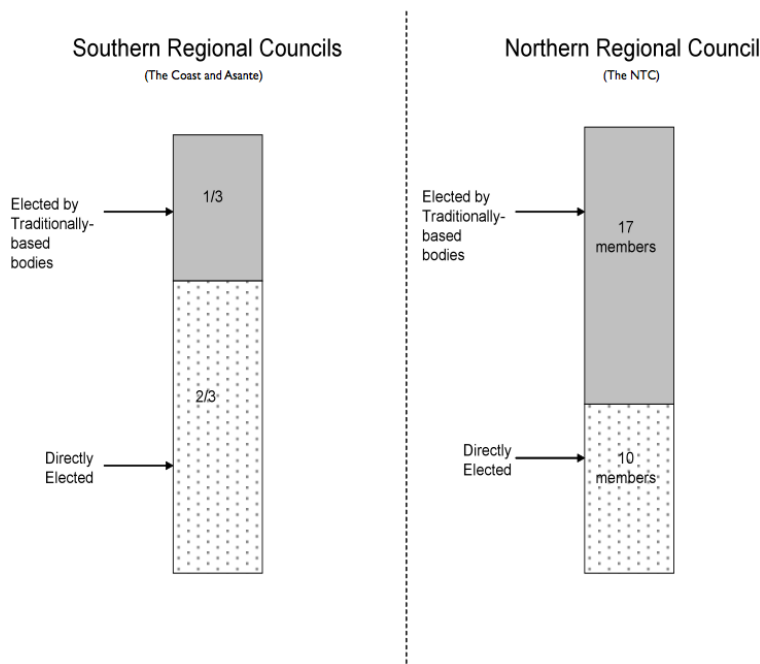
sentiments, guided initially by the NTC, an institution very much created in the vision of the colonial administration.

The Coussey committee

The fact that the northern representatives on the Coussey Committee were selected by the NTC meant, unsurprisingly, that all five had either an affiliation to chieftaincy or to the colonial administration, or to both. Two chiefs were nominated, Yakubu Tali (the Tali Na from Dagomba) and J.A. Karbo (the Lawra Na, from the North-West). The other two selected were J.A.A. Salaam, an Achimota-trained teacher, and N. Yenli, an Assistant Agricultural officer in charge of the Agricultural Training School at Tamale. Finally, Ingram selected J.A. Braimah, also a chief (the Kabachewura), from Gonja. Braimah had been clerk to the Gonja Native Authority since 1933. Three of the five northern members of the Coussey Committee were thus themselves chiefs, while the remaining two, although not chiefs, had built careers within the colonial administration, which itself had for many decades promoted chieftaincy as the natural authority of African societies.

The paradigm which came to define much of the north's involvement in national politics in the lead-up to Independence was dominated by a number of primary concerns. For the five Northern representatives on the Coussey Committee, all recommendations set forward by the members of the committee were studied within the gap between the level of development in the south compared with that of north. The northern members of the Coussey Committee were afraid to rush towards independence and argued that the gap between the north and the south needed to be closed before independence was granted. The inclusion of the north in the proceedings of the Coussey Committee thus posed a unique challenge for the committee: The committee had to find ways in which the new constitution could cater, on the one hand, to the progressive forces in the south, and on the other, the conservative sentiments which were pervasive in much of the north.

7.1. Constitution of regional councils: North vs. South



- * The chart above reveals a majority for members of the NTC elected by traditionally based bodies (grey shaded area), in contrast to southern regional councils, where only one-third of the council was elected by traditionally based bodies.

In order to incorporate northern sentiments into a constitution designed largely by and for progressive southerners, a large amount of flexibility was required. Thus, for instance, the Coussey Committee recommended the creation of regional councils, which – *except in the case of the Northern Territories* – would not be based on the existing territorial councils.⁶ The consequence was that whereas in the south the membership of the new regional councils would consist of two-thirds directly elected members and only one-third nominated by traditional elements, in the Northern Territories the regional council would consist of the seventeen members nominated by the NTC and only ten directly elected members. The members of the NTC were, as has been mentioned previously, aligned to chieftaincy. As a result,

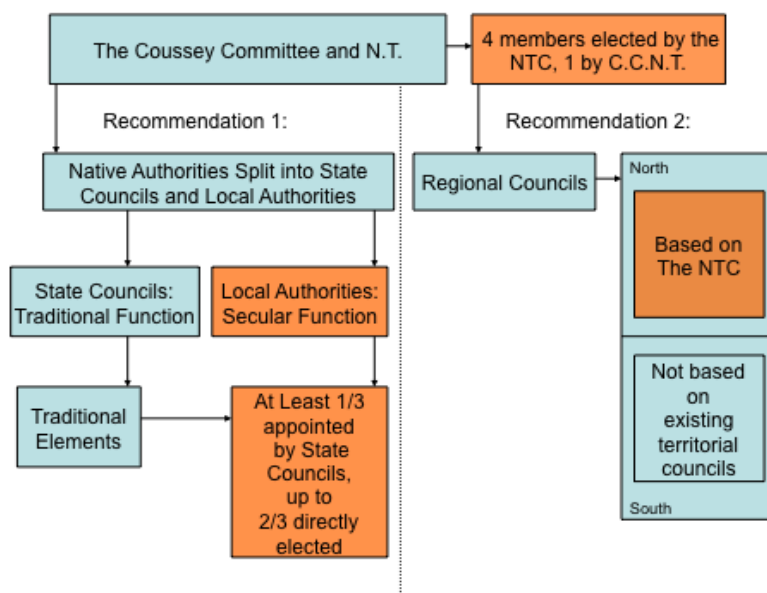
⁶ Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 74.

while in southern regional councils traditional elites held only a minority, in the Northern Regional Council such traditional elites held a 17-to-10 majority (see Figure 7.1 below). In the north, therefore, the recommendations of the Coussey Committee reasserted chieftaincy at the apex of the north's regional hierarchical structure, in contrast to the developments in the structures of southern politics. This is more evidence of Grischow's argument that the emphasis on the maintenance of African social structure outlived the demise of indirect rule in the Northern Territories.

Furthermore, the Committee recommended that Native Authorities be abolished and replaced by a system of State Councils (SCs) and Local Authorities (LAs). SCs were mandated to preside over traditional issues, while LAs would assume responsibility for municipal initiatives. *At least* one-third of the members of the LAs would be appointees of the SCs, whilst *up to* two thirds would be elected.⁷ The flexibility of the new structure in terms of the division between secular and traditional actors was part of a design which sought to allow the north to continue to sail its pro-chieftaincy course, while simultaneously allowing the south to fulfil its progressive agenda.

⁷ Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 74.

7.2. Coussey committee recommendations



- The two major recommendations of the Coussey Committee are set out in this chart. The constitution of the Northern Regional Council was a replica of the NTC, while in the south, regional councils had a directly elected majority. The split between State Councils and Local Authorities is also illustrated. Both recommendations were designed in order to cater for the conservative forces in the north and, simultaneously, the progressive forces in the south.

'The bad boys have come ... the bad boys have come'

The pro-chieftaincy dominance of politics in the Northern Territories would have gone unchallenged had it not been for the simultaneous establishment of a CPP branch in Tamale in 1948. The CPP in Tamale challenged the dominant pro-chieftaincy elements in the Northern Territories. As Paul-Andre Ladouceur states of the late 1940s:

... two very different types of politics were evolving in the Northern Territories, one based on the colonial administrative structure of indirect rule, the other derived from and allied with the nationalist politics of Southern Ghana. The former received strong encouragement and endorsement from the administration,

while the latter, outside of the framework of the official politics was either ignored or subject to harassment and intimidation.⁸

If the traditionally focused NTC embodied the former of Ladouceur's 'types of politics' that emerged in the Northern Territories in the late 1940s, Ebenezer Adam perhaps embodied the latter. Ebenezer Adam was born in Tamale, the son of a carpenter working for the Public Works Department in Tamale. In 1939 Ebenezer Adam completed his penultimate year at Achimota College. On his journey back to Tamale for the school holidays, he stopped at Kumasi for two days to visit family. When he returned to Tamale, Ebenezer Adam reflects, "people were saying, 'the bad boys have come ... the bad boys have come'".⁹ For reasons he did not yet know, he was ordered to appear in front of the Education Officer. He was told that his grant was to be rescinded on the grounds that he was "visiting Kumasi without a permit".¹⁰ Adam was able to complete his schooling at Achimota as a result of private funding he had secured with the assistance of the headmaster of Achimota.

How much this confrontation between Adam and the colonial administration had to do with the anti-colonial politicisation of Adam is not clear, but in the years which followed, a discernable resentment towards colonial domination manifested itself in a political career largely dedicated to decolonising the Gold Coast. In 1940, after completing his training at Achimota, Adam was sent to Kumasi to teach. He joined the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC) in 1947 and in 1948, on the outbreak of the Accra riots, he was sent to Tamale to open a branch of the UGCC. Adam remembers of his arrival at Tamale that "although individuals knew of the UGCC, there was no party presence when I arrived in 1948".¹¹ He went in search of a support-base. Clerks who worked for the colonial administration, generally the most educated social strata in Tamale, almost all southerners, were not permitted to join political parties and were thus of little use to Ebenezer Adam. Adam thus assembled a series of "Fante, Ga, and other southern businessmen".¹² in Tamale and proposed

⁸ Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 83.

⁹ Interview with Ebenezer Adam, Tamale, March, 2010.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Interview with Ebenezer Adam.

¹² Ibid.

the opening of a branch of the UGCC in Tamale, with their support. Adam became the secretary of the new branch, while his uncle, R.S. Iddrissu, a transport owner also based in Kumasi, was elected chairman. An interesting feature of the UGCC branch in Tamale, and later the CPP branch, is that early on, although its leadership (Ebenezer Adam and R.S. Iddrissu) were very much local in terms of Tamale, the majority of its support came from foreigners. Both Adam and Iddrissu supported the new party founded by Kwame Nkrumah, the Convention Peoples Party (CPP), in 1949, and both transferred to and became prominent members of the CPP branch in Tamale.

7.3. 'Types' of politics in the Northern Territories and Tamale

Type 1	Type 2
Based on the Structures of Indirect Rule, supported by the colonial administration, pro-chieftaincy	An outcome of nationalist political thinking in the south, outside 'officialdom', as defined largely by the colonial administration, anti-chieftaincy
Northern Territories Council	United Gold Coast Convention
Mamuni Bawumia, Yakubu Tali (later the Tolon Na), J.A. Nagba, J.A. Braimah	J.H. Allassani (after 1951), R.S. Iddrissu, Ebenezer Adam, Ayarna Imoru
Northern Peoples Party	Convention Peoples Party
Dakpema	Gulkpe Na

- * The two types of politics set out by Ladouceur. The table shows the contrasting dominance of each 'type of politics' in the Northern Territories generally (left-hand side), and in Tamale (right-hand side).

The Ewart committee

Following the conclusion of the Coussey Committee in November 1949 and the acceptance of the recommendation to increase the African representation on the Legislative Council, an election for the Legislative Assembly needed to be held at the earliest possible date. The Ewart Committee was set up with the mandate of

working out the technicalities of the 'delimitation of constituencies and the establishment of voting procedures, qualifications and disqualifications of voters and candidates etc'.¹³ The Ewart Committee was a working committee of the Legislative Council, and as no northerners were, at that stage, members of the Legislative Assembly, the north was not represented on the Ewart Committee. The Ewart Committee recommended that whereas in the south, direct elections were to be held, in the north, MPs would be elected by an electoral college. As a result, previous authors associate the Ewart Committee with a disenfranchising of the north.¹⁴ That the Ewart Committee disenfranchised the north is technically true – northerners were not given the opportunity to elect their national representatives directly – but the recommendations set out by the Ewart Committee for the north were directly in line with what the five northern members of the Coussey Committee had argued: owing to a general lack of education, northerners were not in state to elect MPs directly, and for the foreseeable future, chiefs would thus act as custodians of the people. In this vein, the Ewart Committee noted that in the north 'there appeared to be universal support for nomination'¹⁵ by an electoral college. The electoral college would consist of the 17 members of the NTC and another 104 members, who were chosen on a population basis by the Native Authorities. The Chief Regional Officer (who replaced the CCNT) recommended that the new district council areas be made so as to correspond with the areas of the traditional units of Native Authorities. Furthermore, each of the new Local Authorities corresponded directly with that of Subordinate Native Authorities, just as under indirect rule. Finally, in Dagbon, the Ya Na was the president of the Yendi division's Local Authority, which according to Staniland, 'symbolised the continuing authority of chieftaincy'.¹⁶ The only challenge to the electoral college came from the Tamale branch of the CPP. They submitted a memorandum which indicated that they were vehemently against nomination by an electoral college and in favour of direct elections because, they felt, the process by which the electoral college was

¹³ Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 75.

¹⁴ See, for instance, Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 75.

¹⁵ Austin, D., *Politics in Ghana, 1948-1960*. Oxford. 1964, 232.

¹⁶ Staniland, *Lions*, 128.

constituted was strongly biased in favour of chieftaincy.¹⁷ But outside of Tamale the CPP had little traction. As a result, the CPP memorandum could be, and was, simply ignored. Both Ebenezer Adam and R.S. Iddrissu boycotted the nomination process. Ebenezer Adam complained: That, “They did not want any CPP people involved in the electoral college”.¹⁸

The electoral college was mandated to nominate the 19 northern seats on the Legislative Council. Thirty-four candidates challenged for the 19 available seats. The nominations of the electoral college took place largely along ethnic lines, and selections were made with more due regard for personalities than political convictions. Although the CPP did not officially put any candidates forward, two CPP members ran of their own accord (see list below). One of the two CPP candidates, E. A. Mahama, tied for nineteenth place with Seidu Wala, who was the Katua-Na of Katua, but the CCNT cast the deciding vote in favour of the Katua-Na. The Muslim Association Party (MAP) representative for Tamale, Alhadji Osumanu, tied for tenth place, with 36 votes.

