Staying on the Margins: Konkomba Mobility and Belonging in Northern Ghana, 1914-1996

Joseph Udimal Kachim

Thesis Submitted in Accordance with the Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities for the Centre of Africa Studies at the University of the Free State

Supervisor: Prof. Neil Roos
Co-Supervisors: Dr. Matteo Grilli and Dr. Anusa Daimon
November 2018

Declaration

I declare that the thesis hereby submitted by me for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of the Free State is my own independent work and has not been previously submitted to any university or institution for any degree, diploma, or any other qualification. I furthermore cede copyright of the dissertation in favour of the University of the Free State.

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To

Rev. Fr. Joseph Renner

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Abstract

This thesis examines Konkomba mobility and the contestations it generated about their belonging in northern Ghana. It analyses the social and political context within which this mobility occurred and argues that by moving across colonial and ethnic boundaries and further away from centres of power, the Konkomba placed themselves beyond the reach of state authorities. The thesis contends that whereas Konkomba spatial mobility was initially an instrument of resistance against state control, it became a source of marginality and exclusion from political and land rights in the postcolonial period. It further analyses the shifting British colonial policy, arguing that the nature and trajectory of British colonial experiment among the Konkomba were shaped not only by colonial initiatives but also by the Konkomba's ability to subvert colonial rule through cross-border mobility. On the other hand, colonial policy also influenced the changing pattern and magnitude of Konkomba mobility. The thesis argues that the pattern of Konkomba mobility in the 1930s and 1940s has had a lasting impact not only on Konkomba status but also on the political and demographic history of the region. In addition, the thesis maintains that colonial state formation in northern Ghana produced a highly politicised form of ethnicity by pushing groups to redefine their feelings of belonging and identity in ethnic terms. It also analyses the tensions that emerged between the Konkomba and their host groups in the 1960s and 1970s as well as the differentiated ways in which they negotiated their inclusion in their host communities. Whereas in the 1990s, democratisation opened up political space for equal citizenship, it also excluded the Konkomba from land ownership and political rights. This fuelled tension between the Konkomba and their hosts. The thesis goes beyond explanations for mobility to contribute to debates around ethnic identity, belonging and democratisation in contemporary Africa, suggesting that there is the need to rethink the role of democratisation as a tool for empowering marginalised groups in Africa.

Opsomming

Hierdie tesis ondersoek Konkomba beweeglikheid en die betwisting wat die gegenereer het oor of hulle behoort in noord Ghana. Dit analiseer die sosiale en politieke konteks waarin hierdie beweeglikheid voorgekom het en argumenteer dat deur om oor koloniale en etniese grense en verder weg van die sentrums van mag te beweeg, die Konkomba hulself buite die bereik van staatsowerhede geplaas het. Hierdie tesis voer aan dat terwyl Konkomba se ruimtelike beweeglikheid oorspronklik `n instrument vir verset teen staatsbeheer was, dit `n bron van marginalisering en uitsluiting van politieke en grondregte vir die Konkomba in die post-koloniale periode geraak het. Dit analiseer koloniale beleid en demonstreer dat die Britse koloniale beleid konstant geskuif het van akkommodasie na gewelddadige onderdrukking. Deur hierdie verskuiwings in Britse beleid te onthul argumenteer hierdie tesis dat die aard en trajek van die Britse koloniale eksperiment onder die Konkomba nie net gevorm was deur die amptelike koloniale inisiatiewe nie, maar ook deur die Konkomba se vermoë om koloniale heerskappy ondermyn deur kruis-grens beweeglikheid. Aan die ander kant het koloniale beleid ook die patrone en omvang van Konkomba beweeglikheid beïnvloed. `n Ondersoek van die sensus opnames van noord Ghana wys dat die Konkomba met grootskaalse migrasie na areas suid van hulle tuislande betrokke was. Hierdie patroon en omvang van Konkomba beweeglikheid in die 1930s en 1940s het `n blywende impak op Konkomba-status gehad asook op die politieke en demografiese geskiedenis van hierdie streek. Daarbenewens voer hierdie tesis aan dat koloniale staatsvorming in noord Ghana `n hoogs verpolitiseerde vorm van etnisiteit geskep het en groepe is forseer om hul gevoelens van behoort en identiteit in etnisiteit te herdefinieer. Dit analiseer ook die spanning wat ontstaan het tussen die Konkomba en hulle gaheer-groepe in die 1960 en 1970s en die onderskeidelike wyses hoe die Konkomba hul insluiting in die gasheer-gemeenskappe onderhandel het. Terwyl demokratisering in die 1990s politieke ruimte oop gemaak het for gelyke burgerskap, het dit in dieselfde asem die Konkomba van grondbesit en politieke regte uitgesluit en sodoende die spanning tussen die Konkomba en hul gashere aangevuur. Hierdeur gaan hierdie tesis verder as `n verduideliking van beweeglikheid om by te dra tot die debatte rondom etniese identiteit, behoort, en demokratisering in kontemporêre Afrika en dui op die nood om die rol van demokratisering in die bemagtiging van gemarginaliseerde groepe in Afrika te heroorweeg.

Acknowledgement

In the process of writing this thesis, I received numerous assistance and support from a number of individuals and institutions. Unquestionably, my greatest debt is to the International Studies Group (ISG) of the University of the Free States. The journey of writing this thesis began only after Professor Ian Phimister, the Director of the International Studies Group, awarded me a generous scholarship in 2015. Apart from the stipend extended to me throughout my three years of study, Professor Phimister funded two research trips to Ghana for my data collection. I would also like to thank Mrs. Ilse Le Roux and Ms Tari Gwena for their assistance and extraordinary sensitivity to my welfare at the centre. Their dedicated service together with the collegiality at ISG offered an excellent academic environment that facilitated the successful completion of this thesis.

I owe a huge intellectual debt to my supervisors, Professor Neil Roos, Dr. Matteo Grilli and Dr. Anusa Daimon for their insightful comments on my draft chapters. Professor Neil Roos, in particular, was very helpful. In spite of the fact that he joined the supervisory team late into the project, he read up every draft chapter of the thesis and offered insightful suggestions that greatly enhance the quality of the thesis. Dr. Daniel Spence who was my first main supervisor was instrumental in guiding me through the first chapters of the thesis. The contributions of Dr. Matteo Grilli and Dr. Anusa Daimon to the thesis is immense. Dr. Grilli translated the relevant sections of Giulia Casentini's book, (the latest major study on the Konkomba) from Italian into English, giving me the opportunity to understand her perspective. I am also very grateful to Dr. Grilli for our discussions in all the informal settings which he frequently set up. My thanks also go to Dr. Frank Gerits for his advice during the proposal stage of this thesis.

I want to also extent my gratitude to the University of Cape Coast for granting me study leave to take up a full-time fellowship at the University of the Free State. In this regard, Professor Kwame Osei Kwarteng, the Head of History Department was of tremendous assistance in convincing the university to release me for studies. Many thanks also go to the late Professor Benedict Der and Professor De-valera Botchway for their mentorship. Mr. Adjei Agyepong and Dr. Richmond Ngula have been good friends and I appreciate their support during the many difficult times of my life.

I owe special thanks to Dr. Kate Skinner of the University of Birmingham and Dr. Wilson K. Yayoh of the Centre for African Studies at the University of Cape Coast for taking an interest

in my academic development. Thank you both for selecting me for the ESRC Graduate Training Partnership Placement at the University of Birmingham. I would never have embarked on a PhD program at the University of the Free State without the encouragement of Dr. Tinashe Nyamunda. Our meeting at Birmingham in May 2015 was really the beginning of my PhD journey. Throughout the writing period, his constant refrain, 'you are almost done' was a great motivation.

Graduate school is supposed to be a long and lonely enterprise but mine was not. This was because of a cohort of great PhD student colleagues and Postdoctoral Fellows at ISG. Bryson Nkoma, Sibanengi Ncube, George Bishi, Mbozi Santebe, Victor Gwande, Ruhan Fourie and Tawanda Chambwe were all great friends and sources of advice. I benefited from scholarly discussions and advice from Drs. Kundai Manamere, Rita Amara, Ana Stevenson, Noel Ndumeya and Clement Masekure. Dr. Admire Mseba read some of my chapters, offered helpful suggestions, and directed me to relevant literature that greatly enhanced my thesis. Dr. Abraham Mlombo was always an e-mail away, no matter how big or how small the problem was. Thank you all for making my studies at ISG a success.

My deepest gratitude also goes to all those who agreed to share with me their memories about Konkomba social life. Daniel Niena Jobor, the late Isaac Sukpen, Kenneth Wujangi and Joshua Yakpir were my constant source of historical knowledge about the Konkomba long before I embarked on this project. Their stories have been of immense benefit to this project. Cletus Mbowura and Cliff Maasole have been generous in making their personal archives available to me. I am most grateful for their generosity. I am also indebted to Margaret London and the late Mary Steel for not only sharing their experiences among the Konkomba with me but also making GILLB library in Tamale accessible to me. I also thank the dozens of people who took time from their busy schedules to assist me in the data collection process. Some of them include Moses Mbolali, Emmanuel Kachim (my brother and friend), Solomon Bukari, Owuahene Acheampong, Gregory Njatabor and Joseph Bisi Porlab. I must also thank Isaac Limpu for reading some of the chapters and cross checking some of the files at the National Archives in Accra for me.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Kachim and Nkii, for educating me in an environment where education was seen as a waste of time and resources. I owe them much gratitude for giving me a better life than what they possibly could have imagined.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CFO	Criminal Fugitive Offenders Ordinance
CPP	Covention People's Party
DAYA	Dagomba Youth Association
GYA	Gonjaland Youth Association
KOYA	Konkomba Youth Association
KYIA	Konkomba Youth Improvement Association
Na	Chief
NAP	Native Authority Police
NAYA,	Nanumba Youth Association
NCOs	Native Constabulary Officers
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NLC	National Liberation Council
NPP	Northern People's Party
NYA	Nawuri Youth Association
NYA	Northern Youth Association
PNDC	Provincial National Defence Council
PNT	Permanent Negotiating Team
TC	Togoland Congress
TICCS	Tamale Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies
Tolimo	National Liberation Movement of Western Togoland
Ya Na	Paramount Chief of the Dagomba

Tables and Maps

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Chapter One

Conceptual and Methodological Reflections on Mobility and Belonging

Introduction

The centrality of mobility in Konkomba social life in the precolonial period is widely acknowledged in the literature.[1] In response to political and security threats from nearby states, the Konkomba frequently moved from one place to another. The imposition of colonial rule and the establishment of fixed boundaries did not prevent them from moving across colonial and ethnic boundaries. Upon moving into new territories and interacting with different groups, under different socio-political contexts, the Konkomba redefined their identity, political and social life. While scholars have recognised the centrality of mobility in Konkomba social life, very little attention has been devoted to exploring its cultural embeddedness as well as the impact it has had on their social and political status in northern Ghana. Against this background, this thesis focuses on Konkomba mobility and its role in shaping their ethnic identity, belonging and political status in contemporary northern Ghana. Understanding Konkomba mobility within this region is particularly important not only because these movements were massive and varied but also because they created significant long-term impact on the region's economic, political, social, and demographic history.

By the end of colonial rule in Ghana in 1957, mobility had brought the Konkomba into closer contact with other ethnic groups. The conflictual relationship that characterised Konkomba relations with their neighbours has been the subject of many studies.[2] Among these studies,

[1] J-C. Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba du Nord Togo* (Dakar: IFAN, 1954). All references to Froelich are from the English translation by Nirgrit Bolli, obtained from the Ghana Institute of Linguistic, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT) library in Tamale. D. Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961). C. Maasole, *The Konkomba and their Neighbours from the Pre-European Period to 1914* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 2006). B. Talton, *Politics of Social Change in Ghana: The Konkomba Struggle for Political Equality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010) and G. Casentini, *Al Di là Del Fiume: Storia e Antropologia di un Confine Africano, Ghana-Togo* (Roma: Viella, 2015).

[2] P. Skalnik, 'Nanumba Chieftaincy Facing the Ghanaian State and Konkomba Tribesmen: An Interpretation of the Nanumba Konkomba War of 1981', in J. van Binsbergen, F. Reyntyens and G. Hesseling (eds.), *State and Local Community in Africa* (Buxelles: CEDAF, 1986), 69-78. H. B. Martinson, *The Hidden History of the Konkomba Wars* (Tamale, Masta Press, 1995). A. Bogner, 'The 1994 Civil War in Northern Ghana: The Genesis and Escalation of a "Tribal" Conflict', in Lentz and Nugent (eds.), *Ethnicity in Ghana: The Limits of Invention* (New York: St. Martin's Presss, 2000), 183-203. J. Jönsson, 'The Overwhelming Minority: Traditional Leadership and Ethnic Conflict in Ghana's Northern Region', Crises Working Paper, 30 (Oxford University, 2007). J. Jönsson, 'The Overwhelming Minority: Inter-Ethnic Conflict in Ghana's Northern Region', *Journal of International Development,* 21, 4 (2009), 507-519. I. Mahama, *Ethnic Conflicts in Northern Ghana* (Tamale: Cyber Systems, 2003). S. A. Pul., 'Exclusion, Association and Violence: Trends and Triggers in Northern Ghana's Konkomba-Dagomba Wars', *The African Anthropologist,* 10, 1 (2006), 38-82. Talton, *Politics of Social Change*

some are devoted to the broader history of the Konkomba. In his *Konkomba and their Neighbours,* Cliff Maasole for example, makes efforts to trace Konkomba origin and migration, and describe their socio-political organisations and mobile social life.[3] However, Maasole's work is limited in scope as his study ends in 1914. Benjamin Talton, analyses the struggle between the Konkomba and their neighbours within the context of social change, emphasising the impact of British colonial policy and Western education.[4] He contends that the Konkomba was a marginalised group and attributes their marginality to the British policy of subordinating them under Dagomba rule, which deprived the former of their right to an independent chieftaincy in northern Ghana.[5] The point of departure of this thesis is that the high mobility that has long characterised Konkomba social life provides a more convincing explanation for their status in northern Ghana than colonial policy. The Konkomba mobile lifestyle placed them on the margins[6] of both the colonial and the postcolonial states. The thesis also examines how mobility shaped colonial policy in ways that served to disenfranchise and marginalise the Konkomba. Exploring mobility as a source of marginality provides a window through which to articulate and foreground the relationship between people and territory, which has been important in the contestations over belonging in northern Ghana. The study therefore asks the following questions: What factors influenced and shaped Konkomba mobility? What role did mobility play in Konkomba marginality? How did the Konkomba challenge their marginality and exclusion? What factors inhibited the extent to which they achieved inclusion?

Scholars continue to debate how postcolonial African states endorsed and institutionalised exclusionary frameworks constructed in the colonial period.[7] This thesis contributes to this debate by analysing contestations over Konkomba inclusion and exclusion within the traditional communities of northern Ghana. By employing the concept of mobility instead of

in Ghana. C. Maasole, 'The Konkomba and the Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Ghana, 1900-1981' (PhD Thesis, University of Development Studies, Tamale, 2011).

[3] Maasole, *The Konkomba and their Neighbours*, 57. For details on Konkomba socio-political organisation see Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana.*

[4] Talton, *Politics of Social Change.*

[5] *Ibid*, 52-55.

[6] The phrase 'Staying on the Margins' in the title of this thesis is adapted from S. Hiskey, 'Citizens on the Margins' in his book chapter 'Caught at the Crossroads: Citizenship, Marginality and the Mbororo Fulani in Northewest Cameroon', in S. Dorman, D. Harmmett and P. Nugent (eds.), *Making Nations, Creating Strangers: State and Citizenship in Africa* (Leiden and Boston: BRILL, 2007), 89.

[7] M. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996). Jönsson, 'The Overwhelming Minority'. Talton, *Politics of Social Change.* Casentini, 'Socio-Cultural and Political Change in a Transnational Group'. C. Lund, 'Bawku is Still Volatile': Ethno-Political Conflict and State Recognition in Northern Ghana', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41, 4 (2003), 587–610. S. Balaton-Chrimes, *Ethnicity, Democracy and Citizenship in Africa: Political Marginalisation of Kenya's Nubians* (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2015).

migration as a framework for analysing Konkomba population movement, the study hopes to capture not only the irregular nature of the movements, but also the cultural and social dimensions of mobility.[8] Unlike migration, which refers to the spatial movement of people across different geographical and administrative boundaries, mobility encompasses all these movements in addition to the socio-cultural interpretation of such spaces as well as the forms of relationships these migrations engender.[9] Cross-border relationships were very important in Konkomba social life. Giulia Casentini explored the Konkomba as a transnational group on both sides of the Togo-Ghana border, paying attention to how perceptions of their inhabited space shaped their identity.[10] Although Casentini's study highlights some Konkomba cross-border movements, her exclusive focus on the border areas left out the Konkomba populations that have migrated south. This thesis analyses the cross-border movements as a continuation of Konkomba mobile social life and follows the migrants to their new settlements by analysing their dilemmas, conflicts, and the complex processes of negotiation for inclusion. By framing the study from the perspective of mobility, this thesis examines movements across colonial and ethnic boundaries, beyond the limitation of nation-state as a unit of analysis. This approach allows us to avoid the challenge of definitional binaries of international and local migrations whilst analysing cross-border movements.

The assumption underlying the study is that mobility was not essentially a feature of marginality. Rather, it was a tool employed to challenge and evade state authority and control. The thesis is informed by James Scott's idea that the inhabitants of the 'ungoverned margins' were not more 'primitive' than the centralised societies, but that they were populations that had placed themselves on the margins of the state by choice.[11] By moving into inaccessible terrains on the periphery of organised states, militarily weak groups were able to evade state domination. Thus, the 'ungoverned margins' on the periphery of organised states were zones of refuge for groups desiring to remain independent.[12] Far from being a feature of societies 'left behind by civilization', mobility was largely a political choice or adapation to evade capture

[8] T. Gratz, 'Introduction: Mobility, Transnational Connections and Sociocultural Change in Contemporary Africa', in Gratz (ed.), *Mobility, Transnationalism and Contemporary African Societies* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 1-17.
[9] M. de Bruijn, R. van Dijk & D. Foeken, 'Mobile Africa: An Introduction', in de Bruijn, van Dijk & Foeken (eds.), *Mobile Africa: Changing Patterns of Movement in Africa and Beyond* (Leiden and Boston: BRILL, 2001), 3.
[10] Casentini, *Al Di là Del Fiume.*
[11] J. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia,* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2009), 8.
[12] *Ibid*.

by the state.[13] In this respect, mobility becomes a political resource for those who flee the burden of state. Such communities also adopt subsistent strategies designed to escape detection and maximise their physical mobility should they be forced to flee at a moment notice.[14] In this thesis, Konkomba mobility is interpreted as a social choice designed to position themselves vis-à-vis their centralised neighbours. Framing mobility as a political tool enables this study not only to transcend the everyday story of migration, but also to analyse it as an integral part of a group's political strategy and survival tactics. In the specific case of the Konkomba, although mobility allowed them to shape their destinies to a considerable extent, it became a source of marginality when attachment to territory became an important means of belonging during the process of colonial state formation.

The choice of 1914 as the starting point is premised on two considerations: first, sources for studying Konkomba mobility become increasingly available from that time onwards; and second, the Anglo-French partition after the outbreak of the First World War greatly transformed Konkomba mobility. As a landmark of sovereignty, colonial borders and control of local populations were crucial steps towards state making in colonial Africa.[15] Predictably, colonial state population movement control clashed with the long-held tradition of Konkomba mobile social life. This collision provides an excellent point of entry to the examination of how colonial policy shaped and was itself shaped by Konkomba mobility. More precisely, the thesis outlines the changing pattern of Konkomba mobility and the socio-political context within which this mobility took place. It further highlights the magnitude of Konkomba emigration and examines their position within the societies in which they settled. By examining the changing relations between the Konkomba and their hosts in the postcolonial context, the thesis interrogates the tensions that emerged between the Konkomba and their host groups. It is also concerned with the strategies the Konkomba employed to negotiate their belonging and how processes of democratisation affected their ability to achieve inclusion. In doing so, the thesis devotes attention to how modern state and traditional institutions interacted at the local level to shape ethnic belonging. The end of the study in 1996 is not arbitrary. Following the 1994

[13] *Ibid*, 9, 183.
[14] *Ibid*, 183-5.
[15] F. Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labour Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 46. See also A. Horstmann and R. L. Wadley, 'Introduction', in Horstmann and Wadley (eds.), *Centering the Margin: Agency and Narrative in Southeast Asian Borderlands* (New York & Oxford: Berghan Books, 2009), 9.

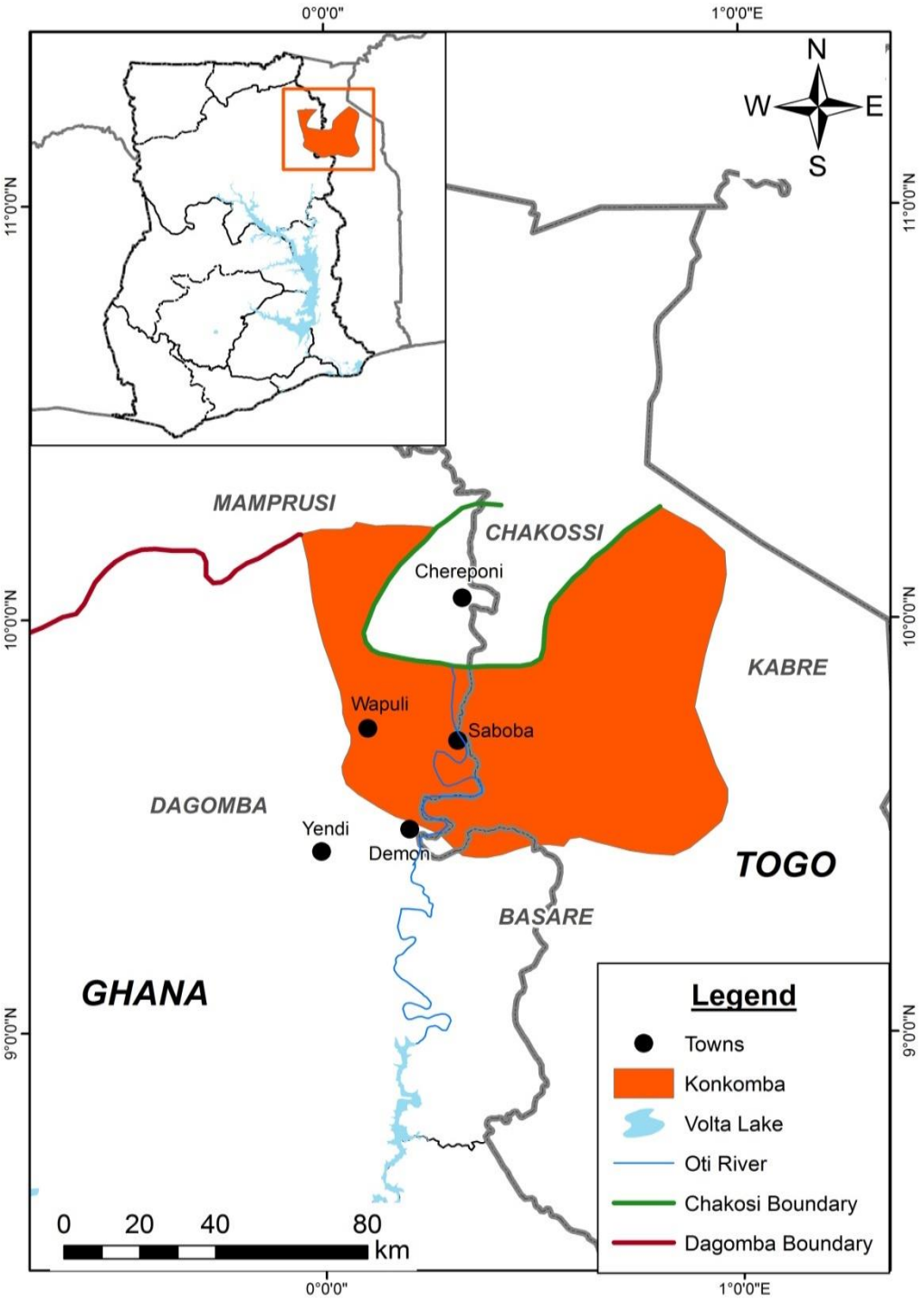
conflict, the Konkomba and their neighours signed a peace accord in 1996, which clearly stipulated the status of each group in northern Ghana.[16]

Konkomba Land and People

The Konkomba, who constitute the focus of this thesis, belong to the Gur cluster of the Gurma sub-group found in the Oti-Volta basin of modern Ghana and Togo.[17] They refer to themselves as *Bikpakpaam* and their language as *Likpakpaln*. They were and continue to be predominantly agrarian. Historically, they are one of the earliest inhabitants of Middle Volta basin of modern Ghana.[18] In about the eighteenth century, they moved into the Oti River valley due to pressure from the invading Dagomba, Mamprusi, Gonja, Nanumba and Chakossi (Anoufo) groups. The area they regard as their homeland in the Oti plain is located in the northern parts of both modern Ghana and Togo between latitude 9° 10' and 10° N. and longitude 0° and 1° E.[19] This area was bordered on the west by the Dagomba, on the northeast by the Mamprusi, on the north by the Chakossi, on the south by the Bassari and on the east by the Kabre.[20] Until the beginning of the colonial period, the Konkomba area was on the periphery of the centralised states that had emerged in the area.[21] Figure 1.1 shows a map of Konkomba homeland.

[16] Kumasi Accord on Peace and Reconciliation between the Various Ethnic Groups in the Northern Region of Ghana, 1996.
[17] J. Greenberg, *The Languages of Africa* (Bloomington*:* Indiana University, 1966), 3.
[18] I. Wilks, 'The Mossi and the Akan States, 1400 to 1800', in J. F. A. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa,* Vol. 1, Third Edition, (New York: Longman, 1985). 470. See also G. Tuurey, *An Introduction to the Mole-Speaking Community,* (Wa: Catholic Press, 1982), 12.
[19] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana,* 1. See also P. Barker, *Peoples, Languages and Religion in Northern Ghana* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1986), 170.
[20] Memorandum on Konkomba Lands Submitted by KOYA on Behalf of the Chiefs and People of the Konkomba Traditional Area, to the Committee on the Ownership of Lands and Position of Tenants in Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana, 1978.
[21] G. Casentini, 'Different Ideas of Borders and Border Construction in Northern Ghana: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives', *Ghana Studies,* 17 (2014), 181.

Figure 1. 1 A Map Showing Konkomba Homeland



***Source*:** Adapted from David Tait, *Konkomba of Northern Ghana*, 3.

The most important neighbours of the Konkomba were the Dagomba because they pushed the Konkomba eastward into the Oti plains. This eastward thrust of the Konkomba in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries shaped their social and economic systems in a very significant way. It is significant that the name 'Konkomba' is derived from the Dagbani form *Kpunkpamba*.[22]

In 1918, Allen Wolsey Cardinall, a British colonial official, described the Konkomba as a 'primitive people' without political organisation higher than the family group. The only authority among the Konkomba, according to Cardinall, was the head of a family over his immediate household. Except the earth priest, who was 'more often than not the head of the family whose fetish he guards', no one had any authority 'outside his compound or group of compounds'.[23] Cradinall's description of the political organisation of the Konkomba fitted well within Meyers Fortes and Edward Evans-Pritchard's typology of a stateless or an 'acephalous' society.[24] However, later analysts found the Konkomba not to be headless or stateless in the sense that they were without rulers. According to David Tait, a British anthropologist who studied the Konkomba in the 1950s, the Konkomba were organised on clan basis. The clan was the largest political unit of the Konkomba political system.[25] These clan-based units were ruled by elders (*Bininkpiib,* plu. or *Uninkpel* sing.).[26] Konkomba elders did not possess executive power based on law and coercion but rather, they derived their authority from moral and ritual control.[27] Throughout the precolonial period, the Konkomba did not develop a centralised system of administration. Each clan continued to be an independent and autonomous unit. There is no evidence of any concerted efforts among the Konkomba clans in defence of their territory against outside invasion during the precolonial period.[28] In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, they resorted to mobility to avoid the expanding centralised states of

[22] See Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana*, 1. Dagbani is the language of the Dagomba. The origin of the Dagomba term '*Kpunkpamba*' is contested. David Tait suggests that the term was a corruption of the Konkomba word '*Bikpakpaam*' but Froelich contends that the Dagomba word '*Kpunkpamba'* was derived from the term '*Kpunkpam*' that was a name of a Komba clan (today the Komba are a sub-group of the Konkomba). In the early German maps, the word *Kpunkpam* was used to refer to the population of the northern part of Komba territory. It is possible that the Dagomba first came into contact with this clan and applied their name to all Gurma speakers of the Volta basin. J-C. Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba du Nord Togo,* (Dakar: IFAN, 1954).
[23] A. W. Cardinall, 'Some Random Notes on the Customs of the Konkomba', *Journal of the Royal African Society,* 18, 69 (1918), 45.
[24] African political systems were first grouped into two broad categories – centralised and stateless societies – by M. Fortes and E .E. Evans- Pritchard in their work, *African Political Systems,* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987), 5.
[25] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana*, 46.
[26] D. Tait, 'The Political System of Konkomba', *Journal of the International African Institute,* 23, 3 (1953), 213.
[27] H. Zimoń, 'Guinea Corn Harvest Rituals among the Konkomba of Northern Ghana', *Anthropos*, Bd. 84, H. 4./6. (1989), 456-7.
[28] Tait, 'The Political System of Konkomba', 220.

Dagomba, Gonja, Nanumba, Mamprusi, and Chakossi. This mobility thrust them into the Oti River valley.

The climatic condition of the Oti River valley was relatively harsh compared to other parts of the Volta basin. During the dry season, temperatures rose to over 110° by day and dropped to 50° at night.[29] The area was often flooded during the rainy season and in the dry season, water was scarce and the soil became extremely dry. The perennial flooding of the Oti River severely leached the soil resulting in poor soil fertility. [30] The staple crops grown in the area included guinea corn and millet.[31] Besides the poverty of the soil and flooding, which affected food security among the Konkomba, their centralised neighbours organised intermittent slave raids on their villages in the eighteenth century. In the situation of political and economic insecurity, the Konkomba sustained their economic and social life by frequent mobility. In spite of its ecological disadvantage, the Oti valley proved strategically advantageous for the Konkomba. The yearly floods and marshy terrain of the Oti served as adequate protection against the cavalry and horse raiders of the centralised states of the Dagomba and the Anufo. In this sense, the Oti River was not only a source of subsistence and livelihood for the Konkomba but also a political resource that enabled the Konkomba to resist domination by their centralised neighbours. The River was also socially significant as it connected the Konkomba clans on either side in complex social networks of kinship relations.[32] In the colonial period, however, the river would go on to assume a different meaning for the European colonisers – an international boundary. As an international boundary, the Europeans viewed the river as a point of separation, which clashed with the Konkomba social understanding of the river.

Migration, Mobility and Belonging

Studies on African population movement in the colonial period initially emphasised labour migration. Drawing on neo-classical economic theory of Arthur Lewis, some of these studies explained migration as resulting from rational economic decisions of individual migrants to move from areas of low productivity to areas where they have greater opportunities to increase their levels of income.[33] On the other hand, dependency and world system theorists argued that migration resulted from the disruption of the local economies through its incorporation into the Western-dominated world

[29] Tait, *Konkomba of Northern Ghana,* 13.
[30] *Ibid.*
[31] *Ibid*, 14.
[32] Casentini, *Al Di là Del Fiume,* 19.
[33] M. Todaro, *Internal Migration in Developing Countries* (Geneva: International Labour Office, 1969) and M. Todaro, *Economic Development in the Third World*, Third Edition (New York: Longman, 1985).

economic system.[34] In spite of their disagreement, both strands of literature tended to focus on economic factors prompting migration to the neglect of other socio-political contexts within which the movements occur. Those who paid some attention to the social dimension of migration found migration to be disruptive to people's cultural and social life.[35] Scholars have since the 1970s explored migrations of Africans under colonial rule beyond economic factors. Anthony Asiwaju has been forthright in conceptualising colonial cross-border migrations as resistance to colonial rule.[36] Asiwaju observes that cross-border migrations during the colonial period was a continuation of the tradition of politically motivated migrations of the preceding epochs.[37] He argues that most colonial migrations in Africa constituted an important dimension of a series of unarmed but effective protests against European colonial rule.[38] Subsequently, Jeffrey Herbst employed Albert Hirschman's concepts of 'exit' and 'voice' to explain African migrations in the colonial period.[39] For Herbst, 'exit' through migration was the most attractive option for dissatisfied colonial subjects since 'there was usually a significant amount of open land which could be occupied at low cost.'[40] He notes that, because the exit option was always available, it was usually the strategy of choice.[41] Conceptualising migration as a political resource against state power added a significant dimension to the concept of migration. However, both Asiwaju and Herbst's approach continued to imprison migration studies within the binary framework of 'push and pull' factors,[42] the aim of which was mainly to explain the factors influencing individuals to leave their homes and those factors attracting them to particular places.[43]

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[34] Among these are R. Thomas, 'Forced Labour in British West Africa: The Case of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, 1906-27', *Journal of Africa Studies*, 14 (1973), 19-103. S. Amin, 'Introduction', in S. Amin (ed.), *Modern Migrations in West Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 65-124. D. Cleveland, 'Migration in West Africa: A Savanna Village Perspective', *Africa*, 61, 2 (1991), 222-246. J. Baker & Tade Akin Aina (eds.), *The Migration Experience in Africa* (*GOTAB: Nordiska Afrikainstitute, 1995*).

[35] E. P. Skinner, 'Labour Migration and its Relationship to Socio- Cultural Change in Mossi Society', *Africa*, 30, 4 (1960), 375-401. W. Hance, *Population, Migration and Urbanization in Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970). A. O'Connor, *The African City* (London: Hutchinson, 1983). A. Adepoju (ed.), *Internal Migration in Nigeria* (Ife: University of Ife for Institute of Population and Manpower Studies, 1976).

[36] A. I. Asiwaju, 'Migrations as Revolt: The Example of the Ivory Coast and the Upper Volta before 1945', *Journal of African History*, XVII, 4 (1976), 577-594.

[37] A. I. Asiwaju, *Western Yorubaland Under European Rule, I889-I945: A Comparative Analysis of French and British Colonialism* (London: Longman, 1976). Asiwaju, 'Migrations as Revolt'.

[38] Asiwaju, 'Migrations as Revolt', 582-3.

[39] J. Herbst, 'Migration, the Politics of Protest and State Consolidation in Africa', *African Affairs*, 89, 355 (1990), 183. Albert Hirschman's theory held that people in a group facing a deteriorating circumstance have two options available to them – leave (exit) or stay and make their dissatisfaction known (voice).

[40] *Ibid*, 184

[41] *Ibid*.

[42] E. Lee, 'A Theory of Migration', *Demography*, 3, 1 (1966), 47-57.

[43] See Asiwaju, 'Migrations as Revolt' and Herbst, 'Migration, the Politics of Protest and State Consolidation'.

From the 2000s, there was a new approach to the study of migration influenced by the 'mobility turn', or the 'mobilities' perspective'.[44] This strand of literature embraced the transnational approach to migration and engineered a shift from the neo-classical economic analysis of migration towards a cultural studies approach.[45] The move towards transnational and cultural studies approach challenged the view of migration as disruptive to economic and social progress. In *Mobile Africa*, Mirjam de Bruijn, Rijk van Dijk & Dick Foeken call for departure from the interpretation of mobility as a 'rupture' because it was so integral to many African societies that 'not being mobile may be the anomaly.'[46] In the same volume, Mirajn de Bruijn, Han van Dijk & Rijk van Dijk explore how travelling cultures were developed and responded to immediate social, economic, political and ecological conditions.[47] In their analysis of the changing pattern of Fulbe mobility, Mirajn de Bruijn *et al*, observe that although economic conditions influenced and shaped mobility, 'the role of mobility goes much deeper than this and permeates the ways in which people relate to each other'.[48] By this, they were drawing our attention to the cultural dimension of mobility. They suggest that for a better understanding of migration, there was need for a closer look at cultural embeddedness of mobile cultures and the transformation it engenders in the sending, as well as the host societies.[49]

Peter Hahn and Georg Klute adopt this approach in their edited volume, *Cultures of Migration*, and argue that mobility is an integral part of the livelihood system of many African people.[50] They suggest that 'the normative perspective on migratory movements as the exception as compared to sedentary ways of life obviously contradicts the reality of many African peoples and groups.'[51] They present migratory movements as 'complexes of cultural representations' influenced by factors other than the external 'pull and push' factors.[52] Instead, they proposed

[44] T. Faist, 'The Mobility Turn: A New Paradigm for the Social Sciences?', *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* 36, 11 (2013), 1638.
[45] H. P. Hahn and G. Klute (eds.), *Cultures of Migration: African Perspectives* (Berlin: Lit Verg, 2007). J. H. Cohen and I. Sirkeci (eds.), *Cultures of Migration: The Global Nature of Contemporary Mobility,* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011). Cohen and Sirkeci, 'Cultures of Migration and Conflict in Contemporary Human Mobility in Turkey', *European Review*, 24, 3 (2016), 381–396.
[46] M. de Bruijn, R. van Dijk & D. Foeken, 'Mobile Africa: An Introduction', in M. de Bruijn, R. van Dijk & D. Foeken (eds.), *Mobile Africa: Changing Patterns of Movement in Africa and Beyond* (Leiden and Boston: BRILL, 2002), 2.
[47] M. de Bruijn, H. van Dijk & R. van Dijk, 'Cultures of Travel: Fulbe Pastoralists in Central Mali and Pentecostalism in Ghana', in M. de Bruijn et. al (eds.), *Mobile Africa: Changing Patterns of Movement in Africa and Beyond* (Leiden and Boston: BRILL, 2001), 64.
[48] *Ibid*. 66.
[49] *Ibid.*
[50] P. Hahn and G. Klute, 'Cultures of Migration: Introduction', in H. P. Hahn and G. Klute (eds.), *Cultures of Migration: African Perspectives* (Berlin: Lit Verg, 2007),
[51] *Ibid*, 11.
[52] *Ibid*.

an emic perspective to the study of migration, which prioritises migrants' telling of their own stories.[53] Jeffrey Cohen and Ibrahim Sirkeci's edited work, *Cultures of Migration,* took this approach to explore household-level decision-making process that prompts migration.[54] Rather than individual family and household level analysis, this study is interested in cultural and historical experiences of the movements of a social group.

Scholars have also devoted attention to migrant modes of adaptation, economic and social integration into host societies and the way migrants maintain relationships back home, across space and time. This strand of literature emphasises the new forms of population movements brought about by globalisation.[55] While there is no doubt that patterns of mobility have changed, the extraordinary focus on international migration in this literature has tended to overshadow a range of the older forms of migratory movements that are significant in the reconfiguration of group identities and belonging. Moreover, in postcolonial Africa, people did not just move unhindered. Border regimes and permit requirements have presented serious constraints to mobile populations.[56] These barriers to mobility should be traced to the emergence of colonial borders in the late nineteenth century. This makes it imperative to situate mobility in Africa within the colonial state making process. This allows us to see mobility not only as a socially embedded phenomenon, but also as a political resource that Africans used to assert themselves.

The contributions in the volume, *Movements, Borders and Identity in Africa*, edited by Toyin Falola and Aribidesi Usman focus on the centrality of migration in the transformation of group identities.[57] Most of the chapters however centred on forced mobility. In contrast, the present study focuses on voluntary and culturally embedded mobilities. These were equally important in the transformation of group identities. More than transforming identities, mobility was also crucial in defining belonging. Mobility brought people into new relations, and pushed them to

[53] *Ibid*, 13.
[54] Cohen and Sirkeci (eds.), *Cultures of Migration*.
[55] M. Thapan (ed.), *Transnational Migration and the Politics of Identity* (New Delhi: SAGE, 2005). T. Gratz, 'Mobility, Transnational Connections and Sociocultural Change in Contemporary Africa', in T. Gratz (ed.), *Mobility, Transnationalism and Contemporary Africa Societies* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010). C. Audebert and M. K. Dorai (eds.) *Migration in Globalised World: New Research Issues and Perspectives* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010). M. Awumbila, D. Badasu and J. Teye (eds.), *Migration in a Globalizing World: Perspectives from Ghana*, (Accra: Sub Saharan Publishers, 2018).
[56] R. Ciavolella, 'Frontiers of Mobility, Limits of Citizenship: Political Meanings of Mobility for Some Fulani Groups in Mauritania', in T. Gratz (ed.), *Mobility, Transnationalism and Contemporary Africa Societies* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, (2010), 72-91.
[57] T. Falola and A. Usman (eds.), *Movements, Borders and Identities in Africa* (Boydell & Brewer: University of Rochester Press, 2009).

redefine not only their identities but also their feelings of belonging.[58] It therefore brings to the fore issues of citizenship and belonging, whose link scholars have documented.[59] Although the concepts of citizenship and belonging are closely related, Rogers Brubaker provides a good distinction between the two. He differentiates belonging from citizenship by the level of formality and informality involved in their acquisition.[60] According to him, membership in a nation state entails 'both *formal* and *informal* aspects' of belonging.[61] Specialised personnel and codified rules confer formal membership in the nation state while ordinary people in the course of everyday life, using tacit understandings of who belongs and who does not, administer the informal membership.[62] This implied a certain inherent duality in membership of people in a community. This duality is very pronounced in Africa.

Mahmood Mamdani has analysed the duality in African citizenship as a colonial political legacy produced by indirect rule. He asserts that the colonial state in Africa was effectively bifurcated into 'citizen and subject' consisting of local and the urban areas respectively.[63] In his conception, citizenship defined in terms of civil rights was applied to European settlers and detribalised Africans in the cities, while indigenous populations were only qualified as subjects under the customary law of a particular Native Authority which corresponded with an ethnic group.[64] Thus, colonial law made a fundamental distinction between the world of the 'natives' and the world of the settlers with two different legal systems: one civil and the other customary. Mamdani argues that 'customary law was defined in the plural, as the law of the tribe, and *not*

[58] M. de Bruijn, 'Mobility and Society in the Sahel: An Exploration of Mobile Margins and Global Governance', in Hahn and Klute (eds.), *Cultures of Migration: African Perspectives* (Berlin: Lit Verg, 2007), 110.
[59]See P. Geschiere and F. Nyamnjoh, '"Capitalism and Autochthony": The Seesaw of Mobility and Belonging', *Public Culture* 12, 2 (2000), 423-452. B. Ceuppens and P. Geschiere, 'Autochthony: Local or Global? New Modes in the Struggle over Citizenship and Belonging in Africa and Europe', The *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 35, (2005), 385–407. P. Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009). See also P. Konings, 'Mobility and Exclusion: Conflicts between Autochthons and Allochthons during Political Liberalisation in Cameroon', in M. de Bruijn, R. van Dijk & D. Foeken (eds.), *Mobile Africa Changing*: *Changing Pattern of Movement in Africa and Beyond*, (Leiden & Boston: BRILL, 2001), 169-194. P. Geschiere and S. Jackson, 'Autochthony and the Crisis of Citizenship: Democratization, Decentralization, and the Politics of Belonging', in L. B. Landau (ed.), *Exorcising the Demons Within: Xenophobia, Violence and Statecraft in Contemporary South Africa* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2012). F. Nyamnjoh, *Insiders and Outsiders: Citizenship and Xenophobia in Contemporary South Africa* (Dakar: Codesria Books, 2006).
[60] R. Brubaker, 'Migration, Membership, and the Modern Nation-State: Internal and External Dimensions of the Politics of Belonging', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, XLI: I (2010), 61-78. See also E. A. Ifodon, 'Citizenship, Statehood and the Problem of Democratization in Nigeria', *Africa Development*, 21, 4 (1996), 93-107.
[61] Brubaker, 'Migration, Membership, and the Modern Nation-State', 64.
[62] *Ibid*, 65.
[63] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*. M. Mamdani, 'Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities: Overcoming the Political Legacy of Colonialism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 43, 4 (2001), 658.
[64] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 292.

in the singular, as a law for all natives.'[65] Under customary law, land could not be a private possession. It was defined as a customary communal holding to which each member of the group had customary access.[66] In this arrangement, strangers had no equal rights to land. The question of defining who was indigenous and who was not became important at both the central and the local levels. Within the country as a whole, only indigenous ethnic groups had rights to have Native Authorities of their own. Locally, at the Native Authority level, a distinction was made between those people who were ethnically indigenous and those who were not, and only the former had full rights to land and resources by custom.[67]

The salience of Mamdani's argument is that the postcolonial African states failed to desmatle this colonial burfication between settlers and 'natives' and among ethnic groups. Although the independent African states removed the sting of racism from a colonially fashioned framework, they kept in place the Native Authorities, which enforced the division between ethnicities.[68] Whereas this study acknowledges the usefulness of the idea of the 'bifurcated state', a simple binary between 'citizens' and 'subjects' is problematic. In Mamdani's conception, 'citizens' and 'subjects' were mutually exclusive, but in contemporary Africa, people, particularly the rural folks, are both citizens of the nation state and subjects of the ethnic state as well. The informal membership (ethnic membership) constantly slips into the formal (national citizenship), making the boundaries between the two ambiguous and contested. In Ghana, membership within an indigenous ethnic group determines one's access to full national citizenship. It is this ambiguity and fluidity between 'citizens and subjects' that makes citizenship a problematic concept for describing membership. In this sense, belonging is a much more appropriate analytical concept for understanding groups' membership in African societies. This is because it encompasses all forms of identifications that evoke notions of social ties, which include formal and informal modes of membership in the community.

In the last two decades, belonging proved to be a powerful analytical tool for understanding stranger-autochthone relations in Africa.[69] Peter Geschiere and Francis Nyamnjoh, for

[65] *Ibid*, 22.
[66] *Ibid*.
[67] M. Mamdani, 'Political Identity, Citizenship and ethnicity in Post-Colonial Africa, Arusha Conference, "New Frontiers of Social Policy", 12-15, December 2005, 10.
[68] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 26. Mamdani, 'Beyond Settler and Native as Political Identities', 658.
[69] Tania Li has warned that the situation under which people come to identify themselves as autochthones, 'are the contingent products of agency and cultural and political work of articulation'. See T. Li, 'Articulating Indigenous Identity in Indonesia: Resource, Politics and Tribal Slot', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 42, 1 (2000), 151.

example, have contributed to our understanding of how African states have employed this notion of 'autochthony' to redefine belonging in Africa.[70] The nexus between autochthony and belonging has created complex but fertile grounds for 'othering' within nation-states, resulting in conflicts between supposed indigenes and outsiders. There is also a huge body of literature focusing on how democratisation and economic liberalisation in the 1990s in Africa engendered struggle over belonging.[71] Piet Konings study of Cameroon shows how the government exploited the division between autochthones and allochthones for political gains during the political liberalisation of the 1990s.[72] Bambi Ceuppens and Peter Geschiere have suggested that the upsurge of contestation over belonging in the 1990s was not restricted to Africa.[73] Yet the African case was unique in the way belonging was used as a powerful weapon by the ruling elite to exclude migrant groups in their attempt to retain political power.

In many parts of Africa, contestations over belonging due to democratisation degenerated into violent exclusion of supposed 'strangers.' In South Africa, this process of exclusion took the form of xenophobic reaction where the local population attacked black immigrants for taking over local jobs and business opportunities.[74] In Zimbabwe, and Cote d'Ivoire, the state redefined citizenship to exclude ethnic strangers from voting and contesting elections respectively.[75] Thus, politics of belonging has posed a major challenge to the integration of migrant groups in Africa. In Ghana, this exclusion had occurred in the 1970s where supposed

[70] P. Geschiere and F. Nyamnjoh, 'Capitalism and Autochthony'. P. Konings, 'Mobility and Exclusion: Conflicts between Autochthons and Allochthons during Political Liberalization in Cameroon', in M de Bruijn, R van Dijk, D Foeken (eds.), *Mobile Africa*: *Changing Patterns of Movement in Africa and Beyond* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 169–94. Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging.*

[71] Geschiere and Jackson, 'Autochthony and the Crisis of Citizenship'. Geschiere and Nyamnjoh 'Capitalism and Autochthony'. Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging.* Konings, 'Mobility and Exclusion'. Ceuppens and Geschiere, 'Autochthony: Local or Global?'. B. E. Whitaker, 'Citizens and Foreigners: Democratization and the Politics of Exclusion in Africa', *African Studies Review*, 48, 1 (2005), 109-126. C. K. Daddieh, 'Elections and Ethnic Violence in Cote d'Ivoire: The Unfinished Business of Succession and Democratic Transition', *Africa Issues* 29, 1/2 (2001), 14-19.

[72] Konings, 'Mobility and Exclusion', 184-9.

[73] Ceuppens and Geschiere, 'Autochthony: Local or Global?', 397.

[74] Landau (ed.), *Exorcising the Demons Within*. Nyamnjoh, *Insiders and Outsiders.* J. Crush, 'The Dark Side of Democracy: Migration, Xenophobia and Human Rights in South Africa', *International Migration*, 38, 6 (2000), 103-133. M. Neocosmos, 'The Politics of Fear and the Fear of Politics: Reflections on Xenophobic Violence in South Africa', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 43, 6 (2008), 586–594. See also C. Gray, 'Cultivating Citizenship through Xenophobia in Gabon, 1960-1995' *Africa Today* 45, 3/4 (1998), 389-410.

[75] J. Muzondidya, '"Zimbabwe for Zimbabweans": Invisible Subject Minorities and the Quest for Justice and Reconciliation in Post-colonial Zimbabwe', in B. Raftopoulos, and T. Savage (eds.), *Zimbabwe: Injustice and Political Reconciliation* (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2004), 213-235. Whitaker, 'Citizens and Foreigners'. A. Daimon, '"Mabhurandaya": The Malawian Diaspora in Zimbabwe, 1895-2008', (PhD Thesis, University of the Free State, 2015). J. Mujere, 'Autochthons, Strangers, Mordernising Educationists and Progressive Farmers: Basotho Struggle for Belonging in Zimbabwe, 1930s-2008' (PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2012).

'aliens' from Nigeria and elsewhere in Africa were expelled.[76] In the 1990s, there was a new wave of ethnic exclusion from traditional authority and land ownership during the democratic transition in Ghana. This exclusion led to a series of conflicts between the Konkomba and their neighbours. Martijn Wienia's work is devoted to Konkomba relations with the Nanumba in Nanun after the 1994 conflict.[77] He observes that although the Konkomba have generally accepted their settler status in Nanun and agreed to respect the Nanumba tradition, there was a controversy over 'the confines of the Nanumba traditions, especially when Konkomba considered them to clash with their citizenship rights.'[78] Since there was no clearly defined boundary between traditional rights and citizenship rights, the ambiguity led to tension and conflict. This thesis extends this idea by exploring how the boundaries of the traditional citizenship rights are constructed and constantly redefined to exclude or include outsiders like the Konkomba, and how the supposed outsiders respond to these definitions. In doing so, the thesis explores how the various groups positioned themselves to articulate their inclusion and exclusion.

Colonialism, Ethnicity, Land and Belonging

In Africa, ethnicity operates as a powerful source of distinction between group members and outsiders. Like all categories of identification, ethnicity is an ambiguous and highly contested concept. Historical and anthropological literature has revealed the manner in which colonial discourse slotted Africans into ethnic categories.[79] The essential debate was whether ethnic groups or 'tribes' were rooted in the precolonial African past or whether they were invented in the colonial period. Many scholars have suggested that the notion of ethnicity in Africa was a colonial construct.[80] This view has however been challenged by scholars who argue that there

[76] N. Sudarkasa, 'From Stranger to Alien: The Socio-Political History of Nigerian Yoruba in Ghana, 1900-1970', in W. Shack and E. P. Skinner (eds.), *Strangers in African Societies*, (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), 141-169.
[77] M. Wienia, *Ominous Calm: Autochthony and Sovereignty in Konkomba/Nanumba Violence and Peace, Ghana* (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2009).
[78] *Ibid*. 174.
[79] S. Dorman, D. Hammett and P. Nugent, 'Introduction: Citizenship and its Casualties in Africa' in S. Dorman, D. Hammett & P. Nugent (eds.), *Making Nations, Creating Strangers: States and Citizenship in Africa* (Leiden & Boston: BRILL, 2007), 3-26.
[80] J. Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). E. Colson, 'African Society at the Time of the Scramble', in L. H. Gann and P. Duigan (eds.), *Colonialism in Africa 1870-1960: Vol. 1, The History and Politics of Colonialism, 1870-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 27-65. L. Vail (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa (*London, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989). O. Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa', in E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983), 211-262.

were limits to the powers of colonial authorities to invent African traditions and customs.[81] Yet the colonial administration was responsible for reifying flexible and overlapping networks of social relations into fixed and rigid ethnic boundaries in northern Ghana. For the British colonial administrators, an ethnic group was a cultural unit, possessing common language and customs, occupying a well-defined territory. The British also thought that ethnicity was the basis of African political system.[82]

The colonial officials therefore imagined that boundaries existed among African peoples based on ethnicity. In northern Ghana, Meyer Fortes and later his student, Jack Goody found precolonial northern societies to be fluid, interconnected and overlapping into one another.[83] Carola Lentz's work on the Dagara demonstrates how colonial officials transformed this fluid, overlapping and mostly situational distinctions into rigid boundaries by imposing their own mental maps on locally differentiated spaces.[84] In the northeast of Ghana, the colonialists constructed boundaries between the so-called state and stateless groups. Since the British intended to build their political system around chiefs, they forced groups without centralised political organisations under their centralised neighbours. In 1932, when the British imposed a number of Native Authorities on the people of the Gold Coast, the Konkomba did not have their own Native Authority. The administration put them under the Dagomba Native Authority. Because of the notion of organising Africans according to 'tribes', with each tribe in its own place, the tendency was to homogenise and flatten cultural diversity within the Native Authority areas in favor of an official ethnic version. The system by which one ethnic group controlled the Native Authority excluded some groups and instituted unequal access to political authority and resources between state and stateless groups.

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[81] T. Spear, 'Neo-Traditionalism and the Limits of Invention in British Colonial Africa', *Journal of African History*, 44(2003), 3-27. T. O. Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa', in T. Ranger and O. Vaughan (eds.), *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth-Century Africa* (London: Macmillan, 1993).

[82] Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, 324. R. S. Rattray, *The Tribes of A shanti Hinterland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1 932).

[83] M. Fortes, *The Dynamics of Clanship among the Tallensi, Being the First Part of an Analysis of the Social Structure of a Trans- Volta Tribe,* (London: Oxford University Press, 1945). J. Goody, *Comparative Studies in Kinship* (London: Routledge& Kugan Paul, 1969). J. Goody, *The Social Organisation of the Lowiili* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, [1956] 1967).

[84] C. Lentz, 'Colonial Construction and African Initiatives: The History of Ethnicity in Northwestern Ghana', *Ethnos*, 65, 1 (2000), 107-136. C. Lentz and P. Nugent (eds.), *Ethnicity in Ghana: The Limits of Invention* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000). C. Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History in Northern Ghana* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006). C. Lentz, 'They Must be Dagaba First and any Other Thing Second…': The Colonial and Post-Colonial Creation of Ethnic Identities in North-western Ghana', *African Studies, 53,* 2 (1994), 65.

Peter Skalnik has however questioned the state/stateless dichotomy of the northern societies in anthropological literature.[85] He argued that it was wrong to speak of the two systems as opposing 'ideal types' because if one critically observed the two systems, there were 'fewer 'structural' differences than anthropologists of the British structural-functionalist tradition often maintain.'[86] Skalnik suggests that the state/stateless dichotomy was an imposition of the prevailing evolutionist ideas on African conditions. He warned that unless scholars abandoned these typologies, they might not adequately understand African societies. Building on this earlier argument, Wyatt MacGaffey in 2013 deconstructed what he called 'the received history of northern Ghana.'[87] In a sustained critique of the dichotomy between state and stateless groups, MacGaffey argues that the supposed contrast were colonial assumptions built into the political and historical discourses of northern Ghana.[88]

Basing the colonial rule on Native Authorities, controlled by ethnic chiefs, the colonial state incorporated ethnicity and chieftaincy into the colonial administration. As agents of government, the chiefs and their ethnic groups came to occupy a privileged position in the colonial arrangement. As MacGaffey writes, 'in the northern context today, to have or to have had chiefs is to associate oneself and one's group with superior status; those who supposedly had none are at risk of being called slaves by others.'[89] These assumptions continued to determine groups' superiority and inferiority in the postcolonial period. By this, colonialism produced and perpetuated highly politicised forms of ethnicity, making it a primary form of collective identification and political mobilisation.[90] As a symbol of superiority and inferiority, ethnicity was salient as a category of social differentiation and became useful for political mobilisation and the construction of ideological and social boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. Talton examines Konkomba construction of ethnic identity as a means by which they mobilise themselves to challenge their marginality.[91] In postcolonial Ghana, ethnicity remained salient in determining political participation, access to resources, acquisition of political power and membership in a community.

[85] P. Skalnik, "On the Inadequacy of the Concept of the Traditional State: Illustrated with Ethnographic Material on Nanun, Ghana", *Journal of Legal Pluralism*, 25&26, (1987), 301-325.
[86] *Ibid*, 320.
[87] W. MacGaffey, *Chiefs, Priests and Praise-Singers: History, Politics and Land Ownership in Northern Ghana* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013).
[88] *Ibid*, 12.
[89] *Ibid*, 16.
[90] Lentz and Nugent (eds.), *Ethnicity in Ghana*.
[91] Talton, *Politics of Social Change.*

While this study recognised the role of colonialism in ethnic identity construction, it argues that ethnicity was also an outcome of mobility. Scholars have noted the importance of ethnicity among migrant communities. Abner Cohen, writing on the Hausa immigrants of Ibadan in Nigeria, argues that ethnicity has been essentially a political phenomenon for migrant groups.[92] Enid Schildkrout's study on Zongo in Kumasi suggests that ethnicity was an important political resource in situations where different groups come into juxtaposition through processes of migration.[93] Once members of different groups come together in the same territorial space, they tend to relate to each other with the assumption that they have diverse origins, histories and cultural heritage and begin to construct ethnic boundaries.[94] From this perspective, the existing ethnic boundaries in northern Ghana were not only the result of colonialism but also a consequence of mobility. Keith Haith, Enid Schildkrout and Carola Lentz have examined the importance of ethnicity for migrant communities in Ghana.[95] Haith's article on migration and ethnic identity among the Frafra of northern Ghana highlights how ethnicity became a political resource for the Frafra migrant community both at home and in Accra.[96] In a different way, Carola Lentz has demonstrated how Dagara migrants were central to the emergence of Dagara ethnic identity at home. Lentz's analysis shows that the Dagara migrants developed ethnic consciousness as they sought solidarity and kinship support for survival in southern mines and plantations, which they later introduced back home.[97] This thesis builds on this body of literature by examining the relationship between mobility and ethnicity.

The question of land right is also important in understanding the Konkomba position in northern Ghana. Scholars have long debated whether notions of property rights were present in traditional land tenure regimes in Africa under conditions of surplus lands.[98] Gareth Austin argues that because land was not the crucial factor of production, African rulers did not invest

[92] A. Cohen, *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa: A Study of Hausa Migrants in Yoruba Towns* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1969), 190.
[93] E. Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo: The Transition of Ethnic Identities in Ghana* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 11.
[94] *Ibid*.
[95] Lentz and Nugent (eds.), *Ethnicity in Ghana*. Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History*. K. Haith, 'Migration and Tribal Identity among the Frafras of Ghana', *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 6, 1, (1971). Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo.* See also J. Eades, *Strangers and Traders: Youruba Migrants, Markets and the State in Northern Ghana* (Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press, 1994).
[96] Haith, 'Migration and Tribal Identity among the Frafras of Ghana', 25.
[97] Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History in Northern Ghana*. 150.
[98] P. Bohannan, '"Land", "Tenure" and Land-Tenure', in D. Biebuyck (ed.), *African Agarian Systems*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 101-15. E. Colson, 'The Impact of the Colonial Period on the Definition of Land Rights', in V. Turner (ed.), *Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960, Vol. 3: Profile of Change: African Society and Colonial Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 193-215. G. Austin, 'Resources, Techniques and Strategies South of the Sahara: Revising the Factor Endowments Perspective on African Economic Development, 1500-2000', *Economic History Review*, 61, 3 (2008), 589.

in controlling territory, but rather in the control of people and labour.[99] However, property and in particular land rights in Africa have changed over time. According to Elizabeth Colson, in Africa, colonialism transformed mere domain over territory into an economic holding and confused sovereignty with proprietary ownership.[100] Subsequent scholars claimed that this transformation was achieved through a collusion between the chiefs and the colonial elites who invented customary land holdings to serve their own interests.[101] Christian Lund analyses the postcolonial legacies of such alliances in northern Ghana.[102] The claim that chiefs and colonial officials invented land tenure was based on Terence Ranger's more general idea of 'invention of tradition.' This view suggests that once colonially invented traditions were codified, they were as well transformed from a flexible system of practices into fixed procedures and rules.[103] Thomas Spear's critique of the invention of traditions did not only put to rest the view of invented traditions but also challenged the view that the invented traditions reified flexible and fluid African customs and traditions.[104] Sara Berry takes this critique further by arguing that colonial attempts at formalising African customs and traditions actually generated more contestation and instability in access to productive resources. In short, attempts at codifying traditions and customs generated more fluidity and change.[105] Instead of putting an end to the debate and conflicts over land rights, colonial transformation of land tenure rather generated unceasing negotiations and contestations over land. It is against this background that the Konkomba struggle for land rights in the postcolonial period must be understood.

Sara Berry's work addresses the issue of changing property rights in an increasingly neoliberal economy of Africa.[106] She suggests that in situations where access to land was linked to

[99] G. Austin, 'Resources, Techniques and Strategies South of the Sahara', 589. Scholars have contested the suggestion that land in Africa was abundant and that political control tended to be over people rather than over land. See Lentz, 'Land Rights and the Politics of Belonging in Africa', 8. A. Mseba, 'Land, Power and Social Relations in Northeastern Zimbabwe from Precolonial Times to the 1950s,' (PhD Thesis, University of Iowa, 2015).

[100] Colson, 'The Impact of the Colonial Period on the Definition of Land Rights', 197-8.

[101] M. Chanock, 'Paradigms, Policies, and Property: A Review of the Customary Law of Land Tenurei', in K. Mann and R. Roberts (eds.), *Law in Colonial Africa* (Portmouth: Heinemann, 1991), 61-84. K. Amanor, 'Customary Land, Mobile Labor and Alienation in the Eastern Region of Ghana' in R. Kuba and C. Lentz (eds.), *Land and the Politics of Belonging in West Africa* (Leiden &Boston: BRILL, 2006), 137-186.

[102] C. Lund, 'Who owns Bolgatanga? A Story of Inconclusive Encounters', in R. Kuba and C. Lentz (eds.) *Land and the Politics of Belonging in West Africa* (Leiden: BRILL, 2006), 77-98.

[103] Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa', 254-60.

[104] Spear, 'Neo-Traditionalism and the Limits of Invention', 3-4.

[105] S. Berry, 'Hegemony on a Shoestring: Indirect Rule and Access to Agricultural Lands', *Africa*, 62, 3 (1992), 329-30. See also S. Berry, *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*, (Madition: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 25.

[106] S. Berry, 'Property, Authority and Citizenship: Land Claims, Politics and the Dynamics of Social Division in West Africa', *Development and Change,* 40, 1 (2009), 23–45.

historical claims to authority and social belonging, attempts to clarify ownership lead to contestations and provoke conflicts.[107] Her study is quite instructive on the question of belonging in Africa in many ways but it is particularly useful in the way it makes an explicit connection between land, politics, and belonging and outlines the directions in which these connections are changing in the era of structural adjustment.[108] She also emphasises the role of the state in shaping land rights and how in their struggles over land, people evoke the past, which in turn informs debates over citizenship and belonging in the present.[109] Carola Lentz has observed that control over land was linked to political power and authority because land owners easily converted land rights into social and political capital.[110] Access to resources and property rights in postcolonial Africa came to reflect very much power relations. In Africa, right over land was a form of sovereignty, a territory to control and a source of leverage over people. In this sense people make claims to land using history, ancestry, origin, or 'custom' not to obtain economic resources but political power.[111] This study explains the Konkomba attempt to obtain land rights in the 1990s from this perspective.

Christian Lund has specifically connected land rights in Africa to belonging.[112] She argues that for postcolonial Africa, claims to land are partly defined by social identity, property rights to land and provides 'a rewarding analytical entry point to the analysis of power in any [African] society.'[113] Precolonial African societies constantly redefined rules governing land ownership to adjust power relations. This was particularly relevant between migrant and host groups. Richard Kuba and Carola Lentz's study of northern Ghana and southern Burkina Faso explores the various ways in which boundaries of land holding rights between first comers and late comers were constructed and continued to be redefined to include or exclude the former.[114] Their work shows how the post-independent state completely surrendered control over land rights and political decision-making at the local level to the chiefs, earth priest and local

[107] Berry, 'Property, Authority and Citizenship' 23–45.
[108] *Ibid*.
[109] S. Berry, 'Ancestral Property: Land, Politics and "the Deeds of the Ancestors" in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire', in J. Ubink and K. Amanor (eds.) *Contesting Land and Customs in Ghana: State, Chiefs and Citizen* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2000), 27-8.
[110] C. Lentz, 'Land Rights and the Politics of Belonging in Africa: An Introduction', in R. Kuba and C. Lentz (eds.), *Land and the Politics of Belonging in West Africa* (Leiden: BRILL, 2006), 2.
[111] *Ibid*, 24.
[112] C. Lund, *Local Politics and the Dynamics of Property in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). C. Lund, 'Property and Citizenship: Conceptually Connecting Land Rights and Belonging in Africa', *Africa Spectrum*, 46, 3 (2011), 71-75.
[113] Lund, 'Property and Citizenship', 72.
[114] Lentz, 'Land Rights and the Politics of Belonging in Africa', 1-34.

strongmen, and how this arrangement promoted the discourse of belonging in ways that excluded strangers from political participation at the local level.[115]

In *Land, Mobility, and Belonging in West Africa,* Lentz further explores how mobility influenced land and property rights among the people of the Black Volta region in the northwest of Ghana and southwest Burkina Faso.[116] She draws our attention to how local people employed historical narratives to gain recognition as first comers in order to obtain rights over land which was then converted to power and authority by the ethnic group.[117] She demonstrates that the Dagara were able to use their claim over earth shrines (land gods) to establish land rights and become 'natives' in territories occupied by the Phou and Sisala.[118] Lentz observes that a critical study of the settlement histories of the region suggests that in the precolonial period, land rights and political constitution were aimed not at exclusion but at the integration and assimilation of new comers.[119] In the course of the colonial period, the distinction between first comers and new comers changed into a much more rigid boundary between 'natives' and 'settlers', which tended to be aimed at exclusion.[120] In this sense, colonialism froze the process of stranger integration, making it difficult for stranger groups to become full members of the host society.[121] This freezing of ethnic boundaries in the colonial period is very relevant for understanding Konkomba status in their host communities. Unlike the Dagara whose migration occurred in the precolonial period, this study deals with a mobility that took place in the colonial period. The process of integration that enabled the Dagara to obtain land rights was no longer available to the Konkomba immigrants who continued to be classified as aliens in their new territory. This raises the question of marginality and unequal power relations in a way that was outside the scope of Lentz's work. This thesis engages with the fundamental unequal power relations that resulted from Konkomba mobility and analyses how they sought to challenge this power imbalance through claims to land and political rights.

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[115] C. Lentz, 'First-Comers and Late Comers: Indigenous Theories of Landownership in West Africa', in R. Kuba and C. Lentz (eds.), *Land and the Politics of Belonging in West* Africa (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 37.
[115] *Ibid*.
[116] C. Lentz, *Land Mobility, and Belonging in West Africa* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013).
[117] *Ibid*, 9.
[118] *Ibid*. See also R. Kuba and C. Lentz, 'Arrows and Earth Shrines: Towards a History of Dagara Expansion in Southern Burkina Faso', *Journal of African History*, 43 (2002), 377- 406.
[119] Lentz, 'Contested Identities: The History of Ethnicity in Northwestern Ghana', in Lentz and Nugent (eds.), *Ethnicity in Ghana: The Limits of Invention* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 151.
[120] *Ibid*.
[121] J. Allman, 'Be(com)ing Asante, be(com)ing Akan: Thoughts on Gender, Identity and the Colonial Encounter', in C. Lentz and Paul Nugent (ed.), *Ethnicity in Ghana: The Limits of Invention* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), 100. See also C. Lentz, 'First-Comers and Late Comers', 37.

The struggle over land ownership was equally a contestation over narratives, leading to the politicisation of history and geography.[122] Skalnic has recently observed that because of the importance of history in land ownership, ethnic leaders have appropriated and manipulated historical works to the extent that the authors of those publications may feel embarrassed how their works are being used.[123] Some ethnic elite have even began to produce their own historical works for political reasons. For example, Harold B. Martinson, a Nanumba diplomat and scholar, in his work, *The Hidden History of Konkomba Wars,* claimed that the Konkomba were strangers in Dagbon and thereby contesting the widely held view that the Konkomba were the first inhabitants of northern Ghana.[124] Ibrahim Mahama, a reputed Dagomba lawyer and secretary to Ya Na Yakubu Andani II, makes a similar claim in his study of the northern conflicts by arguing that the Konkomba presence in Ghana dates only to the colonial period.[125] According to him, the pre-existing people in the Oti basin during the time of the Dagomba invasion were Dagomba speaking and not Konkomba. This pre-existing population for him, made up the masses of Dagbon (*Tinbihi*) and the invaders became the royals (*Nabihi*).[126] He attributes the growth of Konkomba population in Dagbon to massive immigration in the 1920s, thereby refuting the Konkomba claim to indigeneity in Dagbon. In his view, all Konkomba in Dagbon, Mamprusi, Gonja and Nanumba are immigrants and had no rightful claim to any land in northern Ghana.[127] The claim that some groups have no right to land have been the source of most ethnic conflicts in northern region.[128] Whereas this study is not directly concerned with conflicts, it explores the contingent factors of exclusion and inclusion, which gave rise to these conflicts.

[122] H. Weiss, 'Contested Historical and Geographical Narratives: Succession Dispute, Contested Land Ownership and Religious Conflicts in Northern Ghana', *Studia Orientalia*, 101 (2007), 462. See also P. Skalnik, 'Political Anthropology of History: The Case of Nanun, Northern Ghana', *Social Evolution and History,* 3, 2 (2014), 57-72.
[123] Skalnik, 'Political Anthropology of History', 58.
[124] Martinson, *The Hidden History of Konkomba Wars*.
[125] Mahama, *Ethnic Conflicts in Northern Ghana*.
[126] *Ibid*, 203-204.
[127] *Ibid*, 205.
[128] P. Skalník, 'Nanumba and Konkomba: An Assessment of a Troubled Coexistence', in W. van Binsbergen (ed.), *The Dynamics of Power and the Rule of Law: Essays on Africa and Beyond, in Honour of Emile Adriaan B. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal*, (Leiden: LIT Verlag/African Studies Centre, 2003), 69-78. See also P. Skalník, 'The State and Local Ethnopolitical Identities: The Case of Community Conflicts in Northern Ghana', *Nouveaux Mondes,* 10, (2002), 141-166. J. Jönsson, 'The Overwhelming Minority', 4. N. J. K. Brukum, 'Ethnic Conflict in Northern Ghana, 1980-1999: An Appraisal, *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, New Series,* 4-5 (2000-2001), 131-147 and C. Lund, '"Bawku Is Still Volatile": Ethno-Political Conflict and State Recognition in Northern Ghana', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41, 4 (2003), 587-610.

Sources and Methodology

The study is mainly qualitative in approach and relied on both written and oral sources, which I collected in two separate research trips to Ghana. The first research trip took place between November 2016 and May 2017, and the second between December 2017 and February 2018. Key among the written sources were the archival records. The study relied mainly on the National and Regional Archives of Ghana in Accra, Tamale and Ho. In addition to these archives, the study made use of the online archives of the British library, produced by the Endangered Archives Programme (EAP).[129] These archives produced enormous information for the reconstruction of the colonial and early postcolonial periods covered in this thesis.

The Regional Archives of Tamale is particularly rich in records concerning the local populations of northern Ghana. The documents in the Tamale archives are well catalogued, covering diverse areas, such as land acquisition, land tenure systems, reports of enquiries, labour acquisition and population movements. Extensive records exist in memos, letters, diaries, and reports painstakingly recorded by colonial District Commissioners during their frequent tours of inspections in the Konkomba areas. The Konkomba attracted extra ordinary attention in the colonial files relative to their marginal political position. This is because they presented a challenge to the colonial administration because of the frequent feuds and disregard for colonial law and order. The Anglo-French border that existed among them served as a shield for them to evade the British justice system. This caused the British colonial officials to provide detailed accounts on Konkomba cross-border movements, which allows for a detailed reconstruction of the changing pattern of Konkomba mobility as well as the changing colonial policy towards this mobility.

The national archives in Accra was equally important as a source of information for this study. It is particularly rich in the correspondences between the Governor and the colonial office in London. These correspondences were important for understanding the colonial government's policy towards the Konkomba. The National Archives also houses the colonial census records, which were also important for analysing the magnitude of Konkomba mobility. Since 1891, the colonial government undertook various censuses in 1901, 1911, 1921, 1931, and 1948. From 1921, British Togoland became part of enumeration area and while the coverage and the quality of the counting improved with time, low reliability and serious undercounting

[129] This archive is a free internet access facility hosted by the British library. See https://eap.bl.uk/

characterised the entire colonial censuses.[130] This was even more pronounced among the Konkomba who resisted incorporation into the colonial state. However, in spite of these shortcomings, colonial censuses are by far the best source material for estimating the magnitude of population movement in the absence of migration data. The reports of 1931 and 1948 censuses provide ethnic as well as village data. The 1960 census, the first postcolonial census is unique in its quality and scope and provides detailed information on the various ethnic groups, villages as well as households.

Carrying out a search at the Ho Archives presented a serious challenge. Apart from the fact that many of the files were not catalogued, the vast majority of them were completely mixed up and dumped on the floor. There was neither reading space nor light in the archives. Although the building in which the archives is located is connected to the national power grid, there was no electricity at the archives and files had to be retrieved by the help of a torch light. Despite these problems, the Ho archives provided very useful information on Anglo-French diplomatic relations in Togoland. Up until 1945, cross-border migration was an important factor in Anglo-French diplomatic relations in Togoland.[131] These documents throw considerable light on the attitude of both powers towards cross-border mobility. The Ho archives was also important for understanding Konkomba activities and social life in the Kete-Krachi district. It provided enormous amount of information concerning the Krachi and Nchumburu relations, which had significant impact for the Konkomba in the district.

As all historical sources, historians must use information from the archives with caution. As typical of colonial archives, much of the data obtained in the national and regional archives reflected power relations and projected the voice of the colonisers (British and the Dagomba),[132] and muting that of the Konkomba. The double yoke of European colonisation and Dagomba domination rendered the Konkomba voiceless. During the colonial period, Dagomba chiefs acted as the link between the colonial state and the Konkomba and served as the medium through which the European officials obtained information about the Konkomba. Colonial records on the Konkomba therefore represent in most parts Dagomba narratives. More importantly, several gaps and silences exist in archival records. Information on the social

[130] G. Serra, '"Hail the Census Night": Trust and Political Imagination in the 1960 Population Census of Ghana', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 60, 3 (2018), 667.
[131] Asiwaju, 'Migrations as Revolt', 581.
[132] The description of the Dagomba as 'colonisers' is probably far-fetched but the thesis has demonstrated that the Dagomba were as much rulers of the Konkomba as the British were.

margins of the colonial societies are generally lacking in the records.[133] For example everyday social aspects about identities, marginality and agency are largely absent from the colonial records. However, by using the archives as sites of knowledge production rather that as 'sites of knowledge retrieval' and reading 'against and along the grain', these biases were minimised considerably.[134] I also used oral narratives as complementary, to fill the gaps in the archival documents. One significant limitation of this study is its reliance on the British records for the construction of Konkomba cross-border migrations.[135] Relying on British records to understand the French policies raises a considerable problem of bias on the part of the British officials who had every incentive to portray a rival power in bad light. This limitation was also minimised by the use of oral sources to cross check the British records concerning French activities.

Consequently, oral sources constituted an important source of information for the study. These sources were obtained through one-on-one interview sessions. The interviews elicited two categories of oral information. The first one was oral traditions, which encompasses narratives of origins, migrations and settlement histories of Konkomba, passed on from one generation to the other. This category of information was very important for chapter two, where the aim was to establish the roots of Konkomba mobility by examining the migrations and settlement histories of the Konkomba. Although ostensibly these narratives were about the origins and migrations of the various clans, they were also primarily about the spatial transformation of the Konkomba territory. In Konkomba narratives, accounts of movement across space and time are also accounts of production of autonomy as well as shifting identities of clan networks and relations. Each group moved away from their original territory into the less accessible terrain of the Oti River valley to preserve their autonomy and gain control over territorial space of their own. In their oral traditions, Konkomba clans expressed their independence in terms of spatial mobility. Although the narratives recount events before the Konkomba's arrival in the Oti River valley, once the groups arrived in the Oti valley, they shifted from mythical representation of events to spatial reference to historical figures. This is significant because as Jan Bender Shetler has pointed out, when a group begins to ground their traditions in existing

[133] C. Anderson, *Subaltern Lives: Biographies of Colonialism in the Indian Ocean World, 1790-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 187.
[134] A. Stoler, 'Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance', *Archival Science*, 2 (2002), 90. A. Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009).
[135] This was the case because the author does not read French and therefore could not use the French records at the archives at Lome in the Republic of Togo.

landscapes and verifiable events, it signifies a point of transition of its social identity.[136] The shift of Konkomba narratives from mythical representations to one in which place and ancestral names are given, signifies a great transition in Konkomba social life. In the Oti valley, they established clans, totems and earth shrines, which became crucial process of dominating territory.

Historical narratives among the Konkomba like those of many other non-centralised societies in Africa are non-formal and loosely structured. However, events are stored as 'core images' and passed on from generation to generation even if the details were lost.[137] I collected most of the oral traditions on the Konkomba origins and migration in Saboba area (Kikpakpaan). I focused on Kikpakpaan because as Shetler suggests, place and landscape serve as important mnemonic devices for the recollection of the core images.[138] I complemented these interviews with the traditions recorded by colonial anthropologist like Jean-Claud Froelich and David Tait in the 1940s and 1950s. Froelich collected oral narratives in the 1940s, which he used to write his *La Tribu Konkomba du Nord Togo*.[139] Froelich also made use of the traditions collected by H. A. Blair. Blair made enquiry into the history, customs and language of the Konkomba in the 1930s. His study is by far the most significant attempt by the colonial administration to collect and record the history of the Konkomba. Unfortunately, the report of his enquiry is now lost from the archives.[140] Froelich's own efforts at collecting oral traditions from both the Konkomba clans in the French zone and those in the British sphere together with Blair's collection served as a rich source of recorded Konkomba traditions. The research conducted by Tait also provides a good amount of recorded Konkomba traditions.[141] These traditions are not only significant for understanding Konkomba mobility within the region, but they are also important for appreciating their conception of the territorial space within which they moved.

The second category of the oral source is oral history, which involves oral narratives of the life experiences of the people. I conducted interviews in a number of villages the Konkomba have come to settle during the colonial period, such as Chinderi, Banda, Kojoboni, Balai, Kpandai,

[136] J. B. Shetler, '"Regions" as Historical Roduction: Narrative Maps from the Western Serengety, Tanzania', in A. M. Howard and R. M. Shain (eds.), *The Spatial Factor in African History: The Relationship of the Social, Material and the Perceptual* (Leiden and Boston: BRILL, 2005), 146.
[137] J. B. Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti: History of Landscape Memory in Tanzania from earliest Times to the Present* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007), 19.
[138] *Ibid*.
[139] Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba*.
[140] Except for a few records, the main report has been removed from the file. My suspicion is that one of the earlier researchers had not returned the report after using it.
[141] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana*.

Lungni, Kpassa and Chamba. The selection of the informants was purely purposive and the sampling process was a snowball method where my initial interviewees directed me to others who were knowledgeable about the issues. Over all, the interview process was very smooth except on my first research trip in 2017 when a minor violent conflict in Bimbilla on 9 February interrupted my research.[142] The conflict was a chieftaincy dispute between the two gates of the Nanumba paramountcy. Even though it did not concern me as a Konkomba, the area became insecure and a state of emergency was imposed in the district. State security soon restored the situation to normalcy and my interviews were completed on schedule.

In my interviews, I sought to capture individual experiences and their recollections about Konkomba migration processes and their interaction with their host communities. Oral histories are acts of memory shaped by the history and experiences of the teller as much as by the moment of telling. In this sense, oral narratives are peoples' ways of constructing their past and social experiences.[143] These narratives were an important window for understanding Konkomba social constructions of ethnicity, belonging, and the ways in which they positioned and articulated their marginality. As a Konkomba myself, I had knowledge about some issues of contention between the Konkomba and their hosts which I explored further through the interviews. My insider position also made it possible for me to plan and execute the interviews in ways that generated quality information. For example, except when I was visiting a former KOYA leader or a literate opinion leader, my first point of call was always at the chief's palace or *uninkpel*'s house. Historical narratives among the Konkomba have become politicised because of land and chieftaincy disputes. For this reason, without passing through the elder or the chief of the village, the informants may not be willing to give out information.

Again, my knowledge of Konkomba culture and traditions did not only facilitate the understanding of the social context of the narratives, but it also helped to win the trust of the interviewees. In some few instances, informants showed signs of suspicion and hesitation when talking about chieftaincy issues but overall the informants were confident and opened about their experiences on all aspects of life. Moreover, since I conducted the interviews in the Konkomba language (*Likpakpaln*), the interviewees freely expressed themselves and very little

[142] Bimbilla clashes: More residents flee town as death toll rises to 10, https://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2017/February-10th/bimbilla-clashes-more-residents-flee-town-as-death-toll-rises-to-10.php, access on 21 Agust 2018.
[143] L. White, S. Miescher, and D. W. Cohen, *African Words, African Voices: Critical Practices in Oral History* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2001).

information was 'lost in translation'.[144] However, while being a member of the study group may provide the cultural knowledge for effective understanding of the social context, it also raises the question of whether an outsider researcher would have come to similar conclusions. Thus, to what extent were my interpretations of facts and conclusions free from personal bias and prejudice? While historians may aspire to obtain objectivity in their works, the social positioning of every researcher affects his interpretations and conclusions. Thus, whether one is a member of a group or not, the issue of objectivity is a problem to overcome. As a member of the study group, I was conscious of my preconceptions and prejudice, which constitute the first step towards objectivity. This is because biases and prejudices could be reduced significantly by being conscious of them.[145]

Letters, memoranda and petitions of youth groups constituted another important source of data for this study. This data source was particularly important for the last two chapters. Information was derived from documents produced by the Konkomba Youth Association (KOYA), Dagomba Youth Association (DAYA), Gonjaland Youth Association (GYA), Nanumba Youth Association (NAYA), and Nawuri Youth Association (NYA). Most of these documents are held at the Tamale Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies (TICCS) library in Tamale. Others are scattered among individual researchers, opinion leaders and chiefs. Cliff Maasole and Cletus Mbowura were generous to make their personal collections available to me. They gathered these documents for their various studies. Individuals such as Daniel Niena Jobor and the late Isaac Sukpen were equally generous with their personal collections. The numerous position papers and memoranda of the youth groups reveal contestations over belonging. Newspaper reports augmented information from these documents. Specifically, the information obtained from these documents helped me to understand how the Konkomba used the discourse of indigeneity to construct belonging.

The study was approved by the Ethics Clearance Committee of the Faculty of Humanties of the University of the Free State and the interviews were conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles. All my informants agreed to be identified by their names in the thesis.

[144] See J. Bujra, 'Lost in Translation?: The Use of Interpreters in Fieldwork' in V. Desai and R. Potter (eds.), *Doing Development Research* (London: Sage Publication, 2006), 172-188.
[145] A. Hegelund, 'Objectivity and Subjectivity in the Ethnographic Method', *Qualitative Health Research*, 15, 5, (2005), 660.

Chapter Outline

This thesis is organised chronologically into seven chapters and a conclusion. Chapter one introduces the study. It provides justification and outlines the scope of the study. It also introduces the Konkomba people and their location as well as situates the study within the wider debates around mobility and belonging. The chapter further reviews the existing literature on colonialism, ethnicity and land in northern Ghana pointing out their bearing on the Konkomba. It also outlines the sources and data collection methods employed in the study and provides the chapter outline of the thesis.

Chapter two historicises Konkomba mobility by locating it within their historical, cultural and social experiences. It analyses the precolonial history of the Konkomba in ways that reveal the pattern of Konkomba movement, and their social and political organisations that provided the foundation for their mobility. Analysing the Oti River valley as a frontier zone, the chapter explores how landscape shaped Konkomba mobile social life. In doing so, the chapter analyses both the historical, environmental and political background that provided the context for Konkomba mobility in the precolonial period. It contends that the Konkomba employed mobility to stay on the margins of the centralised states. The chapter largely provides the background for understanding the historical roots and pattern of Konkomba mobility discussed in the subsequent chapters.

The next two chapters examine the changing pattern of Konkomba mobility, and highlights how colonial policy shaped and was itself shaped by Konkomba mobility. Focusing on the period between 1914 and 1932, chapter three, interrogates Konkomba cross-border mobility within the Anglo-French frontier, revealing the paradoxical Konkomba appropriation of the border. While rejecting the border as a barrier to their social interaction, the Konkomba appropriated the border to subvert colonial control. The chapter also outlines the changing colonial attitude towards the Konkomba cross-border mobility and suggests that the Konkomba success in subverting colonial border rules forced the British to adopt more violent and harsh policies towards them in the late 1920s.

In the 1930s, the Konkomba added southward migration to their cross-border mobility. Chapter four analyses this southward migration, emphasising the role colonial policy played. It presents the Konkomba movement as an expression of their agency. While not discounting other socio-economic and ecological factors, the chapter contends that the motivation for Konkomba

southward migrations in the 1930s was more political than economic. Attempts are made to estimate the magnitude of these migrations using census figures. The chapter also discusses the political cost of these migrations to Konkomba social status and consequently their belonging in northern Ghana.

Chapter five, titled, '*Making Homes in Nawol'*, focusses on settler-host relations during the colonial period and highlights the social and political context within which the Konkomba established their settlements in their new home. The chapter examines colonial attitude towards Konkomba migrants. The colonial state saw the Konkomba as good farmers who could help stimulate peasant food production without disrupting the rural production system. This perception guided colonial attitude towards the Konkomba immigrants throughout the colonial period. It further examines the interactions between the Konkomba and the host groups and how they negotiated for some level of autonomy in the 1950s. Though the colonial policy of indirect rule continued to keep the Konkomba on the margins of their host societies, they nevertheless enjoyed a certain degree of protection, and political autonomy during the colonial period. By this, the chapter goes beyond the explanation for Konkomba mobility to examine their belonging in their new home.

After independence, the situation changed and the Konkomba began to experience profound political and social exclusion, which forced them to resort to migration and ethnic mobilisation in response to their new challenge. Chapter six elaborates this by analysing Konkomba immigrant position after independence. The chapter demonstrates that by the second decade into the postcolonial period, chiefs of the host groups with the tacit support of the post-independent state had succeeded in rolling back or at least narrowing the liberties of the Konkomba settlers. This process was not however uniform. Whereas in East Gonja and Nanumba districts, the host groups excluded the Konkomba from positions of authority, in Krachi district the host groups allowed the Konkomba to live under their own headmen. In the 1960s, some of the Konkomba headmen, who were essentially 'wealthy men', skilfully appropriated the dispute that existed among their host societies to transform their wealth and influence into political power and authority. However, in East Gonja and Nanumba districts, increased Konkomba wealth rather led to more exploitation and exclusion from political participation. The chapter also highlights how this increased exploitation and exclusion from politics set the Konkomba on the path of ethnic mobilisation, leading to violent ethnic conflicts between the Konkomba and their host societies in the 1980s.

Chapter seven discusses how the Konkomba sought to negotiate their belonging in the host societies in the 1990s, analysing how they challenged their exclusion from traditional politics and land rights, leading to the 1994 conflict. It explores how democratisation further excluded and dispossessed the Konkomba in ways that shaped their status at the local level in northern Ghana as outsiders. It further makes the point that the failure of the Konkomba to obtain political and land rights in Ghana was mainly due to democratisation rather than the lack of it.

The conclusion of the thesis highlights the main findings of the study and points out the implication of the Konkomba case on the debates around mobility and belonging. It also affirms the link between mobility, ethnicity, belonging and marginality, and suggests a need to rethink the contours of the debates around democracy, particularly regarding its role in empowering minority groups.

Chapter Two

The Origin and Root of Konkomba Mobility before 1914

Introduction

In the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, very important changes occurred in the Middle Volta basin (present day northern Ghana) with the arrival of the Mole-Dagomba (Dagomba, Mamprusi and Nanumba) and Gonja groups.[1] Before their arrival, there were some earlier inhabitants in the region. Although the region was not completely static before the new comers' arrival, their state-making activities profoundly influenced and transformed the socio-cultural identities of the region in a significant way.[2] Unlike the earlier groups, the new comers' esblished centralised states in the region. While some of the earlier populations withdrew from their original settlements, others were absorbed and assimilated into the new states. The ancestors of the Konkomba were one of the earlier groups in northern Ghana who withdrew eastwards due to the state making activities of the new comers.[3] In order to escape incorporation into the new states, the Konkomba developed what Riccardo Ciavolella calls 'culture of mobility'[4] and 'for five hundred years they have been a mobile periphery on the margins of centralised kingdoms.'[5] Whereas several studies have referred to the mobile social life of the Konkomba, none has attempted to trace the socio-environmental and historical roots of Konkomba mobile culture.[6]

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[1] The specific date of arrival of the ancestors of the mole-Dagomba in modern Ghana is still a matter of debate. Fage asserts that they entered modern Ghana in the fifteenth century. See J. D. Fage, 'Reflections on the Early History of the Mossi-Dagomba Group of State', in J. Vansina, R. Mauny and L. V. Thomas (eds.), *The Historian in Tropical Africa* (London, Ibadan, Accra: Oxford University Press, 1964), 183-4. See also D. H. Jones, 'Jakpa and the Foundation of Gonja', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana,* 6 (1992), 8. A. A. Iliasu, believes that the Mole-Dagomba group arrived in the fourteenth century. See A. A. Iliasu, 'The Origins of the Mossi-Dagomba States, *Research Review*, 7, 2 (1970), 95-113. I. Wilks on the other hand is of the view that the ancestors of Mole Dagomba states entered Ghana in the sixteenth century. Wilks, 'The Mossi and the Akan States, 1400 to 1800', in J. Ajayi and M. Crowder (eds.), *History of West Africa,* vol. 1. Third Edition, (New York: Longman, 1985).

[2] Jones, 'Jakpa and the Foundation of Gonja', 8.

[3] Public Records and Archives Administration Department, Accra (hereafter PRAAD/A.) ADM 11/1306, Krachi Native Affairs, Historical and Ethnological Notes on the People of the Krachi District to Supplement the Annual Report, extracted from Case 16/31, 3.

[4] Ciavolella, 'Frontiers of Mobility, Limits of Citizenship', 3. The phrase 'culture of mobility' is taken from R. Ciavolella who adapted it from the more popular usage 'cultures of migrations' from Hahn and Klute (eds.), *Cultures of Migration*.

[5] Casentini, *Al Di là Del Fiume*, 21.

[6] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana*. Maasole, *The Konkomba and their Neigbours*. Casenitini, *Al Di là Del Fiume.*

This chapter examines the practices and socio-political environment that provided the foundation for Konkomba mobility. It explores how their location and ecological terrain forced them to adopt mobility as a survival strategy. Once the Konkomba moved into the Oti valley, the poor soil fertility coupled with the harassment of the centralised groups forced them to resort to mobility for their political and economic survival. The chapter argues that the Konkomba successfully employed mobility to avoid incorporation into the emerging states and thereby preserved their political and social autonomy. It further examines the pattern of Konkomba mobility during the early colonial period and contends that although the Konkomba continued to be mobile within their territory, they were less successful in staying beyond colonial control.

Konkomba Origins and Migrations up to 1744

The origin of the Konkomba has remained a serious quandary for historians. Among the historians who have studied the Konkomba, Cliff Maasole made the best efforts to trace the origins of the Konkomba. However, his efforts did not go far enough because he claimed that the Konkomba lack of a 'developed cosmogony' and migration myths made it difficult to establish their origins.[7] For Maasole, what the Konkomba 'consider to be migration is their movement from Eastern Dagbon to their present homeland after their encounter with the Dagomba.'[8] Establishing the origin of the Konkomba is made even more difficult by the fact that they did not recognise a single ancestor. Whilst some Konkomba groups claim that God created them in the Oti plains, others insist that they moved into the Oti plains from the Gurma country.[9]

To understand the history of the Konkomba, one must turn to the history of the centralised groups. These state-building groups have preserved their migratory histories relatively well, which throws some light on that of the Konkomba.[10] The received narrative is that the ancestors

[7] Maasole, *The Konkomba and their Neighbours*, 23.
[8] Ibid, 23.
[9] Interview with Gabriel Nabuer Lasim, Saboba, 11 April 2017. Interview with Gabriel Mabe, Saboba, 9 January 2014. The area refer to as Gurma by the informant is the area stretching from West of Borgu to what is today Dagbon. Before the arrival of Na Gbewa in Pusiga, the whole of the territories south of the Sudanese states were controlled by the Gurma.
[10] The history of the Mole-Dagomba is preserved in the drum history. This drum history was first reduced to writing by Emmanuel Tamakloe in, *A Brief History of the Dagbamba People*, (Accra: Government Printing Office, 1931). For other works on Dagomba traditions see A. Duncan-Johnstone and H. A. Blair, *Enquiry into the Constitution and Organisation of the Dagbon Kingdom* (Accra: Government Printer, 1932). Iliasu, 'The Origins of the Mossi-Dagomba', 95-113 and M. Staniland, *The Lions of Dagbon: Political Change in Northern Ghana* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).

of the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Nanumba and Gonja were bands of warrior groups who entered northern Ghana from the north in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These invading groups were politically better organised and better armed than the earlier inhabitants were. Their knowledge of chieftaincy and use of horses made it easy for them to subdue the earlier inhabitants, leading to centralised states.[11] The traditions of the Mole-Dagomba assert that they came into northern Ghana from the northeast, in the direction of Hausaland as an organised group and first established their state at Pusiga near present day Bawku under Na Gbewa. At Pusiga, there was a succession dispute among the children of Na Gbewa. This succession dispute caused them to split, leading to the founding of the Mamprusi, Dagomba and Nanumba states, in present-day northern Ghana and the Mossi state in present-day Burkina Faso.[12] The Gonja, on the other hand, came from a different direction, the north-west, to establish the Gonja state by dominating the northern outposts of the Guan in the Savannah area to the north of the Akan forest.[13] Another state of importance to the Konkomba was the Chakossi (Anufo) state. They were also a small band of warriors from a place called Mango-Toro in present day Cote d'Ivoire. They established their state between the Mamprusi, the Moba and the Konkomba in the second half of the eighteenth century.[14] Their traditions suggest that the Mamprusi king, Na Atabia, brought them to assist him in his wars against the Konkomba.[15]

By the seventeenth century, the centralised states of Dagomba, Mamprusi, Nanumba, and Gonja had been firmly established in northern Ghana. Since the invading groups were usually small in number, it is reasonable to argue that they incorporated many of the earlier populations to form the masses of the states they established. Although the invading groups assimilated some of the earlier inhabitants, a good number also moved out and retained their autonomy and distinctive identity to this day. These state evading groups included the Konkomba, Vagla,

[11] It is believed that the invaders conquered the 'indigenous' groups and while bringing the latter under their control, adopted their language. R. S. Rattray, *Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932), xii. Some scholars have attempted to deconstruct this earlier narrative by arguing that the centralised states of the Mole-Dagomba emerged from within the pre-exinting groups. They contend that the narrative of invaders was an invention of the chiefs and the colonial state to bolster the former's position. See for example W. MacGaffey, *Chiefs, Priests and Praise-Singers: History, Politics and Land Ownership in Northern Ghana* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013), 7-8.

[12] Iliasu, 'The Origins of the Mossi-Dagomba States', 100-101.

[13] Jones, 'Jakpa and the Foundation of Gonja', 7-8.

[14] Duncan-Johnstone and Blair, *Enquiry into the Constitution,* 14.

[15] M. Abdul-Aziz, 'A History of the Anoufom, 1750-1978' (M.Phil. Thesis, University of Cape Coast, 2013). B. K. Tcham, *Le Royaume Anoufo De Sansane – Mango: De 1800 A 1897*, (Lome: Presses De l'UL, 2007), 97-106. Sansanne Mango is an Hausa name, which means a larger war camp. Another version of this narrative suggests that Na Atabia fought the Chakossi in their country, defeated them and brought them to his country and settled them near Sansanne Mango. See also Duncan-Johnstone and Blair, *Enquiry into the* Constitution, 14-15.

Tempulensi, Chamba, Nafena, and Kusasi.[16] The ethnic identities of the assimilated groups are now very difficult to ascertain because oral narratives are contradictory and vague on cultural identities.[17] After they established their states, the centralised groups began to expand into areas occupied by the people who had withdrawn, like the Konkomba. The Mamprusi state for example, expanded eastward from Gambaga to Nalerigu where they established their capital and expelled the Konkomba inhabitants further east into the Oti River valley.[18] Oral traditions of the Gonja also assert that the Gonja pushed the Konkomba further east during their expansion into eastern Gonja.[19] It was however the Dagomba eastward expansion into Yendi that became the event that would generate the kind of mobility that produced the Konkomba social and political identity in the region. There is a controversy over the exact date this Dagomba expansion occurred. Jean-Claud Froelich, basing his chronology on the calculations of Emmanuel F. Tamakloe, the first African to record the drum history of the Dagomba, placed this expansion between 1554 and 1560.[20] However, several scholars have shown that Tamakloe's chronology was too early by about fifty to sixty years.[21] This revision suggests that the beginning of the seventeenth century may well be the appropriate date for the Dagomba eastward expansion. This expansion is presented as 'the conquest of Eastern Dagbon' (Naya) in Dagomba narratives.[22] In light of recent studies, Dagomba expansion into Yendi area was a peaceful process of penetration rather than a conquest.[23]

Availlable sources suggest that the Dagomba movement eastward into the Konkomba country was to flee Gonja threat to their capital at Yendi Dabari. Some scholars have however argued that the Gonja threat was less a factor in this movement than the Dagomba desire to control the

[16] On page 3 of their *Enquiry into the Constitution*, Blair and Duncan-Johnston list the indigenous people of Yendi district as Konkomba, Bukumbung, Gbimba, Nafeba, Saboba, Nagbiba, Chamba, Komba, Bohoru, B'wamba and Kpriba. See also Wilks, 'The Mossi and the Akan States', 470. G. Tuurey, *An Introduction to the Mole-Speaking Community*, (Wa: Catholic Press, 1982), 12. Jones, 'Jakpa and the Foundation of Gonja', 7-8.
[17] Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba Du Nord Togo*, 215.
[18] Maasole, *The Konkomba and their Neigbours*, 47.
[19] *Ibid*, 52. See also Tamakloe, *A Brief History of Dagbamba People*, 24. See J. Dixon, *Report by Mr. J. Dixon, Administrative Officer Class I, On Representations made to the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations Organisation, Concerning the Status of the Nawuris and Nanjuros within the Togoland Area of the Gonja District*, (Accra: Gold Coast Government, 1955), Appendix x, 3. See also Extract from Jack Goody, 'Ethnography of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, West of the White Volta' in Report by Mr. Dixon.
[20] Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba*, 14.
[21] Fage, 'Reflections on the Early History of the Mossi-Dagomba', 177- 91. See also Iliasu, 'The Origins of the Mossi-Dagomba', 95-113 and Wilks, 'The Mossi and the Akan States, 1400 to 1800'.
[22] A. W. Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930). Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana*, 4.
[23] See Talton, *Politics of Social Change in Ghana*, 34-36. Casentini, *Al Di là del Fiume*, 24-29.

eastern trading routes that passed through the Konkomba territory.[24] For example, Martin Staniland, relying on the authority of Phyllis Ferguson, asserts that the Dagomba were drawn eastward in search of iron ore and slaves as well as the desire to take control over the eastern trade routes to Hausaland.[25] Whereas the desire to control trade routes was an important factor in the Dagomba eastward expansion, Gonja pressure eventually compelled them to shift 'the centre of gravity of their state further to the east'.[26] Nehemiah Levtzion, drawing on Tamakloe's account, gives a good description of how the Gonja pushed the Dagomba to the east:

> After expelling the Dagomba from Daboya, the Gonja crossed the White Volta River and defeated the Dagomba not far from their capital [Yendi Dabari]. In this battle, it is said, the Dagomba chief, Na Dariziegu, was killed. His successor, Na Luro, had a victory over the Gonja, but his son and successor, Na Tutugri, faced a more vigorous Gonja attack. He abandoned the old capital, Yendi-Dabari, and moved to the east where he conquered part of the Konkomba country.[27]

Although Allen Wolsey Cardinall, a colonial official and author, suggests that the movement of the Dagomba capital took place during the reign of Na Luro, he corroborates Tamakloe's view that Gonja attacks necessitated the movement of the capital into Konkomba country. He writes, 'to avoid this incessant fighting [with the Gonja] Na Luro…deemed it expedient to abandon the capital and to build a new one in *Kpamkpamba* country,' and from then onwards Tchale became Yendi.[28]

There is no agreement among scholars on the exact process by which the Dagomba took over the Konkomba territory. Although, the Dagomba do not remember any battle against the Konkomba, their oral narratives often present the Konkomba as a conquered people.[29] The Konkomba on their part insist that the Dagomba occupation of their country was a peaceful penetration, which did not amount to a conquest. They claim that they voluntarily withdrew

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[24] Staniland, *The Lions of Dagbon*, 6. See also J. Katanga, 'An Historical and Ethnographic Commentary on the Northern Conflict', Unpublished Manuscript, n.d., 7.
[25] Staniland, *The Lions of Dagbon*, 5. In the seventeenth century, commercial routes in the Volta basin shifted east as Gonja kingdom consolidated its power. The change in the direction of the commercial routes was also due to the destruction of the Songhai Empire after the Moroccan invasion, which destabilized the area and commercial routes were now directed to the Hausa states in the east.
[26] J. D. Fage, *Ghana: A Historical Interpretation* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1959), 25. The Dagomba-Gonja struggle over Toma stretched for over a century and traditions recorded by G. Case suggest that the Gonja emerged victorious and put the Dagomba capital, at Yendi Dabari in western Dagomba at a considerable risk of capture. G. Case, *Wasipe under the Ngbanya*, vol. 1, (UMI Dissertation Information Service, 1989), 116.
[27] N. Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa: A Study of Islam in the Middle Volta Basin in the Pre-Colonial Period* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 88.
[28] Cardinall, *Tales Told in Togoland*, 262.
[29] Talton, *Politics of Social Change*, 33.

eastward to avoid Dagomba interference in their affairs.[30] Accounting for the absence of war between the Konkomba and the invading Dagomba, H. A. Blair suggests that the Konkomba willingly accepted Dagomba domination because it saved them from the 'continuous inter-tribal warfare which prevailed before the Dagomba immigration'.[31] There is, however, ample evidence to show that the Konkomba did not accept Dagomba domination. They actually detested Dagomba control and moved out of Dagomba influence. Benjamin Talton points out this fact by observing that the precolonial relationship between the Konkomba and the Dagomba was a much more complex than one of 'conquerors and conquered'.[32]

A plausible explanation for the absence of war between the Konkomba and the invading Dagomba was the circumstances under which the latter came into the Konkomba country. According to Konkomba oral tradition, the Dagomba arrived in Yendi to seek refuge, which they not only offered, but also assisted them in driving back the Gonja.[33] The tradition claims that when the first Dagomba chief arrived in Yendi, he obtained the permission of the Konkomba who settled him close to an old Konkomba woman, isolated from the main community.[34] To emphasise the cordial relationship that existed between the first chief and his Konkomba hosts, the Konkomba point out that they gave the chief a wife called Kidiignan.[35] In an interview, Alhaji Baba Seidu, the Chief Butcher of Yendi, corroborated this version of the Konkomba tradition by remarking rather dryly that, all the very successful Ya Nas were the sons and grandsons of a Konkomba woman.[36] Talton believes that this might have brought about a Dagomba custom by which all royals refer to the Konkomba symbolically as their 'mothers'.[37] At Yendi, the Dagomba chief benefited from a periodic food supply to the old woman but when she died, the Konkomba stopped the food supply. The food supply however resumed after the Dagomba chief proved to be a powerful rainmaker and saved the Konkomba

[30] Interview with Uninkpel Tigur Bombo, Nalogni Elder, Saboba, 7 April 2017. Uninkpel Tanya, Nalogni, Saboba, 12 April 2017. See also Ali Kamshegu, 'Statement of J. Y. Ali Kamshegu on Settlement of Dagombas on Konkomba Lands and Some of the Taboos of Nanumba District to the Lamptey Committee into Konkomba/Nanumba Conflict', TICCs Library, n. d. See also A. S. H. Pul, 'Exclusion, Association and Violence, 56.

[31] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/33, Konkomba Language, Custom and Constitution, 1931.

[32] Talton, *Politics of Social Change*, 26.

[33] Ali Kamshegu, 'Statement of J. Y. Ali kamshegu on Settlement of Dagombas on Konkomba Land'.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Interview with Wajom Gmajir, Elder of Ngben, Kojooni, 20 March 2017.

[36] Interview with Alhaji Baba Seidu, Chief Butcher, Yendi, 16 April 2017.

[37] Talton, *Politics of Social Change*, 26. The Dagomba likewise believe that in order to accede to the highest office in Dagbon one must have a Konkomba blood. Either his mother or grandmother must have been from the Konkomba ethnic group. See A. S. H. Pul, 'Exclusion, Association and Violence', 57.

from a devastating drought.[38] With time, however, the subsequent Dagomba chiefs began to make the food supply mandatory and the relationship between the Konkomba and their hosts became confrontational, causing the Konkomba to withdraw eastward into the Oti River valley.[39]

Although Steven Feierman has shown the importance of rainmaking medicine as a source of chiefly power in precolonial Africa, the Konkomba narrative is overly simplistic.[40] The changes in relationship between the Konkomba and the chief depicted in the Konkomba narrative actually signifies the changing power relations between the Konkomba and the Dagomba over the years. The Dagomba chief could not have been in Yendi without his subjects. Moreover, scholars have shown that the establishment of Yendi as a Dagomba capital occurred many years after the evacuation from the old capital, Yendi-Dabari. [41] Levtzion, for example, points out that the Dagomba did not establish a fixed capital until they defeated the Gonja in 1714. Before then, their royal court was always located in villages east of Yendi as a precaution against Gonja invasion. In short, Dagomba kings did not live in Yendi until after 1714. Na Zangina, the 44th king of the Dagomba was buried at Agbandi, a village between Nakpali and Sabali, where he had his court.[42] The movement of the Dagomba capital to Yendi might have caused the relationship between The Konkomba and their Dagomba hosts to strain. In order to avoid confrontation with the Dagomba, the Konkomba fled eastward. A considerable number of Konkomba families must have remained behind and became assimilated and lost their identity as Konkomba.[43] They assumed a lower status in the Dagomba state as commoners but they retained their rights over the earth shrines of the area.[44] The process where dominant stranger groups assimilated indigenous groups into the lower strata of society was common in African history.[45]Although many people who are now considered

[38] Interview with Ali Moro Ayana, Son of Ali Kameshiego, Saboba, 17 April 2017. See also, Talton, *Politics of Social Change,* 34. Rainmaking was the act of using super natural powers to cause rain to fall in periods of drought for agricultural purposes. See S. Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990).
[39] Interview with Ali Moro Ayana, Son of Ali Kameshiego, Saboba, 17 April 2017.
[40] Stephen Feierman has discussed the importance of rain making medicine as a source of chiefly power in precolonial Tanzania. Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals,* 8.
[41] Levtzion, *Muslims and Chiefs in West Africa*, 93. Levtzion also makes reference to David Tait's Manuscript, text A that suggests that it was Andani Zighli, the successor of Zangina who 'brought Yendi to this town.' See Levtzion, page 94 footnote 1.
[42] *Ibid*, 93.
[43] J. Kirby, 'Ethnic Conflicts and Democratization: New Paths Towards Equilibrium in Ghana', *Transactions of Historical Society New Series,* New Series, 10 (2006-2007), 78. Interview with Alhaji Baba Seidu, Chief Butcher, Yendi, 16 April 2017. See also J. Katanga, 'An Historical and Ethnographic Commentary', 7.
[44] A. C. Dawson, 'Earth Shrines and Autochthony among the Konkomba of Northern Ghana', in A. C. Dawson (ed.) *Shrines in Africa: History, Politics and Society* (Alberta: University of Calgary Press), 78.
[45] Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti*, 54.

Dagomba in eastern Dagbon, Yendi in particular, are aware of their Konkomba ancestry, they do not admit this connection publicly because of being labelled as uncivilised and primitive.[46]

Important for our consideration, however, were those who resisted this assimilation and withdrew from Dagomba authority. This group represented the state-evading population who moved out of their original location and developed a distinct identity. The population that withdrew from Yendi area to evade political and social domination moved into the difficult terrain of the Oti River valley. Mobility was one of the strategies weaker groups employed to escape domination. But as we shall see from the Konkomba example, these groups did not just move. As James Scott points out, they often headed towards a relatively 'hostile or inaccessible' terrain.[47] In fact, areas of 'rugged countryside isolated from transportation routes by physical barriers, with a harsh landscape and scanty agricultural yields.'[48] It was, therefore, no wonder that the Konkomba headed to the swampy and flood-prone terrain of the Oti valley. The floods and marshy terrain made the valley inaccessible to the Dagomba horsemen and provided 'barrier', which put the Konkomba out of reach of the centralised states. Many non-state groups in the middle Volta basin fleeing centralised groups, often ended up in places like massifs, riverbanks and mountains which provided 'friction of terrain'.[49]

Konkomba oral narratives about their migrations highlight this 'friction of terrain' by projecting the river as helping them to escape Dagomba invasion. For example, Cardinall recorded a Kpaltiib tradition that states:

> Being pursued by the Dagomba, they, or rather their grandfathers, fled to the river, which was in flood. They could not cross and begged a crocodile to help them. He did so and all crossed safely on his back. The Dagomba came up and, seeing the fugitives had crossed, considered the river fordable; it was not. So many were drowned. Hence, the crocodile to the Palba (*sic*) is not to be slain or eaten. [50]

The narrative presents a metaphorical representation of how the Oti valley, as a landscape, provided refuge for the Konkomba against Dagomba domination. Although the account draws on a mythic element to explain why the Kpaltiib people did not eat the crocodile, it uses the

[46] Interview with Ali Moro Ayana, Son of Ali Kamshiegu, Saboba, 17 April 2017.
[47] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 128, 130.
[48] *Ibid*, 130.
[49] See J. Goody, *Technology, Tradition, and State in Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 57. C. Piot, 'Symbolic Dualism and Historical Process among the Kabre of Togo', *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 1, 3 (1995), 614. P. de Barros, 'The Rise of the Bassari Chiefdom in the Context of Africa's Internal Frontier', J. Cameron and A. Ogundiran (eds.), *Power and Landscape in Atlantic West Africa: Archaeological Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 255-277. The phrase, 'friction of terrain' is borrowed from James Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 182.
[50] Cardinall, 'Some Random Notes on the Customs of the Konkomba', 46.

core spatial image of the river to represent, in an effective way, the importance of landscape in Konkomba evasion of Dagomba power.[51] Another way the narrative captures the power of the river is how their pursuers perished as the Konkomba arrived safely on the other bank. Both banks of the river were therefore integral and an essential part of Konkomba history. Whereas the existence of such narratives illustrates Konkomba powerlessness against the Dagomba, they also emphasise mobility and the landscape as an important source of power.

The projection of landscape as security against state power is also evident in the various Konkomba clan narratives of their settlement in the Oti valley. These narratives provide evidence that suggests that Konkomba movement into the Oti valley was not merely in search of farmlands. It was a process of evading political authority and seeking refuge in landscape. The narratives further provide insights into the ways in which the Konkomba clans and lineages developed through mobility and evasion of Dagomba authority. In most of the narratives, families broke away from a main group or left their original place because of the intrusion of outsiders. For instance, the traditions of the Chatiib clan claim that they stayed in Tchare (Present Yendi) before the Dagomba arrived there. The Dagomba presence caused them to migrate eastward to find a new Tchare on the east bank of the Oti River.[52] Whereas much of the traditions do not say much about the process of migration, they reveal that hostilities with the Dagomba princes caused the Konkomba to withdraw into the Oti Valley.[53]

The Samboltiib clan also states specifically that they were originally at Sambu on the Yendi-Tamale road before they moved to settle on the banks of River Oti.[54] Tamakloe, tells us that the eastward expansion of the Dagomba into Sambu in about seventeenth century forced Samboltiib to move out of Sambu.[55] According to Tamakloe, from their base in western Dagbon, the Dagomba first settled at Tamalgo, a village near Kpabia before moving to displace the Konkomba at Sambu. At Kpabia, a Dagomba prince died suddenly after he had been appointed the first chief of Mion. His successor, in an attempt to avoid a similar fate, moved his headquarters to Sambu, among the Samboltiib.[56] As Tamakloe reports:

> The people of this village (Sambu), being Konkombas, deserted with their fetish which was then a young Baobab tree, and settled among their kinsmen on the other side of the river Oti. They remained there for a considerable length of time; but,

[51] Shetler, *Imagining Serengeti*, 54.
[52] Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba Du Nord Togo*, 211.
[53] *Ibid*.
[54] Interview with Uninkpel Nansagma Kufegma, Elder of Samboltiib, Samboli, 23 April 2017.
[55] Tamakloe, *A Brief History of the Dagbamba People*, 58.
[56] *Ibid*.

> owing to the fruitlessness of the place, they were compelled by continuous famine to quit that place for the present site which they called 'Sambul'.[57]

The Nalatiib clan of Saboba claim to have come from the vicinities of Gushiegu under their ancestor Ipiin.[58] After moving out of Gushiegu because of Dagomba intrusion, they first settled at Chanchang (Sunson) before moving to settle at their present location at Nalogni in Saboba.[59] Similarly, the Buakutiib of Saboba assert that they came from the north east to their present location in Saboba. They came by the Oti River and in the course of their journey, a crocodile helped them during the journey. For this reason, they made the crocodile their taboo animal.[60]

These traditions and similar clan histories provide a view of a Konkomba identity that emerged from a diverse group of people coming into the Oti valley from different directions. Kpaltiib and Kukutiib traditions present an even more interesting example of people from different cultural origins. Kukutiib maintain that their ancestor was a hunter from Gonjaland (Usabakja). This man came through the Oti River and settled on the riverbank. From there he hunted in the immediate surroundings. On one of his hunting expeditions, he killed an elephant and so the local people gave him the name '*uku kuln'*, meaning he who 'kills elephants'.[61] The location where he killed the elephant became Kukuln and his descendants became Kukutiib.[62] Earlier inhabitants of Konkomba speakers presumably assimilated the descendants of this Gonja hunter.[63] Kpaltiib tradition gives a similar account of mixing of different groups. They assert that the first group to settle at Kpalb were Kasintiib. Taatiib who were a combination of Gonja fishermen and Konkomba trappers later joined this earlier group.[64] The third group, Paabyaab (Upper Kpalb) who settled near the forest were originally hunters but were later joined by Yakitiib, who were salt traders of Hausa origin. [65] The pre-exiting groups recognised these later groups as 'outsiders' but within a relatively short period, they accepted them as 'insiders' to become Kpaltiib.[66]

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[57] *Ibid,* 5.
[58] A tape-recorded interview with Kayil Mado conducted by Barnabas Kayil, Saboba, 13 September 2001, transcribed by the author.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Interview with Uninkpel Bingrini, Buakuln, Saboba, 19 April 2017.
[61] Interview with Nborkan Timunyun, Kukunzoli, 18 April 2017.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Interview with Aleji Kagon, Chief of Kpalb, Kpalba, 24 April, 2017.
[65] Interview with Ali Moro Ayana, Son of Ali Kamashiegu, Saboba, 17 April 2017.
[66] Talton, *Politics of social Change,* 28.

A critical analysis of these narratives reveals the Oti Valley not only as a refuge zone but also as a melting pot of people from different origins. It is reasonable to deduce from the narratives that people who escaped state power and headed towards the Oti valley were not necessarily of a single cultural group. The people we know today as Konkomba were those earlier populations who chose to flee state capture and sought autonomy on the margins of organised states. To evade integration into centralised states they moved further into the Oti valley where landscape served as refuge. This also buttresses the point of a relative permeability of supposed social boundaries of precolonial Africa.

Slave Raiding and Socio-Political Adaptation to Mobility, 1744 – 1874

Although the Atlantic slave trade was a central feature of the people of the Gold Coast, northern Ghana did not participate in this trade until the middle of the eighteenth century. [67] In the eighteenth century, Asante began to expand into the savannah region to obtain slaves to feed the increased demand for slaves on the coast.[68] In the early 1730s, they invaded Gonja and succeeded in imposing a tribute, payable in slaves, on them.[69] In about 1744/5, Asante again invaded Yendi, the capital of the Dagomba. According to Benedict G. Der, the battle ended in a military stalemate. However, the Asante army captured the Dagomba King, Na Gariba, and wanted to take him back to Kumasi. The king's nephew, Ziblim, intervened and 'bought him' back from the Asante.[70] By this, Ziblim incurred a 'skin debt', which the Dagomba state had to pay.[71] The Dagomba state therefore began to raid other groups including the Konkomba for slaves to pay off this debt. From the middle of the eighteenth century, therefore, 'the Grunshi, Busansi, Konkomba, Tchokossi, and other independent tribes were raided regularly to procure

[67] B. G. Der, *The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana*, (Accra: Woeli Publishing Service, 1998), 8. Piot, 'Symbolic Dualism and Historical Process', 619. For slave raiding activities outside this period, see I. Wilks, *Wa and the Wala: Islam and Polity in Northern-Western Ghana* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), see also J. J. Holden, 'The Zabarima Conquest of North West Ghana' *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 8, (1965), 60-81.

[68] W. Rodney, 'Gold and Slave on the Gold Coast', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 10 (1969), 15.

[69] B. M. Haight, 'Pontonporon and Koko: Asante-Gonja Relations to 1874', in E. Schildkrout (ed.), *The Golden Stool: Studies of the Asante Center and Periphery,* 65, (New York: The American Museum of Natural History, 1987), 62. Case, *Wasipe under the Ngbanya*, 156.

[70] Der, *The Slave Trade in Northern Ghana*, 10. See also I. Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century: Structure and Evolution of Political Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 21-22.

[71] A skin is the symbol of political authority among the northern states. In this sense 'Skin Debt' meant a national or state debt. See M. D. Iddi, 'Chieftaincy in Dagbong' (Unpublished Field Notes, Institute of African Studies, Legon, 1974), 124. There is no consensus among historians on the exact amount of the debt incurred by the Dagomba in this transaction but this debt was to be a yearly payment of slaves and other items such as goats, cattle and sheep. T. E. Bowdich reports that in 1800 the regular tribute payable annually to Kumasi by the Dagomba was 500 slaves, 200 cows, 400 sheep, 400 cotton cloths and 200 silk cloths. Ivor Wilks put the figure at 1000 slaves annually. Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*, 22.

the required number of slaves, and when hard put to it the Na of Dagomba asked his relatives of Mossi and Mamprussi to help him in his payment.'[72] The Dagomba seem to have paid off this debt by the 1860s but the new Asantehene, Kofi Karikari, re-imposed it. Ivor Wilks, relying on records of European travellers, observed that upon the death of Asantehene Kwaku Dua in 1867, his successor, Kofi Karikari, required that Ya Na Abdallai affirmed his allegiance to him through payment of the tribute that Asante had suspended owing to peace and order in Dagbon.[73] In his award winning novel, Manu Herbstein, recounts an exceptionally fascinating story of how Dagomba slave raiders organised slave raids on Konkomba hamlets in the Oti valley to acquire slaves for payment to Asante. A party of raiders on horseback usually descended on a Konkomba village either at night or at day:

> seeing the horsemen approaching at a gallop, the Konkomba fled in disarray. The Dagomba chased them ruthlessly shooting from the saddle, slashing with their sword or driving with their spear into the enemy as they passed.[74]

He reports that, on one of their raiding expeditions into the Konkomba area, the Dagomba captured twenty slaves but lost two of their men. On their return to Yendi, the Dagomba king, Na Saa, invited the Asante consul, Nana Kwaaten Pete, to inspect the first consignment of the slaves to Asante.[75] The consignment included eighteen full-grown men, one woman and a boy.[76] In the novel, Herbstein presents the Konkomba settlements in the Oti River valley as dispersed, isolated and extremely vulnerable to Dagomba slave raiders. Dagomba superiority, according to Herbstein, emanated from the fear horses struck in their Konkomba victims.[77]

Herbstein's depiction, however, grossly overstates the success of these Dagomba raiding parties. On the contrary, some other evidence suggests that, on many occasions, the Dagomba did not only fail to obtain the required number of slave demanded by the Asante, but the terrain of the Oti valley was not favourable for horse raiding. For instance, Cardinall reports that in about 1860, slaves were not forthcoming and the King of Dagomba sought the help of some Zaberima raiders to obtain slaves and with their help, he sent a raiding expedition to the northeast to acquire slaves.[78] Again, in 1867, when Asante again pressed for more slaves, Abdulai, king of Yendi, organised raids into Bassari and Konkomba territories and having

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[72] A. W. Cardinall, *The Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast: Their Customs, Religion and Folklore* (London: E.P. Dutton, 1920), 9.
[73] Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*, 305.
[74] M. Herrnstein, *Ama: A Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: E-reads, 2001), 14.
[75] *Ibid*. In the account of Ivor Wilks, Kwaaten Pete was sent to Dagomba to restore order after a civil disorder having occurred there. See, Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century*, 22.
[76] Herrnstein, *AMa: A Story of the Atlantic Slave Trade*, 23.
[77] *Ibid*.
[78] Cardinall, *The Natives of the Northern Territories*, 9.

failed to obtain the required number of slaves, laid siege to Bassar. The inhabitants of Bassar fled into the mountains and hunger and lack of supplies nearly exterminated the raiding party. De Barros citing Robert Cornevin suggests that Na Abdulai died in this siege but Withers-Gill is of the view that Abdulai escaped to Yendi where he died.[79]

The intensity and magnitude of the slave raids triggered a wave of migration and settlement pattern, which became a central feature of the history of the Volta basin in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In the history of these raids, landscape provided sanctuary for many groups against the raiding parties. The Bassari Mountains provided one such sanctuary. De Barros has suggested that Dagomba raids precipitated the development of chiefdoms in Bassar as many different groups of people converged in the area to seek refuge in the mountains.[80] Charles Piot described the Kabre hills as a refuge area that gave protection to thousands of people.[81] As the works of de Barros and Piot suggest, slave raiding caused significant spatial and socio-structural changes in northern societies. In the case of the Konkomba, the Oti valley was a refuge against Dagomba and Anufo slave raiders. Besides the floods and the swampy nature of the terrain, in the event of a raid, the Konkomba easily crossed the river using the river as a barrier between them and the raiders. Jack Goody has identified running across rivers as a convenient strategy for victims of slave raids.[82] More importantly, the Oti River valley was infested with tsetse fly (*glossinas morsitans)* which were dangerous to horses.[83] All these factors made the Oti valley essentially inaccessible to the Dagomba and Anufo horsemen, making it a refuge zone for the Konkomba fleeing state capture and slave raids. This strategy of moving into the Oti valley to avoid slave raids has had a lasting impact on Konkomba socio-political organisation.

Although by locating themselves in the Oti valley, the Konkomba succeeded in evading slave raids and state capture, the area was poor in soil fertility and unsuitable for the development of large-scale societies. Located in a low-lying plain of less than 500 ft. below sea level, the Oti

[79] P. de Barros, 'How Far Inland Did the Arm of Slave Trade Reach?: An Overview of Slave Trade in Togo', Conference in Honor of UCLA Emeritus Professor Merrick Posnansky, William A. Clark Memorial Library, (2009), 6. J. Withers-Gill, *A Short History of the Dagomba Tribe*, (Accra: Government Printer, 1932), 11. The Bassari tradition states that Abudulai managed to escape to Sabari where he died of wounds sustained in the war. See also L. I. Digbun, 'A History of the Bassari from the Precolonial Period up to the 1930s', (Mphil Thesis, University of Cape Coast, 2015), 150-6.
[80] de Barros, 'The Rise of the Bassari Chiefdom in the Context of Africa's Frontier'.
[81] C. Piot, 'Symbolic Dualism and Historical Process', 619.
[82] J. Goody, *Comparative Studies in Kinship* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 161-2.
[83] Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba*, 3.

valley was susceptible to perennial flooding in the rainy season.[84] It was flooded to such an extent that for about three months of the year some villages were completely unreachable by road until the floods receded. Unlike the Nile floods, which deposited organic matter on the flooded plains, the Oti floods seriously leached the soil, leaving the top soils thin and poor in fertility.[85] Because of this, the land easily lost its fertility, forcing the Konkomba to sustain their economic and social life by shifting cultivation. Henryk Zimon observes that:

> The economic life of the Konkomba is determined by shifting hoe cultivation of a subsistence type connected with breeding poultry, goats, sheep, cattle, and pigs. Because of poor soil conditions and no fertilizers applied, the Konkomba must use a crop-rotation system, leaving part of the land out of crop for some time.[86]

By this method of cultivation, new plots of lands were cultivated yearly. This method of cultivation was conducive for mobility because it afforded the Konkomba the opportunity to shift their farms and villages. As the new piece of land was being cultivated in a different location, they made their homes close to their new farms. This generated a situation in which the Konkomba were always in a state of constant motion. According to Froelich, Konkomba villages were never fixed, they always 'change[d] them readily to install themselves a few kilometres further away, but always close to their fields'.[87] This habit was not only profitable for their subsistence but also important for their political survival. As Terry Rambo observes, mobility was one of the safest strategies for a defensively weak group living close to militarily dominant and often hostile group.[88]

Since the Konkomba depended on mobility for their economic and political survival, their social systems were adapted to it. They developed social institutions that were compatible with mobility. It is understandable how different forms of social organisations supported different patterns of lifestyles.[89] The Konkomba social system based on family and clan units greatly suited mobility. Throughout the precolonial period, the political organisation of the Konkomba did not transcend clan level. Their largest political unit was the clan with each clan or even lineage heads being a law unto themselves.[90] Without a centralised political oragnisation, the

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[84] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana*, 13.
[85] *Ibid*.
[86] H. Zimon, 'Guinea Corn Harvest Rituals among the Konkomba of Northern Ghana', *Anthropos*, 84, 4./6. (1989), 456.
[87] Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba*, 3.
[88] T. Rambo, 'Why are the Semang? Ecology and Ethnogenesis of Aboriginal Groups Peninsular Malasia', in T. Rambo, K. Gillogly, and K. Hutterer (eds.), *Ethnic Diversity and the Control of Natural Resources in Southeast Asia*, 19-58 (Ann Arbor: Center for South and Southeast Asia, 1988), 25.
[89] Lentz, *Land, Mobility, and Belonging in West Africa*, 80.
[90] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/490, Annual Report, Yendi District, 1920.

Konkomba were footloose. So deeply was the notion of movement ingrained in Konkomba social life that nothing 'could bind him to the soil on which he was born'.[91] Just as shifting cultivation supported mobility, so did their social and political organisation. Preserving their clan based political organisation, the Konkomba maintained their statelessness and continued to break up their clans into smaller units through lineage fission to avoid the emergence of state-like system among them. By being stateless, the Konkomba remained unattractive to state conquest. In 1894, the Chakossi chief of Sansanne-Mango told George Ferguson, a Fanti civil servant acting as a British agent to the Northern Territories, that 'had their [Konkomba] country been an organised one with a chief, such a chief would have long ago recognised us as his masters.'[92] For the Chakossi, the reason the Konkomba were independent was that they had no centralised political organisation. This buttresses Scott's argument that groups with simpler and smaller units of social organisation were more mobile and unattractive to state conquest.[93] In this sense statelessness was not a characteristic of backwardness but a deliberate adaptation to remain mobile and independent.

Precolonial Konkomba Mobility and Territoriality, 1874-1884

In 1874, the British invaded Asante and captured Kumasi. Following the defeat of Asante, the Dagomba and the Gonja asserted their independence and stopped the payment of slaves to Asante.[94] From 1874, therefore, the centralised states did not raid their acephalous neighbours on the scale of the pre-1874 period. Hence, it was no longer necessary for the Konkomba to seek safety in landscape. They began to move out of the Oti valley, which served as a refuge zone. Consequently, in the second half of the nineteenth century, there was a wave of Konkomba expansion eastward into the heartlands of present day republic of Togo. As Froelich put it, 'In the last century [nineteenth century], they [Konkomba] left the banks of the Oti river and advanced little by little towards the east into French territory'.[95] Bikoom clan established themselves in their current territory around 1850, Bichabob around 1875, and those of Takpamba around 1900.[96] Although a major motivation for these migrations was the search for farmlands, it was not the only reason for the movements. While Bichabob left the region of Saboba because of the exhaustion of farmlands, Nakpantiib were driven from their original

[91] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana,* 124.
[92] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/28, Dagomba Native Affairs, 1930.
[93] Scott, *The Art of Not Governed,* 208.
[94] Wilks, *Asante in the Nineteenth Century,* 89.
[95] Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba,* 4. The eastern part of the Oti River became a French territory in 1914 when the First World War broke out. This area would become the Republic of Togo after the collapse of colonial rule.
[96] *Ibid,* 3.

home in the Oti valley by the famine of 1900.[97] Similarly, Sagmatiib clan left Butun to Tapong because of many deaths.[98] Narrating why his grandfather moved from their original home to their new village, a Chatiib clan elder told Froelich:

> our ancestor first settled at Tchale near Kandjock; one day my mother died, the death of my mother was not natural, a sorcerer had eaten her life, this sorcerer lived with us, but our father did not want to kill him, and we left the place with all our relatives. So we came to live in Djepil, that was seventy years ago and a few years ago we came here to Naware, and here I married.[99]

The search for farmlands, witchcraft accusation, unexplained deaths and famine all contributed to Konkomba eastward migrations into territories of present-day Republic of Togo. There were also inter-clan feuds, which forced some clans to migrate to the east bank of the Oti, 'searching for security in isolation.'[100] In all these, the underlying factor for this eastward expansion was the improved security in the region as a result of the end of slave raids. As Froelich puts it, 'when peace had been restored, the Konkombas started to emigrate again towards the south, in a movement which is still continuing today.'[101]

As Igor Kopytoff argues, the abundance of large tracts of unoccupied territories in precolonial Africa allowed societies wishing to leave the established polities to move into what he called an 'internal African frontier' to establish their own 'social order in the midst of what was effectively an institutional vacuum.'[102] The dominant process of the production and reproduction of African societies as Kopytoff observes were groups breaking off from exiting society and founding their own societies on the periphery of established states.[103] In the Konkomba case, as revealed from oral traditions, the areas into which they moved constituted a frontier region where there was an institutional vacuum.[104] The absence of any established authority in the area allowed the Konkomba to inscribe on the landscape their ritual, social and spatial organisation.[105] The land was empty not because no man dwelled in it, but because no ancestral spirits of a known people dwelt there. Richard Kuba and Carola Lentz show how the

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[97] *Ibid*, 213.
[98] Interview with Uninkpel Timuntuk, Chamba, 12 January, 2017.
[99] Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba*, 212.
[100] *Ibid.*
[101] *Ibid*. 225.
[102] I. Kopytoff, 'The African Frontier: The Making of African Political Culture', I. Kopytoff (ed.), *The African Frontier: The Reproduction of Traditional African Societies* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), 10.
[103] *Ibid*, 7.
[104] Interview with Natil Puchagnab, Chamba, 9 January 2017.
[105] Each clan narrative of how they established their villages include the founding of an earth shrine at their new location. This is similar to the planting of the *nkinda* by the Nunu of Congo which symbolically represented the domestication of land and the establishment of control over nature. See Robert Harms, *Games Against Nature: An Eco-Cultural History of the Nunu of Equatoaial Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 34-35.

Dagara 'patriclans' legitimated their control over territories by the acquisition of earth shrines and turning these territories into *Dagarteng* (Dagara land).[106] They found that, contrary to existing notion that precolonial African societies did not lay claim to territory, the Dagara immigrants focused on gaining control over land, materially and ritually, by establishing ritual relations between themselves and the land.[107] Like the Dagara, the Konkomba appropriated the territory and legitimated their control using earth shrines. It was only by discovering the spirit inhabiting the territory that any groups of people established ownership over a given territory among the Konkomba.[108]

Several scholars have stressed the centrality of territorial cult and other forms of spirit forces in the acquisition of territories in Africa.[109] Once a group of kinsmen established a ritual relationship with a territory through the discovery of an earth shrine, that relationship continued even if the entire clan moved away from that region.[110] This territorial permanence, which the earth shrine guaranteed for the Konkomba, enabled them to be mobile without losing control over their ancestral territories. For example, Sagmatiib who had founded their shrine at Butun in modern day Ghana had completely evacuated the place by the 1890s and migrated further east to establish the villages of Kasseman, Tapon, Wabunyon, Tonin and Bombal in present-day Togo.[111] However, they retained control over Butun by virtue of the fact that their earth shrine was still located there. During the colonial period, Sambol continued to seek access to their territory on the east side of the Oti River, which gave rise to the 'never-ending fighting between the Kanjocks and the Sambulis.'[112] According to Sambol tradition, they brought their ancestral shrine from Sambu, which transformed into a tree on the east side of the Oti before they could erect permanent settlements at present Sambol. However, Kanjotiib, who came to settle at that location, sought to prevent them from having access to their shrine.[113] By denying Sambol access to their shrine, Kanjotiib effectively challenged Sambol's control over the territory and this brought about deep-seated hostilities between the two clans.

[106] Kuba and Lentz, 'Arrows and Earth Shrines', 378.
[107] *Ibid*, 380.
[108] Dawson, 'Earth Shrines and Autochthony', 90.
[109] M. Schoffeleers, *River of Blood: The Genesis of a Martyr Cult in Southern Malawi* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992). Kuba and Lentz, 'Arrows and Earth Shrines', 377- 406.
[110] *Ibid*.
[111] Interview with Tiborwu, Elder of Taputiib, Lungni, 3 January 2017.
[112] Tamakloe, *A brief History Dagbamba*, 59.
[113] Interview with Uninkpel Nansagma Kufegma, Samboli, 12 April 2017.

Although no fixed territorial boundaries existed among the Konkomba clans, the various clans knew and at least roughly agreed upon, where their territories ended.[114] There were usually tracks of uncultivated bush between villages that served as common grounds for hunting and the collection of natural produce. Giulia Casentini suggests that 'rather than borders', the Konkomba territorial boundaries should be spoken of as 'zones of interaction' since the territorial limits were flexible, fluid and constantly negotiated according to demographic and ecological conditions. [115] Similarly, there was lack of boundaries between the Konkomba and their neighbouring groups like the Dagomba, Chakossi, Kabre and Bassari. Tait observed that on the east, the Dagomba established a number of military chiefdoms as outpost against the Konkomba but there were no fixed boundaries.[116] There had been no occasion to agree or disagree on the exact limits of the Konkomba-Dagomba boundary. Although there were no definite boundaries, the Konkomba had a clear conception of what constituted Konkomba territory (*Kikpakpaan*). In the Konkomba territory, the earth shrine was the *sine qua non* of territorial ownership and it was only within *Kikpakpaan* that immigrant Konkomba families sought new shrines in their new settlements. As Tait explains:

> when a Konkomba moves to the Kulkpene river, south of Saambu and in the chiefdom of the Na of Miong, he does not consult a diviner since, 'the land is for the Dagomba', *[Kidagbang]*. He does not seek an Earth Shrine. It is only within Konkomba land proper *[kikpakpaan]* that the question of new shrines arises.[117]

Before the Anglo-German partition, therefore, the Konkomba had developed a sense of what constituted *Kikpakpaan* and what was *Kidagbang* or a foreign territory. However, this distinction was social in nature rather than geographic. A different notion of territoriality however emerged following the European partition. Following the construction of colonial boundaries, territory was no longer defined in terms of social space from which it could expand and recede according to demographic and social conditions, but by fixed borders.

Konkomba Mobility Under German Rule, 1884-1914

Anglo-German partition of what is today the northeastern part of Ghana was part of the general European scramble for territories in Africa in the late nineteenth century. In February of 1884,

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[114] This idea is also expressed by S. Berry in *Chiefs Know Their Boundaries: Essays on Property, Power, and the Past in Asante, 1896-1996* (Oxford: Heinemann, 2000).
[115] Casentini, 'Different Ideas of Borders and Border Construction', 183.
[116] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana*, 10-11.
[117] *Ibid*, 39. Martijn Wienia has however argued that the Konkomba in Nanun found earth shrines which were attended by Konkomba earth priest but these were of minor importance to the Nanumba earth shrines. See Wienia, *Ominous Calm*, 140.

a few months before the Berlin Conference of 1884/5, through treaties with local chiefs, Germany acquired Lome, a narrow strip of the coastline between British Gold Coast and French Dahomey.[118] After acquiring this area, the Germans discovered that the profitability of their possession was entirely dependent upon trade with the interior. Thus, the Germans began to expand their influence inland. In 1886 and again in 1888, the Germans sent expeditions to Yendi, Salaga, Gambaga, Karaga and Savelugu to induce the local chiefs into recognising German authority.[119] The German attempts to acquire the interior together with the French expansion from Ivory Coast and Upper Volta (Burkina Faso) from the west and north respectively forced Britain to also take interest in the 'Gold Coast hinterland'.[120] Britain's attempts to control the interior to the north of the Gold Coast clashed with German designs in the north of their possessions. In order to streamline their activities in northern Ghana, the two powers agreed to create a Neutral Zone. Consequently, in March 1888 the 'area lying between a conventional line drawn between East and West at the confluence of the Daka and Volta Rivers and 10° N latitude and between O° 33′ East and 1° 27′ West' was declared a Neutral Zone where both powers were allowed to trade but not to seek exclusive influence.[121]

In 1892, however, George Ekem Ferguson, an African civil servant in the employment of the British colonial government, began to sign treaties of Friendship and trade with some chiefs in the Neutral Zone to protect both British and German interests.[122] Ferguson's activities in the Neutral Zone led to a misunderstanding between Britain and Germany. In reaction, the Germans sent an expedition to Yendi and Gambaga, in December 1894. Although British complaints forced them to withdraw from Gambaga, the partition of the Neutral Zone became inevitable.[123] By this time, the Germans had established a station at Kete-Krachi and attempted to acquire Salaga, then the most important trading town in northern Ghana.[124] In 1896, the Germans opened another station at Sansanne-Mango with the view of opening up communication with Kete-Krachi by way of Yendi and Bimibilla, which were both located in the Neutral Zone. Contrary to the terms of the Neutral Zone, a military expedition under Dr.

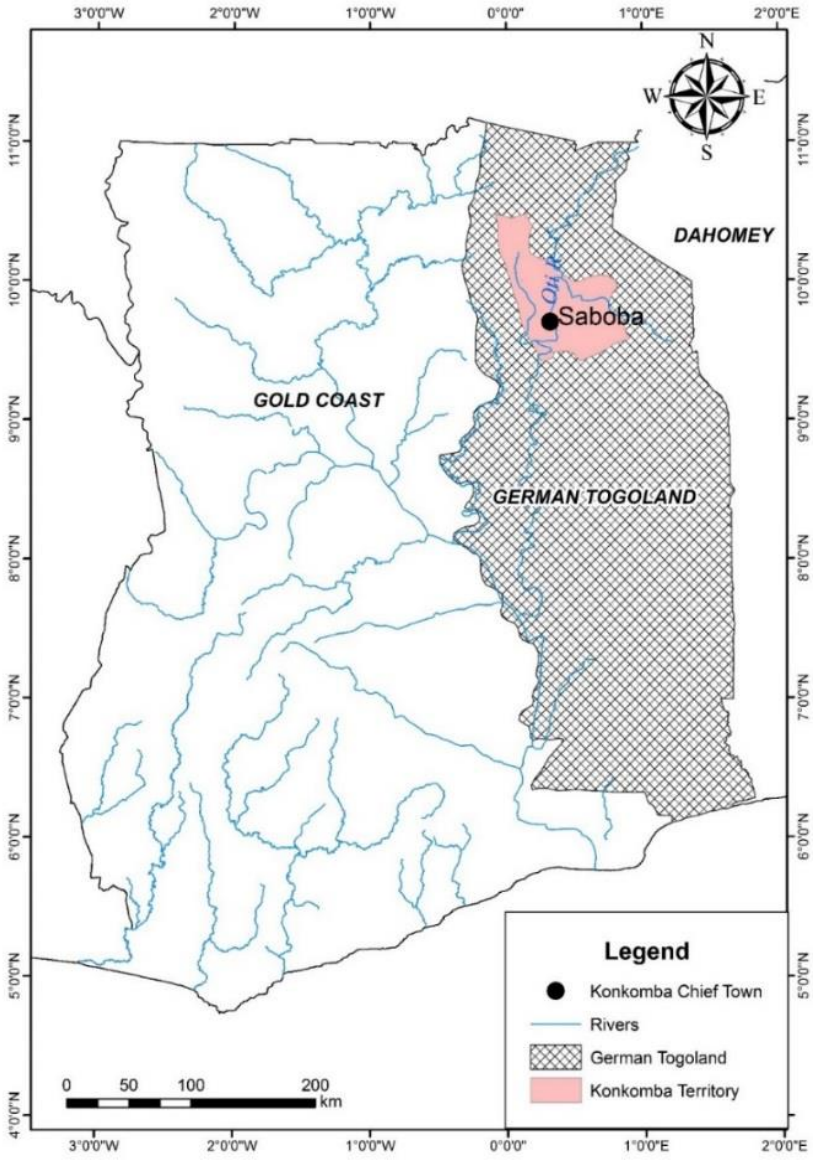
[118] D. Laumann, 'A Historiography of German Togo or the Rise and Fall of "Model Colony"', *History in Africa,* 3o, (2003), 195. See also A. J. Knoll, *Togo under Imperial Germany, 1884-1914: A Case Study in Colonial Rule* (California: Hover Institution Press, 1978), 17-23.
[119] N. J. K. Brukum, 'The Northern Territories of the Gold Coast Under British Colonial Rule, 1897-1956: A Study in Political Change' (PhD Thesis, University of Toronto, 1997), 57.
[120] *Ibid*, 55-56.
[121] *Ibid*, 74.
[122] R. G. Thomas, 'George Ekem Ferguson: Civil Servant Extraordinary', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana,* 13, 2 (1972), 190.
[123] Staniland, *The Lions of Dagbon*, 10.
[124] Thomas, 'George Ekem Ferguson', 193.

Hans Gruner passed through Bimbilla and Yendi to Sansanne-Mango from Kete-Krachi in October 1896. After some skirmishes with the Nanumba in Bimbilla, the German expedition proceeded northward and routed the Dagomba army at Adibo near Yendi, arriving at Sansanne-Mango through the Konkomba territory.[125]

Since the German activities in the Neutral Zone violated the 1888 Agreement, the two powers partitioned the area in 1899. This partition established the boundary between the British and the Germans 'in such a manner that all the territories of Mamprusi shall fall to Great Britain, and that Yendi and all the territories of Chakossi (Anufo) shall fall to Germany.'[126] By this demarcation, the Anufo, Nawuri, Nchumuru, Nanumba and Eastern Dagomba with Yendi came under German rule while Britain took western Dagomba, Mamprusi and Gonja. The Konkomba territory was located entirely within the German colony as Figure 2.1 shows.

[125] *Ibid.*
[126] G. Metcalfe, *Great Britain and Ghana: Documents of Ghana History, 1807-1957* (Edinburgh: Nelson for the University of Ghana, 1964), 50.

Figure 2. 1 Konkomba Area in the German Colony



***Source*:** Adapted from J. Coleman, 'Togoland', *International Conciliation*, no. 509, (1956).

In July 1897, a Franco-German convention recognised the rights of Germany over Sansanne-Mango, Borgou and the right bank of the Niger River, including the Konkomba country.[127] Establishing German control over a people who were unwilling to come under any form of authority caused resistance from the Konkomba. Having established their presence in Sansanne-Mango in the north, the Germans sought to maintain communication with the southern part of their colony by way of Bassari through Konkomba territory. For this reason, Dr. Gruner, the leader of the German expedition to northern Togoland, moved across the

[127] Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba*, 15.

Konkomba area establishing posts in Bangeli, Kounni, Katchamba, Bapuri and Nali. Not long after this, the Konkomba attacked and destroyed the post at Bapure. This attack completely cut off Lt. Gaston Thierry, the German officer at Sansanne-Mango, from the other German establishments in the south of the colony.[128] In 1898, Dr. Gruner decided to re-establish contact with Mango and to punish the Konkomba for their resistance to German occupation. He marched on Bapure with thirty soldiers and some horsemen, but the Konkomba annihilated a patrol team and attacked the main group, killing ten of them. Gruner, however, managed to proceed to Bapure but found the village deserted. Although, he burnt down Bapure, Konkomba attacks forced him to retreat to Bassari.[129]

On 8 August 1898, the German administration at Lome sent a group of soldiers to come to the assistance of Gruner. After some difficulty, the reinforcement arrived at Bassari on 18 August but did not attack the Konkomba until the dry season. After two months of waiting, on 24 November, von Massow declared war on Bapure on his way north. While trying to link up with von Massow, Lt. Thierry on his way from Sansanne-Mango came into a Konkomba blockade and was hit by a poisoned arrow. This caused Thierry to destroy the village of Nali.[130] The two columns finally met at Kucha and established surveillance stations at Bapure and Kachamba. From then, the Germans frequently organised surveillance tours among the Konkomba, raiding and destroying their villages at the least provocation.[131] In 1898, the people of Napare killed a German itinerant officer at Sansugu. In retaliation, von Massow effected a rapid military tour of the Konkomba country and destroyed many villages.[132] Tamakloe observes that the Germans very often punished the Konkomba by way of 'labour with hunger' in the plantation around Yendi. Feeling that labour with hunger was inadequate; they sometimes rounded them up and executed them ruthlessly.[133] On one occasion, the Germans, assembled the Konkomba ostensibly for a liberal distribution of salt, but ordered the arrests of 'these defenceless and miserable folks who were led into Yendi for imprisonment.'[134] On the way to Yendi, the German officers killed many of the old men who could not walk. Many of those who arrived in Yendi were left to die in a prison, and were buried in mass graves.[135] Von Massow summed

[128] H. Klose, *Klose's Journey to Northern Ghana, 1894* (Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, 1964), 150.
[129] *Ibid*. 151
[130] R. Cornevin, *Histoire du Togo*, (Paris: Bergen, 1959), 161.
[131] *Ibid.*
[132] Cornevin, *Histoir du Togo*, 161.
[133]Tamakloe, *A Brief History of the Dagbamba People*, 59.
[134] *Ibid*, 59.
[135] *Ibid.*

up the brutal methods of German pacification in Togo by stating that all the tribes involved 'have been given a taste of German power.'[136] Many Konkomba remember German rule as very harsh.[137] One informant told Froelich that, 'If a boy did not stop when the white man arrived, if he tried to flee from him, he was shot like a dirty dog.'[138] Thousands of Konkomba suffered deportation to the Cameroons to do forced labour in the plantations while others worked on road constructions in Atakpame and Sokode.[139] According to Maasole the scars of German brutality against the Konkomba were still visible in on the old Konkomba men who 'could show their right hand thumbs severed as fool-proof (sic) method for limiting their armed resistance as they could no longer use bow and arrow.'[140]

The advent of German colonisation did not signal the end of Konkomba mobility. Rather, it gave a certain impetus to mobility among the Konkomba. During the German pacification, the Konkomba faced much more danger and insecurity to which they responded by migrating in large numbers to areas outside their homeland. Some of them also moved off the main roads to avoid coming into contacts with German officials. According to Froelich, one major cause of mobility among the Konkomba during the colonial period was 'repulsion from European routes.'[141] Cornevin affirmed Konkomba movement out of their home region during the German pacification and suggested that most of the Konkomba moved into the Bassari area as refugees looking for shelter.[142] According to Cornevin, those Konkomba who migrated to Bassari in search of shelter were in two groups. The first group left their homeland because of ethnic feuds. After inter-clan wars, the vanquished often migrated to a safer location.[143] The second group who came during the German pacification settled in Ingati. They came from Binadjombe close to Nandoutab. Others who settled at Kacha were Sangoutiib from Oripi. On their way to Kacha, they passed through Iboubou and Sanguri.[144] This group must have fled Iboubou during the period of German attack of the village in which the German soldiers killed close to a hundred people. The remains of the gun, which the Germans used in this carnage, is

[136] P. Sebald, '"Togo 1884-1900" and "Togo 1900-1914"', in H. Stoecker (ed.), *German Imperialism in Africa: From the Beginnings until the Second World War,* (London: C. Hurts &Company, 1986), 92.
[137] Interview with Tigur Bombo, Nalogni, Saboba, 7 April 2017.
[138] Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba*, 16.
[139] *Ibid.*
[140] Maasole, *The Konkomba and their Neighbours*, 192.
[141] Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba*, .4.
[142] R. Cornevin, *Les Bassari du Nord Togo*, (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1962), 28.
[143] *Ibid*.
[144] *Ibid*, 29.

still visible at Iboubou.[145] Thus, the German activities did not curtail Konkomba mobility but rather generated more mobility. However, although the Konkomba consistently fled from the German authorities, they were never able to put themselves beyond the reach of German colonial control.

Conclusion

The chapter covers a long period from the precolonial period to 1914. It demonstrates that mobility was a product of Konkomba historical, cultural and environmental experiences as they sought to maintain their autonomy. In an attempt to escape from political domination by their centralised neighbours, the Konkomba withdrew into the Oti River valley. Although an excellent zone of refuge, the Oti valley posed serious ecological challenges to the Konkomba. However, rather than abandon the area and be captured into the state structures of the Dagomba and the Anufo, the Konkomba resorted to mobility in order to survive in this difficult terrain. Mobility then became a central aspect of Konkomba society and their economic and social systems were adapted to it. To adapt to the environmental and security challenges of the area, the Konkomba moved back and forth in the Oti plains and succeeded in evading Dagomba and Anufo states and raiders. Historically established practices and the environment, therefore, shaped mobility among the Konkomba. By the time the Europeans arrived in northern Ghana towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Konkomba had evolved an identity and livelihood based on mobility. During the German period, the Konkomba continued to move within the Oti plains but were no longer able to move beyond the political control of organised state. However, with the outbreak of the First World War and the German expulsion from Togoland, an international boundary was established, dividing the Konkomba territory into French and British spheres. This boundary, which emerged, restored the Konkomba area into a frontier zone where the Konkomba again used mobility as a political resource to evade state control. The next chapter is concerned with the emergence of the Anglo-French boundary and the pattern of Konkomba mobility across the frontier.

[145] J. U. Kachim, 'African Resistance to Colonial Conquest: The Case of Konkomba Resistance to German Occupation of Northern Togoland', *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Studies,* 1, 3 (2013), 168.

Chapter Three

'The River is not to be Crossed': Anglo-French Partition and Konkomba Cross-Border Mobility, 1914 – 1930s

Introduction

After the defeat of Germany in the First World War, the Allied powers partitioned German Togoland between the British and the French.[1] This partition divided the Konkomba territory and the boundary line followed, in most parts, the course of the Oti River. As far as the two powers were concerned, the River would serve as a barrier to curtail Konkomba movements across the international boundary. However, the river became the most difficult part of the border to police. In their social relations, the Konkomba ignored the river as an international border and continued to relate to one another as though the border did not exist and at the same time made use of the border to evade colonial authority through cross-border mobility. Giulia Casentini, who studied the social and political developments of the Konkomba on either side of the river, found that the boundary in the Konkomba area remained porous and the Konkomba crossed it daily for all manner of reasons.[2] In his elaborate work on the Ghana-Togo border, Paul Nugent, saw the international border among the Ewe not as a constraining factor but rather providing opportunities for the frontier populations. 'Contrary to the view that Africans were the victims of a peculiarly European obsession with fixed boundaries', Nugent argued, 'the reality was that there were distinct advantages to living in a border zone.'[3] Anusa Daimon's work on Mozambiquan-Zimbabwean border demonstrates how trans-border communities used their local knowledge and ethnic ties to override restrictions of the border and commuted across the border using various routes in pursuit of better education, health and economic opportunities.[4] In the context of the Konkomba, although the Anglo-French border was meant

[1] For issues arising from the partition, see J. S. Coleman, 'Togoland', *International Conciliation*, 509, (1956). D. Brown, 'Borderline Politics in Ghana: The National Liberation Movement of Western Togoland', *Journal of Modern African Studies,* 18, 4 (1980), 575-609. D. Austin, 'The Uncertain Frontier: Ghana-Togo', *Journal of Modern African Studies,* I, 2 (1963), 139-145. P. Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens on the Ghana-Togo Frontier* (Legon: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2002). K. Skinner, 'Reading, Writing and Rallies: The Politics of "Freedom" in Southern British Togoland, 1953-1956', *Journal of African History,* 48, 1 (2007), 123-147. K. Skinner, *The Fruits of Freedom in British Togoland: Literacy, Politics and Nationalism, 1914-2014* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1915).

[2] Casentini, *Al Di là Del Fiume,* 21.

[3] Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists & Loyal Citizens,* 78.

[4] A. Daimon, 'Commuter Migration Across Artificial Frontiers: The Case of Partitioned Communities along the Zimbabwe-Mozambique Border', *Journal of Borderlands Studies,* 31, 4 (2016), 477.

to curtail free movement across the frontier, it rather provided opportunity[5] for more mobility as the Konkomba began to use the colonial border as a shield against colonial control.

This chapter focuses on the nature and pattern of Konkomba mobility across the emergent colonial boundary. It examines Konkomba confrontation with the colonial border, and how while rejecting the division of their territory, the Konkomba appropriated the colonial border to their own advantage. As the colonial powers never had the resources or the personnel to actively enforce the border among the Konkomba, the reality of the border as a dividing line was never impressed on the consciousness of the Konkomba. By employing kinship and lineage networks within the frontier, the Konkomba were able to subvert and ignore the border and continued to use mobility to assert their independence. By subverting the European idea of the international border through mobility, the Konkomba rejected colonial imposition of belonging based on European notions of the nation state and continued to define belonging based on their social and kinship groups. The chapter further explores how this posed a challenge to the colonial authorities and forced them (the French and the British) to establish closer cooperation in order to enforce their authority in the Konkomba areas. Overall, the chapter broadens the scope of our understanding of how Africans used mobility as a source of local power to remain outside the reach of colonial control and challenge colonial policy. For a better appreciation of the Anglo-French boundary among the Konkomba, it is important to first understand the process of the partition, focusing on the negotiations between the French and the British.

Anglo-French Boundary Negotiation and the Partition of the Konkomba, 1914-1920

When the First World War broke out in 1914, the British administration in the Gold Coast and the French authorities in Dahomey ignored the call for neutrality by Von Doering, the Acting Governor of German Togoland, and declared war on the German colony. After a fierce but brief fighting at Kamina, the German forces surrendered to the Allied powers on 26 August 1914.[6] Since both the French and the British forces occupied the territory, the two powers

[5] A. I. Asiwaju and P. Nugent, 'Introduction: The Paradox of African Boundaries', in Asiwaju and Nugent (eds.), *African Boundaries: Barriers, Conduits, and Opportunities* (London and New York: Frances Pinter, 1996).
[6] According to Paul Nugent, the German wireless station at Kamina, which was the second most powerful wireless communication installation in the world at the time, was the target of the allied forces. P. Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens*, 26. For a detailed account of the Togoland Campaign see B. F. J. Moberly, *Military Operations in Togoland and the Cameroons, 1914- 1916* (London: The Battery Press, 1931), 1- 33. See

reached an understanding that the areas occupied by each power should constitute their respective spheres of influence pending a final determination of the boundary after the War.[7] The temporary boundary between the spheres of influence of the two powers cut through the Konkomba territory leaving about one-third of the Konkomba population to the British and the French taking over the larger share. As early as 14 August when Major J. Marlow occupied Yendi, he was authorized to 'arrange with the French Authorities on the spot the provisional boundaries of the Dagomba country which, pending further arrangements with the French Government is to be administered by the British officers.'[8] The French officials had no problem accepting the British claim over Dagomba territory but a problem soon arose over the eastern limits of the Dagomba kingdom.

Soon after the powers agreed on the temporary boundary, the British began to lay claims to several villages, which had come under the French by conquest. They argued that these villages had been part of the Dagomba Kingdom in the precolonial period and should therefore come under British rule. In October 1916, Captain A. G. Poole, the British Political Officer (later District Commissioner) at Yendi, reported that the Chiefs of Gushiegu, Sunson and Demon had brought claims over some villages, which were under the French administration. But upon a careful enquiry into the claims, it became clear to the British officials that all the villages claimed, with the exception of Sansugu and Nakpal, were inhabited by the Konkomba. More importantly, the Dagomba chiefs in question had never visited these villages.[9] Instead of dismissing the claims, the British constructed a narrative in which the Konkomba became an integral part of the precolonial Dagomba Kingdom. According to this narrative, the Dagomba had conquered the Konkomba in the precolonial period and established control over them until the Germans severed them from Dagomba rule for administrative convenience.[10]

Evoking historical claims to obtain territories in Africa was not new to the British and in general, European colonial powers. The British had used a similar strategy to obtain territories

also B. G. Der, 'The Contribution of the Gold Coast to the Allied War Efforts, 1914-1918, Part I', (Unpublished Manuscript, n. d.), 6-10.

[7] Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens*, 29.

[8] PRAAD/A. ADM 67/5/1, Informal Book, 1916, 'General Instructions Issued by His Excellency to the Officer Commanding Field Force Togoland'. PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1748, Military Operations in Togoland, 1915, 'Report on the Occupation of Yendi', H. C. Armitage, CCNT, 34.

[9] Ibid, Information Book, 1916.

[10] Ibid. See also PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/204, Handing Over Report Yendi Station, Captain A. G. Pole, 25 October 1916. This narrative shaped the administrative system that the British established in northern Togoland in which the Konkomba were put under Dagomba chiefs.

in many parts of Africa.[11] By allying themselves with the Dagomba chiefs, the British laid claims to many Konkomba villages west of the Oti River and managed to convince their French counterparts that these villages were part of the Dagomba state. During the negotiations for a permanent boundary line, the British made significant territorial concessions in the south in their quest to acquire many Konkomba villages.[12] Consequently, the Milner-Simon Declaration of 10 July 1919 handed over many Konkomba villages, which had come under the French by conquest, to the British. These villages included Saboba, Nambiri and other villages in the Sansugu and Zegberi divisions.[13]

Although the British were satisfied that the 10 July agreement had put the Dagomba and Mamprusi under their control, they also wanted to obtain a boundary line that put all the Konkomba people in their sphere of influence.[14] The French, on the other hand, were also anxious to secure all the Konkomba for themselves. [15] Finally, the boundary line in the Konkomba country, as set by the July declaration, followed as much as possible the course of the Oti River, cutting the Konkomba into roughly two halves and now putting the majority of the Konkomba under the British. This boundary could be construed as European construction. However, as we have seen, it was surely not without the active participation of the local Dagomba chiefs. The boundary was therefore a reflection of 'the power relationships, and alliances that prevailed among the various imperial powers' and Africans.[16] Figure 3.1 shows the shifting Anglo-French boundary between 1915 and 1929.

[11] In Uganda, the British allied themselves with the Buganda Kingdom to obtain territories that were independent of this kingdom. See A. Roberts, 'The Sub-Imperialism of the Buganda', *Journal of African History*, 3, 3 (1962), 435-450. See also R. Oliver and A. Atmore, *Africa Since 1800,* Fifth Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 160. J. D. Hargreaves, "The Making of the Boundaries Focus on West Africa', in A. I. Asiwaju (ed.), *Partitioned Africans: Ethnic Relations across Africa's International Boundaries, 1884-1984* (Lagos: University of Lagos Press, 1985), 1-27.

[12] Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists & Loyal Citizens,* 36.

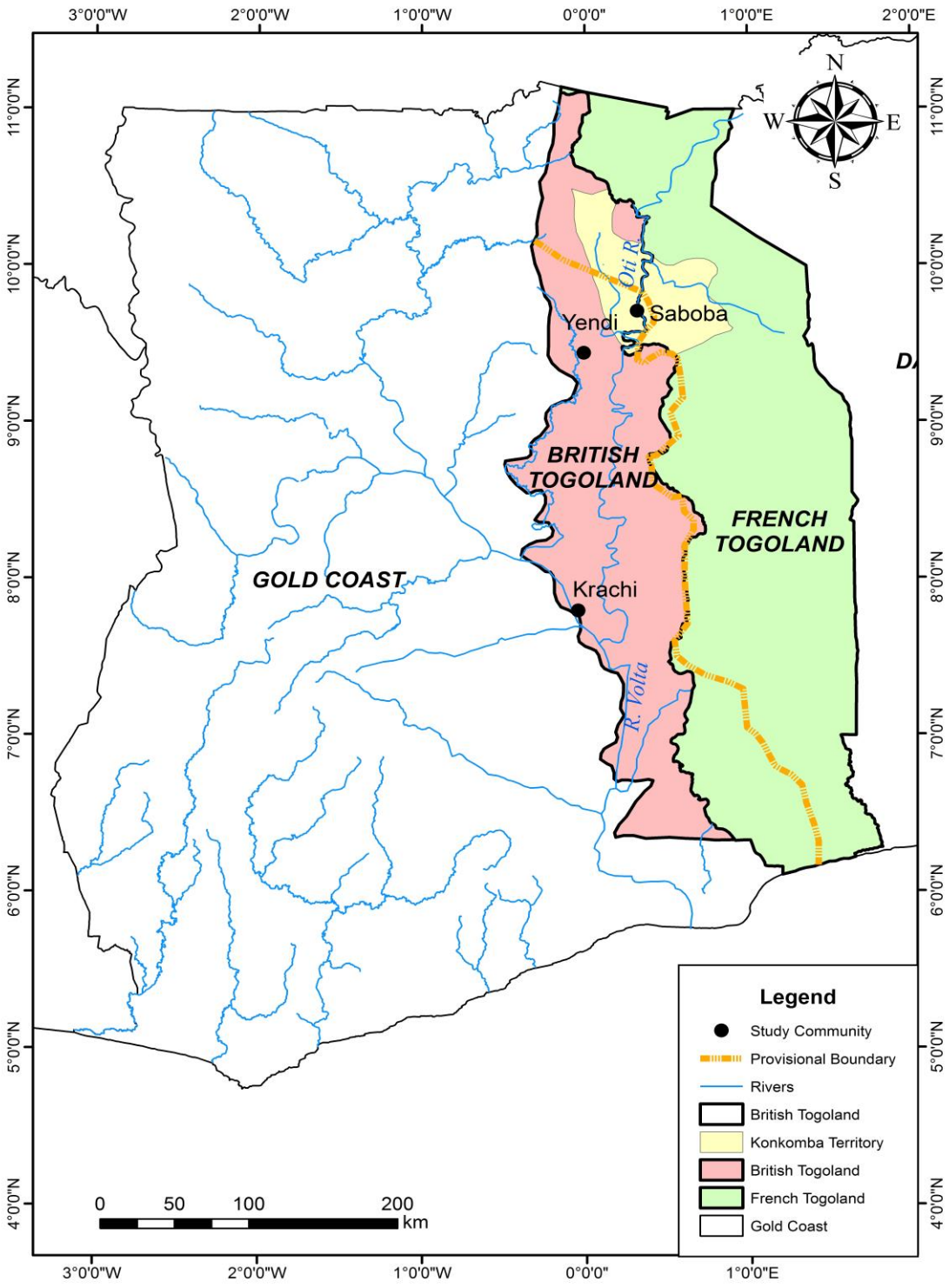
[13] PRAAD/A. ADM 67/5/3, Village Record Book Vol. 2, September 1919 – 1923.

[14] PRAAD/A. ADM 39/1/199, Partition of Togoland between Britsh and French, Memorandum on Anglo-French Togoland Boundary, n.d., 1.

[15] *Ibid*. See also Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists & Loyal Citizens,* 36.

[16] A. Mbembe, 'At the Edge of the World: Boundaries, Territoriality, and Sovereignty in Africa' *Public Culture*, 12, 1 (2000), 265. S. Touval, has however argued that although African rulers may not have been passive victims of the partition, they only tried to make the most of a difficult situation. See S. Touval, 'Treaties, Borders, and the Partition of Africa', *Journal of African History,* VII, 2 (1966), 287.

Figure 3. 1 Anglo-French Boundary in Togoland



***Source*:** Adapted from Skinner, 'Reading, Writing and Rallies', 124

Since the July 10 agreement allowed modifications to be made during the actual delimitation on the ground, both powers continued to insist that the boundary be modified. In November

1920, the French Governor, Major A. Woelffel, argued that the French part of the Konkomba country that contained the most important road in the north had been given to the British. This road provided the French with direct communication from the south to Sansanne-Mango and linked Jugu to Nambiri through Chereponi. The French expressed worry that this all-important road might be neglected and allowed to fall into disuse by the British since it was not particularly important to them.[17] The French officials also expressed the view that if the Oti River was made the Anglo-French boundary, the Konkomba would always fight over fishing rights.[18]

The French then proposed that the Konkomba villages of Saboba, Sanguli and Nambiri, in addition to Chereponi, should be handed over to them while they would cede to the British their part of Adelle containing about 4,500 people.[19] If the British considered that their offer was not a sufficient compensation, the French were willing to add Agbaba and Akebu, situated immediately south of Adelle in the middle belt with similar population, environmental and economic conditions.[20] Although Major Woelffel admitted that their claims in the northern section were more significant and important than those they proposed for the British in the south, he still thought that a compromise could be reached.[21] On the surface, the French based their argument for the Konkomba territory on its strategic location within their territory but the British officials believed that there was something more. A. W. Norris, the Political Officer of Krachi, for example, believed that 'the French wish to have all the Konkombas because they are good fighting men, and may prove good recruits for their black army.'[22] Such a view was influenced by martial race theory developed in the 1850s, which held that 'certain people or societies had a special capacity for military service.'[23] Such an assumption was not completely without merit, looking at the French conscription policies elsewhere in their colonies. However,

[17] PRAAD/A. ADM 39/1/199, Togoland Partition between British and French, F. W. Jackson to Colonial Secretary, 26 November 1920.
[18] Ibid.
[19] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/341, Anglo-French Boundary, Togoland, Extract from Report no. 4 Attached to the Record Officer Ho to District Political Officer Kete-Krachi, 22 March 1921.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid.
[22] PRAAD/A. ADM 39/1/199, A. W. Norris to Record Office, April 3, 1921.
[23] D. O. Spence, *Colonial Naval Culture and British Imperialism, 1922-1967* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 4. See also D. Killingray, 'Guardians of Empire', in D. Killingray and D. Omissi (eds.), *Guardians of Empire: The Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers, c. 1700— 1964* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 15. H. Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

as will be discussed later in this chapter, the French administration was interested in the Konkomba labour for public works rather than their fighting prowess.

The British refused to accede to the French request and continued to use Dagomba oral tradition to justify their claim to Konkomba villages. The British asserted that the Dagomba chief of Sunson had held rights over Saboba, Nambiri and Chereponi from ancient times, and argued that French claims over these villages would deprive these chiefs of their subjects. They argued that if these villages were handed over to the French, the Sunson chief would be deprived of as many as 1,300 subjects. For the British, to deprive one chief of this number of subjects would have very grave political consequences in the future and might even breed discontent and mistrust.[24] They made a similar argument concerning Sansugu. The Deputy Provincial Commissioner of the Southern Province, H. C. Branch, argued that if the French took over these areas, the chief of Sansugu and Demon would be deprived of their ancient lands.[25] The French on their part insisted that 'the Dagomba [precolonial territorial] boundary did not go farther than the Matchapene River' and that placing the boundary at river Kankassi deprived the French of that portion of the Konkomba placed under the jurisdiction of Sansugu. They proposed that Matchapene should be made the Anglo-French boundary to 'its junction with the ethnic limits of the Konkombas and Bitjem [Bassari]'.[26] The British rejected the French proposal and argued that the Dagomba chief of Sansugu formerly ruled as far as the Dakpe River and almost up to the Kara River, their eastern boundary being the Bassari country.[27]

Although the British argument was stated in terms of the need to preserve traditional historical boundaries, a critical reading of the records reveals that the real reason for their claim over the Konkomba territory was also, like the French, based purely on economic considerations. According to the British, 'the Konkomba people made the wealth of the district, they supply the real labour, paid or unpaid', which was of greater value than Dagomba labour and more importantly, 'they own the cattle'.[28] In a confidential report, Branch, intimated that, 'Saboba, Nambiri and Chereponi country are our richest cattle lands and I need not point out how

[24] Public Record and Archives Administration Department, Tamale (hereafter PRAAD/T.), NRG 8/1/21, Boundary Dispute Togoland, Confidential Report No. 65/2/1916 by H. C. Branch, Deputy Provincial Commissioner, Yendi, 23 April 1921.
[25] Ibid.
[26] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/341, Extract from Report no. 4 Attached to the Record Officer, Ho to District Political Officer Kete-Krachi, 22 March 1921.
[27] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/1/21, Confidential Report by H. C. Branch, 23 April 1921.
[28] PRAAD/A. ADM 67/5/1, Information Book 1916.

essential it is for us to retain this cattle country.'[29] The cattle in the Konkomba territory alone were estimated to be over 3,000.[30] In northern Togoland, cattle trade constituted the most viable economic activity within the colonial economic arrangement, and therefore leaving this cattle area in the French territory would be a great loss to the British. Branch concluded that ceding 'this part of the country' to the French would not only take away the richest and most populous part of the district, but also 'reduce the present population by almost half.'[31]

The French officials continued to argue that the agreed boundary line was unsatisfactory because it divided many social groups.[32] Similarly, Major F. W. F. Jackson, the British Commissioner of the Eastern Province of the Gold Coast, also believed that 'the boundary as defined by the Franco-British Declaration of July 1919 has ruthlessly divided kith and kin' and preferred that 'the boundary should follow as close as possible the various tribal boundaries as recognized by the natives themselves.'[33] The argument to go by ethnic boundaries was employed merely for obtaining territories other than a genuine concern for unification of social groups under a single power. None of the powers was prepared to relinquish their Konkomba population. Even if the powers had agreed to follow ethnic boundaries, no such boundaries existed. During the actual demarcation of the boundary (1927-1929), it was discovered that there were no fixed 'tribal boundaries' between the various ethnic groups in the area. The Commissioners found that, whereas in some cases certain points were known on rivers and paths, no ethnic boundary as a continuous line existed. For instance, no trace of the ethnic boundary between the Konkomba and Bassari was found.[34] This reinforces the argument that precolonial societies in most parts of Africa were not delimited by boundaries in the European sense of the term. Scholars have shown that the notion of the boundary as a continuous line was alien in precolonial Africa as the concern of rulers was with control over people rather than land.[35] Ethnic boundaries in the Middle Volta basin, as Carola Lentz indicates, were fluid, ambiguous and entirely situational and the territories expanded and receded in response to

[29] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/1/21, Confidential Report by H. C. Branch.
[30] Ibid.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists & Loyal Citizens*, 35.
[33] PRAAD/A. ADM 39/1/199, Memorandum on Anglo-French Togoland Boundary' by Major Jackson, n. d.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Goody, *Technology, Tradition, and the State in Africa*, 29. Gareth Austin argues that because land was not the crucial factor of production, control over land was not a means of domination, and as a result, African rulers did not invest in controlling territory, but in labour and the control of people. G. Austin, 'Resources, Techniques and Strategies South of the Sahara: Revising the Factor Endowments Perspective on African Economic Development, 1500-2000', *Economic History Review*, 61, 3 (2008), 589.

demographic change.[36] More importantly, the German map (Sprigade map of 1907) on which the 10 July agreement was based did not reflect conditions on the ground. The inhabitants in the area could not recognise most of the villages and natural features located on the map.[37] This was because the Konkomba were 'continually making new villages and leaving the old ones'.[38] Due to this mobility, most of the villages on the Sprigade map had disappeared and many other villages came into existence that did not appear on the map.[39] For instance, during the delimitation, the villages of Natagu, Bobotiwe and Nabugem, which were supposed to be the boundary between the French and the British, had ceased to exist and the people of Kujunle and Bipadjole had moved to a new location.[40]

In this situation, precolonial territorial and ethnic limits were less useful guides for colonial boundary delimitation and in the end, most parts of the boundary in the Konkomba area followed natural features, particularly, the Oti River. One's residence concerning the river then became the deciding factor of their future colonial regime and subsequently, their nationality. The boundary as demarcated between 1927 and 1929 separated many Konkomba families from their relatives, shrines, markets and farmlands.[41] With the coming into being of the boundary, therefore, the Konkomba notion of shared territory was challenged by the colonial notion of exclusive territorial sovereignty. By circumscribing territories with fixed lines, the colonial powers transformed the Konkomba territory from a social space where mobility was unhindered into a bounded geographical space. This brought to the fore the different understanding of territory between Europeans and the Konkomba.[42] Whereas in the Konkomba understanding, the river served as a point of contact and interaction, in the European conception, the river was expected to serve as a barrier between the Konkomba who became British subjects and those that were not. It is obvious then that attempts at policing the border would bring colonial law into collision with Konkomba social and territorial system.

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[36] C. Lentz, '"Tribalism" and Ethnicity in Africa: A Review of Four Decades of Anglophone Research', *Cah. Sci. Hum.* 31, 2 (1995), 319. See C. Lentz and P. Nugent, 'Ethnicity in Ghana: A Comparative Perspective', in C. Lentz and P. Nugent (eds.), *Ethnicity in Ghana: The Limits of Invention* (London: Macmillan, 2000), 1-28.

[37] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/341, Anglo-French Boundary Togoland, Joint Report, The Gold Coast Gazette, 13 January 1931, 61.

[38] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/490, Annual Report Yendi District, 1919.

[39] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/341, The Gold Coast Gazette, 13 January 1931, 61. See also PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/204, Yendi Station, Assistant Commissioner, 5 September 1919.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Interview with Tigur Bombo, Nalogni, Saboba, 23 April 2017.

[42] Casentini, 'Different Ideas of Borders', 177-202. G. Dobler, 'Boundary-Drawing and the Territoriality in Pre-colonial and Early Colonial Ovamboland', *Journal of Namibian Studies*, 3 (2008), 1-30.

European-Konkomba Collision on the Border, 1918-1920

After the temporary partition of Togoland, the portion acquired by Great Britain was administered as an integral part of the Gold Coast, while the French administered their sphere independently from French Dahomey. The boundary between the two powers therefore became an international boundary separating two colonial states. During the first three years of the First World War, the border had little significance on the ground because no attempts were made to prevent the Konkomba from crossing it. However, this gradually changed as the administrations of the two European powers began to be effectively established in their respective spheres of influence. From 1918, the British officials began to pursue a policy of restricting Konkomba mobility across the river, which served as the boundary line with the French. On 14 January 1918, Captain Poole, held meetings with the people of Kutul, Chagbaan and Sambul and warned them that 'the river is not to be crossed'.[43] The people assured him that his orders would be obeyed and he proceeded to Kugnani where a similar warning was sounded regarding crossing the river.[44] Having patrolled the river to discover all the crossing points, Poole was satisfied that the boundary could be adequately policed. He stated:

> There are nine crossings in the dry weather, at each of which I have a constable, although the river is not very deep and in places narrow and fordable. Owing to the thick bush on both sides, with entangled undergrowth, it is unlikely that attempts will be made to cross it except at recognised places.[45]

In the European understanding, the river boundary was expected to be easy to police. The only boundary likely to pose problems in terms of policing among the Konkomba was the land boundary between Bakundjiba and the Dakpe River.[46] As it turned out, the river became the most difficult boundary to police because it was a point of interaction and connection between the Konkomba on both sides of the river and not a point of separation as the European powers perceived it.

Despite stationing the native constabulary police on the river, the Konkomba continued to cross it for various reasons. On 17 January 1918, twenty-three women from Kanjock crossed the river to Chagbaan and were arrested and detained by the British police. These women were escaping from French reprisal tour in view of two murder cases in the area (Nandoutaab).[47] Poole advised the fugitives to return and warned that, 'in future the river must not be crossed

[43] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/229, Yendi Official Diary, 14 January 1918.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid, 15 January 1918.
[46] Ibid, 23 January 1918.
[47] Ibid, 17 January 1918.

even by women.'[48] He left a police detachment there to stop people who were crossing into the French territory at night.[49] But the people continued to cross the river. On 18 January, just the next day after stationing the police, Poole received a letter from the French Commandant of Bassar requesting him to hand over two murderers who had crossed the border and were alleged to be in Kutul.[50] Again, on 24 January 1918, sixteen women and one man from the French sphere crossed the river into the British zone. They were arrested by the British officials stationed at the frontier and detained in the compound of the headman of Kugnani. The detained persons were all identified as belonging to the Kugnani clan and were apparently crossing to obtain foodstuffs from their relatives.[51]

It is essential to understand this crossing within the ideology of moral economy[52] where Konkomba customs enjoined relatives to provide basic security and subsistence for every clan member. European officials however failed to recognise the necessity of these customary relationships and networks. For example, Captain Poole who interrogated the offenders failed to appreciate the necessity of the crossing and suggested that they should be severely punished and their stupidity for disobeying orders pointed out to them. The police deprived the man of his bow and arrows and gave him 'twelve strokes as a reminder that orders were to be obeyed.'[53] For Poole, this public punishment would serve as a deterrent and cause the Konkomba to desist from 'fraternising with their cross-river relatives'.[54] Later events showed that this flogging did not deter the Konkomba from crossing the river. In the subsequent months, several individuals and groups crossed the river in spite of the presence of the police.[55]

The Konkomba crossed the river for all manner of social and economic reasons before the boundary was erected. After the boundary, they continued to cross the river. While such cross-border interactions and relationships persisted, the colonial powers would tolerate no such blatant violation of the border and attempted to apply stringent border controls but with very little success.[56] Restricting movement across the river must have been a perfectly sound action

[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid, 18 January 1918.
[51] Ibid, 24 January 1918.
[52] See J. Scott, *The Moral Economy of Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976).
[53] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/229, Yendi Official Diary, 24 January 1918.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid, 26 June 1918.
[56] Up until the 1930s, the French and the British continued to look for ways to effectively curb Konkomba cross-border movements.

in European law, since the river now constituted an international boundary, but in the local Konkomba context, it was completely absurd to prevent the Konkomba from crossing the river to visit their relatives and engage in their socio-economic activities, which were significantly integrated. Economically, the people on either side of the river were extremely interdependent. On the eve of the partition, the Konkomba on the west side of the Oti possessed farmlands in what became the French territory.[57] More importantly, during the precolonial and German periods, the western Konkomba obtained all their iron implements from Bassar, which now lay in the French zone.[58]

Besides the economic relations, social, kinship and marriage relations closely tied the Konkomba on either side of the river together. The colonial authorities could not easily severe these social relations. The Konkomba continued to contract marriages across the river. Among the Konkomba, girls were often given out for marriage at birth and the prospective husbands provided farm labour and other services to the parents of the girl until she was of marriageable age.[59] The betrothed girls were however, not prevented from having young men as their lovers who could only acquire them as wives by eloping with them.[60] For most of the young men, the Anglo-French boundary provided enough security for their escape from the rightful husbands of their lovers. In 1933, a British report noted that the Konkomba had become particularly notorious in seizing women from the villages in the French mandate and crossing to safety in the British zone.[61] Instead of acting as a challenge to mobility, as the colonial authorities intended, the colonial border provided an additional incentive for cross-border movement as many young men easily eloped with their lovers and crossed the river to join relatives on the other side. The protection that the international boundary provided for the young men who eloped with girls resulted in many people crossing the border, making the border practically irrelevant as a barrier in Konkomba social interactions. Beyond this shield of protection was the difference in the French and the British methods of administration, which created a further incentive for cross-border mobility.

[57] Interview with Tigur Bombo, Nalogni, Saboba, 23 April 2017.
[58] In 1917, it was reported that a ban on imports from French zone resulted in great hardship for the Konkomba who depended entirely on Bassar for their hoe supplies. PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/21, Annual Report for Yendi, 1917.
[59] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana*, 93-108.
[60] *Ibid*, 97.
[61] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1/1281, Annual Report on Togoland under British Mandate for the Year Ending 31 December 1933, 14.

French Occupation and Konkomba Cross-Border Mobility

Following the partition, the French resorted to military force to impose their authority on the Konkomba. Unlike the British who immediately handed over the day to day administration of their sphere of influemce to the civilian administration of the Northern Territories, the French Togoland remained under military occupation until 1922.[62] To establish control over the area, the French began to organise tours of inspection around the villages. These tours were of a considerable violent nature and created fear and panic among the Konkomba who often deserted their villages on the approach of the French patrol teams.[63] The constant desertion of the Konkomba kept them out of the effective control of the French authorities, and with growing frustration over their inability to establish control, they resorted to burning down and destroying Konkomba villages.[64] According to Poole, by 26 January 1918 the French:

> had burnt and laid waste more than twelve Konkomba villages, confiscating all the cattle, sheep, goats and pigs, the last if not eaten during their push[*sic*], were killed and left, they also destroyed any grain and so far as possible the yam farms… any Konkomba seen with a bow and arrow was shot on sight.[65]

In one of the tours, the Konkomba wounded three and killed one of the French mounted men. For this crime, the Konkomba paid with twenty-two dead.[66] Early on, the French troops had boasted to a British constable that they burnt eleven villages and killed six Konkomba.[67] Again, in March of the same year, the French commissioner informed Poole that he was marching to Kanjock 'anticipating the destruction of at least four villages *en route*.'[68] In his dairy, Poole consistently denounced the French methods of administration, describing it as irresponsible and harsh, and wondered why the French were 'pleased with themselves'.[69] It is reasonable to exercise caution when drawing conclusions on the alleged extreme harshness of the French authorities from the British records since the British officials could not have been impartial observers.

However, oral testimonies from Konkomba informants appear to confirm this extreme French treatment of the Konkomba. Natil Puchagnab recounted that burning of crops and villages was

[62] Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba du Nord Togo*, 17.
[63] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/229, Yendi Official Diary, 26 January 1918.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid, 24 January 1918.
[68] Ibid, 17 March 1918
[69] Ibid, 26 January 1918.

so rampant with the French officials that their visits to villages were a nightmare.[70] This is consistent with the French assumption that through severe punishment, they could transform their Konkomba into law-abiding subjects like their brothers on the British side.[71] However, the more the French employed repression, the more they appear to lose control over their Konkomba who simply deserted their villages and crossed over into the British territory. For example, on 27 January 1918, the British police arrested and detained twenty-five people from Tchado (French) who were crossing over to Demon (British). Poole released the fugitives and ordered them to return home to save their village from the destruction of the French forces.[72] But they refused to return and when the French Commandant visited the village the next day, he found it still deserted except for ten old people.[73] On 29 January, the Chief of Demon reported that many people from Kanjock (French) had crossed the river and were moving towards Gnani (British). The chief advised them to return but they refused to heed the advice, because they did not trust the French.[74] Apparently, the French had planned a visit to these villages with the intention of burning them.[75]

On 19 March 1918, the District Commissioner Yendi went to Nayil a village on the French side to meet the French Commandant. He found the whole village deserted and information reached him that the village had been unoccupied for nearly a year.[76] Later, it was discovered that the inhabitants had migrated across into the British side and established the village of Nanbuba near Bakundjiba.[77] Similarly, the village of Kanjock was also found deserted during the same visit,[78] and the inhabitants had probably also migrated across the border to settle in the British Zone. The manner in which the French occupation was carried out among the Konkomba was reminiscent of the slave raids of the precolonial period. Just like the German occupation discussed in the previous chapter, the French activities generated a great deal of insecurity, violence and hardship for the Konkomba. Many of them were rendered homeless after their villages had been destroyed. Their response was to cross the river to take refuge with their relatives on the British side of the river. Rather than providing an overarching sense of

[70] Interview with Natil Puchagnab, Elder of Sagmantiib Clan, Chamba, 20 January 2017.
[71] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/229, 26 January 1918.
[72] Ibid, 27 January 1918.
[73] Ibid, 29 January 1918.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid, 30 January 1918.
[76] Ibid, 19 March 1918.
[77] Ibid, side notes.
[78] Ibid, 22 March 1918.

security, colonialism instead generated new and more devastating source of insecurity and caused the Konkomba to become more mobile.

In this type of mobility, the Konkomba employed what Anthony Asiwaju calls 'protest migration'.[79] At first glance, this mobility was not so much of a political weapon. Yet it profoundly affected the French ability to control their Konkomba subjects. As early as January 1918, the French Commandant admitted that 'as every village they had visited had been found to be abandoned, they were powerless to do anything except impress the poor savage with might.'[80] Mobility made it difficult for the French to establish any authority over the Konkomba villages, forcing them to persuade the British to agree to a complete closure of the border in November 1918.[81] On 12 November 1918, the District Commissioner at Yendi announced to the people of Kutul, Chagbaan and Sambol the closure of the frontier with the French and strongly urged them not to attempt to cross the river.[82] Closing the border might have caused some hardships for the Konkomba on the frontier but the British colonial administration bore the brunt of the closure as all the cattle *en route* from the north through Yendi to the south remained behind the boundary.[83] From 1902 when the Northern Territories became a British protectorate, income from taxing the cattle trade was the most important source of revenue for the British administration, and most of the cattle came from French territory.[84] By the end of 1918, the British officials were already complaining that the cattle trade was suffering owing to periodic closing of the border by the French.[85] Meanwhile, the closure failed to halt the continuous Konkomba influx into the British zone. When the border was closed, the Konkomba resorted to unapproved routes and travelled at night to evade colonial police at the border.[86] Through these clandestine movements, the colonial powers failed to curtail Konkomba cross-border mobility.

[79] Asiwaju, 'Migrations as Revolt', 578. See also, Herbst, 'Migration, the Politics of Protest' and Scott, *The Art of not being Governed.*
[80] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/229, 26 January 1918.
[81] Ibid, 12 November 1918.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid, 15 November 1918.
[84] See H. Weiss, 'Crop Failures, Food Shortages and Colonial Famine Relief Policies in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast,' *Ghana Studies* 6, (2003), 11. N.J.K. Brukum, 'Studied Neglect or Lack of Resources? The Socio-Economic Underdevelopment of Northern Ghana under British Colonial Rule' *Transaction of Historical Society of Ghana*, New Series, 2 (1998), 119. PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/491, Annual Report on the Northern Territories for 1919.
[85] It was reported that only 3,195 cattle passed through Yendi in 1918 as against 3,923 in 1917. PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/490, Annual Report Yendi District, 1918.
[86] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/70, Konkomba Tribes, Report on Konkomba Patrol by Commissioner of Police, M.L. Fraser, and 19 February 1936.

When the French administration in Togoland was handed over to a civilian administration in 1922, two policies of the French continued to cause the Konkomba to move to the British side. These were direct taxation and forced labour. The tendency to migrate across colonial border to avoid taxation was widespread in Africa.[87] Whiles the French had imposed a direct tax of 6/- (six shillings) per compound on the people of French Togoland by 1918, the British sphere did not pay direct tax until 1935.[88] The prospects of paying direct tax while their brothers on the other side of the river paid no taxes must have encouraged the Konkomba to migrate in large numbers to settle in the British territory. Three other factors combined to further increase Konkomba resentment against French taxation. As Froelich observed, the Konkomba were 'bad tax payers'.[89] As a stateless people, the Konkomba resented any idea of state imposed obligation and would rather exit than stay and pay tax. Secondly, many Konkomba were just simply unable to obtain cash to pay the tax. Cotton, the most cash oriented crop among the Konkomba, was also the most unproductive and in fact as Allen Isaacman has indicated in his study of Mozambique, it was 'the mother of poverty'.[90] Due to the frequent failure of the crop, many Konkomba could not obtain money to pay the tax, with many of them resorting to labour migration to the British zone to obtain money to pay their tax.[91] Perhaps the most repugnant factor for the Konkomba was the method employed by the French in collecting the tax. The French method of collecting taxes among the Konkomba was awfully overbearing and ruthless. A tax officer was usually sent to a headman who was responsible for collecting the taxes of his subjects. The officer stayed in the house of the headman until all the enumerated people had paid their taxes.[92] This method of tax collection put a huge responsibility on the headmen who literally paid the taxes of defaulters. In most cases, the defaulters escaped across the border and never returned until the headmen paid the taxes on their behalf. Those headmen who could not pay the taxes of their defaulting subjects were sometimes flogged. In July 1930, the headman of Mogonoiri migrated with twenty of his followers to the British territory because the French soldiers continually flogged him for his inability to collect all the taxes of his subjects.[93] This

[87] Asiwaju, *Western Yorubaland Under European Rule*, 119-122. D.E.K. Amenumey, *The Ewe Unification Movement: A Political History* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1989).
[88] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1534, Dagomba District Report for the Togoland Under Britritish Mandate for the year Ended 31 December 1934, 12.
[89] Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba Du Nord Togo*, 5.
[90] A. Isaacman, *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty: Peasants, Work, and Rural Struggle in Colonial Mozambique, 1938–1961* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996).
[91] Interview with Natil Puchagnab, Elder of Sagmantiib Clan, Chamba, 20 January 2017.
[92] Ibid.
[93] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/278, Migration of Natives from one District to Another, A Letter from the District Commisisoner Kusasi, 16 July 1930.

system of tax collection forced many Konkomba headmen in French Togoland to migrate across the border into the British zone.[94] Once the headmen migrated, their subjects followed.

The French labour policy was another cause of Konkomba cross-border mobility. In 1920, Captain Poole, identified the French labour policy as one of the main reasons for the flight of many French subjects to the British zone.[95] According to him, the French labour demands were so exasperating that the people preferred to risk their lives crossing the border than to stay and work.[96] Every household was required to provide a quota of labour for public works such as building bridges and roads. Officials visited the villages to ensure that each village met its quota. When a village failed to meet its quota, the men were arrested to the station but when they deserted the village, the officials seized women and animals.[97] Because of this harsh labour policy, many Konkomba fled the French side of Togoland. In 1920, Captain Poole, found that Sansugu had 'lost large numbers of young men, who to avoid the French force labour system … have run away into British Territory, some to Coomassie [Kumasi] others to Kratchi and Bimbilla.'[98] He expressed hope that once the town had come under the British, those who had run away to Kumasi and other places owing to the French treatment would return.[99] In an interview, Natil Puchagnab, who witnessed how the French recruited their labour, observed that most of the Konkomba who migrated into the British zone did so in order to avoid working on the Kachan River. He recounted how the local labour supervisor in charge of his village, Unandinja Utuk, who apart from being corrupt, was heartless, harassed them, and seized their women and animals.[100] Similarly, a British report of 1923 noted that the building of a great Bridge across the Naware River by the French had taken a very heavy toll on the 'native' labour supply forcing many to escape to the British territory.[101]

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[94] For instance, Usagmanja Nawoal was the chief of Lijalbu in French Togoland, responsible for the collection of taxes from his subjects on behave of the French authorities. On many occasion Nawoal was compelled by the French authorities to pay taxes of his subjects who defaulted with his own money. His children resented the idea of their father dissipating his wealth on the French taxation and urged him to join his brother at Buya in Krachi district. Interview with Natil Puchagnab, Chamba, 20 January 2017.

[95] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/259, Yendi Diary, 4 November 1920.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Interview with Natil Puchagnab, Chamba, 20 January 2017.

[98] Accra, PRAAD/A. ADM.56/1/259, Yendi Diary, 4 November 1920.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Interview with Natil Puchagnab, Chamba, 20 January 2017. Puchagnab recalled that Unandinja Utuk was one of the French supervisors in his village most remembered because of his corrupt and wicked behaviour. One day he attempted to seize Tichada (a Woman) when he met the absence of men but Nanunja arrived just in time to meet the struggle and slashed him with an axe. When the case was sent to the officials at Bassari, Nanunja argued that Utuk attempted to rape the woman. Utuk was fined (probably sacked from the job) and Nanunja was discharged.

[101] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/493, Annual Report on North Mamprusi District for the Year 1922-1923, 4.

It was difficult for the French to successfully enforce their policy on the Konkomba who at the very appearance of restraint sought refuge on the British side of the river. The ability of the Konkomba to easily move across the border to escape French taxation and labour policy left the French authorities with very limited options. Unless such cross-border movements were curtailed, the French remained powerless. However, curtailing Konkomba cross-border mobility required not only efforts by the French colonial authorities but also the co-operation of their British counterparts whose territory became a refuge zone for the fleeing Konkomba. However, the extent to which the British would cooperate was going to be determined by their attitude towards these cross-border movements.

British Attitude towards Konkomba Cross-Border Migration in the 1920s

Repeated requests of French authorities for the return of Konkomba immigrants inundated the records of the Yendi District Commissioners of the 1920s. The British officials for various reasons often refused to accede to these requests. For example, in July 1920 the French Commissioner at Sansanne-Mango wrote to Captain Poole requesting for permission and help to arrest, and return ten families who had fled the French zone to settle in the British sphere. These immigrants comprised five families from the French village of Nataba who had crossed to settle at Nafekeli and another five from Lekjo who came to settled at Lemo.[102] In his reply, Captain Poole declined having the authority to return whole families who had voluntarily decided to move and settle with their kinsmen in the British sphere and promised to obtain authorization from his superiors in Tamale and Accra.[103] In his letter forwarding the French request to the Chief Commissioner in Tamale, he suggested that the French demand should not be granted because the people were justified to choose under which government they hoped to live.[104] In this sense, Poole applied the principle of self-determination for Africans but only within the colonial framework. This indeed, was a thinking underpinned by the notion of colonialism as a civilizing mission, which they believed was necessary for the social and economic advancement of Africans.

In fact, Poole's refusal to send back the Konkomba migrants was legitimate. In 1920, no agreement existed between the French and the British for the repatriation of migrants. However, in spite of the absence of any law authorising the return of migrants, some district

[102] PRAAD/A. ADM. 56/1/259, Yendi Informal Diary, 29 July 1920.
[103] PRAAD/A. ADM. 56/1/258, Occupation of Yendi, A. G. Poole Reply to the French Commissioner, Sansanne Mango, 29 July 1920.
[104] Ibid, A.G. Poole to the Chief Commissioner, Northern Territories., 30 July 1920.

commissioners in northern Togoland did send migrants back when the French officials requested for them. Thus, many district commissioners were willing to cooperate with the French despite the absence of a legal framework.[105] In the Western Province of the Northern Territories, the British officials were advised to endeavor to persuade the French subjects to return if the French asked for their return.[106] Captain Poole's refusal to send back Konkomba immigrants was therefore an exception rather than the norm. Poole's attitude was motivated by two factors. One was his personal dislike for the French methods of administration. Since Captain Poole consistently criticised the French administrative methods as extremely harsh and ruthless, he must have felt morally obliged to provide refuge for those who wanted to escape this harsh rule.[107] Secondly, Poole had a personal liking for the Konkomba whom he described as 'industrious, merry and prolific race', in contrast with the Dagomba whom he says were 'lazy, effete, passive resisters of the worst description.'[108] The image of the Konkomba as hardworking and the Dagomba as lazy was European stereotyping used to establish racial prejudice and ethnic hierarchies among colonial subjects.[109] Given that the main economic policy of British colonial administration in the Northern Territories at the time was to preserve northern Ghana as a labour reserve for cocoa farms and the mines in the south, [110] the image of the Konkomba as industrious and hardworking was to justify Poole's policy of attracting them into the British zone.

In 1923, an ordinance was passed prohibiting the return of any natives migrating from French territory into the British zone unless they were fleeing from justice.[111] Once the question of returning migrants who sought permanent settlement in British territory was 'settled', at least in legal terms, a challenge arose over the return of migrants defined as fugitives. There was already the Criminal Fugitive Offenders Ordinance (CFO) between the two powers, which

[105] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/493, Annual Report of North Mamprusi District for the year 1924, 17.
[106] PRAAD/A. ADM. 56/1/278, Provincial Commissioner, Northern Province to District Commissioner Kusasi, 15 June 1925.
[107] PRAAD/A. ADM/56/1/229, Yendi Official Diary, 24-26 January 1918.
[108] PRAAD/A. ADM. 56/1/204, 'Handing Over Report', Captain Poole, 25 January 1916. The description of the Konkomba as a virile race is also found in German records. In 1899 a German actress, Meg Gehrts who traveled through the northern German territory and in an illustrative description, Gehrts penned down her observations and experiences throughout the journey. She wrote that she was 'greatly struck' with the appearance of the Konkomba whom she described as 'Tall splendidly proportioned, and of fierce and warlike aspect, they carried themselves with grace and dignity one could not help admiring.' M. Gehrts, *A Camera Actress in the Wilds of Togoland* (London: Seeley, Services & Co., 1915), 116.
[109] Lentz, 'They Must be Dagaba First and any Other Thing Second', 74.
[110] Thomas, 'Forced labour in British West Africa'. N-K, Plange, 'Underdevelopment in Northern Ghana: Natural Cause or Colonial Capitalism', *Review of African Political Economy*, 6, (1979), 1-34. Brukum, 'Studied Neglect or Lack of Resources?', 117-131.
[111] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/505, Annual Report of the Northern Territories, 1923-1924

provided for the reciprocal repatriation of fugitives in both zones.[112] Whenever the French wanted any migrants returned, they simply labelled them fugitives. However, in spite of the existence of this ordinance, there was a serious challenge for the colonial authorities. For the extradition law to be triggered several conditions had to be met, such as giving details about the fugitives, including their names, crimes and warrant of arrest. To be fair, the French were quite prepared to deliver suspects at the request of the British, without following the extradition requirements strictly, and expected the British officials to do the same.[113] However, the British officials could not return fugitives without strictly following the extradition procedures, which the French usually found difficult to fulfil.[114]

Even when the French officials were successful in fulfilling the strict requirements of the CFO, the fugitive ultimately evaded colonial authorities by their capacity to easily integrate with the border population using cross-border family and lineage networks. In spite of the existence of the CFO, the colonial authorities failed to repatriate Konkomba fugitives. In his handing over report, J. A. Armstrong admitted that even though there were many Konkomba fugitives from the French zone in the district, he was unable to apprehend any of them.[115] The inability of the British officials to return the Konkomba fugitives caused the French officials to think that the British were not willing to co-operate with them.[116] However, British officials were unable to identify Konkomba fugitives, as was the case for many areas in Africa. Three factors made it difficult for the Europeans to identify fugitives and return them to face colonial justice during the colonial period. First, the names of migrants were usually spelt in a foreign orthography, which made it difficult for officials to identity the culprits. Secondly, the culprits often changed their names immediately after they crossed the border and finally, the colonial officials often lacked adequate police force to conduct thorough search for fugitives.[117]

Among the Konkomba, the situation was made even more difficult because most of those crossing to either side were returning to their relatives. The difficulty of identifying migrants

[112] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/31, A Letter From the Chief Commissioner, N. T., 14 August 1912.
[113] Nugent, *Smugglers and Secessionists*, 101.
[114] The British officials raised concerns about the difficulty involved in getting accurate information of the whereabouts of the fugitives and how to discriminate between cases where a fugitive should or should not be sent back. They also anticipated that during the periods of tax collection in the French zone, fugitives would number hundreds and would present so much problem for District Commissioners to handle. Due to these concerns, the British officers were often reluctant to apply the CFO. PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/31, A Letter from the Acting Commissioner Eastern Province, Navrongo, 14 August 1912.
[115] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/362, Handing Over Report on the Eastern Dagomba District by Captain J. A. Armstrong, Acting District Commissioner to Mr. W.E. Gilbert, District Commissioner, n. d. (possibly 1923).
[116] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/505, Annual Report of the Northern Territories, 1923-1924, 23.
[117] Asiwaju, *Migration as Revolt*, 592.

from their closely related kinsmen, who as hosts generally co-operated in hiding them, made it impossible for the administration to track Konkomba fugitives. In March 1924 for example, some Konkomba from the French territory crossed into the British territory and committed three murders near Kucha and Sansugu after which they escaped back to the French territory. However, the French authorities failed in all their attempts to get them arrested.[118] Again, in June 1925, the French Commissioner at Bassar wrote to W. E. Gilbert, the Acting District Commissioner at Yendi, requesting him to help in the repatriation of four men who had committed murders and were now hiding in the British zone. Gilbert however failed to make any arrest with the explanation that it was difficult to identify the culprits since 'all the people in this area are related'.[119] Similarly, in 1926, ten men from Nagbani in the French territory crossed to the British side at night and burnt a compound at Lewalubu, after which they escaped back to their village. These people were also not arrested. [120]

The French were equally unsuccessful in fulfilling similar requests from the British. For instance in April 1921, the inhabitants of the village of M-monkpen (British) murdered two messengers of the Demon chief and escaped across the frontier to join their relatives in the village of Kutchen in the French zone.[121] The reason for the murder was that in the previous year, Major Moreton had sent the elder of the village in question to Yendi for refusing to supply labour requested by the Chief of Demon. Unfortunately, the man died in custody.[122] The villagers harboured a grievance against the Dagomba chief, their overlord by the British political arrangement at the time. Feeling oppressed by the Dagomba chief who was supported by the British authorities, the people decided to migrate into the French territory. Upon getting information about the intention of the villagers to migrate, the chief sent three messengers to the village to enquire into the reason for their alleged emigration.[123] As soon as the messengers entered the village, they were shot at, leaving two dead and the third badly wounded. Before the native police and Mr. Branch arrived in the village, the entire village had escaped across the river into the French territory.[124]

[118] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/504, Annual Report of Southern Province for the Year Ending 31 March 1924, 3.
[119] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/244, Yendi District Native Affairs, A Letter from District Commissioner's Office Eastern Dagomba, Yendi, 2 July 1925.
[120] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1 /244, A Letter from the District Commissioner's Office, Yendi, 22 March 1926.
[121] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/258, A Letter of Deputy Provincial Commissioner, 28 April 1921.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Ibid.

Although the French authorities were given the necessary details, that the fugitive inhabited the French village of Kutchen near Kubabu, and were accompanied by eight women and seventeen children, they failed to apprehend any of them. [125] In his reply to the British request for the application of the CFO, the French Commissioner stated:

> I have the honour to inform you that all the enquiries made with the object of finding the eight natives whose extradition is requested by the British Government have up till now been without result. If any fresh facts occur, I shall not fail to inform you.[126]

Here it becomes difficult to explain Konkomba cross-border migrations during the colonial period by the general notion that migrants left the French territory into the British zone because of the harsh rule of the French. Essentially, colonialism, of any form, was harsh and it is therefore inappropriate to explain Konkomba mobility from the classical interpretation of push and pull factors because what constituted unfavourable condition was relative and constantly changing.

With knowledge that the border acted as a shield against arrests, the Konkomba continued to ignore the colonial justice system.[127] As the colonial officials lacked the resources to police the border adequately, culprits simply crossed the river and rejoiced in absolute freedom on the opposite side. By moving back and forth across the border with relative ease, the Konkomba appropriated mobility to challenge colonial rule and until the 1930s, the Konkomba country remained a frontier area, not simply in the literally sense as a borderland but also as a periphery, outside the reach of colonial control. Colonial authority continued to be marginal in Konkomba areas despite efforts to impose colonial standards of law and order.[128] The ease with which the Konkomba used cross-border mobility to evade colonial control demonstrates how borders enhanced local power and imposed serious limitation on colonial states' ability to control local populations.

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[125] Ibid, Chief Commissioner's Office, Northern Territories, 20 May 1921.
[126] Ibid, A Letter of the Commissioner of French Republic in Togo, 1 September 1921.
[127] Early on in 1923, in order to stem the tide of the frequent murders and vendettas, H.W.M. Branford, the Inspector-General of Police of the Northern Territories in the company of Mr. Gilbert, the Yendi District Commissioner, commanded a patrol team of police to disarm the Konkomba along the Oti River – Sansugu, Sanguli, Kugnani and Kucha areas. During this patrol, about 19,000 arrows and bows were confiscated and destroyed. Although the officials felt confident that they had disarmed the Konkomba, the inter-clan wars and murders continued. Branford himself knew that even if all the bows and arrows were successfully confiscated, they would be soon replaced as all the materials for making them were locally produced. However, the ineffectiveness of this action was that many of the Konkomba 'elected to cross into French Togoland rather than surrender their arrows'. The party could not pursue them across the international frontier 'in view of possible regrettable incidents'. PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/70, The Konkomba Tribe 1935-1936, 'Minutes by the Inspector General of Police', 15 September 1935.
[128] Talton, *Politics of Social Change in Ghana*, 49.

British Policy Shift towards the Konkomba, 1926-1930

By the mid-1920s, the inability to establish a firm control over the Konkomba had frustrated the British officials at Yendi and Tamale. They were not able to arrest persons who committed crimes in the British territory because those people easily escaped across the border and this encouraged more cross-border vendettas and feuds.[129] By using the border as a shield, the Konkomba were able to evade British authority, and turning the border into an important political tool. The British officials then became convinced that it was only by 'severe and drastic measures' that authority could be enforced among the Konkomba. W. E. Gilbert, then the District Commissioner of Yendi, instead of trying to arrest and punish only culprits, resorted to the French communal punishment of burning crops, compounds and seizing livestock of villages in which crimes were committed. In 1926 when the people of Kugnani fought among themselves, Gilbert ordered the destruction of compounds and a seizure of a number of cattle, foodstuffs and arrows after the culprits had run across the French border to avoid punishment.[130]

In December 1928 T. S. Quarshie, an African surveyor demarcating the boundary line in the Konkomba country, was killed by the people of Moaton and Wabine, after which the villagers fled to the French territory. Even before the investigation commenced, Gilbert had burnt all the compounds of the two villages and seized five cows, goats and sheep.[131] Although the investigation revealed that Quarshie and his men caused the incident by attempting to seize a pig from Moaton, Gilbert still felt that the villagers had to be severely punished to set an example for others who might want to take the law into their own hands. He further recommended that corn and yams belonging to the two villages should be burnt as soon as they were harvested.[132] Similarly, in May 1929 during a funeral custom at Kucha one Ujamba killed a man from Butun for having relations with his wife. Afterwards Butun attacked Kucha and nine people were wounded from both sides. In the aftermath of the fight, Gilbert burnt the compounds of both villages, arrested twenty people and ordered twenty cows to be paid as a

[129] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1 /244, A Letter from the District Commissioner's Office, Yendi, 22 March 1926.
[130] PRAAD/A. ADM 56 /1/362, Handing Over Reports to Louis Castellain by Mr. A. J. Outfield, 22 May 1926.
[131] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/ 2/21, Disturbances in Konkomba Area in Yendi District, Inquiry into the death of T.S. Quarshie, 2nd Director Survey and Wounding of his Wife, 18 January 1929.
[132] Ibid, A Letter from District Commissioner's Office, Yendi, 28 December 1929.

fine.[133] He further warned that if there were any more fights in the same village, he would burn all the compounds and food, and have them removed from that area.[134]

Whereas the Chief Commissioner supported the destruction of Konkomba villages, crops, and livestock, the Governor in Accra completely denounced such methods as illegal and economically unsound. He could not see the justification or necessity for burning compounds if the guilty people had fled across the border. Although he recognised the difficulty of identifying real culprits of a crime among a 'wild people like the Konkombas', he maintained that such wholesale destruction of houses and food was not legal.[135] The Governor was also concerned that these methods of punishment could cause hunger to the relatives and dependents of the guilty persons who were not directly responsible for the crime. According to the governor, punishment, which would affect innocent people, was not right under British justice system.[136] The Chief Commissioner on the other hand insisted that in view of the ease with which the Konkomba easily evaded arrest by moving across the border, the commissioners should be 'allowed to deal with them somewhat drastically'. In his view, the punishment of an individual among the Konkomba, had no 'salutary effects' on them except communal punishment.[137] However, as the Governor pointed out, in the situation where culprits easily escaped across the border, communal punishment only meant punishing innocent persons who had not run away whilst their guilty fellows enjoyed comfort in French territory.[138] In spite of this objection, a Collective Punishment Ordinance was passed to provide a legal basis of dealing with the Konkomba.[139] Under this ordinance, all inhabitants of the village in which a crime was deemed to have been committed were liable to a collective fine, unless anyone could show that they did not take part in the offence. More importantly, the district commissioners were empowered to burn compounds, which according to the framers of the ordinance was not 'an unduly severe penalty as huts were rapidly reconstructed.'[140]

Gilbert's action demonstrates the shift of British policy from accommodation to violence. Thus, British ideology and policy reflected adjustments to the initiatives of the colonised and not only

[133] Ibid, A Letter from the Chief Commissioner's Office, Yendi, 9 July 1929.
[134] Ibid.
[135] Ibid, A Letter from the Acting Colonial Secretary's Office, Accra, 9 June 1929. See also A Letter from the Acting Colonial Secretary's Office, 16 September 1929.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid, A Letter from Chief Commissioner, N.T., Tamale, 9 July 1929.
[138] Ibid, A Letter from the Colonial Secretary's Office, 29 September 1929.
[139] Ibid, A Letter from the Provincial Commissioner, Southern Province, Tamale, 26. September 1929. See also Ibid, Chapter 80, Collective Punishment (Protectorate), 1-3.
[140] Ibid.

the question of the colonised reacting to British initiatives. In this instance, whereas Gilbert could not accept any justification for Konkomba use of violence in defense of their property and interests, he believed violence against the Konkomba was justified because it upheld the colonial state's authority. In this particular case, the British colonial bureaucrats assumed an unquestioned monopoly over violence directed at their subjects, challenging the simplistic generalisation of British colonial rule as benign and mild.[141] This case draws our attention to the extreme violence that was a significant aspect of the colonial rule and buttresses Franz Fanon's assertion that colonisation was a violent phenomenon.[142] As Frederick Cooper indicates, colonial violence in such situations demonstrated destruction of African social order rather than civilisation, which they claimed to have brought to the colonised.[143] More importantly, the inability of the British administrators to impose their authority on the Konkomba reveals the limits to colonial power during the colonial encounter.[144]

Meanwhile, the application of collective punishment among the Konkomba allowed the colonial authorities to unleash violent and repressive acts on the Konkomba, forcing them to disperse from the Oti valley into areas dominated by other ethnic groups. In 1934, a British report observed that some of the peace-loving Konkomba had decided that the best way of keeping out of trouble was to move away to other parts of the district. This report further indicates that several new Konkomba settlements were rapidly emerging near Kulkpini village, an area west of Yendi and other non-Konkomba parts of the district.[145] This westward wave of expansion characterised Konkomba mobility in the late 1920s. They employed this pattern of mobility to evade collective punishment introduced by the British in the Konkomba areas. By moving away from their kinsmen and settling among the Dagomba, 'the peace loving Konkomba' successfully evaded collective punishment but it was not long before the Dagomba chiefs began to exploit and harass them. This Dagomba exploitation and harassment gave rise to yet another pattern of Konkomba mobility – the southward migration.

[141] Asiwaju, 'Western *Yorubaland Under European Rule'* 127-8.
[142] F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), 182.
[143] F. Cooper, 'Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History', *American Historical Review*, 99 (1994), 1529.
[144] Spear, 'Neo-traditionalism and the Limits of Invention.'
[145] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1534, Eastern Dagomba District Report for the Year 1934, 21.

Conclusion

Although the Anglo-French boundary dividing the Konkomba was meant to curtail free mobility of the Konkomba across the Oti River, the reality of the border as a dividing line was never impressed on the consciousness of the Konkomba. Rather than curtail Konkomba mobility, as the colonial powers intended, the border became an additional incentive for mobility. By employing kinship and lineage networks within the frontier, the Konkomba were able to subvert and ignore the border and continued to use mobility to assert their independence. The chapter demonstrates that the presence of the border enabled the Konkomba to employ mobility as a political resource to evade colonial taxation, forced labour and the colonial justice system, rendering colonial authorities powerless in their quest to establish firm control over the Konkomba in the Oti valley. Having tried in vain to control Konkomba mobility across the border through their individual efforts, the two powers attempted to cooperate but the British liberal attitude towards local migration hampered any effective cooperation.

Ultimately, the border proved irrelevant as a barrier for Konkomba cross-border mobility and rather created challenges for the colonial officials in their attempt to enforce law and order in the Konkomba areas. As the Konkomba continued to successfully evade British authority using the border, the British were forced to change their attitude towards the Konkomba and adopted a more repressive policy to deal with them. Disagreements however emerged among the colonial officials on what constituted acceptable form of punishment for colonial subjects. The disagreement that emerged between the local administrators and the Governor in Accra speaks to the tensions and divergent views within the colonial system and demonstrates the dichotomy between official colonial policy and the reality of its practice at the local level as well as the ways in which colonial policies were shaped by local contexts. In this instance, we observed colonial administrators at the local level modifying colonial policies and the colonised continuously engaged in shaping and influencing its practice. As Cooper argues, colonial authority was not absolute and African agency determined, largely, the shape that the colonial process in the various areas ultimately took.[146] In the late 1920s, British repression forced the Konkomba to begin to move away from their homeland on the banks of the Oti River into predominantly Dagomba territories. The dispersal of the Konkomba population in response to

[146] Cooper, 'Conflict and Connection', 1529. See F. Cooper and A. L. Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda', in F. Cooper and A.L. Stoler (eds.), *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 1-56. See also, F. Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History (*Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005).

British policy brought the Konkomba into new dangers – exploitation and extortion by the Dagomba chiefs. This exploitation and extortion by the Dagomba chiefs forced the Konkomba to move southward in an attempt to evade Dagomba authority. This southwards mobility is the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Four

Colonial Policy, Dagomba Exploitation and Konkomba Southwards Migration, 1930s – 1951

Introduction

In the early colonial period, Konkomba mobility was centred on back and forth movement within their homeland (*Kikpakpaan*), generally along and across the Oti River. In the 1930s, a new pattern of Konkomba mobility emerged where they began to migrate, in large numbers, into territories further south of their homeland. David Tait, writing in the 1950s, observed that whereas the Konkomba were always highly mobile, it was 'only in the past thirty years that the Konkomba have begun to move from the riverain areas and press to the west and only in the last ten to fifteen, at the most, that they began to move to the Krachi-Salaga regions.'[1] These migrations are particularly striking because they were massive. Before 1940, the largest concentration of the Konkomba was along the Oti River between Zabzugu in the south and Chereponi in the north.[2] By 1948, this was no longer true of Konkomba population distribution in Ghana. The majority of the Konkomba were now further south of their homeland in the triangle between Bimbilla, Salaga and Krachi. In accounting for this large-scale migration, Tait observed that 'exhaustion of the soil had driven many Konkomba out of their native region to settle elsewhere.'[3] Subsequent writers accepted this explanation for Konkomba southward migration. Cliff Maasole suggests that Konkomba exodus from their homeland was motivated by the search for fertile lands for farming purposes.[4] Similarly, Martijn Wienia asserts that in the 1930s *Kikpakpaan* was ravaged by a series of droughts, soil exhaustion, and pests, locust and plagues, which caused migrations to Nanumba and Krachi.[5] This explanation for Konkomba mobility seems to fit well within the migration narrative of most agrarian societies.[6] In the case of the Konkomba, however, political factors were preponderant over the ecological and economic ones.

Although the Konkomba homeland of the Oti plain was deteriorating in soil fertility, it was not the worst affected by the ecological problems of the 1930s. The Northeastern Province of

[1] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana*, 30.
[2] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/97, Konkomba Sub-District, The Opening of the Saboba Sub-Station, 18 February, 1947, 1.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Maasole, *The Konkomba and their Neighbours,* 15.
[5] Wienia, *Ominous Calm*, 41.
[6] K. Van Der Geest, 'North-South Migration in Ghana: What Role for the Environment?' *International Migration*, 49, S1 (2011), e69-e94.

the Northern Territories was more affected by food shortages and droughts than the Konkomba homeland. As early as 1923, colonial officials in the Northeast predicted that the population of the area would soon drift southward as a result of the advance of desiccation from the north in the Sudan.[7] In 1930, the Commissioner of the Northern Province noted that out of the six districts visited in that year, locusts had invaded four districts and damaged hundreds of farms.[8] Moreover, the North Eastern Province was overpopulated. In 1928, for example, many people suffered from food shortage in the eastern part of the Province and the colonial officials proposed that unless drastic measures were taken, such shortages were likely to recur.[9] In order to address the situation, the District Commissioner of Navrongo arranged a meeting with the people of Sirigu in March 1929 to discuss the overcrowding of the area and 'to lay before them the need for their migration southward'.[10] Similar meetings were arranged at other areas in the district to encourage the people to migrate to less densely populated areas.[11] Yet, the population of the northeast refused to engage in permanent migration of the kind proposed by the colonial officials. That the people of the northeast who faced desiccation, acute food shortage and overcrowding refused to emigrate and instead, the Konkomba, who were in a far better situation, emigrated suggests that economic and ecological factors were not sufficient factors for mobility.

Attributing Konkomba southward migration to only economic and ecological factors ignores the important fact that this pattern of mobility occurred during a significant political shift of the colonial administration. In 1932, the British introduced indirect rule in northern Ghana, which brought radical changes in the power relations between and among local societies. While agreeing that drought, locust invasions, erratic rainfall and poor soils in their homeland may have had a bearing on Konkomba southward migration, the chapter locates the fundamental motivation for Konkomba southward migration within Jeffrey Herbst's concept of migration as exit.[12] While indirect rule increased the authority of Dagomba chiefs over their subjects through colonial state invented power structures, it disempowered the Konkomba and made them vulnerable to Dagomba exploitation and oppression. Throughout the 1930s, the British implemented a Dagomba-centred policy, which allowed the Dagomba chiefs to exploit and oppress the Konkomba in their homeland. Moreover, the British subjected the Konkomba to

[7] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/493, Annual Report, North Mamprusi District 1922-23, 5.
[8] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/18, Annual Report on the Northern Province of the Northern Territories, 1930, 3.
[9] Weiss, 'Crop Failures, Food Shortages and Colonial Famine Relief', 37.
[10] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/278, Letter from Acting Commissioner, Northern Province, Navrongo, 20 March 1929.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Herbst, 'Migration, the Politics of Protest'. See also A. Asiwaju, 'Migrations as Revolt'.

severe punitive measures after the Jagbel incident of 1940.[13] The chapter argues that Konkomba southward migration was a strategic response to increased political domination, exploitation and oppression by Dagomba chiefs and British colonial officials. Central to the chapter is the analysis of British policy shifts toward the Konkomba between 1932 and 1951 and the extent to which Konkomba emigration prevented the establishment of a Konkomba native administration and defined them outsiders.

Indirect Rule and Increased Dagomba Authority, 1932-1940

After the British acquired the northern section of Togoland during the First World War, they administered the Konkomba area as part of the Eastern Dagomba District. Since the British regarded the Konkomba as chiefless, Dagomba chiefs were made to act as the link between the Konkomba and the colonial administration.[14] Until 1932, there was no formal institutional framework for Dagomba chiefs to rule the Konkomba. In the absence of official institutional framework, the Konkomba retained some level of autonomy, which they expressed in their continued disregard for Dagomba chiefs' orders and summonses.[15] Indirect rule, however, brought a radical change in the political power relations between the Konkomba and Dagomba chiefs, where the latter came to obtain a considerable measure of authority over the former.

Conceived in the 1900s and popularised in West Africa by Frederick Lugard, indirect rule became a major British colonial policy in the 1930s.[16] In its ideal form, local chiefs were to act as administrators and draw salaries from their own treasuries, relieving the colonial administration of both financial and human resource burden. In addition, the legitimacy of colonial rule could be enhanced by the involvement of chiefs who were deemed to be natural rulers. Thus, indirect rule was not only a strategy for effective political domination, but it was also a response to the British imperial government's lack of economic and human resources in the interwar years.[17] While the British had carried the idea of administering their colonial subjects through local rulers from the very beginning of the colonial enterprise, local and global developments in the 1930s made the adoption of indirect rule imperative. With the end of the First World War and the acquisition of large stretches of territories in former German and

[1313] For the detailed explaination of this incident see page 96-97.
[14] Paul Ladourceur refers to this period as the period of direct administration in northern Ghana. P. Ladouceur, *Chiefs and Politicians: The Politics of Regionalism in Northern Ghana* (London: Longman, 1979), 58. See also Oliver and Atmore, *Africa since 1800*, 173-4.
[15] Talton, *Politics of Social Change in Ghana*, 55-60.
[16] F. D. Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1922).
[17] Talton, *Politics of Social Change*, 80.

Ottoman colonies, the Empire had overstretched and yet, this was a period of long economic recession for Britain, aggravated by The Great Depression.[18] At the same time, Japanese and Italian expansionist activities in the 1930s seriously threatened the Empire's economic and strategic interests in the Far East and Mediterranean. Closer to home, Britain identified Nazi Germany as an enemy.[19] Faced with these threats both at home and abroad, there was the need to mobilise both colonial financial and human resources to assist in the defense and administration of the Empire. Indirect rule was therefore a direct consequence of Empire overstretch in the inter-War years. In northern Ghana where there was no direct taxation, indirect rule provided an essential precondition for the imposition of taxes with the establishment of the Native Treasuries.[20]

The British colonial administration justified indirect rule by arguing that it was based on African traditions and customs. Yet these traditions and customs were sometimes constructed or shaped to serve colonial interests.[21] The colonial state used the notion of tradition quite deliberately to legitimise the policy of indirect rule, and to help consolidate colonial authority. In Ghana and Africa in general, the British built indirect rule around Native Authorities controlled by chiefs. As in most British Africa, the right to participate in the Native Authorities was determined by historical traditions of centralised political organisation rooted in precolonial history. This inevitably excluded the Konkomba and other groups who lacked hierarchical power structures before colonisation. Even in areas where small and fragmented chieftaincies existed, colonial officials took the view that 'it was unsatisfactory to deal with a number of small chiefs' and therefore steps should be taken 'to build up strong native states ruled by paramount chiefs.'[22] To this end, the colonial government commissioned studies on the political and social customs and traditions of the people.

In 1930, the colonial administration commissioned R. S. Rattray, a colonial administrator and anthropologist, to study the northern societies. He had already conducted an illuminating investigation into the social and religious organisation of the Asante.[23] Rattray's research on

[18] Daniel Spence shows that these economic problems of the interwar years led to dramatic cuts in budgetary allocation for the Royal Navy, which led to the devolution of the defense of colonies to local units. See Spence, *Colonial Culture and British Imperialism*, 19.
[19] Ibid, 20.
[20] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1281, Annual Report on Togoland under British Mandate for the Year Ending December 1933, 2.
[21] T. O. Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa', 253.
[22] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/258, Minutes of Conference held by the Governor, Tamale, 11 March 1921.
[23] R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti* (London, Oxford University Press, 1923). *Religion and Art in Ashanti* (London, Oxford University Press, 1927) and *Ashanti Law and Constitution* (London, Oxford University Press, 1929).

the northern societies resulted in his monumental book published in two volumes called, *The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland.*[24] The conclusions from Rattray's study outlined the problems with colonial assumptions about political entities with pre-existing boundaries under unfettered control of the chief. He noted that most precolonial peoples in northern Ghana moved in and out of multiple identities, defining themselves at 'one moment as subject to this chief, or as a member of that cult and at another moment as part of this clan or the other'.[25] He also found that the chiefly groups exaggerated the 'conquest narrative' because political control over the so-called conquered groups was almost nil.[26] Since Rattray's findings did not resonate with the colonial government's assumed social context of the region, the officials set aside his findings and resorted to political conferences to reconstruct and codify the customary traditions of the people.[27] Through these political conferences (1930-1933), the colonial state reconfigured and organised the local populations into native authorities defined by tribal territories and chiefs. Many of the hitherto autonomous non-centralised groups that did not qualify as tribal political groupings were put under their centralised neighbours. In this way, the colonial officials reordered the northern societies to reflect hierarchical power structures within and among the ethnic groups. What eventually transpired in northern Ghana between 1930 and 1933 constituted not only colonial 'invention of traditions' but codified and reified customs which were manipulated by the chiefly groups to obtain control over the chiefless groups.[28] Although these 'invented traditions' distorted the past, they became in themselves realities through which a good deal of political and social relations were constructed.

From 1933 when the Dagomba area was constituted into a native authority, the Konkomba came under the Ya Na through his divisional chiefs. They were divided among the divisional chiefs of Demon, Sunson, Zabzugu, Gushiego and Kunkon.[29] Through the Native Administrative Ordinance, the Dagomba chiefs were empowered to issue rules on a wide range

[24] Rattray, *The Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland,* vol. 1 & 2.
[25] *Ibid*, vol. 2, 549.
[26] *Ibid*, xii.
[27] Brukum, 'The Northern Territories of the Gold Coast', 276. The most important of these conferences were the Yapei conference of the Gonja state in May 1930, Yendi conference of Dagbon state in November l930, Bawku conference for Kusasi in March l93l, Nalerigu for Mamprugu state in December 1932 and Wa in July 1933.
[28] Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa', 254. During the conferences the non-centralised groups were put under the centralised states to form bigger Native Authorities. The first was the Gonja native authority where the Nchumuru, Mo and Nawuri were put under the Gonja chiefs. Similarly, the Kusasi, Tallensi, Bimoba, Konkomba and Frafra were put under the Nayiri of the Mamprusi. The Konkomba, Bassari and the Chakossi were put under the Ya Na, the paramount chief of the Dagomba. In Wa, attempts were made to put the Dagara and Sisala under the Wa Na but they successfully rejected Wa Na's authority arguing that they had never been under Wa. In 1932 three ordinances, Native Authority, Native Treasuries and Native Tribunal, were passed giving legal backing to the native authorities in the Northern Territory and the arrangement put in place by the British officials.
[29] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/97, Memorandum on Konkomba Policy, July 1947.

of matters including rules on weapons, liquor, markets, sanitation and those of a general nature to ensure the peace and order of the Native Authority area.[30] This power entrusted to the Native Authorities, gave Dagomba chiefs jurisdiction over the Konkomba and became a major factor in the definition of chiefly power. In the particular case of northern Ghana, it is difficult to accept Thomas Spear's suggestion that the colonial authorities appropriated the legitimacy of the traditional authorities to legitimise colonial rule in Africa.[31] As the Dagomba case shows, chiefs rather derived their legitimacy from the colonial state. Previously, the Konkomba demonstrated their lack of respect for Dagomba authority by ignoring chiefs' orders and in some instances shot their messengers with poisoned arrows.[32] But with the introduction of indirect rule, the Dagomba chiefs received enormous colonial state support to enforce their orders among the Konkomba. As Benjamin Talton observes, indirect rule 'marked a turning point in the relationship between Konkomba and Dagomba' because it 'led to the construction of customary law, a stronger chieftaincy, and finally courts.'[33] These structures contributed to bringing the Konkomba under effective control of the Dagomba chiefs. Before colonisation, the Konkomba of the Oti valley were peripheral to the Dagomba state. Indirect rule therefore brought about a dramatic shift in the relationship between the two groups, laying the framework for Dagomba domination. To the extent that it was only with the colonial state backing that the Konkomba obeyed Dagomba chiefs, the colonial state instituted and legitimised Dagomba rule over the Konkomba through the Native Authorities and gave rise to unequal access to resources and political representation.

When the colonial administration passed the Native Tribunal Ordinance in 1932, Dagomba chiefs obtained authority over 'native' justice system in Eastern Dagomba district. Under the Native Courts Ordinance, chiefs gained jurisdiction over all criminal and civil cases including matrimonial and land cases.[34] Native Authority Police (NAP) was also established with full allegiance to the chiefs to ensure that summonses of chiefs were obeyed.[35] With the support of NAP and Native Authority Prisons, Dagomba chiefs came to obtained enormous authority over

[30] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1534, Reports of Northern Territories for the Year Ending 1934, 113. Brukum, 'The Northern Territories of the Gold Coast', 281.
[31] Spear, 'Neo-Traditionalism and the Limit of Invention', 8.
[32] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/ 299, Yendi Official Diary, June 1918. For example, the Demon Na complained in 1918 that one Konkomba man who had refused to attend his court on the fourth summons, threatened to shoot his messengers.
[33] Talton, *Politics of Social Change,* 63.
[34] Brukum, 'The Northern Territories of the Gold Coast', 281.
[35] K. O. Kwarteng, J. U. Kachim & I. D. Limpu, 'British Colonial Administrative Policy in the Gold Coast: Where the Ahafo and the Konkomba-Bassari Meet' *AKSU Journal of History & Global Studies*, 1, 1&2 (2014), 160.

the Konkomba, which they exercised with considerable ruthlessness. Under the Native Tribunals, chiefs exercised criminal jurisdiction over a range of cases and imposed punishment of up to six months in prison and a fine of not more than twenty-five pounds.[36] Through indirect rule, the colonial authorities entrusted the local rulers with so much power that it became subject to local abuses, which they could not fully control.

Dagomba chiefs often took advantage of their authority to impose communal fines, and extorted livestock and foodstuff from the Konkomba. For example, when in 1934, the villages of Nambir and Sangul fought over hunting rights, the Sunson Na imposed a fine of thirty cattle on the two villages. Out of this number, only twenty cattle went to the Native Treasuries.[37] Besides imposing generally harsher punishment than the District Commissioner's Court, Dagomba chiefs were also biased against the Konkomba.[38] As James Anderson points out:

> In no aspect of government have the Dagombas shown up worse than in their courts, where, in a suit between a Dagomba and a Konkomba, the former can almost always be certain of getting the judgement, whatever the true fact of the case.[39]

According to Konkomba narrative, the worst exploitation of the Konkomba in the Dagomba courts was in matrimonial cases. In these cases, Dagomba chiefs usually fined both the complainant and defendant and the money went to the chief.[40] It was also very common for Dagomba men to bring a case of seduction against the Konkomba just to exploit them.[41] This seduction fine was known as *Kobiga*, literally £5. This money went to the chief and not to the injured party.[42]

Without justice from the Dagomba courts, 'the average Konkomba keeps as far away from Dagomba justice as he can – and with good cause.' [43] They often resort to their own means of settling disputes through inter-clan feuds and vendettas. Throughout the 1930s, the Konkomba continued to be characterised by their disregard for colonial courts and the colonial officials were unanimous in condemning them as truculent and uncontrollable. Yet the growing

[36] PRAAD/T. ADM 11/1379, Native Administration of the Northern Territories, Memorandum on the Proposed Northern Territories Native Administration Ordinance, n. d., 7.
[37] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/2, Konkomba Disturbances, Sanguli-Nambiri Affair, 15 May 1934, 3.
[38] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/52, Dagomba District Annual Report, 1935. In spite of these problems, the figures presented in British records show a complete efficient and credible handling of cases by the Dagomba chiefs. The report of 1936/7 was full of praise for Dagomba native authority courts for having settled 702 cases with no single appeal brought before the District Commissioner. PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/52, Dagomba District Annual Report, 1936/7.
[39] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/97, Konkomba Sub-District, Memorandum on Konkomba Policy, 2 July 1949.
[40] Interview with Daniel Ngula, First President of the Konkomba Youth Association, 21 February 2014.
[41] Ibid.
[42] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1534, Dagomba District Report for the year Ended 31st December 1934, 22.
[43] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/97, Memorandum on Konkomba Policy, 5.

truculence of the Konkomba was the direct consequence of the colonial policy of forcing them under Dagomba chiefs. When raiding and exploitation through taxation was added to court abuses, the Konkomba simply resorted to their old strategy of exit migration.

Raids, Taxation and Konkomba Southward Migration

By the middle of the 1930s, Dagomba chiefs began to raid and loot Konkomba communities using colonial state power. Raiding and looting of the Konkomba were done in the company of colonial police. For instance, in July 1934, M'badugu ordered a raid on a Konkomba village of Tambadu. [44] Two Konkomba men from the named village had a fight in which one of them sustained wounds from an offensive weapon. When the report got to the District Commissioner at Yendi, he detailed Corporal J. B. Perssah and three constables to seek the assistance of M'badugu to arrest the culprit.[45] M'badugu then took advantage of the situation to arrange for Dagomba youth to hide behind the colonial police to raid and loot the village. During an enquiry into the incident, Corporal Perssah's statement revealed how M'badugu carefully planned the raid to the blind side of the District Commissioner.

> About 3 months ago, I and three constables went to Tambadu on enquiries. Before we left, the D.C told me to tell Mbadugu to send his messenger to follow us. The messenger and about 10 followers came. We slept at a point and the next day I saw about 50 Dagombas. I did not know where they were going until we got to Tambadu. I saw the headman and got the wounded man. I saw the Dagomba looting sheep, fowls and cows. I called Mbadugu's messenger (Bizangna) and asked him why they were doing so, and he told me that was 'kobiga.'[46]

By the mid-1930s, Dagomba chiefs had extended the concept of *Kobiga* to include property confiscated or looted from a village where an offence was deemed to have been committed.[47] According to Konkomba narratives, chiefs applied this practice to only Konkomba villages.[48] It was within this practice of *Kobiga* that M'badugu organised the raid on Tambadu. Once the Dagomba raiding party arrived in the company of the native authority police, the villagers fled and the raiding party looted livestock and other property. On this particular occasion, the party collected 10 guns, 25 sheep, 37 cows and unspecified number of goats, fowls and clothes.[49] At the Ya Na's court, Dagomba elders shared the raided items among themselves and the young

[44] M'badugu is the title for the Ya Na's chief linguist. In 1933, a stroke left the Ya Na partially paralysed and he was unable to control the affairs of state 'with the result that M'badugu usurped the power of the *Kpamba* (elders) and became the power behind the throne', probably with the support of the District Commissioner. See PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/65, Annual Report on the Dagomba District for the Year 1937/38.
[45] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/4/63, Informal Diary, Yendi May-August 1934.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Interview with Daniel Ngula, First President of the Konkomba Youth Association, Tema, 21 February 2012.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.

men who conducted the raid.[50] What Corporal Perssah did not however report was that while the Dagomba entourage looted property, Corporal Perssah and his colleagues allegedly raped women. An eyewitness told the District Commissioner that during the raid, he saw that, 'Each of them [the policemen] use [sic] to pick any Konkomba woman into the hut where they slept. I did not follow them into the hut, so I do not know what happened.'[51] Although the District Commissioner was embarrassed by the Dagomba use of colonial authority to commit such crimes against the Konkomba, he failed to take any action against the raiders, except to remark that 'he [M'badugu] had nothing to be proud of in respect of the incident.'[52]

The reluctance of colonial officials to punish Dagomba chiefs encouraged more of such raids on the Konkomba. In September 1936, a Dagomba chief reported to the District Commissioner that the Konkomba had attacked the Dagomba village of Jimahagu, killing two men and wounding others.[53] On hearing the report, the District Commissioner proceeded to the village with eight Escort Police only to find that the opposite was the case. Rather, the Dagomba raided the compound of Nakoja. On his way to the Jimahagu, the Commissioner met two Dagomba young men carrying bows and arrows, sheep, fowls, goats and a Dane gun.[54] On seeing the Commissioner, they fled into the bush.[55] During the Commissioner's interrogation of the chief, it became clear that the chief gave a completely erroneous message. Apparently, a Konkomba man, Nakoja, who resided among the Dagomba expressed his desire to emigrate. The chief then ordered him to give up his bows and arrows. Nakoja surrendered three bows and three quivers but the chief insisted that Nakoja had some more arrows, which the latter denied. A quarrel ensued and the Dagomba formed themselves into an organised looting party and proceeded to raid Nakoja's compound, seizing all his property they could.[56] It was during the looting of Nakoja's compound that two Dagomba youths were wounded. The Dagomba, fearing revenge from the angered Konkomba reported to the District Commissioner.[57] Again, there is no evidence in the colonial records that the administration took any action against this

[50] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/4/63, Informal Diary, Yendi May-August 1934.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid.
[53] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/21, Disturbances in Konkomba Area, Report of Raids, 14 October 1937, 1.
[54] 'Dane gun' was originally a type of long-barreled flintlock musket imported into West Africa in the middle of the nineteenth century. The term is now used in West African history to refer generally to any indigenous made firearm.
[55] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/21, Report on Raids, 14 October 1937, 1.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid, 2.

chief. In the report, the District Commissioner confessed that, it was the second incident of a Dagomba looting party sent to Konkomba villages in that month.[58]

The first incident was the looting of the house of Akwansi who had lived in a village close to Yendi for more than a decade. The Dagomba from Sambu raided his house on the excuse that 'they had come to disarm him and his sons.' In the morning of that day, a Dagomba crowd from Sambu descended on Akwansi's compound and looted it of three goats, thirty chickens, and all his farm implements.[59] The raiding party informed Akwansi that the raid was an order from the District Commissioner. When the incident came to the attention of the District Commissioner, the only action taken was to order that 'the goods looted from Akwansi's compound be returned within three days.'[60] The District Commissioner then proposed two remedies to forestall these extortions. The first was that Dagomba chiefs would no longer disarm the Konkomba unless a European officer was present. The second was that any chief or headman found sending men to loot Konkomba compounds would be brought before the District Commissioner's Court and charged with stealing.[61] Colonial officials were generally reluctant to punish Dagomba chiefs for such crimes, and Dagomba extortions against the Konkomba continued, forcing the Konkomba to migrate beyond the reach of Dagomba authority.

Another policy that caused Konkomba migration was the introduction of direct taxation. In fact, taxation had been associated with oppression and exploitation of the local people by the colonial regime. In southern Africa, for example, Europeans used taxation to induce the 'natives' to migrate for paid work in European mines and farms.[62] In northern Ghana, the case was different. By the 1930s, the colonial administration had abandoned the policy of preserving northerners for labour work in southern cocoa farms and mines.[63] Although the British did not intend to induce migration with taxation, Konkomba southward migration was one of its unintended consequences. In Eastern Dagomba, taxation provided an additional and an even more effective avenue for Dagomba extortion and exploitation of the Konkomba. In Yendi

[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid, 3.
[60] Ibid, 5.
[61] Ibid.
[62] See L. Vail 'The State and the Creation of Colonial Malawi's Agricultural Economy', in R. I. Rotberg (ed.), *Imperialism, Colonialism and Hunger: East and Central* Africa (Toronto: Lexington Books, 1982), 39-88. See also M. Chanock, 'Agricultural Change and Continuity in Malawi', in R. Palmer and N. Parsons (eds.), *The Root of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1977), 396-409.
[63] See chapter five of this thesis, 21-22.

district, Dagomba chiefs often abused their powers to collect taxes from the Konkomba. The tax rate in the Konkomba areas was the lowest in the district at one shilling (1/-) per person.[64] However, the Dagomba chiefs took advantage of the tax to extort the Konkomba beyond the legitimate rates. This put undue pressure on the Konkomba family heads and they resorted to escape migration.[65]

Moreover, Dagomba chiefs often extended the tax to include other payments and services for the maintenance and upkeep of their households. During farming seasons, the Konkomba contributed labour to make the farms of the Dagomba chiefs. Yet, during harvest seasons, with the aid of NAP, chiefs sent representatives to Konkomba villages to collect grains, yams and livestock. In most cases, chiefs used the name of the District Commissioner or threat of punishment from the administration to ensure compliance.[66] Tait reports that these extortions continued into the 1950s.

> From time to time collectors are sent into Konkomba territory to collect corn, which is sold in the market to raise money. When the YaNa was fined in the District Commissioner's court in 1950, no fewer than two lorry loads of sorghum were collected in the Saboba region alone on the grounds that, 'The European says it has got to be paid'. In the same year some Konkomba were stopped by Dagomba on their way into Yendi market and their headloads of new yams taken, on the ground that they had paid no tribute to the YaNa…. Of these particular yams one head load went to the District Commissioner's interpreter, one to the sergeant of police in Yendi, and the rest to the YaNa's household. The total value was about 18 pounds.[67]

In spite of the prevalence of these extortions, the 1936/37 annual report claimed that with the introduction of direct taxation, 'the burden of forced labour has been entirely removed… and, almost completely, the capricious demands of the chiefs for petty services and tribute'.[68] As Tait observes, though the Konkomba frequently suffered this kind of extortion, it was rare for them to appeal to the District Commissioner.[69] These extortions and exploitations more than anything else forced many Konkomba to migrate to the Krachi and the Gonja areas.

Oral narratives further buttress the point that Konkomba southward migration was a strategy they employed to escape Dagomba control. They reveal conscious attempts by the migrants to escape Dagomba extortion and oppression through migration. Namuk Bindignum, a first

[64] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1534, Dagomba District Report for the Togoland Under British Mandate for the Year Ending 31 December 1935, 8.
[65] Interview with Daniel Niena Jobor, A Retired Educationist, Jilmani, Wapuli, 3 April 2017.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana*, 9.
[68] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/58, Annual Report on the Northern Territories for the Year 1936-1937, 71.
[69] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana*, 9.

generation migrant and a contestant to Lungni chieftaincy, observed that his father was one of the first Konkomba to move out of Eastern Dagomba. He described the migratory history of his family in the following manner:

> My grandfather migrated from our home village in French Togoland to settle at Bolni, near Yendi. At Bolni the Dagomba chief always demanded labour from him which he complied. But the frequent labour request developed into demands for cattle, livestock and other services which became unbearable. To avoid these demands, he migrated away from the Dagomba to Nawol. He first settled at Dabarini and later moved to Lungni.[70]

Kpanduln, another first generation migrant, recounted that his people first migrated from Kucha to settle at Kpachani near Yendi. From Kpachani they moved to Nawol (East Gonja).[71] Dagomba harassment caused them to migrate to Nawol. The chief under whose authority they lived gave them 'sleepless nights' by making outrageous demands from them. To evade his control they moved to Nawol. They first migrated to Bunteng near Sabonjida before finally settling at their present village of Konjado.[72] In another narrative, Uninkpel Tamanja, an eyewitness of the migration process to Nawol in the 1930s, recounted that his ancestors migrated from Sambol to a village near Sunson where he was born. Scarcity of farmland forced his people to migrate from Sambol.[73] When his father died, he stayed with his uncle, Ndoom and took care of his cattle.

> A time came when Sunson Na was persecuting my uncle. My uncle, had been summoned to Sunson Na's court on many occasions, all of which he was fined. The first summon was on the allegation that one of his young men had an affair with a Dagomba man's wife…this was ridiculous! Although the young man denied the allegation, my uncle was fined to pay two cows. On another occasion, the Sunson Na fined him for possessing a gun without license. My uncle then decided to migrate away from the chief, so we came to Nakpayili (Nanumba District). When we were coming, we came on foot. After staying in Nakpayili for some time, we migrated to Nanto before the conflict. Many deaths including the deaths of our cattle forced us to migrate from Nakpayili. Later after the conflict, we came here (Bagjoon). [74]

These narratives reveal the importance of Dagomba exploitation in Konkomba southward migration. Families like that of Namuk and Tamanja had already migrated out of the Oti valley by the 1930s into more fertile lands close to Dagomba settlements. Namuk's father was one of those families to have emigrated from the French territory to avoid French taxation and forced

[70] Interview with Namuk Bindignum, Former KOYA Local Chairman of Lungni Branch, Lungni, 16 January 2017.
[71] Interview with Kpanduln Kajal, first generation migrant, Konjado, 9 January 2018.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Interview with Uninkple Tamanja, first generation migrant, Bagjoon, 13 January, 2017.
[74] Ibid.

labour.[75] The fact that most of the Konkomba who first migrated southward were those who had settled among the Dagomba reinforces the argument that it was the Dagomba exploitation rather than the ecological problems that was responsible for this pattern of Konkomba migration in the 1930s.

The narratives also suggest that families with a considerable amount of wealth in cattle and young men were the first to move out of Dagomba influence. Studies of migration elsewhere in Africa have suggested that migrants tended to be from lower social strata of the society, particularly those who were not completely part of the society. Dmitri Van den Bersselaar has argued in the context of Igbo labour migrants in Nigeria, that migrants were former slaves who saw migration as a way to escape exploitation and social discrimination.[76] Benedicta Rossi has also found in her study of Niger that emigrants were usually people of slave descent who wished to hide their slave background by moving away from their original village.[77] Among the Konkomba, the reverse was the case. Immigrants were people of high social status with a considerable amount of wealth in livestock and young men. Since the Konkomba migrated with their entire households, migrants required a significant amount of resources – both human and material.[78] Many of them migrated with cattle, which they exchanged for food in their new home until the next harvest season.[79] These families would have been the least affected by the food shortages and the famine that plagued the northern parts of the protectorate in the 1930s. This suggests that although the ecological problems might have been a contributory factor, it was not the determining one for the Konkomba. In addition, the Konkomba families who had earlier moved to settle among the Dagomba were the first to move south because they became isolated from their clan members and became more vulnerable to Dagomba raids and extortions.

That the Konkomba resorted to emigration in response to Dagomba exploitation and extortion is not surprising. Exit through migration had been the widespread Konkomba strategy in response to deteriorating political and economic conditions in the precolonial period. Throughout their history, every time they faced intrusion into their affairs, they simply

[75] Interview with Namuk Bindignum, Former KOYA Local Chairman of Lungni Branch, Lungni, 16 January 2017.
[76] D. Berseelaar, 'Imagining Home: Migration and the Igbo Village in Colonial Nigeria', *Journal of African History*, 46, 1 (2005), 57.
[77] B. Rossi, 'Migration and Emancipation in West Africa's Labour History: The Missing Links', *Slavery & Abolition*, 35, 1 (2014), 23-46.
[78] Interview with Unanjin Kpadin, Chamba, 5 January 2017.
[79] Ibid.

withdrew beyond the reach of the invading power. Jean-Claud Froelich in his description of the Konkomba observed that they were 'lovers of absolute freedom of their lives' and they 'flee from any source of constraint or dominating power, including that of the District Commissioner.'[80] The southward migration of the Konkomba was 'the ultimate form of exit' from Dagomba political community.[81] Tait seems to have acknowledged this fact when he noted that although the establishment of colonial rule has enabled many people to move freely and to seek fresh lands distant from their natal districts, 'for the special instance of Konkomba this move has also often been a move outside the sphere of Dagomba influence'.[82] As a stateless society, the Konkomba were prepared to migrate when there was increased interference with their affairs. Such societies Scott points out, 'rarely challenge the state itself, but neither do they allow the state an easy point of entry or leverage.'[83] However, the Konkomba did not completely leave the Dagomba authority unchallenged. When the Konkomba suffered from excessive extortion, the majority migrated to different administrative areas and some tried to adapt to the situation while others rose up and fought.

The 1940 Jagbel Rebellion, British Reprisals and Konkomba Emigration

In the 1930s, emigration remained the main Konkomba response to Dagomba exploitation and extortion. However, in the 1940s, some Konkomba groups resorted to armed resistance after a series of extortion and exploitation from a local Dagomba chief, Zagbeli-Lana. A Konkomba informant expressed the situation as a choice between 'dying on their feet or living on their knees.'[84] They chose the former. On 10 September 1940, the Nankpatiib clan (a section of the Konkomba) from the villages of Nyamgbapele, Nanyundo, Tawando and Mulpido attacked the Dagomba village of Zagbeli.[85] In all, the Konkomba killed ten men, one woman and a boy of about twelve years, including ten wounded.[86] The attack, known as the 'Jagbel Rebellion', became a significant turning point in British policy towards the Konkomba. It became an

[80] Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba du Nord Togo,* 5.
[81] Indeed, in the precolonial period, it was relatively easy to migrate beyond established political authority by moving a few kilometers because the geographical and administrative reach of centralised political powers were extremely limited. See Herbst, 'Migration, the Politics of Protest', 186.
[82] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana*, 157.
[83] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed,* 219.
[84] Interview with Tigur Bombo, Nalogni, Saboba, 16 April 2017. The expression 'dying on their feet or living on their knees' shows how the Konkomba invoked the language of civil rights and anti-colonial struggles to explain their past.
[85] Zagbel is the Dagomba version of the Konkomba Jagbel. Both versions shall be used in the text when appropriate.
[86] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1801, Konkomba Administration, Report of the Chief Commissioner, Northern Territories, 17 September 1940, 6.

important factor for Konkomba migratory history, not least because, following that incident, the colonial administration took a series of actions that led to a haemorrhage of Konkomba population into areas south of their homeland. More significantly, it signified the point of Konkomba emancipation from Dagomba maltreatmen.

The incident that led to this rebellion began on 6 September 1940 when two members of the veterinary staff, Abdulai Bamvin and Yisufu of the Yendi District, accompanied by two representatives of the Zegbeli chief visited some Konkomba villages to immunize their cattle against pleura-pneumonia. The team then discovered that some cattle were not immunized during the previous anti-rinderpest immunization that took place earlier in January that year.[87] Since failure to bring cattle to immunization camps constituted an offense under colonial law, the chief took advantage of the discovery of unimmunized cattle to extort cattle from the cattle owners. After the veterinary staff had finished their work and left, the messengers then attempted to force the cattle owner to the chief to answer why they had not sent those cattle for immunization. The attempt to send the cattle owners to the chief's court led to a brawl between the chief's messengers and the cattle owners.[88] The cattle owners then attacked the messengers who managed to escape. Talton, however, suggests that the messengers imposed a fine on the Konkomba cattle owners and a payment of a cow was offered which they rejected and demanded a bull instead. It was this demand for a bull that angered the Konkomba who attacked the messengers and subsequently the chief and his village.[89]

The statement of the veterinary staff recorded by Binka indicates that the chiefs' perpetual extortion of the Konkomba cattle owners pushed them to attack him. In spite of the fact that the statement of the veterinary assistant revealed the complicity of the chief in the incident, the official report completely exonerated the chief. The report concluded that, the chief's only offense was to 'seek to assist government officers in the performance of their work.'[90] In his letter to London in November 1940, the governor blamed the activities of the veterinary staff for the rebellion.[91] By making the veterinary activities responsible for the trouble, the

[87] Ibid., 2
[88] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1801, A letter from Ag. Chief Commissioner, Northern Territory to Colonial Secretary, Accra, 5 September 1941. When such unimmunized cattle were found by the veterinary assistance the matter was reported to veterinary officers or the District Commissioner and such matters were dealt with in the magistrate courts under cap. 202 of the ordinances.
[89] Talton, *Politics of Social change in Ghana*, 91. During my fieldwork, my informants corroborated this assertion put forward by Talton.
[90] Ibid, Report of the District Commissioner Yendi, 11 September 1940, 6.
[91] Ibid, A Letter from Government House, Accra 22 November 1940.

administration sought to conceal the problematic relations between the Dagomba chiefs and their Konkomba subjects. It was this attempt to sustain an obviously problematic policy in the Konkomba areas that W. A. Jones, the Chief Commissioner, sought to emphasise the barbarity of the Konkomba and demanded that the administration punished them severely:

> My description of the scene at Segberi (sic) does not, I fear convey a true idea of the hideousness of the crime; its frightfulness and barbarity could not be exceeded. Defenseless people, innocent of any wrong to the Konkomba, were pursued and shot while trying to escape. It is said that a young child of a murdered mother was flung against the wall of a compound. The Konkomba truly reverted to a state of savagery. For twenty-five years they have been a festering sore on an otherwise healthy administrative body.[92]

In his view, the administration was exceedingly lenient to the Konkomba who considered leniency not only as a sign of fear but also as evidence of 'our growing weakness and inability to effectively enforce law and order in their area.'[93] He was of the opinion that the abolition of communal labour and the reluctance to punish the Konkomba for communal crime created such an impression among them. According to him, close supervision and severe punishment was the only means by which the administration could establish law and order in the Konkomba area.[94] He warned that 'we must cease to treat the Konkomba as naughty, but amusing, children' and teach them 'the lesson they need to learn.'[95] The notion of taming the Konkomba through drastic measures stemmed from the civilising mission ideology of the colonisers.[96]

In the subsequent months, the colonial police subjected the Konkomba to severe punitive measures. By September, the administration arrested about 343 Konkomba and detained them in Yendi, consisting of 170 men and 173 women and children.[97] By October 1940, forty-seven of the arrested persons were convicted and the number of persons serving various terms of sentences in Tamale prison rose to seventy-three by the close of the year.[98] While many Konkomba languished in jail in Yendi and Tamale, a greater majority migrated southward. For two years, escort police harassed the Konkomba, burnt their homes and foodstuffs, forcing many of them to flee their homes. If the measures taken after the Jagbel incident intended to teach the Konkomba 'a lesson they need to learn', what they actually did was to cause the

[92] Ibid, Report of Chief Commissioner of Northern Territories, Tamale, 17 September 1940, 9.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid, 5.
[95] Ibid, Report of the Chief Commissioner, Northern Territories, 17 September 1940, 9.
[96] See H. Fischer-Tine and M. Mann (eds.), *Colonialism as Civilizing Mission: Cultural Ideology in British India* (London: Wimbledon Publishers, 2004), 5.
[97] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/88, Konkomba Disturbances, Yendi District, Report of Assistant Superintendent of Police, 22 September 1940.
[98] Ibid, Yendi District, Konkomba Patrol, Superintendent, Gold Coat Police, 27 December 1940.

displacement of Konkomba from their homeland. Colonial reports showed that the next day after the incident, many fleeing Konkomba were already 'making their way in the direction of Krachi.'[99] Most of those involved in the incident escaped across the Oti into the French territory, from where they crossed back to Krachi and East Gonja.[100] Peter Skalnik commenting on the Konkomba population in Nanun observed that there was a massive drift of Konkomba population into Nanun in the 1940s when the Konkomba killed the 'Zegbeli chief' and fled to escape British punishment.[101]

Konkomba oral narratives emphasize the burning of their villages and foodstuffs by the colonial officials after the Jagbel incident as the main reason for their migration south to Krachi, East Gonja and Nanumba. Kuyoon Bikanyi, a first generation migrant and Linguist of Nana Nandi of Banda, who was an adult during the Jagbel incident, observed that because they belonged to the Nakpatiib clan, the administration believed that some of the wanted persons were hiding in their village. For this reason, the colonial officials continued to harass their village for more than two years. This caused his uncle Biyaam to migrate to Chinderi.[102] This harassment, in addition to the long-term policies adopted by the administration to pacify the Konkomba country, forced many Konkomba families to migrate out of their homeland. These measures included the establishment of a substation at Saboba, stationing fifty-escort police and a resident assistant superintendent of police in Saboba, building a bridge over the Tube River, and strengthening the powers of Ya Na over Konkomba headmen.[103] The administration believed that the opening of the substation at Saboba and the presence of a strong police force and a European officer in Saboba would persuade the Konkomba to see the falsity of the rumour that the British would soon abandon their country.[104] The fact that these policies focused on bringing the Konkomba under effective colonial and Dagomba control caused many Konkomba to resort to exit migration – all the more so since the policies were punitive in nature.[105] This wave of Konkomba migration represented a classic case of moving from centres

[99] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1801, Report of the Chief Commissioner, N.T., Tamale, 17 September, 1940, 8.
[100] Talton, *Politics of Social Change*, 93. Among the arrested and molested Konkomba for instance were Gmapoa, Jijir and Jalija all of Jagbetiib of Binafeeb clan. Interview with Joshua Yakpir, Saboba, 9 January, 2014.
[101] P. Skalnik, 'The State and Local Ethno Political Identities: The Case of Community Conflicts in Northern Ghana', *Linventaire, Guerres D'Afrigue, Nouveaux Mondes,* 10 (2002), 142.
[102] Interview with Kuyoon Bikanyi, Linguist of Nana Nandi of Banda, Chinderi, 9 January 2017.
[103] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1801, A Report of the Chief Commissioner N.T., Tamale, 17 September 1940, 10.
[104] Ibid.
[105] For example, as part of their punishment, the people of Saboba were called upon to build and roof the new police station to be established in the town. Other groups of the Konkomba would provide the labour required for building the bridge across the Kpalba River. By 7 October 1941, about 2, 300 bowls and 23, 000 poisoned arrows had been seized and publicly burnt and the arrowheads dumped in the Oti River. The destruction of the bows and arrows was a far less adequate method of disarming the Konkomba because they would be rearmed by the next

of control, which they had employed in the precolonial period to evade Dagomba encroachment on their affairs.

British Colonial Policy Shift towards the Konkomba, 1941-1945

Until 1941, colonial officials did not entertain any alternative to Dagomba rule of the Konkomba. Throughout the 1930s, the administration made all efforts to force the Konkomba to submit to Dagomba chiefs.[106] In 1941, however, the position of the colonial administration changed. The Veterinary Director of the Northern Territories, J. L. Stewart, was at the centre of this change. In January 1941, Stewart received instructions, through a letter, from the colonial office in London on how to conduct veterinary services among the local people to avoid future conflicts. By this letter, Stewart became aware that the colonial administration attributed the cause of the rebellion to the activities of his staff.[107] Steward was extremely enraged by the administration's lack of sincerity in reporting the incident. So, in a letter to the Governor, Stewart expressed his disappointment at the adminitration's decision to attribute the cause of the incident to the activities of his department and stated emphatically that 'neither anti-rinderpest immunization or (*sic*) any other activity of this department had anything whatsoever to do with the trouble… the trouble was due to years of difference between the Dagomba overlords and the Konkomba subjects' [108]

After establishing his credentials as someone with a 'keen interest in the native peoples' and one who had 'worked as a veterinary officer in Konkomba and know[s] them and their villages', he went to great length to reveal the problematic British policy in Eastern Dagomba. He pointed out that the Jagbel incident was not an isolated incident caused by 'the innate savagery of the Konkomba', but rather, it was 'a coherent whole of a smouldering resentment against the Dagomba, which blazes into sudden flames after long provocation and extortions.'[109] He questioned why the numerous Konkomba emigrants from the area who settled in Nanumba, Gonja and Krachi appeared to have suddenly lost 'their vicious savagery and it is exhibited only in Dagomba.'[110] Contrary to views expressed by the administration that

dry season. But the administration saw the disarmament as a form of communal punishment, one which will impress the Konkomba than any other. PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1801, A Letter from Chief Commisisoner's Office, Tamale, 2 November, 1940.

[106] Talton, *Politics of Social Change*, 86.

[107] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1801, A Letter from the Colonial Secretary to the Governor, Downing Street, 17 January 1941.

[108] Ibid, A Letter from Director of Veterinary Services, Pong-Tamale, 28 February 1941.

[109] Ibid, 18 March 1941.

[110] Ibid.

the Konkomba resented immunization of their cattle, Stewart maintained that the Konkomba were never opposed to veterinary treatment of their cattle. He wrote:

> My experience and that of my staff is that the only people who are not well received are the Dagomba overlords and their servants. The Dagomba regard the Konkomba as serfs and beasts of burden to catch all the Dagomba cattle at the immunization camps and if possible, to be exploited. The Konkomba is a finer physical specimen, a harder worker and a better type than the Dagomba.[111]

He expressed the view that the administration should not allow the horror and anger at the spectacle at Jagbel to conceal the fundamental cause of the incident. He insisted that the Dagomba chiefs' excessive extortion of the Konkomba caused the rebellion. Stewart observed that even in that year, the chief of Gushiegu had extorted two cattle from a Konkomba elder. The chief claimed that it was a fine for not having his cattle immunized the previous year but 'the incident was investigated and the chief was ordered to return the cattle'.[112] This, Stewart contends, happened repeatedly but 'The Konkomba think it no good complaining to the white officials as the names of these are used in vain by those who exploit them so when driven to desperation takes direct action'.[113] He suggested that without addressing the fundamental problem, increased repressive measures were only going to yield greater trouble.[114] While increased repression did not directly yield more trouble, it nevertheless yielded greater Konkomba mobility. The Konkomba resorted to exit migration to evade the repression.

Despite stating that his opinion was 'given in no spirit of criticism of the administration', Stewart insisted that his letter be forwarded to the colonial office in London. From the administration's point of view, a sensitive administrative issue of this nature was outside the remits of the Director of the Veterinary Services. The administrative officers, therefore, viewed Stewart's opinion as an attack on their work and strongly admonished him to confine himself to matters that were within the scope of his department and appreciate that 'administrative policy is not his concern.'[115] Whereas the Chief Commissioner may have lacked the precise nature of the chief's complicity in the Jagbel incident, he was not unaware of the growing Dagomba exploitation and extortion of the Konkomba. It is, therefore, not surprising that he was angered by Stewart's attempt to bring the matter to the attention of the Colonial Office in London. If he had been successful in doing so, the administration of the Gold Coast, particularly the Chief Commissioner, would have been extremely embarrassed. Although with

[111] Ibid, A Report of Director of Veterinary Services, Pong-Tamale, 18 March 1941.
[112] Ibid, A Letter from Director of Veterinary Services, Pong-Tamale, 7 May 1941.
[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid, A Report of Director of Veterinary Services, Pong-Tamale, 18 March 1941.
[115] Ibid.

the support of the Chief Commissioner, the governor forced Stewart to drop his request to bring the issue to the attention of the Colonial Office in London, the latter's views made a lasting impression on the colonial administration and changed colonial policy towards the Konkomba.

From 1941, the colonial administration changed their policy from a Dagomba-centred approach to a more flexible policy and contemplated an alternative system of ruling the Konkomba through their own chiefs. The administration acknowledged that the strategy to rule the Konkomba through Dagomba chiefs had only succeeded in subjecting the Konkomba to Dagomba exploitation. In October 1941, the Chief Commissioner made it clear to a gathering of Dagomba chiefs that the administration was aware of the series of illegal oppressions and extortions against the Konkomba and warned that 'the Government would not tolerate further oppression of the Konkomba and would severely punish future offenders.'[116] Other colonial officials began to draw the administration's attention to the considerable oppression of the Konkomba at the hands of the Dagomba chiefs and called for some form of Konkomba Native Administration.[117] At the very least, the Konkomba were to obtain their own subordinate Native Court and Treasury as well as a resident Assistant District Commissioner.[118]

In 1941, the colonial administration voted a sum of £250 to provide suitable accommodation for the Assistant District Commissioner in Saboba. In the same year, they voted another £500 for the building of a bridge across the Tupe River.[119] With this money and the help of local labour, the administration built two large round houses in Saboba. In 1944, they completed the bridge and constructed an all-weather road from Wapuli to Saboba.[120] Apart from this, the administration did not make much progress towards the establishment of a Subordinate Native Authority in the Konkomba area during the War years. From the point of view of the colonial government, the problem was not their lack of commitment to colonial expansion during the war years, but the 'patriarchal stage' of Konkomba social development. The British dismissed all traditional forms of Konkomba organisation as lacking leadership and sought a form of government structure that resembled the Dagomba system. In the administration's view, the lack of central authority among the Konkomba made it difficult to administer their territory

[116] Ibid, Letter from the Chief Commissioner's Office, 23 October, 1941,
[117] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/21/3, Handing Over Notes of Mr. H. A. Blair District Commissioner to Mr. C. C. R. Amory, Assistant District Commissioner, 1935-1945, Handing over Notes, Dagomba, Part II Native Administration, Mr. A. P. Kerr DC to Mr. H. Devaux, D.C.
[118] Ibid.
[119] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1801, A Letter from Colonial Secretary Office, Accra, 17 November, 1941.
[120] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/97, The Opening of the Saboba Sub-Station, 18 February 1947, 1.

without involving Dagomba chiefs.[121] In order to organise the Konkomba into a hierarchical political structure, a Konkomba constitution was required. However, such a constitution was only possible after a political officer had made careful enquiry into Konkomba political and social organisation. Though the Assistant District Commisioner's residence was ready by 1941, no officer was available for posting because of the War. [122] During the war, the needs of colonies were subordinated to the needs and defence of the Empire as men were pressed into active service and colonial territories bore the burden of losses of manpower.[123] Due to the War, the administration suspended all the Konkomba policy projects.[124] Coincidentally, the end of the War inaugurated a major policy shift towards rapid economic and social welfare development of British colonies in Africa in what is termed, the Second Colonial Occupation.

The Opening of Saboba Sub-Station, 1945-1947

From 1941 to the end of the Second World War, the Konkomba were still largely outside the effective and consistent British colonial authority. Occasionally, they came into focus when they committed violent crimes, and law and order needed to be enforced but they were largely isolated and neglected. In official records they were represented incoherently in the records 'as an amusing but a naughty child, a simple, untutored and misunderstood farmer, a picturesque survival of a dying race, or a vicious "bad hat" whose delight is war and past time plunder.'[125] To the Konkomba, the colonial administration was 'one breathing out fire and revenge, closing markets, confiscating bows and arrows, and haling (sic) away innocent and guilty alike for trial and imprisonment in Yendi.'[126] They were neglected politically as much as socio-economically. By 1945, having paid tax for a decade, the Konkomba areas received 'not even a half-penny' for development works.[127] In 1946, the administration felt that this state of affairs must change. Two important factors influenced this change of attitude of the administration. The first was a general colonial policy shift towards improving the conditions of colonies after the Second World War. This thinking began with the passage of Colonial Development and

[121] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1801, A Letter from the Chief Commissioner, Northern Territories, Tamale, 2 November, 1940.
[122] Ibid, A Letter Chief Commissioner, Northern Territories, Tamale, 9 February, 1941.
[123] D. Killingray and R. Rathbone, 'Introduction', R. Killingray and D. Rathbone (eds.), *Africa and the Second World War,* (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 1986), 9.
[124] In 1941, for example, the superintendent of police in Saboba was withdrawn for service in Ethiopia because the threat 'faced were of much greater Empire significance than anything the Konkomba were likely to bring about'. PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1801, Letter from the Commissioner, Gold Coast Police Accra, 23 May 1941.
[125] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/97, The Opening of the Saboba Sub-Station, 18 February, 1947, 1.
[126] Ibid.
[127] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/97, Memorandum on Konkomba Policy, 12.

Welfare Act of 1940, which unlike the earlier development Acts, the colonial government now had as part of its mission, the improvement of lives of the colonial peoples.[128] After the War, Britain implemented this Act in her colonies. The magnitude and intensity of post-war development activities expanded colonial bureaucratic power into rural area in the colonies to improve the lives of the colonised.[129] This more intrusive imperial policy in the colonies in the post-war years was what Donald Low and John Lonsdale termed 'the Second Colonial Occupation'. [130] This policy shift in London brought the Konkomba into closer focus of the colonial state.

The second factor was internal. The British administration in Tamale had been sincerely influenced and deeply embarrassed by their misrepresentation of the Jagbel incident, and felt that 'something must be done for the Konkomba.'[131] Measures were then taken to incorporate the Konkomba into the colonial project. Opening a sub-station in Saboba was intended to achieve this end. The first step leading to the opening of the Saboba station began in 1944 with the construction of an all-weather road from Wapuli to Saboba.[132] The all-weather road from Yendi to Saboba made the latter the central town of the Konkomba, accessible all year round, and paved the way for the stationing of the Assistant District Commissioner in the area. The second event was the visit in person of Governor Alan Burns to Saboba in May 1946.[133] It was after this visit that the programme for Konkomba development took shape.

The final and most significant event for the Konkomba project was the appointment of Mr. James C. Anderson in August 1946 as the Assistant District Commissioner of Saboba. In January 1947, Anderson arrived from leave and took up residence at Saboba as the first Assistant District Commissioner of Konkomba division.[134] He was charged with accomplishing four critical tasks, the most important of which was to conduct a study into Konkomba social and political organisation and enable them to be organised into political units

[128] B. U. Kelina, *The Second Colonial Occupation: Development Planning, Agriculture, and The Legacies of British Rule in Nigerian* (New York: Lexington Books, 2017), 28.
[129] J. M. Hodge, 'Colonial Experts, Developmental and Environmental Doctrines, and the Legacies of Late British Colonialism' in C. F. Ax, N. Brimnes, N. T. Jensen, and K. Oslund (eds.), *Cultivating the Colonies: Colonial States and their Environmental Legacies*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011), 300-1.
[130] See D. A. Low and J.M. Lonsdale, 'Introduction: Towards the New Order, 1945-63', in Low and Lonsdale (eds.) *History of East Africa*, Vol. 3, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976). See also N. White, *Decolonisation: The British Experience since 1945*, Second Edition (New York: Routledge, 2014).
[131] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/97, The Opening of the Saboba Sub-Station, 18 February 1947, 1.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid, 2

higher than 'family or totem' units.[135] In the meantime, Anderson was to ensure Konkomba participation in the colonial administration until a Konkomba sub-native authority could be organised.[136] On 18 February 1947, the administration convened a meeting in Saboba to inaugurate the Konkomba sub-district with its headquarters at Saboba. Among the important dignitaries at the occasion was Colin Imray, the Superintendent of Police of the Gold Coast.[137] The presence of Imray at this occasion is significant. Barely a year after this event, Imray was involved in the Christiansborg crossroad shooting leading to the 1948 Riots, which became the turning point in the nationalist struggle in the Gold Coast.

In his minutes of the inauguration event, A. W. Davies, the District Commissioner of Yendi, described the Konkomba reception of the colonial officials in glowing terms and praised their discipline and energy. The speech of the Acting Chief Commissioner, Guthrie Hall, centred on the changed attitude of the government towards Konkomba after several years of troubled relations. But more than anything else, the speech reflected the ideological shift in London towards the rhetoric of development and welfare of the colonial subjects. The Chief Commissioner acknowledged that there had been little development in the Konkomba area but sought to explain away the administration's complicity. The reason for the lack of development among the Konkomba, according to Hall, 'was lack of adequate knowledge of their custom and social organisation, and above all language barrier which made communication between them difficult.'[138] He expressed hope that more development would be brought to the Konkomba area since an interpreter had been found. In the usual civilising mission ideology of colonial officials, Hall believed that the Konkomba were already receiving some benefits of colonial rule, pointing to the Yaws campaign, leprosy treatments and the corn distribution the previous year, after the Konkomba crops failed. [139]

The colonial administration was not going to do everything for the Konkomba. They had to contribute by collecting taxes among themselves and unite under proper headmen. Hall reminded the gathering that seven years before, there had been serious trouble in the District in which many people were killed, leading to stationing of police in Saboba.[140] However, 'now the time had come for the Konkombas to rule themselves, to settle their disputes amongst

[135] Ibid.
[136] Talton, *Politics of Social Change*, 103.
[137] PRAAD/A. ADM11/1801, The Opening of the Saboba Sub-Station, 18 February 1947, 2.
[138] Ibid. 3
[139] Ibid.
[140] This refers to the Jagbel incident in which many people died.

themselves without violence and to realise that Government was there as a friend and helper as well as a stern maintainer of law and order.'[141] He admonished the Konkomba to obey the headman whom the administration would appoint for them and take their troubles and complaints to the District Commissioner or Dagomba chiefs for settlement if those headmen failed to settle them.[142] Hall still felt that Dagomba chiefs would play a role in Konkomba administration. To illustrate this belief, Hall, later suggested that a representative of Sunson Chief should reside in Saboba but the Konkomba elders rejected the suggestion.[143] That the Konkomba voiced their objection against a colonial policy, which the administration accepted, was a clear demonstration of a changed colonial attitude towards the Konkomba. This was the time the colonial officials were beginning to conceive the Konkomba country as a political space and establish them as one of the legitimate ethnic groups of northern Ghana. But this failed because of the large scale Konkomba emigration from their land. The next section discusses the failure of Konkomba administration.

Emigration and the Failure of Konkomba Administration, 1947-1951

By July 1947, Anderson had completed the research on Konkomba social organisation on which their administration was to be based. Once he had completed the research, 'the period of probation' on Konkomba administration should have ended.[144] However, just as everything was ready for the implementation of the Konkomba self-rule, W. H. Ingrams resumed duty from leave as the Chief Commissioner and completely ignored the work of Hall who acted as the Chief Commissioner in his absence. Ingrams' view was that the Konkomba should be encouraged to emigrate instead of establishing a Konkomba administration. He pointed to the great exodus of the Konkomba out of their homeland and insisted that, 'quite the best policy with the Konkomba is to drop the present antiquarian research and attempts to build yet another Alice in wonderland constitution, and encourage the natural movement of the Konkomba to other areas'.[145] For Ingrams, it was in the best interest of the Konkomba that they were migrating because of paucity and exhaustion of soil fertility in their homeland. In his diagnoses of why the Konkomba were moving, Ingrams failed to acknowledge the part the colonial policy had played. He, however, was greatly fascinated by the Konkomba ability to settle peacefully and profitably among other groups, and hoped that in their new area, the Konkomba would

[141] PRAAD/A. ADM11/1801, The Opening of the Saboba Sub-Station, 2.
[142] Ibid.
[143] Talton, *Politics of Social Change in Ghana*, 104-5.
[144] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/97, District Commissioner, Dagomba, 9 July 1947.
[145] Ibid, Extracts from letter addressed to the Honourable Colonial Secretary, Accra, 19 June 1947.

adopt the language of their neighbours and 'thus reduce one of the babel of tongues in the Northern Territories.'[146]

Not all the colonial officials subscribed to this view of forcing the Konkomba to move completely out of their homeland. Whereas Ingram saw mobility as a means to disintegrate the Konkomba ethnic identity, Anderson, the Assistant District Commissioner of Saboba, believed that the Konkomba native administration should be organised in spite of the large-scale emigration. Konkomba emigration had indeed increased rapidly by the 1940s. Between 1926 and 1946, the Konkomba population in their homeland reduced from some 40, 000 to 12, 000 largely due to emigration to Krachi and Salaga.[147] In his memorandum on Konkomba, Anderson also estimated that the Konkomba population in the Oti valley had reduced substantially by emigration during the last fifteen years to a little over 15, 000.[148] Martijn Wienia has suggested that between the 1930s and 1940s, up to three-quarters of the British Konkomba might have left Kikpakpaan.[149] It is quite clear from the census figures that there was a massive movement of the Konkomba out of their homeland between 1931 and 1948. Out of the 53, 297 Konkomba population in 1948, only about 18 per cent (9, 605) was recorded in *Kikpakpaan*, the rest of the over 80 per cent had left their homeland to other parts of northern Ghana.[150] Tait observed that by the late 1940s, the Konkomba villages in the Oti valley drastically shrunk in size, and the number of compounds in Saboba reduced from about 500 to less than a hundred within a period of fifteen years. In Sambol, Kijobon, Lagea and Nakpando, the population also reduced by more than half.[151] Census figures in Table 4 below captures the reduction in the population of the Konkomba villages in *Kikpakpaan*.

[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid, Extracts from letter, 19 June 1947.
[148] Ibid, Memorandum on Konkomba Policy, 1.
[149] Wienia, *Ominous Calm*, 47.
[150] PRAAD/A. ADM 5/2/9, Census of Population 1948, 35.
[151] Tait, *Konkomba of Northern Ghana*, 30.

Table 4. The Population of some villages in Kikpakpaan

Villages	1931	1948	1960
Saboba	629	828	778
Sangul	357	360	362
Nakpando	450	31	9 houses
Wapul	247	243	286
Kucha	789	217	44
Sambol	936	964	851
Chagbaan	230	161	116
Kutul	171	117	104
Kpalb	233	428	172
Kugnani	915	574	_
Kujoon	234	243	104
Sobib	432	238	240

Source: Extracts from 1931, 1948 and 1960 Census Reports

Colonial officials most sympathetic to Konkomba self-rule such as Anderson agreed that the viability of Konkomba administration was extremely doubtful unless this exodus was stopped. Having recognized the problem, Anderson believed that the suggestion to encourage the Konkomba to emigrate in large numbers was 'of a rather negative character.'[152] For him, the factor to be considered in the establishment of the Konkomba administration should be their remarkable solidarity despite their mobility. He observed that considerable interactions existed between the emigrant population and their home villages, and there was likely to be some amount of 're-immigration from Krachi to the Sub-district' in the near future.[153] He further argued that rather than encourage the Konkomba to emigrate, efforts should be made to check further emigration of the Konkomba.[154] Anderson was, however, unable to arrest the Konkomba exodus. Indeed, in the 1940s, the threat of Dagomba exploitation had been replaced by a new kind of threat – drought, locust invasions and food shortages. Konkomba mobility was now driven by ecological and economic factors more than politics. During the 1940s, the drought and the deterioration of the soil fertility in the Oti valley was more pronounced. For instance, in 1941, a colonial report attributed the poor harvest in Konkomba area to the early

[152] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/97, Memorandum on Konkomba Policy, 2.
[153] Ibid.
[154] Ibid.

ending of the rains that year.[155] It observed that the prices obtained by those who were able to spare some crops for sale was so high. In 1942, Lloyd Shirer, a missionary of the Assemblies of God mission who had worked in Yendi since the 1930s, observed that due to 'frequent droughts, attacks of locust, too much rain and rain at the wrong times, [and] general poverty of the soil', recurring crop failure had become a normal state of affairs in Konkomba land.[156]

Although poor soil fertility and drought had caused crop failures, the prevailing war economy contributed to making food shortages a crisis. Although, the aim of the colonial system had always been the integration of colonial societies into the market economy, this had not been wholly successful in northern Ghana until the Second World War. The War brought the Northern Territories into the market economy in foodstuffs trade that existed in Ashanti and the Colony. Increased demand for food supplies for the troops and government departments stimulated money economy and kept food prices abnormally high.[157] This high demand induced many people into selling their food reserves and during the period of scarcity, they were unable to buy enough due to high prices.[158] Moreover, from 1941 the Vichy government in French Togoland on the opposing side of the fighting had stopped all kinds of produce from entering the British zone. The ruthless manner in which the French police and custom guards enforced the restriction aggravated the situation.[159] In 1942, a British report complained that the policy of the Vichy government had completely prevented normal intercourse and trade between the two mandated areas.[160] Although smuggling took place during the night, the French were quite successful in disrupting the social interdependence that existed among the Konkomba on both sides. With this situation, the normal food scarcity among the Konkomba in June and July every year became a crisis since they could not rely on their relatives in French Togoland.

Ecological problems continued in the post-war years. In 1945, a colonial report noted that 'unsuitable rains' had been largely responsible for unsatisfactory harvest in that year, maize and ground nut being average and corn and millet crop being a total failure in parts of the

[155] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/119, Annual Report on Togoland under British Mandate, Report of Northern Section of Togoland under British Mandate, 1941.
[156] L. Shirer, 'How We Flew Home from Africa', *Pentecostal Evangel*, no. 1491, 5 December 1942, 5. For the enigmatic missionary career of Lloyd Shirer, see K. Skinner, 'From Pentecostalism to Politics: Mass Literacy and Community Development in Late Colonial Northern Ghana', *Paedagogica Historica*, 46, 3 (2010), 307–323.
[157] PRAAAD/T. NRG 8/3/119, Report of Northern Section of Togoland under British Mandate1, 940.
[158] Weiss, 'Crop Failures, Food Shortages and Colonial Famine Relief Policies in the Northern Territories', 37.
[159] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/119, Report of Northern Section of Togoland under British Mandate, 1941.
[160] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1532, Report on Togoland (Northern Section) Under British mandate, 1942.

Konkomba country.[161] Colonial officials complained that attempts to extend prohibition of bush burning in Konkomba areas met with very little success due to lack of staff and indifference of the chiefs.[162] Colonial conservation methods were hardly successful in any part of Africa.[163] In the Northern Territories, local people were not prepared to adopt any farming method their fathers did not practice.[164] In the next two years, Anderson, continued to lament poor rains. In 1947, he reported:

> The rain at Saboba this year has so far compared very unfavourably with that at Yendi, only 20 miles to the south, and it certainly appears at times as if the treeless Konkomba valleys really did deflect approaching storms. Although the season taken as a whole is probably not below average, with the backwardness of the new millet the pinch of hunger is once more being felt and many more people in the less fertile areas are talking of emigration. The wonderful cheerfulness of the people in these circumstances is perhaps the most saddening aspect of it all.[165]

In areas where the entire livelihood of the people depended on rains, this condition coupled with high food prices was likely to lead to famine. Due to the frequent famines, the administration, in September 1947, organised public famine relief. In this respect, the administration dispatched 159 bags of maize to Saboba area and sold them at controlled prices.[166] At this time also, the French government had imposed taxes on the British Konkomba whose farms lay on the French side of the Oti River.[167] Faced with the prospects of being subjected to double taxation, many people chose to migrate southward where farmlands were plentiful in the British territory. With the knowledge of their relatives who were doing well in Krachi and East Gonja, many Konkomba continued to move out of the Oti valley.

In February 1948, the Chief Commissioner cancelled the Konkomba administration project because 'the Konkomba people were rather migrating.'[168] Anderson was withdrawn from Saboba and his residence leased to the Assemblies of God Mission that was starting a mission

[161] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/151, Report on Dagomba for the Quarter ending 31 December 1945.
[162] Ibid.
[163] For attempts at conservation elsewhere in Africa, see I. Phimister, 'Peasant Production and Underdevelopment in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1914, with Particular Reference to the Victoria District' in R. Palmer and N. Parsons (eds.), *The Roots of Rural Poverty in Central and Southern Africa* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), 225-268. E. C. Mandala, *Work and Control in a Peasant Economy: A History of the Lower Tchiri Valley in Malawi, 1959-1960* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 207-17.
[164] The District Commisioner of Bawku reported that he had not been successful in trying to persuade the people to spread manure on their farms, and their excuse was, 'our fathers did not do it'. PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/493 Annual Report on North Mamprusi District, 1922-1923, 7.
[165] PRAAD/A. NRG 8/3/151, Report on Dagomba for the Quarter Report, April-June, 1947.
[166] PRAAD/A. NRG 8/3711, A Letter from the Chief Commissioner, 5 February 1948.
[167] Interview with Tugur Bombo, Nagloni, Saboba, 16 April 2017.
[168] Endangered Archives Program (hereafter EAP), 256/1/123, Saboba Assistant District Commissioner Bangalore-Leave off by Assemblies of God Mission, A Letter a letter from Harold S. Lehman, the Director of the Assemblies of God Missions, 10 December, 1947, https://eap.bl.uk/.

station at Saboba.[169] Thus, Konkomba emigration has led to the failure of the colonial attempts to reorganise the Konkomba area into a Sub-Native Authority, a policy that would have given land and chieftaincy rights to the Konkomba.

Conclusion

The analysis in this chapter has thrown more light on Konkomba southward migration. In their homeland, the Konkomba were faced with drought, erratic rainfall, crop failure, locust invasions, and land scarcity, but these factors, it is argued, may not have induced the Konkomba to emigrate, at least in the 1930s, had they not come under severe exploitation and oppression by the colonial state-supported Dagomba chiefs. Having excluded the Konkomba from the native administration system, the colonial state disenfranchised them and with the power of summons, taxation, and general administration, Dagomba chiefs came to enjoy unlimited power over the Konkomba. The chiefs took advantage of this power to severely oppress and extort the Konkomba. Turning to their enduring strategy of mobility, the Konkomba migrated south to escape Dagomba control.

The chapter also showed that far from implanting a rigid policy, the British policy changed with time. From 1941, the British changed their policy from a Dagomba-centred administration to Konkomba self-rule. The conflict within the colonial administration indicated in the previous chapter continued to manifest in the 1940s as exemplified in the conflict between the veterinary office and the political officers. By the middle of the 1940s, plans were underway to establish a Sub-Native Authority for the Konkomba, which would have defined the Konkomba area as a political space with its own 'native' institutions. The chapter argued that this change in British policy towards the Konkomba was the result of both the local events and changes in the Metropole. That this was not successful was because of the large-scale Konkomba migration away from their homeland. By the time a new pro-Konkomba policy was formulated, the Konkomba homeland had lost so much of its population and many colonial officials felt that a Konkomba administration was no longer viable. With the failure to organise the Konkomba area into a sub-native administration, the Konkomba would remain a disenfranchised group consigned to the margins of society into the postcolonial years. Mobility, the chapter argued, therefore, served to foster Konkomba identity as a migrant group in northern Ghana.

[169] Ibid.

Chapter Five

'Making Homes in Nawol': Immigrants, Colonial State and Local Politics, 1931 – 1960s

Introduction

Konkomba migration into Nanumba-Gonja-Krachi area (Nawol)[1] constituted one of the considerably large-scale local migratory movements in northern Ghana during the colonial period.[2] Migration into this area began in the 1920s and grew exponentially in the 1930s and 1940s. From a population of less than 200 in 1931, the Konkomba increased to over 8,500 in 1948 in East Gonja and Krachi districts.[3] The colonial state provided security and protection to immigrants and created an environment conducive for migration across ethnic territories. However, while the colonial state provided incentives and opportunities for migration into different ethnic areas, it paradoxically truncated the relative ease with which immigrants were assimilated into the host communities.[4] Because colonial rule reified the otherwise fluid and flexible ethnic boundaries, ethnic strangers were no longer easily absorbed into the host societies.[5] This explains why Konkomba immigrants in Nawol remained strangers even after several generations in the area.

Although in their homeland the Konkomba did not exercise political control over their territory, they were not regarded as immigrants, but when they migrated into Nawol, they became ethnic strangers in their new home. As ethnic strangers, the Konkomba had no land and chieftaincy rights with the result that they remained on the margins of their host communities. However, this did not prevent them from taking advantage of the emerging food crop market to become successful food crop farmers. This delighted the colonial officials since it dovetailed into their economic policy of developing the Northern Territories into a food basket of the Gold Coast to

[1] In the Konkomba migratory narratives, the key phrase was, *ncha Nawol la,* meaning 'I am going to Nawol'. Cletus Nbowura has suggested that the Konkomba used the term Nawol to refer to Nawuriland. C. Mbowura, 'Nawuri-Gonja Conflict, 1932-1996', (PhD Thesis, University of Ghana, Legon, 2012), 1. In Konkomba understanding, the Gold Coast was designated into three zones: *Kikpakpaan* (Konkomba land in the Oti valley), *Nawol* (all territories outside Kikpakpaan stretching from the territories between Bimbilla, Salaga and Krachi) and *Kibanbangni* (the area beyond Krachi into Ashanti and the Colony). The Konkomba therefore used the term Nawol to describe the territory outside Konkombaland which is beyond Dagomba chiefs' authority but not under the control of Asante.

[2] PRAAD/A. ADM 5/4/121, Gold Coast Land Tenure, Volume I – A Survey of Land Tenure in Customary Law of the Protectorate of the Northern Territories by R. J. H. Pogucki, 1955, 12.

[3] PRAAD/A. ADM 5/2/9, The Gold Coast Census of Population – 1948 Report and Tables, Report of the Census of Population, Gold Coast, 1948, 369.

[4] See for example M. Schlottner, 'We Stay, Others Come and Go', 49-67. Lentz, 'First-Comer and Late-comers', 37 and Allman, 'Be(com)ing Asante, Be(com)ing Akan', 100.

[5] Lentz, 'First-Comer and Late-comers', 37.

feed the cocoa producing parts. In this way, mobility became one way by which the Konkomba integrated into the local colonial economy as well as the global capitalist production. By analysing the relations between the Konkomba immigrants and their host communities within a changing economic and political milieu of the late colonial period, the chapter reveals the various ways by which the host societies sought to construct boundaries and define access to power, which served to keep the Konkomba immigrants on the margins of their societies. The chapter further explores the considerable power struggle that ensued among the host societies in East Gonja and Krachi and shows how the Konkomba settlers exploited these tensions to obtain some level of autonomy. The situation was different in Nanumba district as the Konkomba settlers remained on the margins of the Nanumba traditional political and modern state institutions. The chapter begins by exploring the dramatic influx of Konkomba immigrants into an area, which had become increasingly contested.

Konkomba immigrants in a Contested Ethnic Space

Even though the idea of migration was an accepted feature of Konkomba social life, cutting themselves off from traditional support networks was a source of anxiety and concern for both the migrants and those left behind. As David Tait observes, there was serious consideration and consultation of the spirits before the Konkomba made any migratory movement.[6] Nevertheless, Konkomba migration to Nawol was quite rapid. During the 1931 census, the Konkomba population in Nawol was very small. Only seventy-nine Konkomba were in East Gonja, and these consisted of thirty-six females and forty-three males. A little over 30% of this population was below fifteen years and 5% was over fifty years.[7] This demography suggests that the Konkomba who had moved into this area came with their entire families to settle. In the Krachi district, the census records show similar demography of the Konkomba population.[8] Migration of the Konkomba into Nawol appeared to have begun in the early 1920s. In 1920, Pole recorded that many Konkomba had begun to take the Yendi-Krachi motor road to Bimbilla, Krachi and beyond.[9] During this period, the Konkomba migrated to Krachi mainly in search of farm work to earn money to meet their tax and social obligations.[10] J. Dixon reports that the first Konkomba settlers in Eastern Gonja arrived in 1922.[11] By the middle of the 1930s,

[6] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana*, 124.
[7] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/45, Report on the Census 1931–British Sphere of Mandated Territory of Togoland, Southern Province, 1931.
[8] Ibid.
[9] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/259, Yendi Informal Diary, November 1920.
[10] Brukum, 'Chieftaincy and Ethnic Conflicts in Northern Ghana', 437.
[11] Dixon, Report of Mr. J. Dixon, 10.

quite a number had settled permanently in Krachi district, particularly the area along Salaga-Grubi road, stretching to Chinderi in the south.[12] With time, Konkomba migrants in Nawol gradually increased. It is difficult to establish the arrival of the first Konkomba migrant in Nawol. However, according to Kuyoon, a first Konkomba generation migrant and linguist to Nana Nandi, all Konkomba settlements in Krachi came after Unalanja Usii and his brother Mboan had settled at Buafri in Krach district.[13] The Gonja claim that the first Konkomba immigrant in Alfai (East Gonja) was one Nante Konkomba who settled at Dodope in about 1934.[14] The Gonja source indicates that the other early settlers were Achira Konkomba and Kwame Konkomba. The two men settled in Ahirpe and Dodope near Jimbupe in 1941.[15] Other sources also mentioned Mamoar, Kitendo Takoro, and Ujor as the early people to settle in various villages in Nawol.[16]

As the oral history suggests, if the influx of the Konkomba into Krachi district began with the settlement of Usii and his brother Mboan at Buafiri Konkomba, then it took place after 1931. In 1931, Buafiri Konkomba did not exist but by 1948, it had a population of 396 inhabitants.[17] From a small population of eighty-three in 1931 in Krachi district, the Konkomba had increased to 3,034 by 1948.[18] Coincidentally, the Konkomba movement into Nawol occured at a time when the area had become a contested space. This contestation began in 1932 when the British introduced the indirect rule system culminating in the establishments of Native Authorities. Colonial officials built Native Authorities around shared ethnicity so that, ideally, the chief and his subjects belonged to the same ethnic group.[19] However, in multi-ethnic areas, like East Gonja and Eastern Dagomba, the British simply elevated one ethnic group to the status of rulers and reduced the rest of the groups to subject groups based on the degree of centralisation of their traditional political systems. Since the Nchumuru and the Nawuri who occupied Nawol lacked centralised traditional political systems, the British placed them under the authority of the Krachi and Gonja chiefs. In the precolonial period, the Nchumuru and Nawuri had some

[12] PRAAD/A. ADM 5/4/121, A Survey of Land Tenure in Customary Law of the Protectorate of the Northern Territories, 12.
[13] Interview with Kuyoon Bikanyi, Chief Linguist of Nana Nandi, Chinderi, 9 January 2017.
[14] Memorandum Submitted by the Gonjas on the Peace Negotiation in the Northern Conflict, September 1994, 9.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Interview with Ujan Mawon, former KOYA local branch Chairman, Lungni, 16 February 2017. Interview with Kpanduln Kpajal, Elder of Konjado and a first generation migrant, Konjado, 9 January 2018. Interview with Kwaku Tabii, Konkomba Chief of Kojoboni, Kojoboni, 12 January 2018.
[17] PRAAD/A. ADM 5/2/9, Report on the Census of Population, Gold Coast, 1948, 325.
[18] Ibid, 33. PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/45, Report on the Census 1931, 9.
[19] Lentz, 'First-Comer and Late Comer', 48.

association with Krachi through the Denteh Shrine.[20] They deny having any such relationship with the Gonja.[21] However, with the new arrangement of the native authorities, some Nchumuru came under the Krachi and almost all the Nawuri and a section of Nchumuru (Nanjuro) came under the Gonja. It all began at the Yapei Conference of May 1930 during which the British colonial administration forced the Nawuri and Nanjuro under the Gonja Native Authority.[22] In 1933, the Kpembe Subordinate Native Authority was established and Nawuri (Alfai) and Nchumuru (Nanjuro) areas came under the Kpembewura (Gonja divisional chief of Kpembe). Alfai and Nanjuro were ruled directly by the Gonja sub-chiefs of Kpandai (Kanakulaiwura) and Sabongida (Singbungwura) respectively.[23] From the 1930s, therefore, the Nawuri and the Nchumuru were reduced to 'subject tribes' who had no rights to chieftaincy.[24] Their status was, thus, not different from the Konkomba immigrants in the area who were required to submit to Gonja political authority.[25] The imposition of customary law to be defined and dispensed by a 'tribal' authority, necessarily turned the simple fact of ethnic heterogeneity into a source of tension.

The Native Authority system also established a strong link between political authority and land ownership in the Northern Territories. Thus, the British colonial state making process in northern Ghana went beyond simply elevating some ethnic groups into 'subjects' and 'rulers', and entrusted the means of production in the hands of the ruling groups. In the British understanding, customary land tenure meant that the chiefs held the land in trust for all their subjects.[26] This meant that the non-chiefly groups like the Konkomba, Nawuri and Nchumuru lost their rights to land ownership. By the mid-1930s, all lands in Nawol came under the firm control of the Gonja, Nanumba and Krachi chiefs. In Alfai, the early Konkomba immigrants established their settlements with permission from the Nawuri and Nchmuru elders but the later migrants sought the permission of Gonja chiefs before they settled.[27] For example, Ninka Manin, an earlier immigrant, attested to a committee of inquiry that he obtained his land on his

[20] D. J. E. Maier, *Priest and Power: The Case of the Dente Shrine in Nineteenth-Century Ghana* (Indiana: University Press, 1983), 98.
[21] Interview with Binyigne Ntaminasu, Chief Linquist, Balai, 9 Janury 2018. Interview with Kojo Amonchofe, Odikro, Kajoboni, 9 January 2018.
[22] Brukum, 'The Northern Territories of the Gold Coast', 277.
[23] *Ibid*.
[24] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/210, Nawuri and Nanjuro under United Nations Trusteeship, Resolution Adopted by the People of the Nanjuro and Nawuri in the Kpandai Area, 8 November 1950.
[25] Dixon, Report of Mr. Dixon, Appendix VI, The Kanankulaiwura and His Elders to J. Dixon Esq., 25 March 1955.
[26] PRAAD/A. ADM56/1/105, Land Tenure Report of Northern Territories Land Committee, A Letter from Acting Commissioner, Southern Province, 6 May 1914.
[27] Interview with Bifigma Tiborwu, Longni, 3 January 2017.

arrival from Agyenaku, a Nawuri elder.[28] Kajarti Konkomba, a later immigrant, on the other hand, obtained the permission of Kunankulaiwura before he settled at Balai.[29] In the 1930s, the Gonja assumed the control and guardians of Alfai lands and thereafter, no migrant obtained residency in Alfai without Gonja permission.[30] The same principle applied to Nanjuro.[31] Krachiwura and the Bimbilla Na also obtained control over lands in the Krachi and Nanumba districts respectively.

It was during this period of power shift from the Nawuri and Nchumuru to the Gonja, Krachi and Nanumba chiefs that the Konkomba began to arrive in the area. Many Konkomba families arrived after 1931 and established their own villages.[32] Colonial reports in the 1930s suggest that the population of the Konkomba settlements in East Gonja and Krachi increased at a very fast rate. In August 1936, H. W. Amherst, the Acting District Commissioner of Salaga, reported that the nominal roll in the Konkomba village of Garin Dadi showed thirty percent more taxable males than estimated number. He attributed this increase to immigration.[33] In the 1940s, the Konkomba continued to arrive and the District Commissioner of Gonja entered in his diary: 'As elsewhere in this area Konkombas are coming down from Yendi to settle. Saboba and Kucha seem to be the two Yendi villages which they are leaving in greatest numbers.'[34] The emergence of market for food crops and improvement in transportation must have contributed to the increase in this movement. By 1948, the total Konkomba population in East Gonja had reached 5,551 outnumbering both the Nchumuru (2099) and Nawuri (1,195), the local groups of the area.[35] Moving into Krachi, the Konkomba were first attracted to Kitare and eventually moved to other areas of northern Krachi such as Buafri, Banda, Buya and Chinderi.[36] The flooding of the Volta River due to the construction of Akosombo dam in the 1960s caused a wave of Konkomba migration to occupy the empty stretch of land between Dambai and

[28] Evidence from Ninka Manin, Report of the Committee of Inquiry in the Gonjas, Nawuris and Najuros Dispute, 1991, 98. Mr. Theobald, a resident missionary in Kpandai area, observed that whereas his earlier acquisition of land for the mission was made from the Nawuri Tindana, his later acquisition for the leper settlement was made from the Gonja chief.
[29] Ibid.
[29] PRAAD/T. NRG. 8/2/210, Nawuri and Nanjuro under United Nations Trusteeship, Note on the Kpandai Area, n. d.
[30] Dixon, Report of Mr. J. Dixon, 24.
[31] Ibid. 25.
[32] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/4/3, Informal Diary of the District Commissioner, Gonja District, 15 July 1936.
[33] Ibid, August 1936.
[34] PRAAD/A. ADM 64/5/8, Diary Book, Informal Diary, Gonja District, 17 June 1943.
[35] PRAAD/A. ADM 5/2/9, Report on the Census of Population, Gold Coast, 1948, 369. See also NRG 8/2/210, Nawuri and Nchumuru under United Nations Trusteeship, Letter from the Chief Commissioner for the Northern Territories to the Secretary, Ministry of Defense and External Affairs, 1 February 1951.
[36] Interview with Bigma Tiborwu, a first generation migrant, Lungni, 3 January 2017.

Nkwanta.[37] However, in spite of their mobility, the Konkomba did not move into areas dominated by cash crop cultivation due to their penchant for food crops.

Konkomba population in Nanumba before the 1940s was equally small. The 1921 census reported 257 Konkomba out of the Nanumba population of 7, 924.[38] In 1931, the Assistant District Commissioner of Yendi found that there was some Konkomba at Joeli but the Konkomba population increased rather slowly in the 1930s.[39] There was a considerable number of Konkomba villages in the northeastern parts of Nanun before the Anglo-French partition of Togoland. [40] Nevertheless, the Konkomba had not ventured to penetrate south western Nanun until the 1950s. As Martijn Wienia succinctly puts it,

> While since the late 1920s, Konkomba farmers had settled in increasing numbers in scattered hamlets off the main north-south route of Nanun, especially around the swampy areas near Wulensi, south–western Nanun was covered in dense forest and almost uninhabited until the completion of the Bimbilla-Salaga road in 1956.[41]

One of the first Konkomba to penetrate the area south-west of Bimbilla was Unaloja Findi. Findi migrated from Nataab near Saboba to settle at Kuboabu before settling in Chamba in the 1940s.[42] The second group of Konkomba to settle in Nanun were the Kanjotiib clan. The migration of Kanjotiib to Nanun occurred in three waves. Those at Kanjonado (Old Gambuga) claim to be the first Konkomba settlers in Nanun. They first migrated from Kolnyil near Sambol to Kanjock in French Togoland. At Kanjock, witchcraft accusation led Tagnam to cross the river and settled among the Nanumba at Old Gambuga.[43] This was probably during the German period. After some time, some of his relatives joined him and the Nanumba decided to move to a place they called New Gambuga, allowing Tagmam to control Old Gambuga now known as Kanjonando.[44] The relationship between the Nanumba and Tagnam was very cordial, as the Nanumba made him chief of Old Gambuga in the 1960s.[45] Another group of Kanjotiib under Njaagma also left Kanjock due to social conflicts and proceeded to the unoccupied territories west of Bimbilla, settling at Japugendo.[46] A third group left Kanjock under the leadership of

[37] Interview with Nandi Mpoebi, Nandido, 9 January 2017. Dambai was a settlement started by the Germans through force settlement. PRAAD/T. NRG 8/4/20, Informal Diaries, Krachi District, 7 May 1931.
[38] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/35, Nanumba Kingdom, Area, Boundaries and Population, 1931, 7.
[39] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/30, Nanumba Native Administration Diary, Informal Diary of the Assistant District Commissioner, the Honourable H. W. Amherst While at Bimbilla, 25 September 1931.
[40] PRAAD/A. ADM 39/1/199, Togoland Partition between British and French, A. W. Norris to Record Office, April 3, 1921. See also PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/35, Nanumba Kingdom, 1931, 7.
[41] Wienia, *Ominous Calm*, 100.
[42] Interview with Bilikambi Findi, Son of Findi, the first Konkomba settler of Chamba, Chamba, 8 January 2017.
[43] Interview with Nachipoaan Gmabil, Konjonaa, Chamba, 22 April 2017.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.
[46] Interview with Binjin Lakidi, Chamba 21 January 2017.

Gmamo in 1936 during the French 'pacification' of that year. Gmamo first settled at a village near Wulensi and was joined by the children of his brother before migrating to Chamba in the 1960s.[47] Konkomba migration into Nanun increased tremendously in the 1940s after the Jagbel incident. [48]

In addition to the many Konkomba coming from Saboba area to Nawol, were others who came from the French Togoland. Since the 1930s, the District Commissioners of Gonja and Krachi consistently reported about Konkomba families arriving from French territory. In 1936, Guthrie Hall, the District Commissioner of Gonja, reported that two Konkomba families from the French territory had settled at Kaieresu and did not mind about the prospects of paying tax.[49] In 1937, more Konkomba migrants arrived and erected new villages in the area and the District Commissioner hoped that many more would follow them.[50] These immigrants were fleeing from the French pacification, which took place in January 1936. [51] In February 1936, a British constable stationed on the border reported to the Commissioner of Police, M. L. Fraser that since the beginning of that month, a large number of the Konkomba and the Bassari with their livestock and families crossed into British Territory, through Sieni and Nakpari. [52] He estimated these fugitives to be over a hundred, some settling in Nakpari, and the majority going inland to Bimbilla, Yendi, Krachi, and Kumasi.[53] In the next month, Fraser himself came across a large number of Konkomba migrants crossing the border into the British Zone with their poperty and livestock, obviously with the view of settling permanently.[54] He was however concerned that these migrants would cause trouble with the British Konkomba and warned all the chiefs and people not to interfere with them.[55]

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[47] Wienia, *Ominous Calm*, page 98 footnote 4.
[48] Skalnik, 'Nanumba Chieftaincy Facing the Ghanaian State', 93. The British punitive measures against the Konkomba after the Nakpatibb killed the chief of Zagberi pushed most Konkomba to flee their homeland in the Oti valley into Nanumba, Gonja and Krachi. A great number of these fugitives remained in Nanun where Peter Skalnic asserts that they were favourably treated by the Nanumba chiefs because the chiefs considered it a blessing to rule over a large population. See Skalnik, 'Nanumba Chieftaincy Facing the Ghanaian State', 94.
[49] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/4/73, Informal Diary, District Commissioner, Gonja, Salaga, for the Month of July 1936.
[50] Ibid, for the Month of April 1937.
[51] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/70, Konkomba Tribe, A letter of the Acting Governor, Gold Coast, Accra, September 24, 1935, 2. In 1935, the French administration requested British cooperation to disarm the Konkomba in their zone. The British officials reluctantly agreed to cooperate but only as far as to prevent fugitives crossing and causing trouble in the British zone. The French disarmament took place in January and by March, the British police force was withdrawn. This early withdrawal of the British police force allowed many Konkomba to escape the French pacification and cross the border to settle permanently in the British Zone.
[52] Ibid, Report on Konkomba Patrol by M. L. Fraser, 19 February 1936.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid, A letter from District Commissioner's Office, 3 March 1936.
[55] Ibid.

Although there was always a drift of Konkomba population from French territory into the British zone, the scale increased in the 1940s. By this time, the stream of Konkomba migrants from the French side into the British territory became a flood. This rapid inflow of the Konkomba continued well into the 1950s. The British officials attributed the influx of immigrants from the French zone to higher taxation, forced labour and harsh economic exactions by the French authorities due to wartime requirements.[56] The absence of forced labour and the relative milder taxation policy of the British made their territory a refuge zone for the Konkomba. Since no records exist to indicate the exact number of the immigrants, it is impossible to state precisely how many Konkomba crossed from the French into the British Togoland. From all indications, the number must have been large. The various population censuses conducted by the colonial administration in 1931 and 1948 clearly indicate rapid population growths of Krachi and East Gonja areas. This was because these areas were receiving enormous number of immigrants. For example, the population of Krachi increased from 17,948 in 1931 to nearly 32, 000 by 1948.[57] In Kpandai, the population ballooned from 224 in 1931 to 1, 718 by 1948.[58] Although accurate counting must have contributed to this dramatic population growth, it was largely due to immmigrants. In 1948, a number of new villages, which did not exist in 1931, came into being in Krachi and East Gonja and registered huge population figures.[59]

Although other French subjects like the Bassari and the Kotokoli also migrated to Kete-Krachi and East Gonja districts, the majority of the French migrants were Konkomba. This is shown in the dramatic increase of Konkomba population figures in British Togoland between 1920 and 1950. From a population of 13, 153 in 1921 in British Togoland, the Konkomba population more than doubled to 32, 216 by1931.[60] This figure further increased to 53, 297 by 1948.[61] In about the same period, the Konkomba population in French Togo declined from 24, 749 in 1941 to 20, 100 by 1948.[62] In 1959, Robert Cornevin gave the Konkomba population in Togo as 18, 605.[63] Writing in the early 1950s, Jean-Claud Froelich observed that in the last eight

[56] Public Records Archives Administration Department, Ho (hereafter PRAAD/H.) VRG/AD/269, Relations with French Togoland, Migration from French Togoland, 17 May 1945.
[57] See PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/45, Report on 1931 Census, 3. PRAAD/A. ADM 5/2/9, Report on the Census of Population, Gold Coast, 1948, 323.
[58] Ibid, 317.
[59] Ibid. See also footnotes on page 325.
[60] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/45, Report on 1931 Census, 6.
[61] PRAAD/A. ADM 5/2/9, Report on the Census of Population, 35.
[62] Freolich, 'Les Konkomba, Les Moba, Les Dyé', 124. See also Coleman, 'Togoland', 13.
[63] Cornevin, *Histoire du Togo*, 92-93.

years, the Oti Canton had witnessed a great emigration of Konkomba population to Kete Krachi in British Mandated Togoland.[64] In 1941, sixteen villages of the Oti Canton, which numbered 3, 299, declined to 1, 831 by 1947 due to emigration.[65] The dramatic increase of the Konkomba population in the British Togoland explains their decline in the French Togoland. The ethnic population distribution of the two Togolands in the late 1940s and early 1950s is given in table 5.1.

5. 1 Ethnic Population of Northern Togoland, c. 1948-1950

Ethnic Group	British Togoland	French Togoland
Kusasi	22, 400	-
B'moba	29, 200	54, 200
Chokossi	10, 200	8, 900
Konkomba	53, 600	20, 100
Dagomba/Nanumba	41, 700	-
Busanga	7, 500	-
Kotokoli	7, 000	51, 500
Bassari	6, 500	29, 300

Source: Ladouceur, *Chiefs and Politicians*, 134

Immigrants, Colonial Economy and Social Change, 1930s-1950

The British colonial authorities in Kete-Krachi and East Gonja favoured the migration of the Konkomba into the area. This was because the authorities expected the migrants to contribute to the colonial economy through the production of food crops. The economic policy pursued by the British colonial government in the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast is well documented. [66] The conventional view is that the British policy centred on the strategy of

[64] Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba du Nord Togo*, 24.
[65] J-C. Freolich, 'Les Konkomba, Les Moba, Les Dyé', in J-C. Froelich, P. Alexandre and R. Cornevin (eds.) Les Populations du Nord Togo, (Paris: Presses Universiteires de France, 1963), 121-4.
[66] N-K. Plange, 'Underdevelopment in Northern Ghana: Natural Cause or Colonial Capitalism', *Review of African Political Economy*, 6 (1979), 1-34. N-K. Plange, 'Opportunity Coast and Labour Migration: A Misinterpretation of Proletarianization in Northern Ghana', *Journal of Modern African Studies,* 17, 4 (1979), 655-676. Thomas, 'Forced Labour in British West Africa'. N.J.K. Brukum, 'Study Neglect or Lack of Resources? The Socio-

preserving northern populations as a cheap source of labour for the mines and cocoa farms in the south. Yet, contrary to this view, by the 1930s, the colonial administration had abandoned this policy. Following food crisis in the late 1920s in northern Ghana combined with the global economic depression of 1929-1930, the concern of the colonial administration shifted. Instead of viewing the northern populations as a labour reserve[67], the colonial authorities now wanted them to remain on their farms to produce adequate food crops to feed the growing populations in the urban centres in Ashanti and the Colony.[68] From 1930 onwards, the colonial state focused on encouraging the people of the Northern Territories to produce food crops and the Konkomba came to play a significant part in this policy shift.

Although the colonial government encouraged the local population to grow more food crops, production however continued to be based on traditional methods of cultivation.[69] The situation in northern Ghana was not unique. Literature on colonial agriculture has shown that the expansion of agrarian commodity production in West Africa during the colonial period was achieved through African agency without any significant technological contribution from the colonial state.[70] Poly Hill's meticulous research on cocoa production in southern Ghana demonstrates that the expansion of cocoa industry was purely the result of local initiative, which was in response to the availability of market. But more importantly, her work reveals the important role immigrants played in the expansion of the cocoa industry.[71] The colonial authorities in northern Ghana were aware of the successful expansion of the cocoa production by local farmers and wanted food production in the Northern Territories to follow a similar trend. However, unlike in southern Ghana, the colonial administration did not want the increased production in food crops to transform the traditional land tenure system. Since the

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Economic Underdevelopment of Northern Ghana under British Colonial Rule', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, New Series, 2 (1998), 117-131.

[67]Weiss, 'Crop Failures, Food Shortages', 37. In May 1931, the colonial secretary in Accra wrote to the Chief Commissioner, Tamale to instruct the district commissioners to make it known to the people that owing to present depressed conditions of trade there was little or no work now available in the colony. He was to impress on the population to stay in their homes and make their farms. PRAAD/A. ADM 11/10/76, Annual Invasion of the Gold Coast by French and Northern Territories Subjects in Search of Labour, Colonial Secretary, Accra, 27 May 1931.

[68] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/10/1076, The Colonial Secretary to the Chief Commissioner, Northern Territories, 27 May 1931.

[69] 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), 640.

[70] P. Hill, 'The Migrant Cocoa Farmers of Southern Ghana', *Journal of the International African Institute*, 31, 3 (1961), 209-230. P. Hill, *Migrant Cocoa-Farmers of Southern Ghana: A Study in Rural Capitalism*, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1963). S. Berry, 'The Concept of Innovation and the History of Cocoa Farming in Western Nigeria', *Journal of African History*, XV, I (1974), 83-95. L. R. Martin (ed.), *A Survey of Agricultural Economics Literature, Volume 4: Agriculture in Economic Development 1940s to 1990s* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1992). Cooper, 'Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History', 1529.

[71] Hill, *Migrant Cocoa-Farmers of Southern Ghana*, 1.

ordinance of 1931, the colonial government had recognised the Northern Territories' lands as Native Lands, but retained rights over management, sale and purchase of land.[72] By retaining power over land sale, the colonial state was able to prevent the development of markets for land in the Northern Territories. The administration wanted to avoid a system of land tenure that subjected the peasantry to the exploitation of landowners as it developed in the south.[73] For this reason, the colonial administration refused to accept any change to land tenure system, which would increase the value of land. For example, in 1942 the colonial officials refused to accept the demands of the Gonja chiefs to introduce new rules for land acquisition by strangers farming on Gonja lands. They argued that such rules would change the indigenous land tenure system, which had worked quite satisfactorily.[74] The administration further prohibited the sale of land by 'natives' since land belonged to the community and not individuals.[75] As a result, unlike in other areas where migrant concentration led to the development of land sales, traditional land tenure system continued to the basis for the acquisition of land in northern Ghana.[76]

By preventing changes to traditional land tenure system as a way of upholding customary land practice, the colonial officials assumed that land tenure in Africa was static and unchanging. On the contrary, Carola Lentz has shown that traditional land tenure in Africa was not fixed. It was fluid, negotiable and always evolving.[77] Homi Bhaba has argued that, in colonial discourse the concept of fixity as a sign of culture or history represented an important 'ideological construction of otherness.'[78] The representation of land tenure in northern Ghana as static and unchanging in the colonial discourse and practice was therefore a reflection of colonial stereotypes of African societies. By presenting the land tenure system as rigid, the colonial state achieved their objective of stimulating peasant production without allowing any opportunity for commercialisation of land. The colonial state therefore ingeniously

[72] P. Konings, 'Capitalist Rice Farming and Land Allocation in Northern Ghana', *Journal of Legal prulalism and Unofficial Law*, 10, 22 (1984), 94.
[73] Hill, *Migrant Cocoa-Farmers of Southern Ghana.*
[74] EAP 256/1/119, Mamprusi Gonja Boundary, 1938-947, Mamprusi-Gonja Boundary, A letter from the District Commissioner of Salaga, 3 April 1946.
[75] R. B. Bening, 'Land Policy and Administration in Northern Ghana 1898', *Transitions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 16, 2 (1975), 239.
[76] Hill, *Migrant Cocoa-Farmers of Southern Ghana*, 138-40. S. Berry, 'Migrant Farmers and Land Tenure in the Nigerian Cocoa Belt', Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1972, http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1793/56544 accessed on 2 October 2017.
[77] Lentz, 'First-Comer and Late Comer', 35.
[78] H. Bhaba, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 66.

appropriated a fluid and flexible system of traditional land tenure to promote their project of stimulating a non-capitalist food production system in northern Ghana.

The land policy pursued by the British in northern Ghana played a significant part in the large-scale Konkomba migration to Nawol. The policy ensured that in spite of the increasing influx of the Konkomba immigrants, land remained available and accessible to them. With available land, the Konkomba immigrants engaged in growing food crops. The view among colonial officials at the time was that the production of foodstuffs for an export trade was largely a question of transport.[79] With a well-developed road system, increased food production would follow. The administration, therefore, prioritised the construction of roads and created a conducive environment to stimulate demand. In 1931, 107 miles of roads were constructed and by 1936, sixteen bridges and culverts had been built while many others were repaired with new decking and iron rails in East Gonja alone. [80] As the administration opened up the area through improved transportation system, more Konkomba immigrants arrived and the number of acres under cultivation in Krachi and East Gonja districts increased.

In chapter three, I pointed out that the British officials perceived the Konkomba as hardworking, which influenced their attitude towards Konkomba cross-border migrantion into the British zone in the 1920s.[81] In the 1930s the colonial officials continued to describe the Konkomba as 'the most healthy, virile and industrious native of the area' who would help stimulate local agricultural production. [82] In contrast to their host groups who were not inclined to farming, the Konkomba made big farms when they arrived in Nawol. Esther Goody's work bears testimony of the Gonja not being 'an agricultural people' but more inclined to hunting. [83] The Nchumuru and the Krachi were equally inclined to fishing rather than farming.[84] In 1934, a report described the negative attitude of Nchumuru and Krachi towards farming and wondered why they would not follow the Konkomba example of making large farms and keep cattle in addition.[85] Amherst, then the District Commissioner of Gonja, observed that the newly

[79] PRAAD/H. K. SFC/c34, Togoland Annual Reports, Mandated Territories of Togoland Report, 1930, 3.
[80] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/45, Reports on 1931 Census, 3. See also PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/53, Togoland Annual Repot Krachi District, Northern Territories, 1936, 8.
[81] See this chapter three of this thesis, 75-6.
[82] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/53, Report on Togoland under British Mandate, 1936, 23.
[83] E. Goody, *Context of Kinship: An Essay in the Family Sociology of Gonja of Northern Ghana* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), 23.
[84] Interview with Binyigne Ntaminasu, Chief Linguist, Balai, 9 January 2018.
[85] PRAAD/A. ADM 11/1/782, Annual Report-Togoland under British Mandate, Krachi District, 1934, 3.

emerging Konkomba settlements had the biggest herd of cattle in Gonja.[86] Initially, the officials attempted to encourage the production of groundnut and commercial tobacco among the Konkomba, but the Konkomba would simply not cultivate anything except food crops.[87] This should be understood within their belief that, 'if it does not provide food to eat or pito to drink, it is not worth pursuing.'[88]

Besides promoting transportation, the colonial state however paid very little attention to the development of agriculture among the Konkomba and the people of northern Ghana as a whole. Increased production among the Konkomba immigrants was the result of their own initiatives. In terms of crop innovation, the administration attempted nothing among the Konkomba settler farmers.[89] Inez Sutton has shown that throughout the colonial period, the colonial state made very little efforts to introduce new crops in the Northern Territories. Their focus was 'rather to try to expand the production of existing crops.'[90] In 1945, a colonial official visited some of the Konkomba and Bassari villages in Nanun and lamented that the colonial state had failed to develop 'mixed farming' in the area. Like everywhere else in Africa, the colonial officials feared that uncontrolled extensive farming could turn 'this very fertile land… into an arid desert like the north'.[91] Colonial records particularly cited Kpandai area as being in danger of losing soil fertility due to over farming. [92] Despite these concerns, the administration took no steps to conserve the soil. In fact, even if the wished to influence the production system, the administration lacked sufficient agricultural extension officers to influence methods of local production. Even where they tried to change local production practices, they came into conflict with local people.[93] The Konkomba continued to use traditional systems of cultivation. Shifting cultivation and mono cropping were still the main methods of cultivation.Non-capitalist mode of production remained the rule and the Konkomba continued to organise their labour within

[86] PRAAD/A. ADM 64/5/7, Informal Diary of Honourable H.W. Amherst Ag. District Commissioner, Gonja for the Month of September 1938.
[87] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/61, Annual Report Krachi District, Acting District Commissioner Kete Krachi, 4 May 1938.
[88] Talton, "Food to Eat and Pito to Drink', 209. Pito is a local beer brewed from guinea corn.
[89] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/61, Annual Report Krachi District, 1937-1938. The report admitted that although trade in yam had increased, the administration did not give any consideration to the question of which yam was the most profitable type to cultivate and export.
[90] Sutton, 'Colonial Agricultural Policy', 640.
[91] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/4/94, Informal Diary Yendi, 12 April 1945.
[92] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/195, Togoland Report, Annual Report on Togoland 1955, 1.
[93] K. B. Diction, 'Background to the Problem of Economic Development in Northern Ghana,' *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 58, 4 (1968), 691.

the family. Communal labour was the only means of labour mobilisation beyond the immediate family system.

Although some of the Konkomba immigrants brought in cattle and other livestock, their main occupation was food crop cultivation. In their homeland, the Konkomba cultivated cereals, mainly millet and guinea corn (sorghum).[94] In Nawol, their main crops were yam, maize and cassava but yam production gradually gained attention. Apart from becoming their staple, yam was the most cash oriented food crop as prices rose steadily in the 1930s. By 1940, yams of average size cost 3.10/- per hundred tubers in Accra.[95] As early as 1936, Ada canoe-men and lorry drivers from Accra travelled up the Krachi-Yendi main road to buy yam directly from the farmers.[96] Internal trade was equally vibrant as streams of women from Salaga came to Konkomba settlements to buy yams.[97] During April and May 1943, over 22, 000 yams were exported from Kpandai alone to Accra and Kumasi.[98] Expansion of production followed and by the 1944, production far exceeded the capacity of the available transport system. In that year, Syme, the District Commissioner of East Gonja, observed that many thousands of the previous year's yams got rotten owing to lack of transport.[99] In 1945, Syme again, bemoaned the lack of transport in Kpandai area and lamented that the expansion of food crop production was encouraged without a commensurate expansion of transport to take out the produce.[100] Clearly, by the 1940s, the increased production of food crops brought the Konkomba into the colonial cash economy.

In order to benefit substantially from the emerging cash economy, the Konkomba began to construct roads from their settlements to markets centres. In his diary of March 1937, the District Commissioner of Salaga recorded that the Konkomba village on the Salaga-Grubi road had 'started to build a motor road from there through Dodope to Krachi main road'.[101] In June 1938, Amherst also recorded that the Konkomba settlers made a new road from a village close to Kulpi to Kito without any help from the indigenous people.[102] Bifigma Tiborwu, a first

[94] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana*, 14.
[95] PRAAD/A. ADM 64/5/7, Informal Diary for the Month of March 1940. In 1936 the export price of yam was twenty shillings per hundred in the villages. See also NRG 8/3/53, Togoland Annual Report Krachi District, N. T. 1936, 14.
[96] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/53, Togoland Annual Report Krachi District, N.T., 1936, 12.
[97] Ibid.
[98] PRAAD/A. ADM 64/5/8, Informal Diary of District Commissioner of Gonja for the Month of June 1943.
[99] Ibid, Month of July 1944.
[100] Ibid, Month of March 1945.
[101] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/4/73, Informal Diary of Guthrie Hall, Esquire, District Commissioner, Salaga, March 1937.
[102] PRAAD/A. ADM 64/5/7, Informal Diary of Honourable H.W. Amherst Acting District Commissioner, Gonja, for the Month of July 1938.

generation Konkomba migrant, recounted that they also constructed a road from their settlement at Kitare to Dambai. This road brought him into contact with a Hausa man who taught him a trade in tobacco selling.[103] Other Konkomba communities also responded to the increasing market economy by migrating to settle on the main roads for the convenient disposal of their produce.[104] In 1941, a colonial report noted that many Konkomba were moving from the interior to villages near the road.[105] By the 1940s, therefore, the Konkomba had not only been drawn into the colonial cash economy but they had also been brought into the European capitalist economic system to supply food crops to the cocoa growing areas whose production was exclusively for the global market. Mobility therefore became one way by which the Konkomba were integrated into the colonial economic system.

During this period, the Konkomba spent very little of their income from the sale of their food crops on European clothing and continued to show 'no inclination to abandon their distinctive style of under wear or lack of it.'[106] The average Konkomba farmer still built 'his picturesque round mud house with its thatched roof by the labour of his hands and that of his family with no expenditure on materials.'[107] There was however a gradual process of social change occurring among the Konkomba in Nawol. In the 1950s, a number of Konkomba settlers began to accumulate wealth through expansion of their farms. Agriculture led to individual accumulation, a role it did not play in their homeland. Such wealthy farmers like Nandi of Banda, Konja of Kpassa, Bikamba of Kpandai, Sanja and Bagnaja of Burai began to employ young Konkomba men from *Kikpakpaan* on their farms for specific tasks, such as clearing the land and raising of mounds.[108] The demand for labour by these wealthy Konkomba farmers gave rise to seasonal migration of young Konkomba men from *Kikpakpaan* to Krachi for paid farm work. David Tait observed that these young men only worked for three to four weeks on yam farms of their kinsmen and earned up to £10. Three-quarters of this sum went to the father of the young man, and the rest went to clothing and perhaps, to bride price.[109]

The introduction of cash through migration into the Konkomba society transformed their culture to some extent. Scholars have shown that migration, particularly labour migration,

[103] Interview with Bifigma Tiborwu, Longni, 3 January 2017.
[104] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/53, Report on Togoland under British Mandate, N.T., 1936, 22.
[105] PRAAD/A. ADM 64/5/8, Informal Diary of District Commissioner, Gonja for the Month of September, 1941.
[106] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/53, Report on Togoland under British Mandate N. T., 1936, 23.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Interview with Mukanjor Bignali, Kpandai Chiefs, Kpandai, 9 January 2018.
[109] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana*, 30-31.

produced crucial social change for the migrants' home societies.[110] Elizabeth Schmidt established that with the introduction of paid labour in Southern Rhodesia, bride price (lobola) became inflated because parents began to demand higher bride price for their daughters as young men obtained cash from selling their labour. By inflating bride price in cash and cattle, the older generation gained access to the cash wages of the young men.[111] A slightly different, but similar process of change occurred in Konkomba marriage custom due to migration to Nawol. In the Konkomba case, increased access to cash enabled young men to circumvent the betrothal system. As has been explained in chapter three, under the Konkomba marriage custom, infant girls were betrothed at birth to young men, and the latter provided labour services to their prospective parent-in-laws until the girls were of marriageable age.[112] This delayed the marriage of Konkomba men until they were between the ages of thirty-five and forty.[113] In Nawol, the Konkomba continued to contract marriages by betrothal system but cash from their labour and the yam crop enabled young men to avoid this waiting period by paying off the prospective husbands of their lovers. This resulted in relatively early marriages for Konkomba men who migrated to obtain cash by the sale of their labour or were engaged in yam farming. In some cases, the prospective husbands refused the payment and considerable marital disputes arose among the Konkomba.[114]

Unlike in their homeland where these matrimonial disputes degenerated into inter-clan feuds, in Nawol, the host chiefs settled the marital disputes. During the arbitration of these marital disputes, the chiefs took advantage of the Konkomba readiness to pay any price for their women, to exploit them. In many cases, both the plaintiff and the defendant were charged huge sums of money, which went to the chiefs instead of the aggrieved party.[115] This problem led to the decline of Konkomba betrothal marriages in Nawol and the emergence of 'exchange' marriage system, where young men simply exchanged their sisters for wives. This system, having developed in Nawol, was introduced back into *Kikpakpaan*, a novelty, which KOYA denounced in the 1970s as backward.[116] Back in their homeland, the increased material goods

[110] See for example I. Schapera, *Migrant Labour and Tribal Life: A Study of the Conditions Beehuanaland Protectorate* (London: Oxford University Press, I947). K. Sphiri, 'Some Changes in the Matrilineal Family System among the Chewa of Malawi since the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of African History*, 24, 2 (1983), 257-274 and Skinner, 'Labour Migration and its Relationship to Socio-Cultural Change'.
[111] E. Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders, and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939* (Harare: Baobab Books, 1992), 113.
[112] See Chapter three of this thesis, 67.
[113] Tait, *Konkomba of Northern Ghana*, 161.
[114] Interview with Ujan Mawon, Local KOYA Chairman, Lungni, 16 February 2017.
[115] Interview with Wunanjin Kpadin, former local NDC chairman, Chamba, 20 January 2017.
[116] Wienia, *Ominous Calm*, 56.

and cash coming from Krachi began to impact on other aspects of Konkomba culture. The use of clothing in Konkomba ritual performance was one such impact. Describing the social system of the Konkomba in the 1950s, Tait observed:

> The only change that I observed was the practice of hanging cloths round a compound in which a corpse is being prepared for burial. This began in the compound of a man who had been to Krachi and it is spreading rapidly.[117]

Becoming a symbol of wealth of the family of the dead, the custom of hanging cloths around the compound of the deceased soon assumed a cultural value as a sign of attachment and respect to the dead person.[118]

Migration did not engender any structural shift in the kinship relations between the migrants and those at home. In 1947, James Anderson observed a remarkable 'solidarity' between the Konkomba Diaspora and their kinsmen in *Kikpakpaan*. He noted that there was a constant flow of Konkomba immigrants returning to their ancestral villages temporarily for one purpose or another.[119] Although Tait predicted that the links between the immigrants and those in *Kikpakpaan* would die out within years,[120] these links have remained very strong into the 1980s. The Konkomba in Nawol continued to regard Saboba area in the Oti valley as their homeland. In 1985, KOYA wrote that all 'Konkombas outside our traditional homeland look to Saboba as their Jerusalem'.[121] Many social institutions and customary rituals continued to connect the immigrants to their ancestral homes in *Kikpakpaan*. For example, sacrifice to ancestral shrines was an important social ritual that connected the migrants to their home villages. In Konkomba custom, unlike the Dagara,[122] the earth shrine was neither mobile nor completely transferable.[123] Clan members visited their ancestral lands to propitiate their ancestral shrine (*liyajawal*) and earth shrine (*lingbanwal*) and this became the means by which the Konkomba in Nawol maintained links with their kinsmen back home in the Oti valley.

The strong bond that connected the migrants to their ancestral villages allowed many social practices acquired in Nawol to be easily introduced into their homeland. In Nawol, especially

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[117] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana,* 31.
[118] H. W. Zimoń, 'Burial Rituals among the Konkomba People of Northern Ghana,' *Český lid*, 94, 1 (2007), 47.
[119] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/97, Memorandum on Konkomba Policy, 2.
[120] Tait, *The Konkomba of Northern Ghana,* 39.
[121] KOYA to the Secretary for Local Government, on 'Projected Saboba/Chereponi District Council', 8 August 1985.
[122] Kuba and Lentz, 'Arrows and Earth Shrines', 393. Kuba and Lentz observe that, 'The stone at the centre of the Dagara earth shrine is a surprisingly mobile object; it may be carried in a bag from one location to another. An earth shrine is believed to transfer its powers to any stone lying on the ground surrounding the tengan', page 393. This was not the same with the Konkomba earth shrine.
[123] See Froelich, *La Tribu Konkomba*, 138.

in Krachi and Nchumuru areas, the Konkomba encountered anti-witchcraft shrines, *Grumade* and *Tigari* spirits. These shrines became very popular among wealthy Konkomba immigrants who acquired them as a form of protection against witchcraft and other evil spirits.[124] The Krachi and Nchumuru from whom the Konkomba acquired the *Grumade* and *Tigari* shrines obtained them from the cocoa producing areas of Southern Ghana. These cults emerged in the cocoa growing areas 'due to the myriad transformations, tensions and anxieties engendered by the Gold Coast's lucrative cocoa export economy' in the 1920s.[125] Emerging wealthy cocoa farmers sought protection from witches in these cults. If rising anxiety about witches gripped the wealthy cocoa farmers and traders of Asante in the 1920s and 1930s, similar fears gripped the emerging wealthy Konkomba yam farmers in Nawol. Robert Harms study of the Nunu reveals how wealth attracted a lot of jealousy from neighbours.[126] It is not surprising that one of the first Konkomba settlers to acquire the anti-witchcraft shrine was Nandi of Banda, who had become wealthy through yam farming by the 1950s.[127] So much money was involved in the acquisition of these shrines that they became a means by which the increasing wealth of Konkomba settler farmers was redistributed to the host community. By the 1960s, the immigrants introduced these shrines back into *Kikpakpaan*, and the practice of acquiring personal fetishes as a personal protection became a common practice among the Konkomba both in Nawol and in their homeland.

Immigrants, Host Societies and Konkomba Stereotypes in Nawol

The official colonial opinion was that movement of people from a poor and densely populated region to a potentially rich area would benefit both the sending and the receiving areas.[128] As early as 1924, the colonial officials in the Northern Territories endeavoured to induce families to move from the congested areas in the northeast 'into Gonja country where there is good land available and a fair supply of water all the year round.'[129] As limited as the actual experiment was, it became obvious that the people were attached to their homeland and migration outside

[124] Interview with Bifigma Tiborwu, first generation migrant, Lungni, 3 January 2017.
[125] J. Parker, 'Northern Gothic: Witches, Ghosts and Werewolves in the Savanna Hinterland of the Gold Coast', 1900s-1950s, *Journal of the International African Institute*, 76, 3 (2006), 352. J. Allman and J. Parker, *Tongnaab: The History of A West African God* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2005).See also M. Field, 'Some New Shrines of the Gold Coast and their Significance', *Africa*, 13, 2 (1940), 141.
[126] Harms, *Games Against Nature*, 128.
[127] Casual conversation with my father, Paul Kachim, Chamba, 26 January 2018.
[128] F. Cooper, *Decolonization and African Society: The Labour Question in French and British Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 46.
[129] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/505, Annual Report of Northern Territories, 1923-1924, 20.

their ancestral lands was not popular.[130] In this situation when the Konkomba began to migrate willingly into the fertile lands of Krachi and Gonja, the colonial officials favoured such migrations. The local inhabitants also welcomed the migrants and assisted them in their settlement. In the 1920s and even as late as the 1940s, the northern chiefs sought higher population because the number of people a chief ruled over determined his authority and influence. [131] Peter Skalnik has suggested that the Nanumba chiefs welcomed the Konkomba settlers into Nanun in the 1940s because they saw it as a blessing to have many subjects under their rule.[132] The Nchumuru and the Nawuri were equally receptive towards the new comers, granting them land and permission to settle at no cost.[133] The Gonja who became rulers of the area after 1932 also continued, 'without any objection from the Nawuri' to permit many Konkomba immigrants to settle in the area.[134] Settlement and use of land was free. Kajarti Konkomba, a leader of the Konkomba immigrants in Beladjai, recalled that nothing was paid for the land on which he settled and farmed. As he puts it, 'I came to Kpandai and explained my purpose to the Gonja chief and said I had come to settle permanently. The chief told me to go and settle'.[135]

As characteristic of the Konkomba, they did not settle among the host groups but 'almost invariably, they build their own villages.'[136] Their villages were isolated, made of clans, and named mostly after the founder of the village, his clan or village of origin.[137] By 1950, the Konkomba eastablished the general Konkomba settlement pattern based on clans and located in interior and off the main roads. Adam Marshall, a Nanumba opinion leader and a former member of parliament for Bimbilla constituency, related that when the Konkomba 'came here [Nanun], what we know was that they did not like going near people. They preferred to live in the bush.'[138] Although this statement portrays Nanumba stereotypes of the Konkomba, it indicates Konkomba resentment to encroachment on their geographical and social space. The

[130] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/1/278, A Letter from the District Commisioner, South Mamprusi, 8 May 1929.
[131] In 1926 Major A.H. C. Walker-Leigh, the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories observed that the chiefs did not want money for their land but rather accepted settlers for free because they wanted to have many subjects under their authority. Bening, 'Land Policy and Administration', 239.
[132] P. Skalnik, 'Nanumba Chieftaincy Facing the Ghanaian State and Konkomba Tribesmen: An Interpretation of the Nanumba Konkomba War of 198'1, in J. van Binsbergen, F. Reyntyens and G. Hesseling (eds.), *State and Local Community in Africa* (Buxelles: CEDAF, 1986), 93.
[133] Interview with Binyigne Ntaminasu, Chief Linguist, Balai, 9 January 2018.
[134] Dixon, Report of Mr. Dixon, 24.
[135] Ibid, Appendix IX, Note of a Meeting Held with the Alfai Local Council by Mr. J. Dixon, 1 April 1955, 2.
[136] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/3/119, Togoland Annual Report, Kete Krachi district, 1942, 6.
[137] Interview with Kpajal Kpanduln, Elder of Konjado and Fisrt Generation Migrant, Konjado, 9 January 2018.
[138] Interview with Adam Marshall, Former Member of Parliament for Bimbilla Constituency, Bimbilla, 2 February 2017.

settlers constructed social and spatial boundaries and sought to maintain their distinct identity through mobility and isolation. As an intensely acephalous society, they resented political control and continued to seek autonomy in their host areas through isolation. Even with the belief in witchcraft and the knowledge that witchcraft was most likely to be effective among close relatives and tribesmen,[139] the Konkomba still stayed together without preferring ethnically mixed settlements. They often moved away when the host groups encroached upon their settlements.[140] This mobility enabled the Konkomba to maintain their independent ethnic identity and language. However, this left them on the political margins of their host groups.

With increasing population and the consequent diminishing empty land, the Konkomba were no longer able to avoid contact with their host groups through migration. They came increasingly into contact with their host groups. Donald Levine has suggested that when outsiders initially come into a social space of another group, it is normal to presume an initial response of anxiety and at least latent antagonism.[141] In Nawol, the initial anxiety evolved into condescension, disdain and disrespect for the Konkomba. As much as possible the host groups, particularly the centralised groups, looked upon the Konkomba immigrants with condescension and strongly discouraged social contacts and intermarriage with them. The settlement pattern of the Konkomba in scattered and isolated settlements meant that they lacked access to formal education and other social services. This lack of formal education and modern social amenities as well as their geographical mobility reinforced negative stereotypes about them. It was very common for the host groups to compare the Konkomba to nomadic cattle headers (Fulani).[142] Most of the centralised groups avoided any social relations with the Konkomba whom they considered 'primitive'. According to Jack Goody, the only joint activities between the Konkomba immigrants and the Gonja were confined to 'markets and the courts.'[143] In 1939, the District Commissioner decried the Gonja disregard for the Konkomba and observed that former's attitude towards the latter was 'even more exasperating than in Mamprusi.'[144] Inter-marriage did not occur between the Konkomba and the Nanumba because the latter viewed

[139] P. Geschiere and F. Nyamnjoh, 'Witchcraft as an Issue in the "Politics of Belonging": Democratization and Urban Migrants, Involvement with Home Village', *African Studies Review*, 41, 3 (1998), 69-91.
[140] Interview with Binyigne Ntaminasu, Chief Linguist, Balai, 9 January 2018.
[141] D. Levine, 'Simmel at a Distance: On the History and Systematics of the Sociology of the Stranger', in W. A. Shack and E. P. Skinner (eds.), *Strangers in African Societies,* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979), 30.
[142] Interview with Ujan Mawon, Local KOYA Chairman, Lungni Branch, Lungni, 12 April 2017.
[143] J. Goody, *Comparative Studies in Kinship,* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 161.
[144] PRAAD/A. ADM 64/5/7, Informal Diary of J. K. G. Syme, Esquire District Commissioner, Gonja, Salaga, 1939.

them as 'savage and uncivilized bush people' who had no permanent homes.[145] In the 1980s, the Nanumba still referred to the Konkomba as *bunkɔbŋnɔ* (bush animal) or *nirbimaa* (those people).[146] This attitude of the Nanumba towards the Konkomba has been the source of conflict between the two groups.

In northern Ghana, groups that formed centralised states adopted Islam early in the precolonial period while the non-state groups such as the Konkomba, Nchumuru and Nawuri remained traditionalists and adopted Christianity in the post-independent period.[147] Stereotypes based on religious affiliations were reinforced by colonial construct of superiority and inferiority based on the centralised and non-centralised divide. Cletus Mbowura observes that the Gonja subjected both the Nawuri and the Konkomba in Kpandai to similar maltreatments because of their faith.[148] There were many points of convergence between the Konkomba on the one hand and the Nchumuru and Nawuri on the other. They were both subjects of the Gonja and lived in adjacent villages but more importantly, they were both inclined towards Christianity and considered Islam as the religion of their oppressors.[149] Friendship relations and inter-marriages between the Konkomba and both the Nawuri and the Nchumuru were relatively high. In many Nawuri communities and Balai in particular, many intermarriages occurred between the Nawuri and the Konkomba.[150] These inter-marriages became an important factor in Konkomba involvement in the Nawuri-Gonja conflict of 1992.[151] However, such friendly relations did not eliminate Nawuri and Nchumuru prejudice against the Konkomba. They regarded the Konkomba as aliens and a primitive people, lacking European dress and without permanent settlements.[152] These stereotypes also influenced the host groups' perception of Konkomba social status in Ghana.

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[145] Skalnik, 'Nanumba Chieftaincy Facing the Ghanaian State and the Konkomba Tribesmen', 95. Wienia, *Ominous Calm,* 97. I. Fuseini, 'A Brief History of Nanung up to 1974', (B. A. Long Essay, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, 2007), 4

[146] Wienia, *Ominous Calm*, 48.

[147] Islamic inclination of the Nanumba and the Gonja should not be over-emphasised because Islam was until the 1980s restricted to the royals who were a small number.

[148] Mbowura, 'Nawuri-Gonja Conflicts', 166.

[149] J. P. Kirby, 'Ethnic Conflicts and Democratization: New Paths Towards Equilibrium in Northern Ghana', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, New Series, 10 (2006-2007), 97.

[150] Interview with Binyigne Ntaminasu, Chief Linguist, Balai, 9 January 2018. Personal conversation with Cletus Mbowura at his residence, Madina, Accra, 23 April 2017. He asserts that some Gonja even claim that intermarriages between Nawuri and Konkomba was the key factor why the Konkomba supported the Nawuri in the 1992 Gonja-Nawuri conflict.

[151] Mbowura, 'Nawuri-Gonja Conflicts',

[152] Interview with Ujan Mawon, Local KOYA Chairman, Lungni Branch, Lungni, 22 January 2017.

Though social distinction between groups existed in Nawol, the colonial authorities did not sanction any discrimination against the Konkomba. Any attempt by the host groups to maltreat the Konkomba attracted strong response from the colonial officials. For instance, in 1949, there were two villages at Sabongida, between Salaga and Grubi. The Konkomba lived by the roadside and the Singbungwura (Gonja chief) and the Nchumuru lived in another, a quarter of a mile off the road. The Singbungwura decided to move onto the road, and a compound was built for him at the northeast end of the Konkomba village. The Nchumuru then decided to move as well and began to build compounds close to the existing Konkomba houses. As the District Commissioner aptly recorded:

> As characteristic of the Konkomba who liked to be isolated from other groups, the Konkomba headman protested that this was going to lead to trouble, but the Sungbungwura and the Nchumuru answered that it was their land and that if the Konkomba were dissatisfied they could move away and build another village elsewhere.[153]

The District Commissioner intervened and ordered the Nchumuru to build their compounds on the north east of the Singbungwura's compound and to leave some space between themselves and the Konkomba settlement.[154] This prompt intervention forestalled a migratory reaction by the Konkomba. In another report, it was stated that the Nchumuru near Sabonjida were behaving 'in a high-handed and unreasonable way towards the local Konkomba, and appeared to have won over the Sungbungwura to their point of view.' The administration then warned the chief to refrain from any acts of hostility towards the Konkomba.[155] In Nawol, although the Konkomba remained on the margins of their host societies, colonial officials were extremely conscious of their vulnerability and protected them from the molestation and exploitation of local chiefs. However, a more important factor that insulated the Konkomba from severe exploitation and oppression of the host groups was the friction and power struggle among the host groups themselves.

Konkomba Immigrants and Local Power Struggle in Alfai 1950- 1957

The struggle for control among the host groups in Nawol was widespread, but it was extremely intense in Alfai between 1950 and 1956. The tension and friction in Alfai in the 1950s had a direct link with the dissonance that emerged between the Gonja on the one hand and the Nawuri and Nchumuru on the other in the 1930s. The indirect rule system left an extremely unequal

[153] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/60, Nchumuru State, A Letter from the District Commissioner Gonja, Salaga, 20 July 1949.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid, Extract from Informal Diary of Mr. A J. Townsend, Acting District Commissioner, Salaga, 20 July 1949.

power balance between the two groups. In the struggle that emerged among the local groups, the Konkomba came to play a significant part and eventually determined those who controlled local affairs in the area in the 1950s. It has already been discussed earlier in this chapter how the colonial state subordinated the Nawuri and Nchumuru under Gonja chiefs through the Native Authority System. Dixon explains how this subordination pitched the Gonja on the one hand against the Nawuri and Nchumuru on the other:

> …with the imposition of tax and gradual transfer of power in local government matters from the traditional system of councils to the new Statutory System, the importance of the Kpembe Native Authority Council, who were all Gonjas, increased and the importance of the Nawuri Headmen and the Nanjuro 'Chief' who were not statutory members of the council gradually decreased. It is a grievance of both the Nawuris and the Najuros … that under the Native Administration system, they 'became as nothing' and lost the traditional importance and respect with which traditional relationship had invested them.[156]

Dixon admitted that although a well-intentioned policy, the Native Authority System enabled the Gonja to assume a position of power which they had not previously occupied, and allowed them to exploit and suppress the other groups in the district.[157] In effect, the power balance and inequalities between the two groups were the result of the relationship established by the colonial state. Since the Gonja wielded much power to the detriment of the Nchumuru and the Gonja, the latter resorted to rebellion. In 1935, shortly after the colonial authorities placed Nanjuro under the Kpembewura, the Nanjoros revolted against Gonja rule. The Kpembewura with the tacit support of the colonial administration ruthlessly crushed this revolt, killing many people in the process and others fled to Krachi district.[158] Since 1935, the Nchumuru never recognised the Gonja as rulers of Nanjuro though the colonial state continued to work with the Gonja as overlords of the area.

The Nawuri resistance to Gonja authority also began in 1933 after the establishment of indirect rule and came to a climax over the recruitment of soldiers during the Second World War. In 1943, the Kpembewura sought recruitment of soldiers among the Nawuri to support the British war effort. In order to avoid recruitment, the Nawuri paid a sum of £200 for hiring recruits elsewhere to replace Nawuri recruits. In spite of this payment, the Kpembewura forced the Nawuri to still provide their quota of recruits. The Nawuri felt swindled and cheated by the Gonja chiefs. In retaliation, a group of Nawuri attacked the Gonja in Kpandai.[159] During the

[156] Dixon, Report of Mr. Dixon, 15.
[157] Ibid.
[158] Ibid, 14.
[159] Ibid, 16. See also Mbowura, 'Nawuri-Gonja Conflict', 118.

settlement of the dispute, T. R. Talbot, the District Commissioner for Salaga made it clear to the Nawuri that Alfai belonged to the Gonja and ordered them to be either submissive or vacate the area. Nana Agyeman Atorsa, who led the Nawuri delegation, opted to migrate.[160] Many Nawuri then left Alfai to settle in Krachi and Nanumba districts.[161] In 1948, the Nawuri fugitives returned and continued to resist Gonja authority.[162] In November 1950, the Nchumuru and Nawuri jointly petitioned the United Nations Trusteeship Council detailing their maltreatment and plight under Gonja rule. They argued that their land was transferred from the Krachi district to the Gonja district against their will and since this transfer; they lost their status as indigenous groups of the land. They wanted to be returned to the Krachi district and threatened to boycott payment of levies and taxes in Alfai if steps were not taken to restore them to Krachi.[163] Their petition was dismissed by the Ad Hoc Committee of United Nations Trusteeship Council, a decision that was based largely on the representation made by the administrating power (British colonial government of the Gold Coast).[164]

The Nawuri and Nchumuru determination to secede from the Gonja district reached its peak in 1950. However, two events of considerable significance determined the course of events. The first was the transfer of the Krachi district in December 1950 to the Southern Section of Togoland. Since the British acquisition of the British Togoland in 1919, the area was divided into two, the Southern Section incorporated into the administration of the Gold Coast Colony and the Northern Section, administered from Tamale as part of the Northern Territories. Prior to December 1950, the Krachi, the Nawuri and the Nanjuro were all under the Northern Territories administration.[165] The transfer of Krachi to Southern Togoland must have given the Nawuri and Nchumuru hope that territorial transfers within the colonial demarcated territory was possible. At the same time, since Krachi was now part of the South, the colonial officials in Tamale were reluctant to sanction the loss of their most fertile and prosperous region to the Southern Section of Togoland. Although the transfer gave the Nawuri and Nchumuru some hope, the colonial officials became increasingly unwilling to grant their demand. The Nawuri

[160] Mbowura, 'Nawuri-Gonja Conflict', 118.
[161] J. Ampiah, Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Gonjas, Nawuris and Nanjuro Dispute (Accra, Government of Ghana, 1991), Part II, 49-50.
[162] Dixon, Report of Mr. Dixon, 17. Cletus Mbowura argues that the document reporting the return of the Nawuri exiles appears to be forged. See Mbowura, 'Nawuri-Gonja Conflict', 121.
[163] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/210, Nawuri and Nanjuro Under United Nations Trusteeship, Resolution Adopted by the People of the Nanjuro and Nawuri in the Kpandai Area, 8 November 1950.
[164] Ibid, Ad Hoc Committee on Petitions of the United Nations Trusteeship Council at its 20th Meeting.
[165] Dixon, Report of Mr. Dixon, 19.

and Nchumuru determination to join the Krachi district must have pushed the Konkomba to support the Gonja.

The second event was the proposal for local government reforms in 1950, resulting in the local government reforms of 1951. The 1951 local government reform was the direct result of the recommendations of the Coussey Committee to address one of the grievances that led to the 1948 riots. The committee proposed the establishment of a local government system in which elected representatives, rather than traditional authorities played the leading role in local administration. Colonial officials in East Gonja felt that once an elected body replaced the Native Authority, such a body could then decide on the future of the Alfai area. It was assumed that under the new local government system, the Nawuri could use their numerical strength to achieve their secession from Gonja or even remain within the Gonja state and use their numerical strength to challenge Gonja hegemony. However, the local government did not become entirely democratic. The local government councils of 1951 were still dominated by chiefs and traditional leaders. One-third of the members of the councils were to be composed of nominated traditional authorities and only two-thirds of the members were to be elected by universal adult suffrage through a secret ballot.[166]

When on 10 January 1951, the Alfai Local Council came into being; it was still dominated by the Gonja traditional hierarchy. Out of the four traditional members of the Council, three, including the Chair, were Gonja and only one was Nawuri (Kigbiriwura, the fetish priest of Balai, vice Chair). In a clear case of gerrymandering, all the Nchumuru villages (Nanjuro) located on the east side of the Dakar River were ironically placed within the Kpembe local council instead of Alfai, where in the raining season they were cut off from Kpembe. Nanjurowura protested against this arrangement but he received no audience from the colonial government.[167] Therefore, the Nchumuru remained a minority in the Kpembe local council. Notwithstanding the concession to chiefly power, it was obvious that the introduction of elective representation in the new system provided an opening for the Nawuri, though not quite for the Nchumuru, to challenge their domination by the Gonja minority. This shift to election weakened Gonja power and opened the way for the Konkomba participation in local politics. The Konkomba support was now crucial in the struggle for power among the Gonja, Nchumuru and Nawuri.

[166] Ibid.
[167] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/210, A Letter from Nanjurowura, Kwadwo Kuma, 9 January 1954.

Instead of the Nawuri embarking on a mobilization that would include the Konkomba in their struggle with the Gonja for power, they began a project of ethnic mobilisation towards a centralised political framework centred on chieftaincy and the exclusion of stranger groups including the Konkomba immigrants. The first step towards a grand Nawuri ethnic mobilisation was the creation of a Nawuri paramount chief (Nawuri-wura).[168] On 14 October 1951, the Nawuri gathered at Katiejeli and elected Atorsa Agyemang as the paramount chief of Nawuriland.[169] He was installed on 28 October in Kpandai and the Nawuri sent a communication to the District Commissioner requesting that Atorsa be given government recognition.[170] The colonial officials however refused to give Atorsa government recognition on the grounds that his position was not supported by history and tradition.[171] In November 1951, the Nawuri reminded the District Commissioner that since they had elected and installed 'our Nawuri chief, Nana Atorsa Nawuri (Nawuri-Wura)', when the new Council was reconvened, it should be properly constituted with Nana Atorsa as president.[172] They advocated the replacement of all Gonja traditional members in Alfai Council with Nawuri traditional members, and all 'the stranger-elements considered in their proper status.'[173] They also wanted salaries for the Nawuri traditional members, including the Fetish Priest of River Oti. More importantly, they demanded that Alfai Local Council be renamed Nawuri/Nanjuro Local Council and put under Krachi district.[174] These demands point to one objective, and that is, an attempt by the Nawuri to gain complete dominance in the Alfai area to the exclusion of the Gonja and other groups like the Konkomba. Dixon observed that in the Nawuri demands:

> The feelings of the Bassaris and the Konkomba are not considered. Although in the majority, they are regarded by the Nawuris as having no say in the matter. For with their disregard of the rights of others the Nawuris seek to establish a degree of dominance never attempted by the Gonjas.[175]

It was precisely to achieve dominance that a paramountcy was created for Nana Atorsa Agyeman I. Through chieftaincy, the Nawuri elite sought to construct a central authority that could challenge Gonja hegemony. They argued that it was 'undemocratic to subject the majority to minority rule.'[176] Indeed, the Gonja was a negligible minority in Alfai in the 1950s.

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[168] As an acephalous group, the Nawuri had no chiefs during the precolonial period.
[169] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/210, Letter of Elders of Nawuri Land, Katiejeli, 14 October 1951.
[170] Ibid, Letter of Elders of Nawuri Land, 1 November 1951.
[171] Ibid, Letter from Chief Commissioner Northern Territories, Tamale, 21 February 1952.
[172] Ibid, Elders of Nawuriland, Katiejeli, 3 November 1951.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Dixon, Report of Mr. Dixon, Appendix VIII, 4.
[175] Ibid, 27.
[176] Ibid, Appendix II, Joint Memoradum of Nana Atorsa Agyeman I Nawuri Wura and Nana Kwadjo Kumah Nanjurohene on Behalf of Ourselfs, Elders and People, n.d., 2.

In 1948, Alfai had a population of 6, 974 and the Gonja numbered only 456.[177] The Nawuri were themselves not the majority (1, 200), the majority of the people being the Konkomba and the Bassari who together numbered 4, 144.[178] By 1955, the population of Alfai had reached 16, 393 due to Konkomba immigration into the area.[179] The composition of the local council in 1952 reflected this demography. Out of the thirty-two members of the council, the Gonja occupied six seats, which included the three traditional members and six seats for the Nawuri. Migrant groups, the majority of whom were Konkomba, occupied the rest of the nine seats (Five seats for the Konkomba and four for the Bassari). This composition suggests that for the Nawuri to effectively challenge the Gonja dominance using numerical power, they would require the support of the Konkomba and Bassari.

However, the Nawuri and Nchumuru failed to seek the support of the Konkomba and other settlers in Alfai. As early as October 1950, the Nawuri were defeated on the election of representative for the Joint Council for Togoland Affairs. The Gonja candidate, Alhasan Jawula obtained seventeen votes against three votes for the Nawuri choice, J. K. Mbimadong.[180] At the opening meeting of the Council on 10 January 1951, the Nawuri were again defeated on their motion of secession from Gonja by twenty-nine votes to three.[181] The Gonja continued to command the majority in the local council although they were in reality a minority population. The Nawuri assert that the Gonja did so by threats. For instance, the Nawuri complained that on the eve of the election of the representative of the Joint Council in 1950, the Gonja threatened all the settlers, including Konkomba with confiscation of their properties and deportation if the failed to vote for Mr. Alhasan Mahama Jawula, the Gonja candidate.[182]

It is however not entirely true that the Gonja obtained the Konkomba support through threats. Nawuri objective of excluding the Konkomba and other immigrants in Alfai from local politics pushed the Konkomba to support the Gonja. Initially the Nawuri refused to accept that the immigrant groups in Alfai had the right to participate in local decision-making. In August 1951, the Nawuri and Nchumuru complained about how the Gonja and the colonial state were using aliens to sabotage their course. They identified these 'aliens or strangers-elements' as 'Gonjas, Konkombas, Bassaris, Kotokolis, Dagombas and Moshis, who have come to exploit our virgin

[177] PRAAD/A. ADM 5/2/9, Census of Population 1948, report and Tables, 1948, 369.
[178] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/210, Petition to the Trusteeship Council Regarding Kpandai Area, Chief Commissioner, Tamale, 1 February 1951.
[179] PRAAD/T. NRG 8 /3/195, Togoland Report, Annual Report on Togoland 1955, 1.
[180] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/210, Memorandum in Connection with the Article Appearing in the Ashanti Pioneer of December 13th 1950, 2.
[181] Dixon, Report of Mr. Dixon, Appendix XI, Kpandai-10 January 1951.
[182] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/210, Memorandum in Connection with the Article Appearing in the Ashanti Pioneer, 1.

lands and shift to other areas after the land has been laid waste.'[183] They complained that through the instrumentality of the Gonja and 'with Imperial backing' these 'nomadic aliens where made to register as voters in Alfai and Nanjuro, and after they had 'wrecked our very existence to the advantage of the Gonjas, [they] would leave the country back to their respective homes (the majority from the French zone).'[184] For the Nawuri the Konkomba should not be allowed to participate in local council elections. They did not see 'why a group of strangers on our land' should decide their future for them.[185]

After they failed to prevent the Konkomba and other immigrants from participating in local politics, the Nawuri began to seek their support actively. In 1952, the District Commissioner observed that the Nawuri were coercing the Konkomba to become involved in the Nawuri Gonja dispute.[186] During the registration for a bye-election in Kambowuli and Katiejeli in 1952, it was alleged:

> The Nawuri leaders of the campaign induced many of the immigrant settlers to make their claims, by using the threat that if they did not comply, they (the Nawuri) would not propitiate the land spirits for the benefit of the settlers' farms. These settlers had not previously shown any interest in registration as voters, or in the Gonja-Nawuri dispute.[187]

Despite these threats, the Nawuri failed to obtain the support of the Konkomba. In 1952, another Nawuri motion for secession from Gonja was defeated in the local council by twenty-one to three votes.[188]

The 1956 plebiscite results further manifested Konkomba support for the Gonja. When in 1956, the independence of the Gold Coast became imminent, the question arose as to whether the British Trust Territory should be integrated into the Gold Coast at independence or remain under the United Nations' rule. The British government naturally favoured integration (union), a platform the Convention People's Party (CPP) under Kwame Nkrumah pursued.[189] The Togoland Congress (TC) led by S. G. Antor sought the unification of the two Togolands.[190] By 1954, the Togoland issue was well defined for the parties, with the CPP and the Northern People's Party (NPP) firmly supporting integration (union) with the Gold Coast and the

[183] Ibid, Memorandum of the Nanjuros and Nawuris in the North of Krachi, Togoland Under United Kingdom Trusteeship, to the Minister of Local Government, 19, August 1951, 3.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid, Chief Commissioner, N. T. Tamale, 5 May 1952.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Dixon, Report of Mr. J. Dixon, 30.
[189] Ladouceur, *Chiefs and Politicians,* 135.
[190] J. S. Coleman, 'Togoland', *International Conciliation*, no. 509, (1956), 28.

Togoland Congress and all the Ewe parties supporting separation.[191] The Gonja naturally supported integration because they hoped for the unification of Alfai with their lands in the Gold Coast. Although the Nawuri and Nchumuru, had no interest whatsoever in French Togoland because their territories were located entirely within the British Togoland, they supported Togoland unification. They argued that maltreatment under the Gonja had pushed them to support Togoland Unification. In doing so, their only objective was to secure secession from Gonja authority because 'the hazards of Togo unification' were seen to be less irksome than 'Gonja hegemony and oppression.'[192] The Nawuri believed that separation was the only way to be free from Gonja domination. In spite of the intensive campaign mounted by the Nawuri in support of separation, the results showed that the Konkomba-dominated villages generally supported integration.[193] The Konkomba support for integration contrary to the preference of their kinsmen in their homeland suggests that the Nawuri insistence on traditional privileges to the exclusion of the strangers alienated the Konkomba and pushed them into closer alliance with the Gonja.

The Konkomba perception of their own vulnerability in the power struggle between the host groups played a part in their decision to support the Gonja against the Nawuri. In the 1950s, the Konkomba immigrants were 'oblivious to considerations of status'[194] as long as they could obtain land and make their farms with the approval of those who held power. Since the Gonja wielded political authority in Alfai, and could grant them land, the Konkomba were inclined to support the status quo. As outsiders, the Konkomba were more inclined to accept their subordination under Gonja rule than the Nchumuru and Nawuri were prepared to accept. In the Nawuri-Nchumuru-Gonja struggle, ethnicity became an important political tool for Nawuri mobilisation, which centred on exclusion of stranger groups like the Konkomba. By their claim to traditional privileges, the Nawuri elite had lost sight of the changing political conditions in the country. In the 1950s, power in local government was gradually passing to the electorates, irrespective of status or ethnicity. By focusing on ethnicity as a resource against Gonja power, the Nawuri alienated the Konkomba immigrants who held the numerical power.

[191] *Ibid.*
[192] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/210, Nawuri and Nanjuro Under United Nations Trusteeship, Joint Memoradum of Nana Atorsa Agyeman I Nawuriwura and Nana Kwadjo Kumah Nanjurohene on Behalf of Ourselves, Elders and People to the Commissioner of Enquiry on the Nawuri/Nanjuro Affairs, 26 March 1955.
[193] PRAAD/H. VRG DA/D.118, Plebiscite Maps, The Gold Coast Gazette, 14 May 1956, 623.
[194] Goody, *Comparative Studies in Kinship*, 162.

In order to maintain the loyalty and support of the Konkomba, the Gonja began to grant them political autonomy and recognition at the local level at the expense of the Nawuri. For example, in 1951, the Gonja with the support of the British administration appointed Manga Bignali as the first Konkomba chief of Kpandai.[195] Until his death in 2014 Bignali was the most respected Konkomba leader in Kpandai and together with Gau, the Bassari chief, they collected taxes from all the Konkomba and the Bassari of Kpandai.[196] In 1955, the Gonja rejected Nana Leseni, a Nawuri, as the headman of Lesenipe and Longito in favour of a Konkomba.[197] In his petition to Dixon in 1955, as many as six Konkomba headmen were included in the fifteen-member council of elders of the Kanakulaiwura.[198] Among the Konkomba elders, Najombi Gazere (although in the Nanumba village of Lungni), and Muyiba were held in very high esteem by the Kanakulaiwura.[199]

The recognition of Konkomba headmen by the Kanaikulaiwura was calculated to undermine the Nawuri authority over the Konkomba. The position of power which the Gonja chiefs allowed the Konkomba to exercise was not only meant to retain their support and loyalty, but it was also to weaken and draw a wedge into any alliance the Nawuri and Nchumuru may attempt to establish with the Konkomba for the purpose of challenging their exclusion from traditional power. Whereas this illustrates the way the Gonja creatively exploited the vulnerable position of the Konkomba to retain power in a period of increasing democratisation at the local level; it does reveal how the tension between the hosts groups enabled the Konkomba to obtain some amount of political autonomy in Alfai during the colonial period. While the Konkomba settlers had gained some political rights in Alfai during the colonial period, those in Nanumba could not negotiate for political participation. The Nanumba chiefs were able to keep the Konkomba on the margins of political space in Nanun by denying them political representation both at the traditional and modern state levels. In predominantly Konkomba settlements, the Konkomba were not allowed to appoint leaders to settle petty quarrels among themselves nor collect taxes and levies. This position of the Konkomba was further worsened in the postcolonial period.

[195] Obituary, The Biography of Ubor Bignali Mangan, 2015, 2.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Dixon, Report of Mr. Dixon, Appendix VIII, Note of Meeting Held by Mr. J. Dixon at Kpandai, 31 March and 1 April 1955.
[198] Ibid, A Petition of the Kanankulaiwura and his Elders of the Alfai Area in Gonja District to J. Dixon Esq., The Commissioner of Enquiry, 25 March 1955.
[199] Interview with Bikanyi Kuyoon, First Generation Migrant and Linguist of Nana Nandi of Banda, Chinderi, 9 January 2017.

Conclusion

The chapter has demonstrated that the colonial state allowed and even encouraged free movement of population across ethnic spaces but excluded the ethnic strangers from traditional political power. In the case of the Konkomba, their migration into the ethnic spaces south of their homeland coincided with the colonial economic policy shift towards developing the Northern Territories into the breadbasket of the region. As industrious farmers as the Konkomba were, the colonial state favoured their migration into the area. They saw the Konkomba migrants as good farmers who could help stimulate peasant food production without disturbing the rural production system. This favourable view of the colonial state towards the Konkomba immigrants encouraged large-scale influx of Konkomba into the Krachi-Gonja-Nanumba areas in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. During this period, the Konkomba received adequate protection from the colonial state against exploitation and extortion of the host communities as they made useful contribution to the colonial economy.

The host groups, particularly the Nawuri and Nchumuru attempted to exclude the Konkomba from participation in local decision-making. But the intense competition among the indigenous groups over local control allowed the Konkomba to negotiate for autonomy. During the intense Nawuri and Nchumuru mobilisation against the Gonja rulers in the 1950s, the Konkomba supported the Gonja and remained loyal to the Gonja traditional elite. The chapter demonstrated that Konkomba perception of their own vulnerability played a part in their decision to side with the historically centralised groups. The need to retain Konkomba loyalty and support against the Nawuri and Nchumuru forced the Gonja to allow the Konkomba to exercise some level of political control over their own affairs. By this, the Konkomba exploited the tensions and power struggle among their host communities to escape strict political domination and marginalisation. The chapter concludes that during the colonial period, the Konkomba enjoyed a certain degree of protection, political autonomy and economic independence that renders the description of their status from the perspective of marginality inadequate. However, as the next chapter will show, after independence, the situation changed and the Konkomba began to experience profound political and social challenges, which forced them to resort to migration and ethnic mobilisation.

Chapter Six

Postcolonial Power Shift, Konkomba Marginalisation and Ethnic Mobilisation, 1960s – 1980s

Introduction

The previous chapter has discussed how the colonial state favoured the Konkomba immigrants and protected them from the exploitation and oppression of local chiefs in Nawol. This chapter examines the Konkomba position after independence. When political authority passed on to local officials after the independence, the nascent state had weak local government institutions. In the absence of strong state precence at the local level, chiefs came to control both traditional authority and the emerging local state institutions. This allowed them to take advantage of state power, to exploit and oppress the Konkomba settlers. Scholars have discussed the position of strangers in independent African states showing how immigrants quickly moved from being one of the privileged groups under colonialism to a position of vulnerability after independence.[1] This chapter contributes to this literature by focusing on the position of internal immigrants like the Konkomba. It discusses the discriminatory policies of payment of land rents and tributes imposed on the Konkomba. The chapter analyses the Konkomba response to their progressively marginalising position within the rapidly changing socio-political context. It argues that after independence the host groups attempted to exclude the Konkomba from local politics and institutionalise their exclusion, using the authority of formal state institutions. However, what the host groups had not anticipated was the extent to which the Konkomba would mobilise to demand a share of their autonomy within the established ethnic political spaces.

Postcolonial Power Shift and the Konkomba Position in the 1960s

During the colonial period, the British incorporated chieftaincy into the colonial state, making them agents of the state.[2] As agents of the colonial state, chiefs wielded much authority but the presence and active supervision of the District Commissioners denied them absolute power over their subjects. For instance, although chiefs exercised considerable authority over rural

[1] See M. Peil, 'Host Reactions: Aliens in Ghana', in W. A. Shack and E. Skinner (eds.), *Strangers in African Societies* (Berkely: University of California Press, 1979), 123- 140. Sudarkasa, 'From Stranger to Alien'. M. Peil, 'The Expulsion of West African Aliens', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 9, 2 (1971), 205-229. V. Jamal, 'Asians in Uganda, 1880-1972: Inequality and Expulsion', *Economic History Review,* New Series, 29, 4 (1976), 602-616. S. Balaton-Chrimes, *Ethnicity, Democracy and Citizenship in Africa.*

[2] K. Arhin, *Traditional Rule in Ghana: Past and Present* (Accra: Sedco, 1985), 108.

populations during the colonial period, the District Commissioners controlled stranger policy at the local level.[3] With the end of colonialism, however, chiefs came to dominate local government institutions and regained authority to control immigrant groups, which had been lost in the colonial period. Thus, following independence, there was a crucial power shift towards chiefs and their ethnic groups. This appears rather absurd in the Ghanaian context because the Convention Peoples Party (CPP) government under Kwame Nkrumah was openly hostile towards chiefs and sought to weaken chieftaincy through legislation and various forms of administrative controls.[4] Although Nkrumah was committed to the elimination of chieftaincy and to building a country in which local loyalties would give way to a common Ghanaian citizenship, he was very unsuccessful in doing so.[5] By the 1950s, chieftaincy in Ghana had become very difficult to regulate or control even by the colonial state.[6] In spite of Nkrumah's anti-chief stance, chieftaincy continued to wield enormous power in the rural areas.

Nkrumah's attitude towards chieftaincy was itself ambivalent. While he found chieftaincy conservative and outdated, and rigidly stressed equal citizenship, he also used chiefs as a tool to win political support for his government. Nkrumah's creation of Regional Houses of chiefs alongside Regional Assemblies served to enhance chiefly power.[7] He also installed new chiefs where there had been none, while promoting others to paramount status.[8] Although Nkrumah abolished traditional representation in the local councils in 1961 and made all membership in the councils' elective[9], chiefs continued to control the affairs of local councils. In northern Ghana, the influence of chiefs was even more pronounced. The reason for this was that the colonial educational system in the Northern Territories made education available only to chiefly families.[10] Because of this, at independence, the political apparatus, including politicians and clerks of government institutions, was in the hands of the chiefly families.[11]

[3] Shack, 'Open Systems and Closed Boundaries', 41.
[4] R. Rathbone, *Nkrumah & the Chiefs: The Politics of Chieftaincy in Ghana 1950-60 (*Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000), 113-25.
[5] *Ibid*.
[6] R. Rathbone, 'Kwame Nkrumah and the Chiefs: The Fate of "Natural Rulers" Under Nationalist Government', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* 10 (2000), 50, 60.
[7] Rathbone, *Nkrumah & the Chiefs*, 109-10.
[8] In Krachi, the Nchumuru, Achode, Ntrobu and Adelle chiefs were raised to the status of divisional chiefs and given their own traditional areas. After the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966, the Krachiwura made several efforts to get Krachi restored to its former superior position among the four traditional areas but the severed chiefs refused to submit to the Krachiwura's authority. See PRAAD/H. VRG/NA/21, Krachi Traditional Affairs, Restoration of Krachi Traditional Area to Its Former Position, 3 June 1968.
[9] K. Ahwoi, *Local Government and Decentralisation in Ghana* (Accra: Unimax Macmillan limited, 2010), 17.
[10] For a detailed discussion on colonial educational policy in northern Ghana, see R. B. Bening, *History of Education in Northern Ghana, 1907-76* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 1990).
[11] Ladouceur, *Chiefs and Politicians*, 86.

These government clerks, who were mostly children of chiefs, worked to enhance the authority of chiefs in local politics. More than this, the local councils were so weak that they could hardly survive without the support of the state councils, which were made up of traditional authorities.[12] Under the local government arrangements of the 1960s, state councils assisted the local councils in the collection of local revenue.[13] In many cases, the chiefs took advantage of their involvement in the revenue collection process to enforce payments of tributes and land rents.[14]

In Alfai (East Gonja), for example, Gonja chiefs and their ethnic group came to dominate the affairs of the local council at the expense of the Nawuri and the Konkomba who were the demographic majority. As the Gonja ruling elite came to dominate the local council and traditional politics, they became powerful enough to exclude the Konkomba from local political participation. In the early 1960s, Alhaji Baba Dusaiwura, a Gonja sub-chief in Kpandai, became the chairperson of the Kpandai Local Council and came to dominate every aspect of Kpandai local political affairs.[15] With power from the local council and as a chief, Alhaji Baba began to unleash terrible brutality, maltreatment and exploitation on the Konkomba immigrants in and around Kpandai.[16] This crucial change in Gonja attitude towards the Konkomba in Kpandai after independence is particularly surprising. In the early 1950s and even earlier, as discussed in chapter five, the Konkomba had supported the Gonja chiefs in their struggle against the Nawuri and Nchumuru groups in Alfai and Nanjuro. It is ironic that the Gonja began to maltreat the Konkomba who had been their ally. Meanwhile the Gonja had not gained complete control over Alfai. Even though in principle, the Kpembe Traditional Council exercised jurisdiction over Alfai and Nanjuro, the local Nawuri and Nchumuru had not fully accepted this arrangement, and would not allow any payment of tributes by the Konkomba in

[12] Rathbone, 'Kwame Nkrumah and the Chiefs', 55.
[13] See for example PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/111, Nanumba Traditional Constitution and Procedure, Minutes of the 7th Meeting of the Nanumba Traditional Council, 4 July 1969.
[14] Interview with Ujan Mawon, Former KOYA Chairman, Lungni Branch, Lungni, 16 February 2017.
[15] Dusaiwura was a Gonja chieftaincy title in Alfai, second only to the Kunakulaiwura. A village by name Dusai once existed at Kpandai area, but had ceased to exist and therefore the Dusaiwura did not preside over any village. The Nawuris view the creation of Dusaiwura by the Gonja as an imposition of a ghost chief on a ghost village. See PRAAD/T. NRG8/2/171, Installation of Kanunkulai-wura, Kanunkulai Skin Dispute, 31 May 1971, 3. In this thesis, Alfai and Kpandai is used interchangeably as they both refer to the same geographical and administrative area.
[16] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/161, Kpandai Affair, A Letter from Yaw Atorsah to the DC, 1 August 1964. It is reported that Alhaji Dusaiwura personaly assaulted a certain Konkomba man to the extent that his ear bled, rendering him partially deaf. See also, Ibid, Move to Eliminate Extortion, Fraud, Maltreatment of People, Stealing Embezzlement of Council funds/Property; and Embloc Migration of People, Kpandai District, 19 September 1964.

Alfai to the Gonja chiefs. In this sense, the Gonja chiefs could not exploit the Konkomba settlers by extracting land rents and tributes from them.

Extortion of the Konkomba in Alfai was through the collection of basic rates. From the 1960s, the Konkomba came under intense exploitation and extortion by the Gonja revenue collectors and chiefs. In some cases, the Konkomba settlers were over-charged but mostly they were made to pay the same rates more than once in the same year.[17] In 1963, Nana Agyeman Atorsa, a Nawuri leader, presented a list of four Konkomba whose extorted sums amounted to £G470.[18] Apart from being extorted through the collection of local rates, the Konkomba were also made to pay huge sums of money before they were allowed to perform their funerals. In one particular instance, Kpanja Konkomba of Ketiejeli was obliged to pay an amount of £3 before he was allowed to perform his mother's funeral.[19] On another occasion, Alhaji Baba Dusaiwura took £19 from Konja of Lessenipe for performing a funeral without seeking permission from the local council.[20] These extortions and exploitations gave rise to a large wave of Konkomba emigration from Kpandai area in the mid-1960s. The majority of the emigrants headed north to the Nanumba district. In April 1964, many Konkomba families – Taminbo from Nkanchina, Billodam from Lesenipe, Kabraka from Ketiejeli, and Blikon from Kambowule – were listed to have emigrated out of Kpandai local council to various villages in Nanumba district.[21] In order to prevent the Konkomba exodus from Kpandai, the Dusaiwura caused the council to pass a law requiring all Konkomba migrating out of Kpandai district to pay £10 per every lorry load of yam seeds.[22] The council was empowered to seize the yam seeds of those who could not afford this amount. Considering the subsistence nature of Konkomba agriculture in the 1960s, £10 was an extremely high levy, meant to serve as a barrier for their free mobility out of Kpandai.

In early 1964, Atorsa petitioned the Regional Administration in Tamale against the activities of Alhaji Baba Dusaiwura, pointing out among other things the exploitation of the Konkomba

[17] In 1963, Damanko Konkomba, with the help of Agyeman Atorsa (the leader of the Nawuri), lodged a complaint with the police against the Dusaiwura and his rate collectors for exploiting him and his people during the collection of basic rates. In June, a number of aggrieved persons sent a petition to the Regional Commissioner to demand a refund of money extorted from them by the Dusaiwura, the majority of these people were Konkomba. By the orders of the Regional Commissioner, Alhaji Baba was compelled to refund a sum of over £G300 to the petitioners. See PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/161, A letter from the District Commissioner, Kpandai, 19 September 1964.
[18] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/161, A Letter from Nana Agyeman Atorsah I, 19 July 1964.
[19] Ibid, A Letter from Yaw Atorsah to the DC, 1 August 1964.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Ibid, Report of the Investigation into the Allegations of Mr. