Tamale 1907-1957 : between colonial trade and colonial chieftainship

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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 institutions[1], 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 cent[2], 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

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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

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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]

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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'.

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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

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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-serviceman 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.

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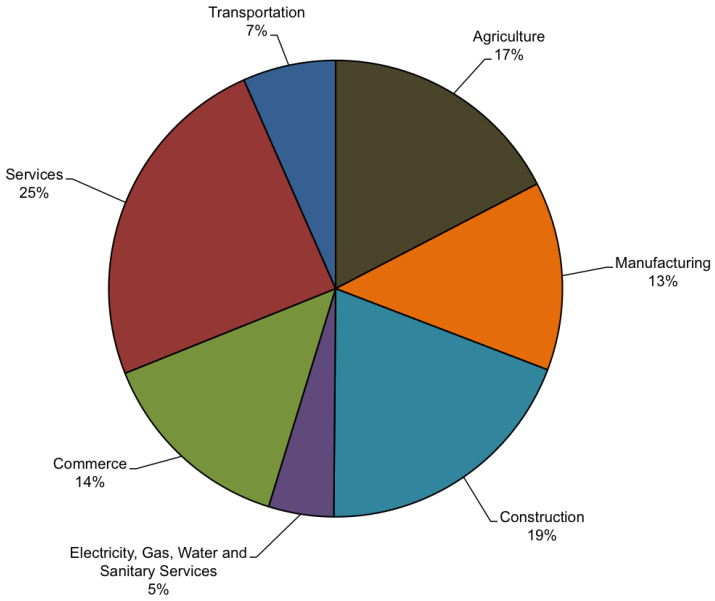
[20] Cooper, *Decolonisation*, 252.
[21] Cooper, *Decolonisation*, 253.

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



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

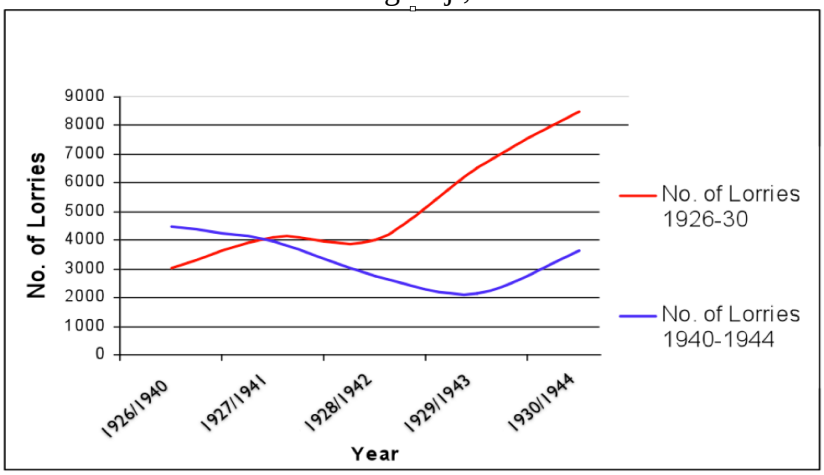
Tamale and the war years

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.

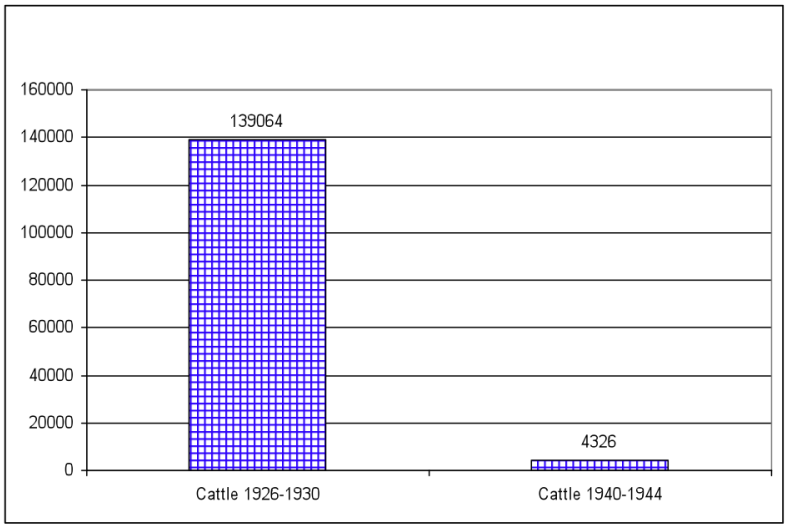
spare parts, and fuel were increasingly difficult to come by. It was noted in the Annual Report for the Northern Territories that motorised transport was 'until 1946, virtually confined to officials' vehicles and cars owned by government officers; there were a few dilapidated "market lorries" … due to 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 south[28] (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]

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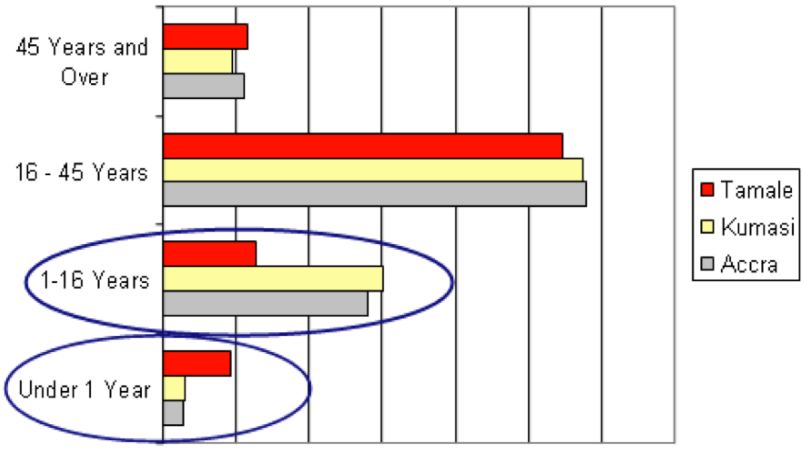
30 PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/3/124, (Report on the Condition of Labour). June, 1947.
31 Ibid.
32 Population Census for the Gold Coast and its Protectorates for the year 1948.
33 PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 8/3/124, (Report on the Condition of Labour), June, 1947.

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 settled 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' 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

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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

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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]

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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

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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'

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[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:

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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

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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.

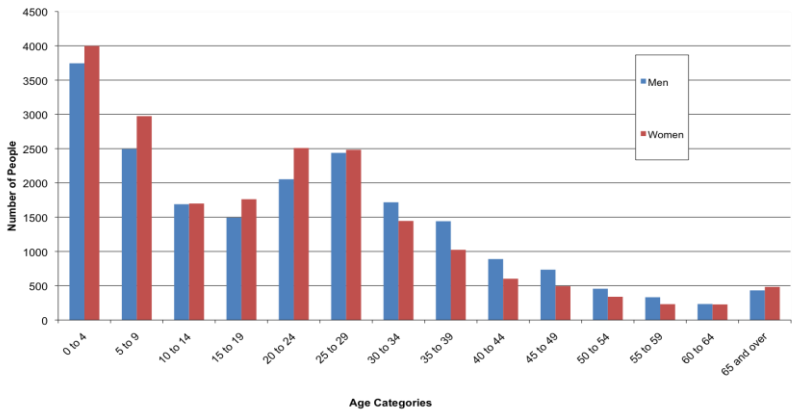
67 PRAAD, Tamale, NRG 2/7/2, (Informal Diary, District Commissioner, Tamale, Packham), June, 1947.

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.

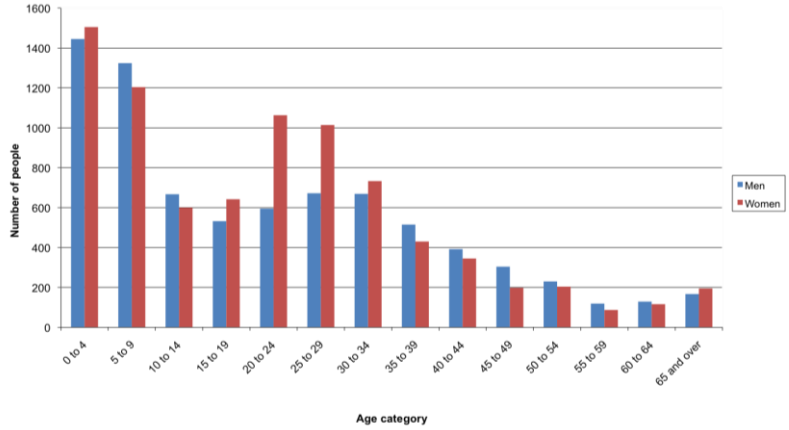
Not only was Tamale's socio-economic landscape increasingly subjected to urban pressures, Tamale's demographic growth accelerated exponentially after 1948. Whereas it had grown from a little under 12,000 in 1931, to 16:055 in 1948, it grew to over 48,000 in 1960. Whilst Tamale's population breakdown 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



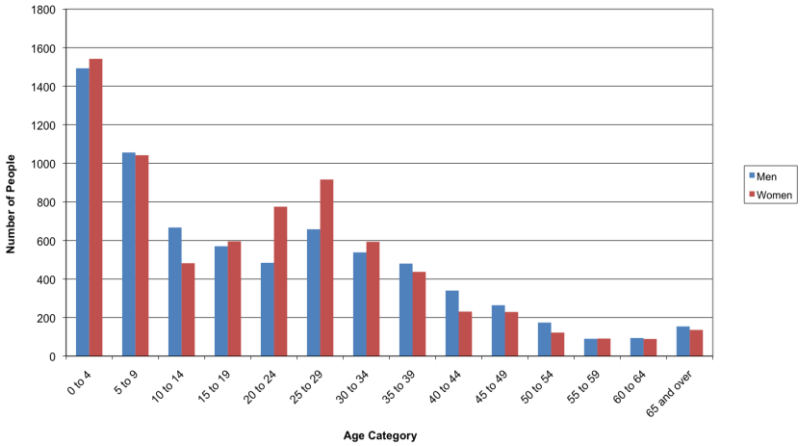
Source: Population Census of Ghana for the Year 1960

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



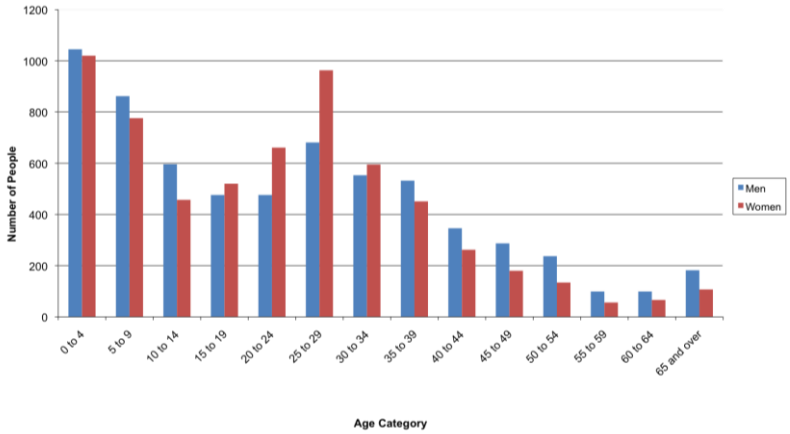
Source: Population Census of Ghana for the Year 1960

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



Source: Population Census of Ghana for the Year 1960

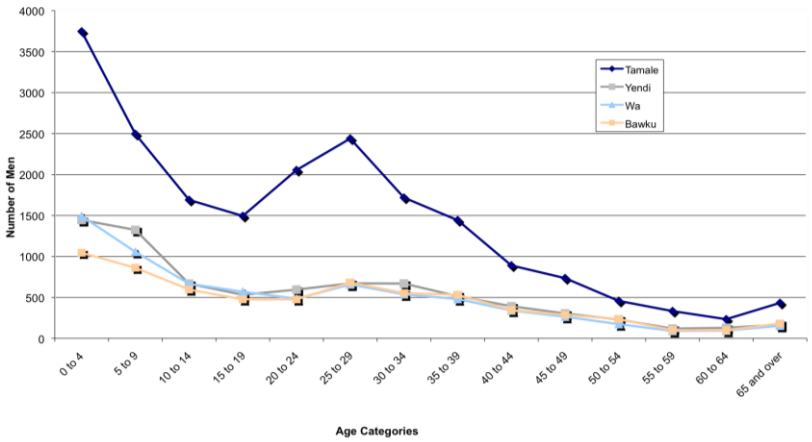
6.8. Bawku, population breakdown, men & women, 1960



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.