¹⁷ Austin, *Politics*, 232.

¹⁸ Interview with Ebenezer Adam.

7.4. Northern candidates for legislative assembly

Candidates	No.of votes
Yakubu Tali	73
J. H. Allassani	67
J. A. Braimah	55
Mumumi Koray	54
J. B. Harruna	48
L. R. Abavana	46
A. Afoko	42
S. D. Dombo	39
Sumani Bukari	36
Alhadji Osumanu	36
Abudu Mumuni	35
Ayeebo Asumda	34
Jambaidu Awuni	33
Bukari Yakubu	32
Ayarna Imoru	31
J. A. Ayinibisa	29
Bagamsa Dimongso	29
Alidu Kanton	29
Seidu Wala	28

* A list of the 34 men elected by the electoral college to represent the Northern Territories in the Legislative Assembly.

Eight of the 19 elected members were chiefs in their own right. Five were prominent members of the NTC. The remaining members were teachers in native authority schools. They were elected largely because they were literate, but they did not necessarily possess any interest in national politics. The result of the political trajectory of the north was that after 1951 (as before), official northern politics was dominated by pro-chieftaincy elements. This outcome was the result of a chain of events starting with the formation of the NTC in 1946, but was greatly aided by the fact that in 1951 the north did not hold direct elections like Asante and the Coast, but relied on an electoral college whose constitution was based on Native Authorities (each one presided over by a chief, since the introduction of indirect rule in 1930) and the NTC (a council created on the initiative of the colonial administration and based on chiefly systems).

The 19 nominated northern members of the Legislative Assembly were seen initially to represent a united block, who broadly took up the same positions as the northern members of the Coussey Committee had done. The priority issues of the northern members of the Coussey Committee continued as the priority issues of the northern block in the Legislative Assembly. The northern block saw itself as essentially neutral, not aligned to any party; they considered their role as being the custodians of northern interests and thus to support an organisation which furthered those interests. Nkrumah was encouraged by the British Government to include the north in his cabinet because it was felt that to select only CPP members threatened to create northern hostilities and perhaps, in the extreme, secessionist tendencies. As a result, J. A. Braimah was appointed to the cabinet as Minister without portfolio, whilst J. H. Allasani became his Ministerial Secretary. Despite his nomination to a CPP-dominated cabinet, J. A. Braimah continued to assert in the assembly that he and other northern members of the Legislative Assembly would continue to adopt a neutral position regarding party politics.

Thus, while Nkrumah and other CPP politicians based their program around independence at the soonest instance ('Independence Now'), the northern block under Braimah continued to assert concerns about the widening economic and social development gap between north and south as a result of rushing towards independence. J. A. Braimah, who had subsequently been made Minister of Communications and Works, addressed the Legislative Assembly, warning that

Those who would like to insert such a date ... they will be paving the gloomy path of national suicide; they will be driving a wedge between north and south; they will be sounding the death-knell of national unity and destroying the hard won confidence of the north ...¹⁹

The issue of chieftaincy continued to be of fundamental interest to the northern block, although at times it was simply taken for granted because each of the 19 northern members of the Legislative Assembly had found his prominence, directly or indirectly, in the traditional system developed during the colonial period. Despite

¹⁹ Braimah, J.A., Address to the Legislative Assembly, July, 1953. In: Metcalfe, G.E., *Great Britain and Ghana, Documents of Ghana History, 1807-1957*. UK, 1964, 717.

the contrast of the political sentiments of the northern Members of the Legislative Assembly MLAs on their priority issues with CPP-based nationalist politics, CPP members continued to exert pressure on the northern MLAs to join the CPP party and found that some younger members of the northern block, especially amongst peoples where colonially endorsed chieftaincy had not worked in their favour, such as the Kusasi, were receptive to such invitations. Six of the 19 northern MLAs were soon CPP members, dividing the unity of the northern block within the Legislative Assembly. But this was not considered to be necessarily problematic by the northern block in the Legislative Assembly. What in the end broke the back of the idea of northern unity was ironically an integral part of its original existence: The Northern Territories railway.

The question of the Northern Territories railway, laid to rest by the colonial administration in the early 1930s, had been resurrected through the NTC. J. A. Braimah had put the suggestion of the Northern Territories railway to the cabinet, who accepted it without much fuss and voted ten million pounds to the project. The immediate response of the northern MLAs was to support such a railway. However, when the route of the proposed railway came to be discussed, opinions amongst northern MLAs differed. Three routes were proposed: one from Kumasi through Tamale to Navrongo; Another further west through Kintampo and Damongo; and another through Bimbilla and Yendi to Bawku. Each of the Northern MLPs supported the railway which passed closest to the area from which he came. The lack of consensus over the route the railway was to take caused the project to be shelved for 15 years. In the meantime, the Volta Dam became an increasingly interesting proposition for Nkrumah, and resources voted for the railway were redirected. Instead, the existing Kumasi-Tamale road was tarred, and work was begun on a new road from Kumasi through Kintampo to Tamale. But this was considered sparse compensation for the abandonment of the railway project. The question of the railway route exposed the illusion of the northern unity that the northern block had hitherto propagated. The implications of the railway split created new hostilities within the northern block, which led to other political frictions. When the question of the timing of independence arose again, the northern MLAs who

were also now CPP members pushed explicitly for independence sooner rather than later, while others such as J. A. Braimah, continued to caution against a hasty move towards independence. If the northern block had previously considered the CPP with suspicion, it increasingly saw the CPP as an outright threat and treated it with hostility. The increasing strain between the hard core of the northern block and the CPP caused Nkrumah and the Governor to schedule a meeting with the NTC and a number of northern traditional leaders in Tamale in May 1953. The purpose was to discuss how the path to independence was to proceed. Prior to the meeting, two memoranda were issued by prominent northern MLAs, one by J. H. Allasani with a conservative tone and another by Ayarna Imoru, by now a staunch CPP member, calling for immediate independence. The NTC placed its hope in the British to fulfil their obligations of 'protection', as set out by earlier treaties. But the Governor was quick to dismiss such expectations. Essentially, the game was up, and the northern block and the NTC had to concede that independence would come sooner, rather than later.

The formation of the NPP

The formation of the NPP out of existing NTC structures meant a departure from a number of fundamental illusions. As Ladouceur notes: 'Gone were the days of aspiring for neutrality in the Assembly, striving only to promote Northern interests, with no alignments with parties in the south'.²⁰ As the relationship between the northern block and the northern CPP-members became increasingly unworkable, the idea of a northern political party was mooted by MLAs aligned to the NTC. The NTC was not a political party, and it was felt that northern interests needed to be represented in the upcoming elections in 1954. As a result, in April 1954, the Northern People's Party (NPP) was established in Tamale with a leadership which came very close to matching that of the NTC. It set out, originally, to act as a pressure group, to defend northern interests. It aimed primarily to have the economic gap with the south closed before any form of self-government took place. It consciously attempted to aggregate all northern interests, electing a Dagau as

²⁰ Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 143.

National Chairman, a Mamprusi as Vice-Chairman and a Dagomba as General Secretary.²¹ Despite the short period between the formation of the NPP and the 1954 elections, the NPP-controlled seats (independent NPP sympathisers and the MAP, a staunch pro-NPP organisation) won more than 60 per cent of the northern vote, while the CPP won 35.1 per cent. The CPP thus controlled 9 of the north's 26 seats, against the NPP's 17. Although the 35 per cent won by the CPP represented a fairly good showing, the NPP was in firm control of most of the Northern Territories. Ironically, the 1954 election result threatened to be too good for the NPP. The Asante-based Ghana Liberation Party, which the NPP leadership held in high regard, had won only one seat. After the CPP, the NPP had the most votes and was suddenly confronted with being the official opposition party. As the NPP was born out of those who wanted to represent northern interest in parliament from a neutral political position, the step to official opposition party was indeed large. The NPP, angered by the Governor's recommendation to reject the position of official opposition, accepted.²²

During the period 1954-6, in which the NPP sat uncomfortably in the role of official opposition, the political landscape changed significantly, especially with the formation of the National Liberation Movement (NLM). The NLM was born out of disgruntled Asante cocoa farmers who blamed the CPP for the fixing of cocoa prices, despite the sharp increases in global cocoa prices over the period. The NLM soon received the political and financial backing of the Asantehene. Politically, the NLM sought to create a federal system for the new independence structures. The federal emphases of the NLM appeared to be fundamentally contradictory to the demands of the NPP, making an alliance between the two parties unhandy. Furthermore, unlike the NPP, the NLM were not at all opposed to a swift move towards independence. The Togoland Congress, a party who lobbied for Togoland to be re-united with French Togo, also joined the opposition alliance, further

²¹ Kelly, B. & R.B. Benning, 'Ideology, regionalism, self-interest and tradition: An investigation into contemporary politics in Northern Ghana', *Africa*, 77: 2(2007), 7.

²² Nkrumah's refusal to recognise the NPP as the official opposition when the Assembly reconvened in July 1954 so angered the NPP leadership that they decided to take up the position of official opposition.

reducing the points of contact between parties within the alliance. For the NPP, within the alliance, federalism meant that money earned in the cocoa and gold sectors in Asante would remain in Asante, while the presence of the Togoland Congress in the alliance threatened to divide Dagbon and Mamprussi, two very powerful northern kingdoms. It appeared as if what bound the alliance was the pervasive anti-CPP, anti-Coast sentiment, which is not a good basis for a constructive partnership.²³ However, the NPP regarded the federal system as an extreme version of a political structure that safeguarded local interests by inhibiting the regional power of central government, which spoke directly to the leadership of the NPP. An alliance with the NLM would also rebut CPP allegations that the NPP could not be considered a true political party because it had only a regional following. To the NLM, the NPP was an interesting partner because they held significant representation in the Legislative Assembly. On the grounds that the NLM promised a development fund for the north, outside the federal system, the NPP agreed to an alliance with the NLM and the Togoland Congress.

The alliance between the NLM, the NPP, and the Togoland Congress significantly changed the national and regional political debate. The change in the political landscape prompted a call for new elections, one condoned by the British authorities. New elections were to be held in December 1956. The NPP set itself a target of controlling 20 of the 26 northern seats, an improvement of 5 over the 1954 result (in 1954 the NPP controlled 15 seats by winning 12 seats and controlling 5 more through 4 NPP-independents and the MAP, and losing 2 seats where politicians crossed the floor to the CPP). To the CPP, the north was no longer an unknown entity as it had been in 1954 when it held its first direct election. Far more attention was thus given to the local level than had been the case in 1954. In the event, the CPP won 3 formerly NPP-controlled seats during the 1956 election (Bawku, Tallensi, and the seat of the Tamale-Nanton constituency). But the CPP also lost 3 CPP-controlled seats (Tumu, Bolgatanga, and Savelugu). The result of the 1956 election was thus the same as that of 1954: CPP controlled 11 seats, while

²³ Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 133.

the NPP controlled 15. In total, the NLM won 12 seats, and the Togolese Congress won 2. In total, the NLM/NPP/Togoland Congress alliance won 29 seats, against the CPP's 71.

7.5. Gold Coast: Election outcome, 1956

<i>Party</i>	<i>No. of votes</i>	<i>% of votes</i>	<i>No. of seats (104)</i>
Convention People's Party (CPP)	398,141	57.10%	71
Northern People's Party (NPP)	72,440	10.39%	15
National Liberation Movement (NLM)	145,657	20.89%	12
Togoland Congress (TC)	20,352	2.92%	2
Muslim Association Party (MAP)	11,111	1.59%	1
Federation of Youth (FY)	10,745	1.54%	1
Independents	38,811	5.57%	2

Source: African Elections Database

To Nkrumah and the CPP, having attained a reasonable majority, there were no more obstacles to freeing Ghana from colonial rule. A motion to call on the British Government to grant independence was put before the Legislative Assembly. Both the NLM and the NPP protested, boycotting the motion, which was subsequently passed with a majority of 72 to none. To no avail, the alliance sent a delegation to London to protest against the manner in which CPP was taking the Gold Coast to independence. But the game was up. Independence would be granted to Ghana, under the leadership of the CPP, with the NLM, NPP, and Togoland Congress alliance as the opposition. On 6 March 1957, outside the Chief Commissioner's residence on Watherston Road in Tamale, the Union Jack was lowered for the last time, and replaced by the flag of independent Ghana.

Establishing politics in Tamale and Dagbon

The subsection above has delineated the broad lines of northern involvement in Ghana's independence for the period 1946-57. We noted earlier Martin Staniland's observation: 'the degree to which Tamale kept to itself politically is an interesting feature of northern politics'.²⁴ There were two reasons for Tamale's political isolation: The first was that the complexity of Tamale's institutional anatomy created a political matrix which was introspective; the second was that Tamale's political elite were to some extent forced to look inwards because of the tension between internal and external alliances.

Delineating Tamale's political landscape

Why did the CPP lose the Tamale-Nanton in the 1954 election by a landslide, and how were they able to manifest themselves in Tamale so as to win, also by a landslide, the 1956 election? The reasons for Tamale's political swing are fourfold: Firstly, cleavages within the CPP leadership of the Tamale branch, which split the CPP in the 1954 elections, were resolved for a brief period during the 1956 elections; secondly, the death of the Nanton Na, a staunch supporter of the conservative Muslim Association Party (MAP), and the succession of his son, a supporter of the CPP; thirdly, the CPP managed to gain control of the TUC and exploited its municipal power for political gains; and fourthly, Tamale's electorate was undergoing changes which inclined it more towards the anti-chieftaincy rhetoric of the CPP, especially amongst its growing numbers of non-Dagomba residents. The following subsection is concerned with each of these political determinants.

Before attempting to deconstruct Tamale's local political landscape, it should be noted that the fact that Tamale kept to itself politically did not mean that Tamale was itself not politicised. On the contrary, Tamale was the stomping ground of the north's political elite. The Tamale branch of the CPP was by some distance the largest in the Northern Territories, with a membership estimated to be somewhere between two and three thousand in the early 1950s. The Northern People's Party (NPP), the largest opposition party in the Gold Coast after the 1954 election, was

²⁴ Staniland, *Lions*, 217, footnote 26.

formed in Tamale. The NPP had its first delegates' conference in Sabongida in Tamale in April 1954, where Mumuni Bawumia, a founding member of the NPP, complained of being slapped by Ayarna Imoru, a prominent northern member of the CPP. Imoru was restrained by police. Furthermore, at a rally for the inauguration of the NPP held near the Dakpema's palace in Tamale, CPP leaders such as Ayarna Imoru, Ebenezer Adam, and R.S. Iddrissu threw stones at the delegates in order to prevent the inauguration taking place. Once again, police were required to intervene. But such political confrontations in Tamale had at their centre questions about the Northern Territories generally. The politics of Tamale existed separately from the larger discussion about the Northern Territories. This might not have been peculiar had Tamale not been the economic centre of the Northern Territories and by some distance the largest city. But to construe Tamale as being somehow a-political is a profound misrepresentation.

In 1954, the Tamale-Nanton constituency was won by the MAP with Alhadji Osumanu, the elder statesmen of the party, winning the seat. He defeated R.S. Iddrissu of the CPP by a landslide. The MAP manifesto reaffirmed the traditional alliance between Muslims and chiefs and declared: 'Chieftaincy shall be restored to its ancient dignity'.²⁵ As staunch supporters of chiefly institutions, the MAP was anti-CPP. Alfai Larden, chairman of the Kumasi branch of the MAP, wrote to the *Ashanti Pioneer* newspaper: 'True Moslems can never be friends with the CPP'.²⁶ The newly formed NPP did not run in Tamale owing to an agreement with the MAP. The MAP and the NPP occupied the same political ground, and the NPP felt that if they were to enter the race in Tamale, they would divide the conservative vote, opening the way for a CPP victory. Mumuni Bawunia writes of the 1954 election results:

²⁵ Austin, *Politics*, 232.

²⁶ Ibid.

The 1954 general elections gave the Northern People's Party 17 out of the 26 seats including the independent candidates of Yakubu Tali, J.A. Bramaih, C.K. Tedom, Alhaji Osumanu & W.A. Amoro who were sponsored by the party.²⁷

The (erroneous) idea in the mind of this high-ranking NPP member that Alhaji Osumanu was an NPP sponsored independent candidate is indicative of the relationship between the MAP and the NPP.

Whereas in the 1954 elections the conservative MAP defeated the CPP by a landslide in the Tamale-Nanton constituency, in the 1956 elections the CPP won, also by a significant margin. The outcome of the 1956 election was thus almost the reverse of the 1954 election: in 1954 the MAP won over 60 per cent of Tamale's vote, and R.S. Iddrissu only 39.6 per cent, while in the 1956 election Iddrissu won 59 per cent of the vote, and the MAP only 36 per cent.

Given the relatively large CPP presence in Tamale, it is noteworthy that the CPP lost so dramatically in 1954 to a party even more opposed to the CPP than the NPP. Tamale's swing has been mentioned, albeit in passing, by previous authors.²⁸ Martin Staniland argues that Osumanu Alhadji was able to win the 1954 Tamale-Nanton constituency on account of being supported by the chief of Nanton, the Nanton-Na Sulemana, a staunch supporter of the MAP. Staniland writes: 'Nanton-Na (who died in 1954) was a firm supporter of the MAP and it was largely through the accession of Nanton votes that Osumanu defeated Iddrissu'.²⁹ Staniland notes in a footnote that the Nanton-Na's son, Tia Sulemana, who succeeded his father as chief, was, in contrast to his father, a staunch CPP supporter. The lack of endorsement in the 1956 election was responsible for the MAP's defeat by the CPP. Staniland points also to 'factionalism' within the Tamale branch of the CPP. According to Staniland, Ebenezer Adam was head of a 'youth faction' within the Tamale branch, which included Yahaya Iddi, the brother of the Gulkpe-Na. R.S. Iddrissu, however, was wealthier and better connected at the party headquarters in Accra. R.S. Iddrissu managed to get Ebenezer Adam excluded from the party slate in the 1954 elections

²⁷ Bawunia, M., *A life in the political history of Ghana; Memoirs of Alhji Mumuni Bawumia*. Ghana, 2004, 50.

²⁸ See Staniland, *Lions*, and Austin, *Politics*.

²⁹ Staniland, *Lions*, 141.

and Ebenzer Adam and his friends refused to campaign for R.S. Iddrissu, who subsequently lost the Tamale-Nanton constituency. A *modus vivendi* was established whereby Ebenzer Adam ran the TUC whilst R.S. Iddrissu ran the party.³⁰ The fact that almost the total number of votes counted for the 1956 election was almost 30 per cent more than the total counted during the 1954 election (3,706 in 1954 and 4,810 in 1956) may suggest that some CPP members boycotted the earlier election, although the MAP also lost a significant number of votes, and it may also have been the case that since the 1954 elections were the first, the number of unregistered residents of Tamale was significantly higher than in 1956. Nonetheless, in a similar vein to Staniland, Dennis Austin argues that the swing was the result of a by now well-documented feud between Ebenzer Adam and R.S. Iddrissu. According to Austin, this feud split the party and, consequently, the CPP electorate, opening the way for Alhadji Osumanu's victory. Austin writes:

It is doubtful whether either Ebenezer Adam or R.S. Iddrissu could have won in Tamale in 1954 without the support for each other which each refused to give. So Alhadji Osumanu got in on a MAP/NPP ticket. In 1956 however, when the CPP was more united and the local quarrel between Iddrissu and Ebenezer Adam had been patched up, Iddrissu defeated Alhaji.³¹

There were more reasons still for Tamale's swing between 1954 and 1956. Significantly, the emergence of the TUC as a CPP-dominated institution meant that the CPP was able to exert significant influence over the everyday authority in Tamale. This drastically and increasingly changed Tamale's political landscape. Finally, chieftaincy increasingly struggled to cope with the complexities of urban life in Tamale. The first of the reasons why chieftaincy in Tamale struggled to assert itself over the new apparatus is the subject of Chapter 4, and it is superfluous to re-develop the arguments here. However, the second two reasons – the TUC and urban life – require specific attention.

³⁰ Staniland, *Lions*, 141. See footnote 26.

³¹ Austin, *Politics*, 222, footnote 26.

Chieftaincy and politics in Tamale; ‘nobody will break down his own house to make it possible for somebody to build his’³²

Bayart’s ‘reciprocal assimilation of elites’³³ has been employed by previous authors to describe the ‘fusion of elites’³⁴ in the Northern Territories.³⁵ This fusion occurred not only within the burgeoning northern intelligentsia but also across different strata, between members of the intelligentsia and traditional elites and, of course, the colonial administration itself. But such fusions also had limits at the local level, between the Gulkpe-Na and the Dakpema. Such a fundamental polarisation could not be overcome through Bayart’s process. The process of fusion was not fluid at all levels, and this meant inconsistencies were created in some instances between alliances on the local, regional, and national levels. The following subsection is concerned with alignments (fusions) both between and across the tradition/non-traditional political divide in Tamale, at the local, regional, and national level.

Since the formation of the NTC in 1946, it became clear that not chiefs, but the sons of chiefs and those strongly aligned and associated with chiefly institutions would represent the north in the national political apparatus. Such ‘representatives’ were pushed forward and ‘sponsored’ by chiefs and acted on behalf of the chiefly classes. There were exceptions – most notably the Tolon-Na, who served as a prominent figure within regional, national, and traditional politics – but generally speaking, chiefs were not directly involved in national politics. After 1951, with the march towards independence in full swing, this tendency expressed itself as a pretence of political neutrality on behalf of chiefs. Despite the thin veil of political neutrality, chiefs were both subjected to political outcomes as well as being crucial determinants of those outcomes. There was perhaps only one issue on which the Ya Na could be outspoken, and that was the issue of Togoland. A position on Togoland could be taken because its inclusion in an independent Ghana was supported by all

³² Braimah, J.A., Address to the Legislative Assembly, July, 1953. In: Metcalfe, *Great Britain and Ghana, Documents of Ghana History, 1807-1957*. UK, 1964, 718.

³³ Bayart, J-F., *The state in Africa: The politics of the belly*, 2nd Edition. Polity Press, UK, 2009, 150.

³⁴ Bayart, *State*, 155.

³⁵ Lentz, *Ethnicity*, 180.

Dagombas, no matter which intra-ethnic division they belonged to. Braimah noted that the Ya Na had stated that:

if the new constitution will make it possible for that part of Dagbon State under the United Kingdom Administration to remain and become part of the free Gold Coast, then it may be possible for me and my people to give it our support. On the other hand, if the new constitution makes for the entire breaking away of that part of Dagbon State in Togoland from the main part of the state which is in the Gold Coast, then of course it will only be natural for me and my people to resist any movement towards independence for the Gold Coast ... Nobody will break down his own house to make it possible for somebody to build his.³⁶

But the Ya Na's role was to unite Dagbon, and taking a side politically threatened to deepen existing divisions. Those divisions are broadly speaking the subject of this subsection, and especially, how they relate to Tamale's traditional elite. For the historian, the contradiction between the prominent political role played by chiefs and their absence from primary sources is of course problematic, because it means that at an important political vector, namely chiefs, is largely silent in the available primary sources relating to the emergence of nationalist politics in the Northern Territories. There are, however, thankfully, enough sources to carry out a discussion about chieftaincy in Tamale in the context of the development of nationalist politics. Of particular interest here are the political alignments of Tamale's traditional political elite and how those alignments came to be. Given the political determinacy of chiefs, the discussion speaks also to questions about how the CPP came to manifest its presence in Tamale.

The interaction between national, regional, local, and traditional political structures in the Northern Territories is extremely complex. 'Local politics involved a complicated set of relations between chiefs, civil servants, MPs, ministers, local councillors, party officials'.³⁷ Such 'sets of relations' were determined by a combination of personal ties, inter- and intra-ethnic considerations, historical developments, and chieftaincy disputes. In order to understand the contours of Tamale's local politics, a number of such political variables need to be brought into

³⁶ Braimah, J.A., Address to the Legislative Assembly, July, 1953. In: Metcalfe, *Great Britain and Ghana, Documents of Ghana History, 1807-1957*. UK, 1964, 718.

³⁷ Staniland, *Lions*, 138.

focus. This requires an understanding of developments surrounding chieftaincy in Dagbon and how emerging political parties aligned themselves within the divisions created through succession disputes of the Ya Na at Yendi. There were a number of issues in which (Dagomba) chiefs were either for or against, either directly or by association. The following subsection is concerned with the political divisions on the national and regional and traditional level, and how and why both the Gulkpe-Na and the Dakpema slotted into such divisions.

On the 6 February 1948, upon his death, the ten-year reign of Ya Na Mahama II of the Andani Gate came to an end. Two candidates emerged as the most likely to succeed Ya Na Mahama II: His eldest son (thus also an Andani), the serving regent, who was hovering between the chieftaincy of Sanerigu and Karaga (both important skins in the Dagomba traditional hierarchy) without holding either, and the chief of Mion, the Mion-Lana, an Abudu. Attempts to ‘democratise’ the succession process by, most notably, the colonial administration, were largely abandoned in the 1948 succession, and in the presence of considerable tension between supporters of the two candidates, the Mion-Lana (from the Abudu Gate) was selected as the new Ya Na, Mahama III. As Mahama III made his way to Yendi, the aforementioned regent (from the Andani Gate) moved to assume the skin vacated at Mion.

In 1954, the same year in which the north held its first direct elections, Ya Na Mahama III died, reopening new complex succession disputes. The most contested components of the discussion had to do with what the succession procedure was, and in the absence of clarity on the procedure, almost anything was defensible. The son of Mahama II, now Mion-Lana, again put himself forward as a candidate, and for the first time introduced the idea of a rotational basis between the two gates. The other candidates were the following: The Yo Na (chief of Savelugu), who was at this stage well over eighty years of age (an Andani); the eldest son of Mahama III, who had assumed the regency (an Abudu); and Karaga-na Adam (the great-grandson of Mahama III, and so also an Abudu). This time the expanded, ‘democratised’ selection committee – introduced largely by the colonial administration – including the Gulkpe-Na, was employed to determine the successor through a ‘majority-vote’

mechanism. In March 1954, the selection committee voted in the incumbent regent, the son of Mahama III, Abdulai III. The Mion-Lana, six years previously in 1948, in more or less the same situation, had not been selected to succeed the Ya Na because he was only the regent and did not possess a chieftaincy (at the time he was hovering between Saniergu and Karaga). The outcome sparked protests amongst the Andani Gate and its followers. Nonetheless, the outcome of the 1954 succession was that the Abudu Gate, who had dominated the paramountcy for many years (except the ten years between 1938 and 1948, when Mahama II had ruled) once again managed to retain the paramountcy.

The emergence of party politics in the north aligned itself almost immediately with this increasingly deep division. J.H. Allassani and Yakubu Tali, who in 1953 became Tolon Na, were the most actively involved in the interface between politics and Dagon's political structures. Both men had been members of the NTC. Allassani came from a village near Tamale and entered Tamale primary school in 1914. In 1949, after serving as a headmaster in Kumasi, he became Secretary to the Dagomba Native Authority. Like the Tolon Na, Allassani was appointed to Nkrumah's first cabinet in 1951. Interestingly, like many, Allassani moved from the NPP to the CPP during his time in Nkrumah's cabinet, while Tolon Na switched to the CPP only much later, after Ghana's independence. During the period 1951 to Ghana's independence (and also thereafter), Allassani and the Tolon Na emerged as representatives, in terms of the Northern Territories, of opposite ends of the political spectrum: Allassani, a CPP member, was a staunch supporter of the Mion-Lana (Andani chieftaincy), while the Tolon Na, a founding member of the NPP, was related through marriage to, and strong advocate of, incumbent Ya Na Abdulai III, an Abudu.

The Ya Na, Abdulai III, made every attempt to present himself as politically neutral, but this position, given what was at stake, was never likely to be tenable. When Nkrumah visited the Ya Na in 1954, the most he could get from the Ya Na was a declaration of neutrality, which was announced on the radio, and angered the NPP leadership. It angered the NPP leadership because, no matter how nuanced attempts

were to establish neutrality, the Ya Na was effectively an NPP supporter. He would become increasingly NPP as prominent northern politicians, lead by Allassani, advocated increasingly for his abdication and the installation of the Mion-Lana as Ya Na.

What were the implications for political alliances amongst Tamale's political elite of the interaction between national politics and Dagbon political structures? The Gulkpe-Na supported the CPP candidate, R.S. Iddrissu, because of 'his connections and deference towards chiefs'.³⁸ But one could not be aligned to R.S. Iddrissu without being aligned also to the CPP, and to Allassani – and if one were aligned to Allassani, one was necessarily anti-Abudu rule. Developments on the local level further manoeuvred the Gulkpe-Na into the CPP corner. The NPP, under the leadership of amongst others, the Tolon-Na, aligned themselves with the Dakpema. Indeed, the inaugural rally of the NPP in 1954 was held at the Dakpema's palace. It is of course ironic that the NPP – *'the chiefs' party'* – so fundamentally concerned with the legitimacy of 'tradition', sought not only to exploit the Dakpema's ongoing legitimacy, but also sought clearly to promote his legitimacy in Tamale. Perhaps the close relations between the CPP and the Gulkpe-Na had forced the NPP to look elsewhere for a traditional foundation upon which to build their campaign, but alliances created were in many respects glaring contradictions. The Gulkpe-Na, who, we have seen in a previous chapter, had the Ya Na to thank for his presence in Tamale, found himself backed by and backing a political party which vilified the Ya Na – while the Dakpema, who, from the point of view of 'traditional' Dagbon political structures, as an imposter, found himself backed by and backing a political party whose campaign was based on the idea that 'tradition' needed to be consolidated. Tamale's local political elite reacted not only to the developments taking place on the national and regional level, but the divisions created forced them also to react to each other.

In 1957, with the CPP in power, the campaign against Abudulai began in earnest. Allassani held a public speech in Yendi on market-day, announcing that government

³⁸ Staniland, *Lions*, 141.

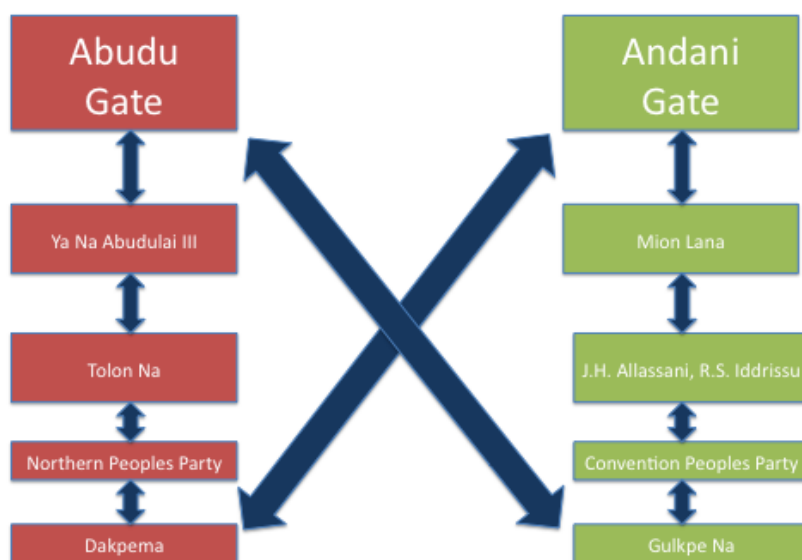
would depose Abudulai on the grounds that he was ‘deformed’ (blind in one eye and allegedly with six toes on one foot) and that his succession had not been in accordance with custom, namely, the rotational basis. Fifty mostly CPP activists signed a petition to de-skin Ya Na Abudulai. Interestingly, the most noteworthy signatories were Allassani, Salifu Yakubu (Yo Na), and MP for Tamale, R.S. Iddrissu. Opposing the petition were brother of the Gulkpe-Na, Yahaya Iddi, S.I. Iddrissu, and Ebenezer Adam, who all gave their support to Ya Na Abudulai. Yahaya Iddi, the brother of the Gulkpe-Na, had been a close associate of Ebenezer Adam within the Tamale branch of the CPP. He had been a member of Ebenezer Adam’s CPP ‘youth faction’, which had campaigned against R.S. Iddrissu during the 1954 elections, which R.S. Iddrissu subsequently lost to the MAP. We may draw one of two conclusions from the alignment of Ebenezer Adam with the Abudu Gate, especially given that the Gulkpe-Na had supported R.S. Iddrissu in the 1954 and 1956 elections, and R.S. Iddrissu in turn supported Allassani in his crusade to de-skin the incumbent (Abudu) Ya Na: Either the Gulkpe-Na was not at all influenced by his brother’s political affiliations (or vice versa), or the Gulkpe-Na, who had been reintroduced to Tamale on the insistence in 1920 of Abudulai II, an uncle of the incumbent Abudulai III, did not share R.S. Iddrissu’s support of Allassani and his anti-Abudu rhetoric. The second conclusion, although not possible to verify, is the most plausible. It suggests also that the Gulkpe-Na and the Dakpema positioned themselves also in relation to each other, given that the Dakpema had aligned himself with the NPP (this is, conversely, equally as contradictory as the Gulkpe-Na aligning himself with an anti-Abudu CPP).

From the perspective of Tamale’s ruling elite, the relationship between local, regional, national, and traditional politics. The subsections reveals that the political aspirations of Tamale’s traditional elite contradicted each other at various levels: The local, regional, national, and traditional political positions taken up by Tamale’s traditional elite made for an uncomfortable mixture. This was in part because the Gulkpe-Na and the Dakpema reacted also to one another.

The politics of urban space

Urbanisation itself was, for a number of reasons, a political determinant. The formation of the TUC in 1952 was an important step in creating a municipal governance apparatus. But the rate of urbanisation endowed this organ with considerable power, as disputes arose over the allocation of urban space.

7.6. Interactions between local, regional, national, and traditional political structures.



The TUC was the Local Authority for Tamale, based on the recommendations set out by the Coussey Committee, as outlined above. The TUC had its first meeting in May 1952. The minutes of TUC meetings depict a rather banal organization. Within the mundane discussions of the TUC, however, significant influence unquestionably simmered. The TUC was responsible for planning and building various public services, such as water and sewerage facilities, an industrial area, and market stalls. The TUC was also represented by four of its members on the Sanitation Board. All

buildings in Tamale, including that of residences of individuals, needed to be approved by the Tamale Sanitation Board (TSB). The fact that two-thirds of TUC members were directly elected meant that the influence of chiefly institutions was limited, which in turn opened the door for the CPP to dominate the TUC. Indeed, prominent CPP members filled high-ranking positions within the TUC. Ebenezer Adam, for instance, was elected chairman of the TUC, while R.S. Iddrissu was also heavily involved. Both Ebenezer Adam and R.S. Iddrissu represented the TUC on the TSB, an extremely powerful organ in Tamale which granted (or refused) building permits. Both Ebenezer Adam and R.S. Iddrissu also sat on the Finance Committee. R.S. Iddrissu also represented the TUC at the District Council in Yendi. Although the chief of Tamale, the Gulkpe-Na, was the president of the TUC, minutes of TUC meetings suggest that he was not a particularly active member. The minutes suggest that the only TUC meeting at which the Gulkpe-Na was present was the second meeting, on 16 June 1952. At that meeting, the Chairman ‘assured the Gulkpe-Na and his elders that the elected councillors were anxious to work hand in hand and in full co-operation with the chief, his elders, and all the people’.³⁹

The TUC was formed prior to the 1954 election, and one may ask if their influence on Tamale’s local politics was not the same in each of the elections in 1954 and 1956? The answer is a resounding No. The CPP’s approach to the two elections in the north was different. It was clear after the 1954 election that northerners were generally not moved by the great themes of decolonisation, which motivated southern voters. As a result, the CPP campaign in the north for the 1956 election had a far more local emphasis. “They sent E. A. Mahama and Sumani Bukari, two northern MLAs, to the north to make recommendations concerning candidates ... they took local factors into consideration: ‘why a person must win, or why this man would stand a better chance than that one’”⁴⁰ Within the context of a new emphasis on local factors, the CPP-dominated TUC took on new significance. Ebenezer Adam describes the TUC as “not at all a political organ”.⁴¹ However, its influence in terms

³⁹ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/5/82. (Minutes of the Tamale Urban Council), June 16th, 1952.

⁴⁰ Interview with E.A. Mahama, in Ladouceur, *Chiefs*, 144.

⁴¹ Interview with Ebenezer Adam.

of the party politics in Tamale can hardly be disputed. All building in Tamale, both private and commercial, needed to pass through the TUC. In the context of significant demographic and economic expansion, the power to decide what gets built where and by whom is hardly irrelevant. This power was exploited in order to make political gains in Tamale. For instance, the Chief Market Dues Collector of the Tamale Central Market, Allassan Dagomba, wrote to the Secretary of the Dagomba State Council:

As Market Master, I am to be looking after the interest of the people in the market ... Two men approached me for the space to put up a temporary shed, I provided them a space, and the said Issah pulled down the two shed. I reported the matter to ... the Native Administration's office, Tamale, he sent a Native Administration's Police to ... enquire into the cause of his action, but the Native Administration's Police returned that Iddrissu the Tamale Chairman of the C.P.P have told him not to attend the call.⁴²

Another, perhaps even less nuanced example of the manner in which the TUC and CPP interacted with one another is that of Salifu Dagomba, a cigarette vendor by trade, who wrote a letter to the Assistant District Commissioner of Tamale:

... I began to trade at the Tamale Lorry Park with some other men since 10 years ago ... I always pay 2 pence per day until I was asked by the Chief of Lamshegu to pay two shillings and 6 pence for the Hawkers License and I did so ... This morning ... he again and asked that he does not want anybody to sit there anymore and that we should all go to the market which I found it impossible to go with my bicycle that I hire in addition, and I cannot join the C.P.P. His son saying Mr. Idirisu requested that we should all join the C.P.P., which may enable us to sit there which is by the road.⁴³

The rise in prominence of the TUC, under the influence of high-ranking CPP elements such as Ebenezer Adam and R.S. Iddrissu, changed the configuration of everyday authority in Tamale. Other forms of authority were challenged (and seen to be challenged) by the TUC, especially since those responsible for running the TUC generally held political convictions which challenged chieftaincy. The kind of exploitations illustrated here were perhaps possible across the Gold Coast, but

⁴² PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/4/4. (Complaints) 'Allassan Dagomba, Chief Market Dues Colector, Tamale. Letter to the Secretary, Dagomba State Council, 18th March, 1952'.

⁴³ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/4/4. (Complaints) 'Letter Salifu Dagomba to Dagomba State Council, 16th July, 1952'

especially so in Tamale, because chieftaincy in Tamale had always been a tenuous concept within a colonial framework which advocated for chieftaincy. The resulting ambiguous character of Tamale's institutional anatomy made it especially susceptible to the kind of the exploitation which the CPP exercised through the TUC.

Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with the relationship between the rise of party politics in the Northern Territories, in Dagbon, and in Tamale. More specifically, the chapter has been concerned with why Tamale 'kept to itself politically' in the years between 1948 and Ghana's independence in 1957. The chapter has argued that Tamale's political landscape became increasingly complex and congested. Tamale's institutional multiplicity, discussed in a previous chapter, was exploited and thus consolidated, reinforced, and expanded. The formation of the TUC, the arrival of party politics on the local scene, and the alliances between the NPP and the Dakpema and between the Gulkpe-Na and the CPP are all examples of this type of exploitation. The increasing complexity and contestation of Tamale's political landscape created an inward-looking political focus. This inward focus, the chapter argues, was exacerbated by tension between local and external alliances. This tension is a major finding of this chapter. Tamale's colonial origins and the subsequent institutional multiplicity complicated the coherency of political alliances on the local level on the one hand, and on traditional, regional, and national levels on the other hand. In this instance, although the alliance between the Gulkpe-Na and the CPP made sense on the local level, on the level of 'traditional' politics the alliance was problematic, as it positioned the Gulkpe-Na in opposition to the Abudu Gate, which had reintroduced the Gulkpe-Na to Tamale between 1920 and 1930.

Conclusion

Introduction

There is a profound tension in Tamale's urban existence; on the one hand, Tamale stands as a sprawling symbol of the colonial period, and on the other hand, it never really fitted into the structures which colonial administration was attempting to erect. In many respects, the relationship between Tamale and the many phases of colonial administration is not unlike that between the various forms of colonial administration and the Konkomba¹ and other acephalous peoples in the Upper-West and Upper-East regions, about whom so much has been written.² I have waited until the conclusion to make this comparison, because of the feeling that the acephalous/chiefly dichotomy, however relevant (along with the 'underdevelopment theme'), hangs like an albatross around the neck of the historiography of the Northern Territories. But the comparison is relevant nonetheless. In the same way that the colonial administration attempted to force colonial stereotypes on ill-fitting realities, creating disputes, dislocation, complexities, and long standing rivalries, so

¹ See Talton, B., *Politics of social change in Ghana: The Konkomba struggle for political equality*. MacMillan, 2009.

² On the Dagara, see for instance, Lentz, C., *Ethnicity and the making of history in Northern Ghana*. Edinburgh University Press, 2006, & Van der Geest, K., *The Dagara farmer at home and away*. Brill, Leiden, 2011.

also in Tamale, round pegs were forced into square holes. Of course, the difference between Tamale and the acephalous peoples' narrative is that unlike the latter, Tamale has escaped academic attention, despite being, in its own right, the most overwhelming and tangible example of the transformation of colonial rule in the Northern Territories. This thesis is an attempt to fill that void.

This dissertation has argued that Tamale's economic hegemony in northern terms is a ramification of two inter-related events: The establishment of an administrative headquarters at Tamale in 1907, and the completion of the Great North Road in 1920. These two events together comprise Tamale's administrative and commercial function. Furthermore, both of these functions need to be taken equally seriously in terms of understanding the founding of Tamale. Through the intersection of these two events, a settlement of 1,435 inhabitants with no significant pre-European political or economic relevance became the centre of the Northern economic framework, the largest city by some distance in northern Ghana, and today, Ghana's third-largest city. While the economics of northern Ghana were being centred at Tamale, a political framework was simultaneously being established by colonial initiative with heavy 'traditional' emphasis. In terms of Dagbon, that meant the centring of political power under the Ya Na at Yendi. Tamale thus grew up without corresponding political (and cultural) relevancy. The purpose of this historical study has been to identify the implications for Tamale of its extra-traditional urban process in a climate dominated by traditional discourses. The study identified two central implications of this economic/political discontinuity – one internal, one external: Tamale's institutional anatomy is characterised by 'multiplicity', and Tamale emerged from the colonial period politically isolated, disconnected from the Northern Territories generally.

Relevance of the study

Tamale does not appear to possess the grand history of settlements such as Salaga and Wa. Its history is also not celebrated in the same way as those settlements and, I would add, the mosque at Larabanga, the slave camp at Paga, and the shrines in the

Tong Hills, amongst others. In Tamale, on the contrary, one is faced by that horrible urban façade, neither old nor new enough to be of any interest. Of course, that Tamale's history is not immediately visible does not mean it is not there. As Wyatt MacGaffey points out, the small cluster of villages which made up Tamale in 1907 'behind the urban façade of banks and businesses, this is the Tamale to which the native citizen belongs'.³ Despite not exposing itself as readily as elsewhere in the north, Tamale's awkward history has thus survived the enormous transformations of the colonial and post-colonial periods.

The tension between the Gulkpe-Na and the Dakpema has never been resolved, although both houses deny any hostilities. However, in 1962, after Ghana had obtained its independence, the Gulkpe-Na contested the right of other chiefs to collect taxes on behalf of the government. Dakpema Alhassan Dawuni installed his own Mallam, Seidu Dagomba. He claimed, 'I am in charge of Changan, Ward H and Ward F ... but in these areas other Mallams get to weddings and funerals and the like before Seidu, depriving him of his daily bread.' The DC for Tamale (a CPP supporter, like the Gulkpe-Na, and unlike the Dakpema) replied that the Dakpema was only a fetish priest, not entitled to install sub-chiefs, and that the Limam of Tamale was installed by the Gulkpe-Na; any duplication, he said, would disrupt the unity of Moslems.⁴

Presently, there is a lull in the rivalry between the two houses, but that has much to do with what is currently taking place in Yendi. In 2003 the Ya Na Yakubu Andani II, King of Dagbon, was murdered. His succession remains a profoundly complicated affair and threatens to unlock simmering tension.⁵ In 2008, Tamale's Gulkpe-Na passed away. Because, according to Dagbon custom, the Gulkpe-Na can only be 'enskinned' by the Ya Na, the fact that there is currently no Ya Na means that the Gulkpe-Na also cannot be replaced. In the interim period (which shows no

³ MacGaffey, W., 'The blacksmiths of Tamale: The dynamics of space and time in a Ghanaian industry', *Institute for African Studies*, 79: 2(2009), 172.

⁴ MacGaffey, 'History', 118.

⁵ In March 2011, the acquittal of 15 men suspected of murdering the Ya Na caused conflicts in Tamale. One man was said to have been killed. A curfew was imposed at the time but has subsequently been lifted.

signs of ending in the foreseeable future), a regent of the Gulkpe-Na carries out the responsibilities of the Gulkpe-Na. The Dakpema of Tamale, on the other hand, is not bound to Dagbon political hierarchies. As a result, the institution is also not dependent on the Ya Na for succession. Thus, in 2009, after the death of the Dakpema, a new Dakpema was 'enskinned' relatively quickly. Currently thus, especially in the absence of the Gulkpe-Na, the Dakpema has a very prominent traditional function in Tamale. The Dakpema recently wrote an article for GhanaNation.com, a popular Ghanaian digital news source. Credit for the article was given to 'Chief of Tamale, Naa Dakpema Alhassan Dawuni'.⁶ A recent article on a popular Ghanaian internet site began as follows; 'The chief of Tamale, Dakpema Na Alhassan Dawuni has called on the youth of Tamale to exercise restraint'.⁷

Furthermore, when in December 2010 I attended a conference in Tamale, the subject of the conference was the lasting impact of mandated territories. In Ghana's case, this referred especially to the impact of German colonial rule in Togoland, which, after WWI, became a mandated territory. On the second morning, the conference was interrupted by the sound of drumming outside. This signalled the arrival of the Dakpema along with his entourage. He was presented to the group (of primarily non-Ghanaians) as the chief of Tamale. I am certain that no irony was intended, but I doubt there was a more real and tangible example of the lasting impact of German colonial rule than the Dakpema of Tamale being presented to a group of largely non-Ghanaians as the chief of Tamale.

What these contemporary examples reveal is that the Dakpema's traditional prominence in Tamale is in large part related to the weakness of Dagbon. In Tamale's history, there has indeed been only one other period in which the Dakpema effectively functioned as the chief of Tamale. That has been a thread throughout this

⁶ GhanaNation.com. (19 April 2011). http://news1.ghananation.com/vivvo_general/137689-chief-of-tamale-naa-dakpema-alhassan-dawuni.html (accessed 4 December 2011).

⁷ GhanatoGhana. (5 April 2011). <http://www.ghanatoghana.com/Ghanahomepage/dakpema-na-alhassan-dawuni-calls-tamale-youth-exercise-restraint> (accessed 4 December 2011).

study. Between 1899 and 1919 the Anglo-German boundary existed such that Yendi lay in German territory while the larger part of Dagbon fell under British jurisdiction. Indeed, during this period, and partly on the initiative of the Dakpema, the British colonial administration established an administrative headquarters at Tamale. Later, after Dagbon had been reunited in the early 1920s, the Dakpema would be referred to as ‘an excellent example of a white-man’s chief’.⁸

At the aforementioned conference, I (thankfully not in the presence of the Dakpema) presented a paper on chieftaincy in Tamale, the subject of Chapter 4 (‘From Dakpema to Gulkpe-Na’) and argued that tension between these two houses in Tamale is the result of the division of Dagbon into British and German jurisdictions in 1899. A number of Ghanaians who were present objected to the suggestion that there existed (and exists) competition between the institution of the Gulkpe-Na and that of the Dakpema. They pointed out that the Dakpema and the Gulkpe-Na have different functions in Tamale. The Dakpema, they told me, is the market head, while the Gulkpe-Na is the chief of Gulkpeagu. As chief of Tamale, they said, the Gulkpe-Na has authority over Tamale’s land. Today, however, Tamale’s urban character has ensured that customary land tenure has been replaced by private land ownership. That the Gulkpe-Na ‘controls’ Tamale’s land is an idea born out of theoretical momentum, rather than an established, practical fact. This we have also seen in the course of this study (Chapter 5, ‘The Whole of Tamale is the Property of the Crown’). Then, like now, the Gulkpe-Na did not control Tamale’s land, in spite of a discourse which suggested that the source of his chiefly legitimacy was his control over land. As a result, Tamale’s traditional focus was (and is) unstable and circumstantial. Indeed, this study has been concerned fundamentally with understanding the implications of urban Tamale’s colonial origins in a climate dominated by traditional discourses. The question of land tenure is one example thereof. Of this cleavage between Tamale’s urban growth on the one hand, and the development of a colonial paradigm focussed on interpretations of ‘tradition’ on the other hand, the study argues that there are, broadly speaking, two significant

⁸ PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/2/28, (Dagomba Native Affairs), ‘Note by District Commissioner for Western Dagomba Blair, ‘Da-Kpema of Tamale’.

implications: The first is Tamale's disconnection from the Northern Territories generally, and the second is Tamale's institutional multiplicity and the resulting legal pluralism.

Before turning to the major themes contained within this study, a second broader relevance may be highlighted. This study inserts an entirely novel entity into northern Ghana's historiography. The historiography of northern Ghana has been dominated broadly by one trajectory; historicising 'underdevelopment'. In terms of transportation (a fundamental component of 'development'), this trajectory has meant an emphasis on the Northern Territories railway, which was never built. The 'underdevelopment' trajectory of northern historiography has also locked the definitions of the Northern Territories into an agrarian paradigm. This study takes a different and entirely unique starting point, that is, the completion of the Great North Road in 1920 and the subsequent introduction of motorised transportation. Taking this transportation presence (rather than the absence of a railway) as a starting point, Tamale's urban 'development' (instead of northern 'underdevelopment') comes into focus. The result is by no means the unravelling of hitherto northern historical narratives. Rather, such an approach adds new contours to the historiographical landscape of northern Ghana.

Theories of urban formation

Anthony O'Connor noted that 'the combination of low levels, but high rates of urbanisation means that tropical Africa provides almost unparalleled opportunities for the outside observer to see 'cities in the making'.⁹ That is as true today as it was in 1983, when O'Connor's work was published. Furthermore, in relative terms, Tamale is indeed a very new city. As an academic object of enquiry, that is also Tamale's strength. From that perspective, at its core, this study argues for a disaggregation of African cities: different histories produce different cities. That such differences produce corresponding differences also in the social relations within cities has been argued by Aiden Southall. Southall in the early 1960s presented a model in which two types of African cities exist. Type A cities,

⁹ O'Connor, A., *The African city*. Hutchinson & Co Publishers, London, 1983, 16.

according to Southall, have pre-European origins.¹⁰ Such cities have a rigid traditional structure (such as Kumasi or Abomey in Benin). Type B cities have colonial origins (such as Tamale). Such cities lack traditional focus. Southall argues that the type of a city has implications for the social relations within the city. Southall's dichotomy has more or less fallen apart. In reality, cities display characteristics of both Type A and Type B cities. However, this study wholeheartedly agrees with the central argument presented by Southall: The origins of cities have implications also for the manner in which social relations are defined within the city. The study thus underlines a concern about blanket definitions of 'urban' in Africa and reaches back to earlier debates about cities in Africa, to promote a more nuanced understanding of African cities (beyond simply primate vs. secondary). This suggests that the specific origins of cities are highly relevant objects of academic inquiry. Tamale is in the first instance an inland, secondary (or second-tier) city. But there is more to the type of city which Tamale is. Tamale is a city created for, and by, the colonial political economy, in a political climate which continues to have strong pre-colonial emphases. Furthermore, the region in which Tamale is located possesses no obvious natural resources (unlike the cities on the Zambian Copperbelt, for instance). Its *raison d'être* is to provide a central administration for Northern Ghana and to facilitate transit trade.

Tamale's urban development, this study has shown, is rooted in the events mentioned above, namely, the decision by the British colonial administration to build an administrative headquarters at Tamale and the construction of the Great North Road. Urban Tamale was thus an administrative and economic centre created by colonial initiatives for colonial purposes (administration and commerce). Simultaneously, the colonial administration relied on a political system which increasingly employed chieftaincy as an auxiliary of colonial administration. Such reliance, it was argued, required the consolidation of pre-colonial historical dimensions of chieftaincy. Therein, it was felt, lay the public legitimacy of the institution of chieftaincy required in order to effectively incorporate chiefs into

¹⁰ Southall, A., 'Social change, demography and extrinsic factors'. In: Southall, A., ed., *Social change in modern Africa*. Oxford, 1961, 7-13.

colonial administrative apparatus. Within that (political) domain, however, Tamale had little relevance. The discontinuity between political and economic frameworks introduced to the Northern Territories through the initiative of the colonial administration had implications for Tamale's urban character, namely, a disconnection from the Northern Territories generally, and institutional multiplicity and resulting legal pluralism. Those implications are, broadly speaking, the subject of this study.

(Dis)connection

The study has argued that Tamale's economic hegemony was not matched by any real political significance within the politics of the Northern Territories, which had implications for Tamale's urban character. On various levels, Tamale detached itself from the Northern Territories generally (disconnection). There is purposeful irony in this subheading. The Great North Road was for Tamale the great connector. Tamale became linked by motorable road to Kumasi, the first such link between north and south. The implication for Tamale of the north-south connection was, however, a disconnection from the Northern Territories generally.

Perhaps the most concrete manifestation of Tamale's isolation and disconnection from the Northern Territories came during the 1956 elections. Martin Staniland has made this observation in a footnote.¹¹ This study has attempted to unpack that observation (Chapter 7: 'A Town of Little Importance'). The reasons for this disconnection, argued here, lie in Tamale's colonial underpinnings and in a political climate dominated by traditional discourses for the north more generally. This traditional discourse was not dismantled by the ending of colonial domination. With the formation of the Northern People's Party (NPP), a party concerned primarily with the lack of northern development, 'tradition' found a voice also within Ghana's nationalist politics of the 1950s. The NPP emerged from the 1953 elections as the second-most successful party in the Gold Coast, an indication of the dominance of conservative attitudes in the Northern Territories. Between the 1953 and the 1956 elections, Tamale's electorate swung dramatically from the ultra-conservative

¹¹ Staniland, *Chiefs*, 217. See footnote 26.

Muslim Association Party (MAP) to the anti-chieftaincy Convention People's Party (CPP). Northern politics focussed on the traditional apexes of Gonja, Dagbon, Mamprussi, Wa, and Nunumba. Although Tamale was highly politicised and much northern politics found a place in Tamale, Tamale itself was not a part of the debate. As a result, Tamale's politics were by definition local urban affairs. This disconnection is a result of the aforementioned cleavage.

Tamale's disconnection from the north was both illustrated and consolidated after the colonial period. The military regime which overthrew Nkrumah dispatched his large-scale, state interventionism and sold off cheap machinery, mainly for rice cultivation, into the private market. A number of capitalists, including southerners, military men and civil servants, took the opportunity to purchase, mainly in the area around Tamale – and for next-to-nothing – large-scale, mechanised rice farms. Between 1970 and 1972, primarily in the area around Tamale, private farmers, mostly from Tamale, doubled both the area under cultivation and their output. On account of both poor conditions and increases in the price of rice in Tamale, many 'villagers', who would otherwise have sold their labour on mechanised rice farms, themselves took to farming rice, albeit on a much smaller scale. The result was an acute shortage of labour for the mechanised rice farms, which turned to Tamale to recruiting young boys as labourers. Tamale, through 'by-day' labour centres, became a centre for the recruitment of (often illegal on account of their age) casual labour. It was estimated that in November and December 1971, 4,000 men were hired from Tamale very day at labour centres. Tamale served as a location for the procurement of farming inputs, from labour through to tractors. Furthermore, between 1970 and 1983, the by-day rates for adult men increased from 0.50 Cedis to 50 Cedis. This applied not only to those recruited from Tamale but also, as a consequence, to labour which large-scale farmers were still able to source from within the villages. Van Hear notes that 'higher wages were also a consequence of bringing villagers into contact with urban workers; farmers complained that Tamale

workers “poisoned the minds” of the villagers with their wage demands’.¹² Tamale served as a site for contested and seedy labour class struggle. Theft increased. The difficulty of separating perceptions of ‘tradition’ from agrarian livelihoods mean that Tamale urbanism could only be perceived as a corruption of traditional morality. The idea of Tamale representing something ‘other’ and certainly ‘worse’ was, as this thesis has shown, not something new. At least from the moment indirect rule was introduced, Tamale’s urban nature came to be seen by traditional and agrarian structures alike as threatening, and this also contributed to its isolation.

Institutional multiplicity

More specifically, this study set out to argue that Tamale’s rapid urbanisation (both social and economic), in a political context dominated by tradition (in which Tamale lacked relevancy), created in Tamale an institutional anatomy in which the jurisdictions of various institutions continuously overlapped. The first step in the creation of an institutional anatomy characterised by multiplicity was the demarcation of the Anglo-German border in 1899. At that time, the Gulkpe-Na was visiting Yendi and was ordered to remain there. In the absence of the Gulkpe-Na, the Dakpema assumed all the powers of the chief of Tamale. In 1930, the Gulkpe-Na was ordered to return to Tamale in order to resurrect Tamale’s traditional structure (for the purposes of indirect rule). The Gulkpe-Na, however, did not simply replace the Dakpema, as the colonial regime had anticipated. Instead, a two-in-one system developed. The nature of the system meant that the colonial administration, in contradiction to its own policy of ‘ruling indirectly’, was frequently required to wade into affairs which they had hoped would be managed by ‘tradition’. This further undermined Tamale’s traditional focus and increased its institutional multiplicity.

¹² Van Hear, N., ““By-day” boys and Dariga men: Casual Labour versus agrarian capital in Northern Ghana’. In: *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 31, Capital vs. Labour in West Africa (1984), 46.

The term ‘institutional multiplicity’ is borrowed from work by Jo Beall.¹³ It contains a small but relevant difference in emphasis to Christian Lund’s reference to ‘institutional ambiguity’.¹⁴ ‘Institutional ambiguity’ suggests an internal dynamic, whereby one institution may define their authority holding over several jurisdictions. ‘Institutional multiplicity’ suggests that a number of institutions define their authority holding over the same jurisdiction. Both may be used to describe Tamale, but the emphasis is more on multiplicity than on ambiguity, as an result of Tamale’s anti-traditional urban process. An example of institutional ambiguity is the establishment of the Tamale Urban Council (TUC) in the early 1950s. Although the TUC had, as its official mandate, municipal affairs, the TUC came to be dominated by the CPP, who employed the jurisdictions of the TUC for political purposes. Tamale’s institutional multiplicity is best illustrated by the plans to redevelop Ward D in the 1940s (Chapter 5: ‘The Whole of Tamale is the Property of the Crown’). This study reinforces (in a historical context) the argument presented by Christian Lund that ‘disputes over land tenure can be understood only if a wider socio-political context is considered and if several different levels of confrontation are included in the analysis’.¹⁵ Lund suggests that in analysing land tenure conflicts, it is useful to distinguish between three types of confrontation: A confrontation between different land users over access to land; a confrontation between different political authorities over the jurisdiction to allocate land access rights; And a confrontation between land users and the politico-legal authorities over the extent of the jurisdiction of authorities to allocate land.¹⁶ Ward D serves as an example of all three of these confrontations. The example of Ward D serves not only as an example of how land was administered but, because land was considered such a fundamental source of chiefly authority, also as an illustration of how authority was negotiated in

¹³ Beall, J., S. Mkhize & S. Vawda, ‘Traditional authority, institutional multiplicity and political transition in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa’, LSE: *Crisis States Programme*, Working Paper no. 48(July, 2004). <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28212/1/wp48.pdf> (accessed 4 December 2011).

¹⁴ Lund, C., ‘Struggles for land tenure and political power: On the politicisation of land tenure and disputes in Niger’, *Journal of Legal Pluralism and Unofficial Law*, 40(1998), 1-2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 1.

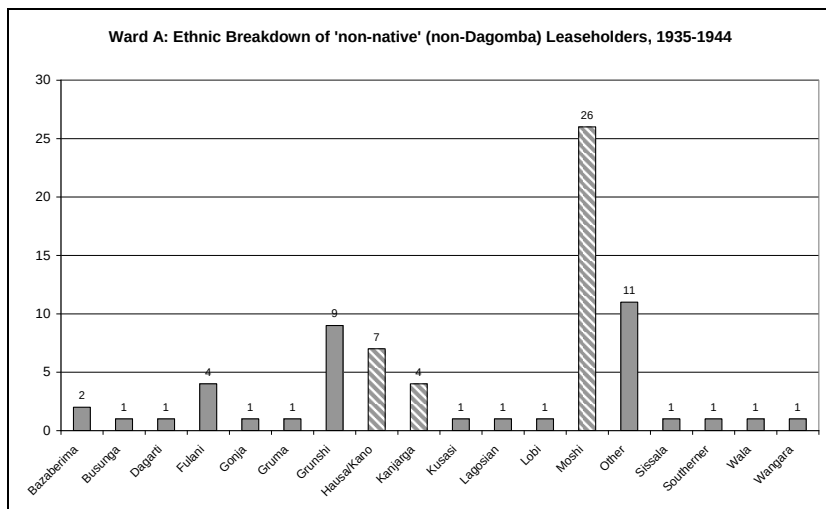
¹⁶ *Ibid.* 1-2.

an increasingly urban Tamale. The case of Ward D thus exposes Tamale's institutional multiplicity and the resulting legal plurality.

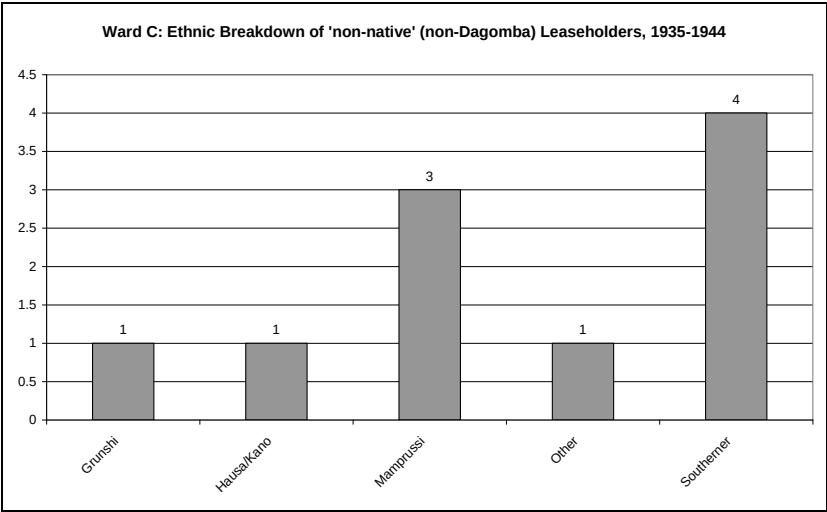
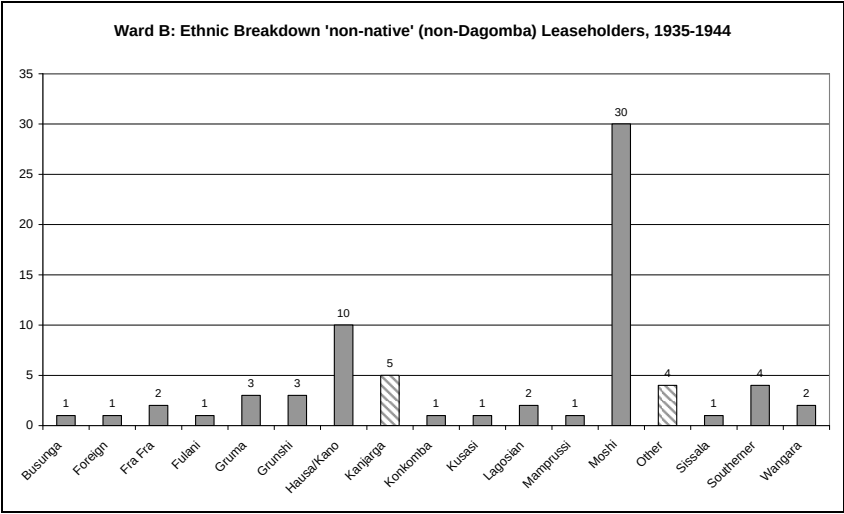
Tamale's disconnection from northern Ghana possesses both strengths and weaknesses. Currently, while the Dagbon political structures are in disarray, Tamale possesses political elites who continue to provide socially stabilising functions. In a study about local government accountability carried out in December 2010, many respondents and focus groups stated that if the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (TAMA) had 'sensitive' information they wished to relay to the residents of Tamale, they should do so through the chief. This, they said, was so because the chief was a very well-respected man in Tamale. Other centres, such as Savelugu and Karaga, are entirely dependent on Yendi for their traditional political stability. Tamale is threatened by the appointment of a new Ya Na, and thus, by the 'enskinning' of a Gulkpe-Na. Although there is no guarantee that such an eventuality need be problematic, it certainly has the potential to generate a series of internal confrontations. The institutional multiplicity which characterises Tamale's institutional anatomy then threatens to destabilise Tamale politically, economically, and socially.

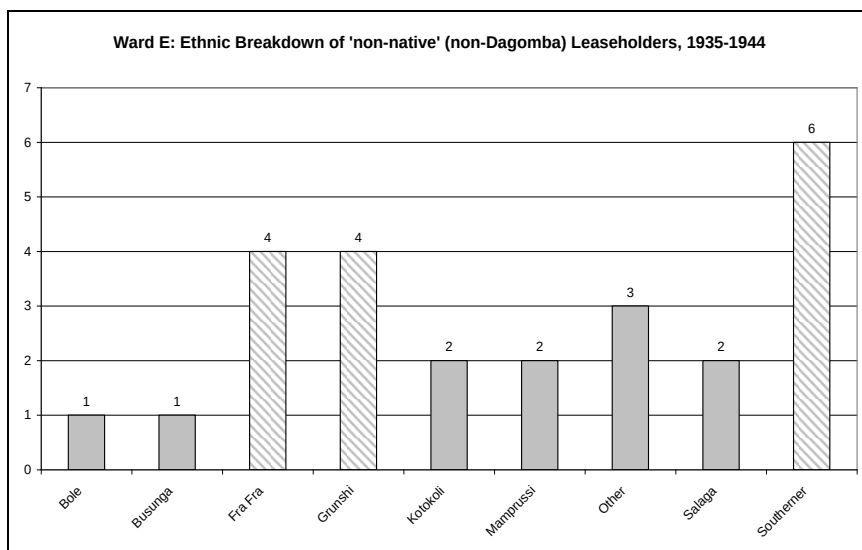
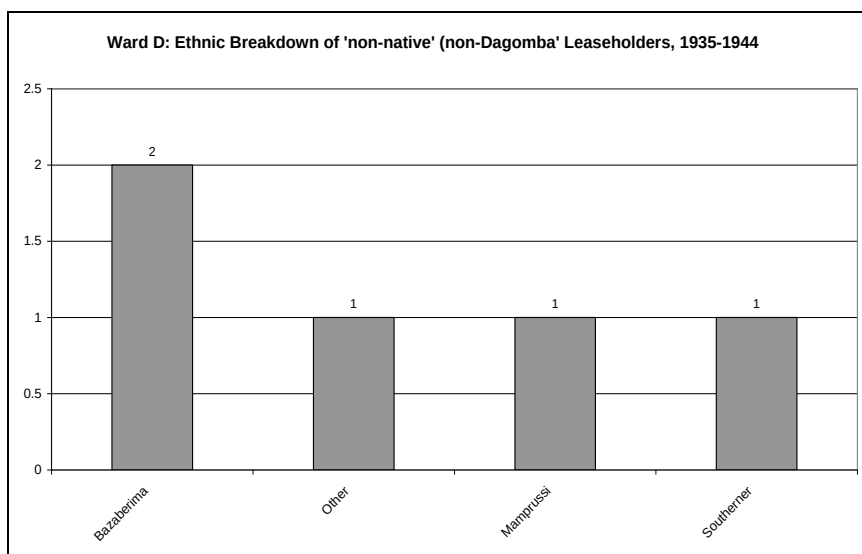
Appendices

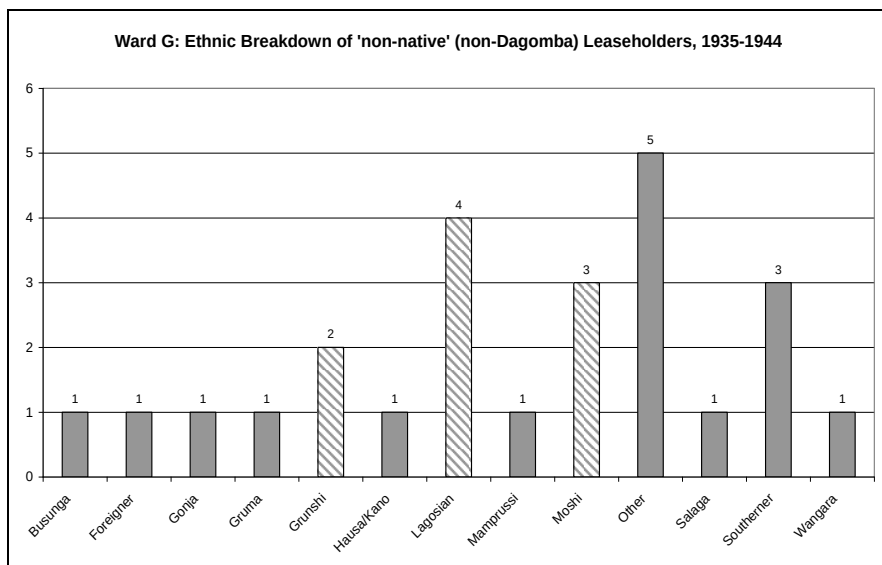
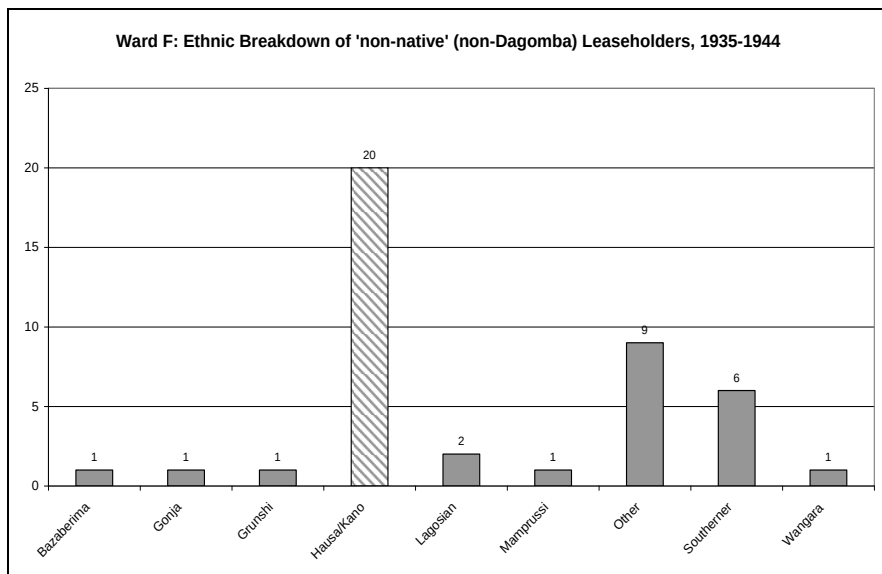
Appendix I: Non-Dagomba leaseholders by Ethnicity for respective Wards.¹

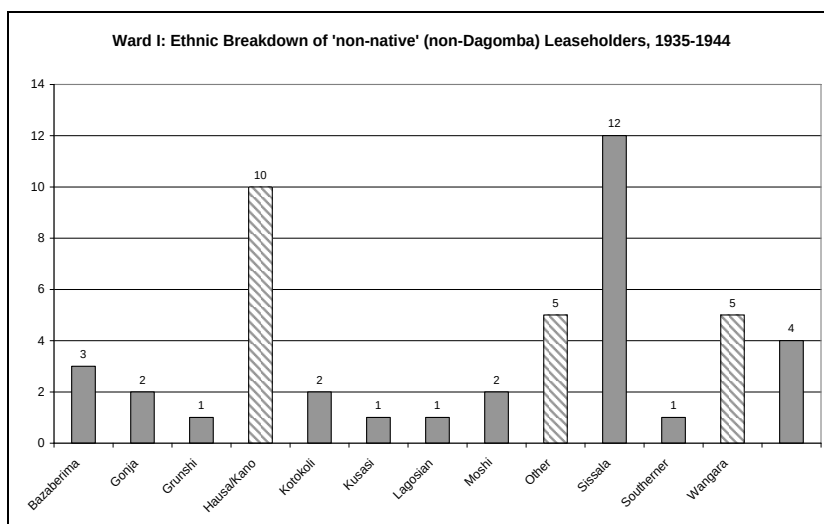
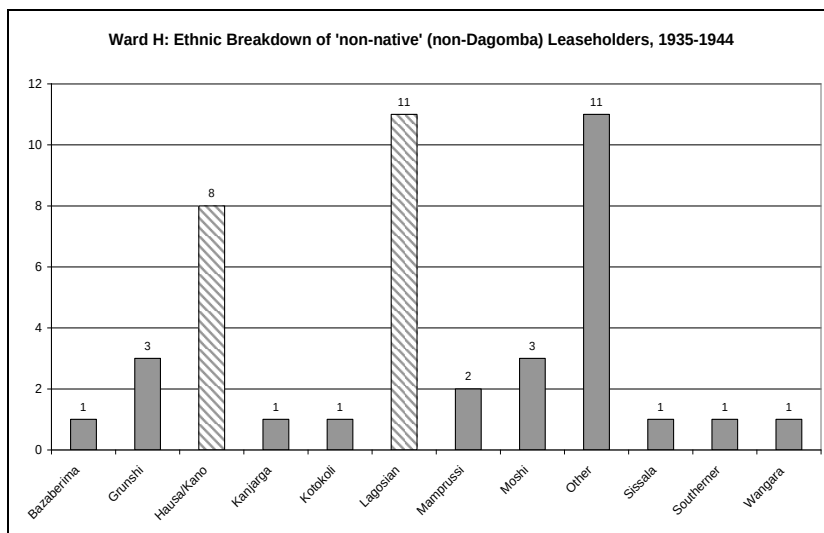


¹ Source: List of Non-Dagomba Leaseholders, 1935-1944, Tamale and Allocations, NRG 2/1/3









Trade Statistics, Yeji Ferry, 1926-1932²

			1926	1927	1928*	1929	1930	1931	1932
	Animals	Horses	28	37	79	9	19	43	32
		Cattle	19884	26688	27043	33165	32284	30072	25063
		Sheep & Goats	9025	15206	17150	33224	41140	32668	26213
		Donkeys	2720	2632	533	210	110	65	5
		Total Animals	31657	44563	43468	66608	73553	62848	51313
Motor Vehicles	N. Bound	Cars	104	179	241	217	291	243	206
		Lorries	1487	2260	1982	3180	4190	3645	2545
		Trailers	727	1252	1295	1796	2298	2310	1877
	S. Bound	Cars	97	173	58	221	241	229	204
		Lorries	1521	1830	2064	3358	4313	3658	2510
		Trailers	754	1000	622	2020	2623	2288	1868
		Total Vehicles	4690	6694	5827	10792	13956	12373	9210
Lorry Loads	N. Bound	Kola Nuts	5699	18066	49642	11338	16680	17269	15054
		English Cloth	1237	1751	5953	2190	1331	1190	801
		European Salt	5971	11844	25030	36416	50304	50652	59872
		Flour, Barrels	0	163	#DIV/0!	160	227	420	450
		Miscellaneous	2930	7740	11422	2267	1523	2026	1586
		Beer, Cases	239	346	886	1376	1165	1292	896
		Total Lorry Loads	41003	65719	118414	145949	91233	85125	92116
	S. Bound	Yams	14949	10192	5056	10	3335	485	2468
		Corn	884	1688	2802	1197	1564	1429	2331
		Ground Nuts	797	2888	4311	3848	4144	2280	722
		Fowls	2999	8051	12553	85504	9444	7281	7407
		Miscellaneous	5298	2990	6092	1643	1516	801	529
		Total Lorry Loads	41003	65719	118414	145949	91233	85125	92116
Head Loads	N. Bound	Kola Nuts	20113	13154	9160	4851	9537	2738	2961
		English Cloth	5777	6244	5487	1397	1266	558	434
		Salt	1650	228	343	182	11	32	12
		Matches	0	48	#DIV/0!	227	188	199	82
		Miscellaneous	5285	3519	11359	1282	915	840	563
		Kerosene	0	0	#DIV/0!	605	1464	1435	941
	S. Bound	Native Cloth	11	426	246	311	179	226	13
		Sheabutter	2828	3763	3965	1517	888	2316	16
		Dawa Dawa	810	1410	3533	476	456	543	46
		Hides	0	117	#DIV/0!	1757	1052	550	379
		String and Rope	0	105	#DIV/0!	180	138	115	1
		Dried Fish	408	903	1605	646	347	657	122
		Fowls	873	671	875	3744	338	547	12
		Miscellaneous	4288	2851	5445	599	302	240	26
		Total Head Loads	42043	33439	40275	17774	17081	10996	5608

² PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/310, (Yeji Trade Statistics)

* The statistics for "1928" were estimated by taking an average "Quarter Ending June 31st" to "Total Year" Ratio' for the entire year, and then dividing "Quarter Ending June 31st, 1928" by 'average ratio'.

Trade Statistics, Yeji Ferry, 1940-1944³

			1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
	Animals	Horses	31	12	22	25	40
		Cattle	141	1590	414	1903	278
		Sheep and Goats	53219	54086	41252	55289	84268
		Donkeys	7	20	39	27	118
		Total Animals	53398	43160	29585	57244	84706
Motor Vehicles	N. Bound	Cars	46	49	21	9	18
		Lorries	2214	1987	1387	1049	1842
		Trailers	2099	1936	1360	1038	1798
	S. Bound	Cars	49	46	24	8	19
		Lorries	2251	1994	1370	1081	1813
		Trailers	2127	1931	1334	1067	1770
		Total Vehicle	8786	5419	3651	4252	7260
Loads by Lorry	North Bound	Kola Nuts, Loads	80041	79327	53708	40091	71252
		English Cloth	2930	2867	2434	3031	5537
		Salt, Bags	14859	15483	13468	9885	16524
		Cement	12	50	75	0	0
		Millet. Bags	7043	577	0	45	11544
		Iron	8678	6943	6144	3499	5839
		Beer, Cases	226	306	81	81	35
		Miscellaneous	14048	8802	7768	5928	7858
		Yams	2758	1745	377	69	1191
		Planks	220	0	0	0	0
		Corn, Bags	0	0	204	149	1558
		Sugar	54	218	497	208	154
		Petrol	37	550	0	0	0
		Kerosene	127	101	83	31	68
		Soap	0	0	10	5	225
	South Bound	Corn	18	725	16	0	0
		Beans, Bags	0	0	0	75	2117
		Groundnuts, Bags	33686	54483	15960	24786	28661

³ PRAAD, Accra, ADM 56/1/310, (Yeji Trade Statistics)

Head-Loads		Fowls, Crates	11227	9642	6456	4474	5189
		Dried Meat	0	0	0	0	133
		Hides	65	222	168	536	715
		Dried Fish	24589	647	720	509	1336
		Dawa-Dawa	4641	3657	1012	539	672
		Shea Butter	4998	5736	5968	3357	3587
		Native Cloth	0	0	0	0	9
		Miscellaneous	2004	1208	4333	575	939
		Kapok	541	410	463	210	45
		Pigs	0	80	331	146	54
		Total Lorry Loads	212802	193779	120276	98229	168741
	North Bound	Kola Nuts	128	75	71	68	106
		English Cloth	21	0	0	3	0
		Salt	6	5	13	3	5
		Miscellaneous	1	40	87	115	34
		Ground Nuts	0	0	0	0	41
		Corn	2	2	0	23	
	South Bound	Native Cloth	4	0	0	10	51
		Shea Butter	795	855	2003	486	1729
		Dawa-Dawa	96	10	30	120	197
		Hides	0	0	0	1	8
		Pots	0	0	0	425	602
		Dried Fish	128	321	182	322	198
		Fowls Crates	108	38	70	45	31
		Dried Meat	0	0	42	0	14
		Miscellaneous	541	188	408	165	83
		Total Head-Loads	1880	1543	2910	1846	3247

Male Population: Breakdown by Age, ‘Absolute Numbers’ and
‘Percentage of Total’⁴

Male Population: Breakdown by Age Category (Absolute Numbers)				
	Under 1 Year	1-16 Years	16 - 45 Years	45 Years and Over
Accra	2078	20140	41524	8017
Kumasi	921	9393	17893	2972
Tamale	768	2043	4537	957

Male Population: Breakdown by Age Category (Percentages)				
	Under 1 Year	1-16 Years	16 - 45 Years	45 Years and Over
Accra	2.90%	28.07%	57.87%	11.17%
Kumasi	2.95%	30.13%	57.39%	9.53%
Tamale	9.25%	12.73%	54.63%	11.52%

⁴ 1948 Census of the Gold Coast

Number of Vehicles Crossing Yeji Ferry, 1926-1930

			1926			1927			1928			1929			1930			1926-1930	
Motor Vehicles	N. Bound	Cars	35	104	0.34	20	179	0.11	59	258	0.23	62	217	0.29	53	291	0.18	0.23	
		Lorries	457	1487	0.31	616	2260	0.27	592	2063	0.29	1005	3180	0.32	1055	4190	0.25	0.29	
	Trailers	156	727	0.21	277	1252	0.22	323	1389	0.23	428	1796	0.24	589	2298	0.26	0.23		
	S. Bound	Cars	30	97	0.31	22	173	0.13	56	248	0.23	63	221	0.29	44	241	0.18	0.23	
		Lorries	454	1521	0.30	465	1830	0.25	535	1925	0.28	987	3358	0.29	1144	4313	0.27	0.28	
		Trailers	158	754	0.21	213	1000	0.21	311	1354	0.23	472	2020	0.23	689	2623	0.26	0.23	
		Total Vehicles	1290	4690	0.28	1613	6694	0.24	1876	7135	0.26	3017	10792	0.28	3574	13956	0.26	0.26	

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Samenvatting

Het proefschrift stelt dat de stad Tamale, opmerkelijk genoeg, verwaarloosd is binnen de geschiedschrijving van Noord Ghana, ondanks het feit dat het de op twee na grootste stad van Ghana is en veruit de grootste stad van Noord Ghana. Dit wordt, in het proefschrift, enerzijds toegeschreven aan het dominante discours van ‘onderontwikkeling’. Dit discours benadrukt de blokkering van de ontwikkeling van het Noorden door het koloniale bestuur en ziet in de koloniale strategie om de Noordelijke uitbreiding van het spoorweginet niet te voltooien, een bewuste strategie om de Noord-Zuid arbeidsmigratie te stimuleren. Anderzijds ligt de oorzaak in een academische focus op traditionele structuren en op de politiek van ‘indirect rule’. Dit discours richt zich vooral op etnische kwesties, en de rol van kolonialisme in de ontwikkeling van etniciteit. De geschiedenis van Tamale past in geen van beide discourses.

Het proefschrift stelt dat Tamales interne historiografie in strijd is met de historiografie van de Northern Territories in het algemeen. Zo waren bijvoorbeeld de periodes dat Tamales bevolking snel groeide, episodes van grootschalige arbeidsmigratie uit de Northern Territories, naar het Zuiden. In dit opzicht stelt het proefschrift dat het voltooien van de Great North Road en de twee wereldoorlogen bepalend zijn geweest voor de geschiedenis van Tamale.

In hoofdstuk 1 worden de centrale thema's beschreven, de onderzoeksvragen gesteld en de theoretische kaders gedefinieerd. Het hoofdstuk stelt dat de interne sociaalpolitieke en sociaaleconomische dynamiek van Tamale vooral gevormd werd door de splitsing tussen een koloniaal gemotiveerde, traditionele politiek aan de ene

kant en een economische structuur die bijna volledig gebaseerd was op de berijdbare weg tussen Tamale en Kumasi, aan de andere kant. Zo werd Tamale een bijproduct van koloniale doelstellingen, in plaats van een integraal onderdeel van het koloniale systeem. De fundamentele doelstelling van het proefschrift is om deze stelling te bewijzen. Hoofdstuk 1 schetst de referentiekaders waarin Tamales verstedelijking wordt bestudeerd; de politieke structuren van Dagbon, koloniale chiefs, handel, ‘new developmentalism’ en de opkomst van de partijpolitiek in Tamale. De theoretische kaders van dit proefschrift hebben betrekking op de vraag waarom steden ontstaan, hoe ze worden ondersteund, en hoe de externe krachten van stadsformatie invloed uitoefenen op het interne sociaaleconomische en sociaalpolitieke landschap van de stad.

Door het situeren van Tamales bestaan binnen grotere koloniale ontwikkelingsprocessen, stelt hoofdstuk 2 dat Tamale een ongemakkelijke keuze bleek als administratief en commercieel centrum binnen de koloniale ontwikkelingsstrategie. Het hoofdstuk stelt dat als gevolg van de afwezigheid van een spoorweg en de toename van gemotoriseerd transport, na 1920 een handelseconomie is ontstaan (met Tamale in het midden), die noch Europese handelaren heeft gelokt, noch systemen en structuren van de Afrikaanse boeren in Tamale heeft geconsolideerd. De opkomst van het ‘single-lorry-owner/driver’ businessmodel en het daaruit voortvloeiende gebrek aan geconcentreerde controle over handel, maakte het moeilijk voor het koloniale bestuur om financiële voordelen te boeken van de toename van de handel die gemotoriseerd vervoer veroorzaakte. Het ‘single-lorry-owner/driver’ model in het hart van de Noord-Zuid handel, creëerde ook individuele accumulatie van rijkdom in Tamale, wat door de liberale koloniale agenda beschouwd werd als de antithese van de Afrikaanse sociale en politieke systemen, die het koloniale bestuur probeerde te bedienen.

Hoofdstuk 3 gaat over de demografische en sociaaleconomische transformatie in Tamale na de introductie van gemotoriseerd vervoer in 1920, toen de ‘Great North Road’ tussen Kumasi en Tamale eindelijk af was. Er worden drie onderling samenhangende argumenten gemaakt in dit hoofdstuk. Het eerste is dat tijdens de

tien jaar na de introductie van gemotoriseerd vervoer, Tamales demografische groei negatief was samenhang met die van de Northern Territories in het algemeen. Terwijl Tamales demografische groei een positieve functie was van de toenemende mobiliteit na 1920, daalde de bevolkingsgroei van de Northern Territories in deze periode als gevolg van de toenemende mobiliteit. Het tweede argument van dit hoofdstuk is dat Tamales economische veranderingen werden gedreven door soldaten die teruggekeerd waren uit de eerste wereldoorlog en door arbeidsmigratie tussen het Noorden en cacaoboerderijen in het Zuiden. Het derde argument van dit hoofdstuk suggereert dat de economische herconfiguratie als gevolg van de niet-Dagomba, ex-militairen en cacaomigranten veel groter was dan hun directe bijdrage aan Tamales demografische groei.

Hoofdstuk 4 richt zich op de introductie van ‘Indirect Rule’ in Tamale in 1932. Indirect Rule, als koloniale strategie, had als doelstelling het (re)creëren van inheemse politieke en sociale normen en waarden. In Tamale was echter door de toename van gemotoriseerd vervoer en als gevolg van een economische en demografische transformatie, al lang een sociale progressie in gang gezet. Hoofdstuk vier stelt dat ondanks het feit dat Indirect Rule, als vorm van lokaal bestuur, lastig paste binnen Tamales in toenemende mate, stedelijke maatschappij, het koloniale bestuur zich inzette om toch Indirect Rule in Tamale in te voeren. Het gevolg daarvan, stelt dit hoofdstuk, was een lokale autoriteit die voor zijn legitimiteit totaal afhankelijk was van het koloniale bestuur. Daardoor kwam Tamale uit de periode van Indirect Rule, niet met een sterke traditionele politieke structuur, zoals de koloniale administratie had gehoopt, maar met een aantal slecht gedefinieerde centra van autoriteit.

Door middel een case study bouwt hoofdstuk 5 voort op de thema’s ontwikkeld in hoofdstuk 4. Meer in het bijzonder, richt hoofdstuk 5 zich op het bestuur en beheer van land in Tamale. Het hoofdstuk illustreert hoe Tamales complexe politieke matrix in de praktijk werkte. Tamales stedelijke land wordt in dit hoofdstuk gebruikt als een informatief en analytisch instrument om de bredere implicaties te begrijpen van het gebrek aan een traditionele kern in Tamale. Het hoofdstuk plaatst vooral

nadruk op Ward D, de oudste wijk van Tamale, en daarbij het meest responsief voor de traditionele retoriek van Indirect Rule, en tegelijkertijd, het geografische centrum van de bloeiende stad Tamale, en dus, van grote commerciële waarde.

Hoofdstuk 6 richt zich op de periode na de Tweede Wereld Oorlog (WWII). Aangezien de meeste de soldaten van de Gold Coast Regiment (CGR) van oorsprong Noordelingen waren, en veel na de oorlog terug gingen naar het Noorden, was deze periode er een van grote transformatie, vooral in Tamale, waar veel oud-soldaten zich vestigden. Het was ook een tijd van grote veranderingen in de koloniale strategie, met de introductie van 'post-war new developmentalism'. Echter, dit hoofdstuk stelt, in overeenstemming met het argument van Jeff Grischow, dat in de Northern Territories, ondanks de invoering van 'post-war new developmentalism', de nadruk op het behoud van inheemse Afrikaanse sociale structuren de ondergang van Indirect Rule overleefde. Het resultaat was een voortzetting van de ongemakkelijke relatie tussen verstedelijking in Tamale en het grotere, koloniale, politieke en economische kader in Dagbon en de Northern Territories. Dit hoofdstuk geeft ook een belangrijke context voor het volgende hoofdstuk (hoofdstuk 7), dat de interne lokale politiek in de aanloop naar de onafhankelijkheid deconstrueert.

Hoofdstuk 7 is op de Conclusie na, het laatste hoofdstuk van het proefschrift. Dit hoofdstuk stelt dat door de invoering van partijpolitiek en een aantal 'seculiere' instellingen, Tamales sociaal politieke landschap transformeerde. Deze veranderingen leidden tot een aantal politieke herschikkingen in de horizontale en verticale afmetingen tussen de legitimiteit van Tamales twee chiefs, de Gulkpe-Na en de Dakpema, het koloniale bestuur, islamitische en christelijke elites, etnische hoofdmannen, zuiderlingen, en nieuwe 'seculiere' politieke apparaten, zoals de Tamale Urban Council (TUC),

Allianties waren gebaseerd op een mix van complexe persoonlijke relaties en vaak tegenstrijdige, lokale en traditionele doelstellingen. De complexiteit van Tamales socialepolitieke landschap, in relatie tot die van Dagbon en het Noorden meer in het algemeen, resulteerde in een afscheiding van Tamales lokale politiek van de bredere

politieke structuren van Dagbon en de Northern Territories. Tamales naar binnen gerichte politieke dynamiek werd versterkt, niet alleen door spanningen tussen verscheidene lokale politieke lijnen, maar ook de nationale, regionale en traditionele breuklijnen. Kortom, dit hoofdstuk stelt dat Tamales isolement het gevolg is, voor een deel, van de complexe en omstreden interne politieke stratificaties, en voor een deel, van de lokale politieke allianties van Dagbon.

Hoofdstuk 8 geeft de conclusies aan. Kort gezegd, het doel van dit historische onderzoek is het identificeren van de gevolgen van stedelijke processen tijdens de koloniale periode buiten traditionele structuren, in een klimaat gedomineerd door een (koloniaal) traditioneel discours. De studie toont twee centrale gevolgen van deze economische en politieke discontinuïteit aan - een interne en een externe: Tamales institutionele anatomie wordt gekenmerkt door 'multiplicity', en Tamale is voortgekomen uit de koloniale tijd, politiek geïsoleerd, en losgekoppeld van de Northern Territories in het algemeen. Dit is te zien in de hedendaagse politieke structuren en, in de afwezigheid van Tamale in de historiografie van de 'Northern Territories'.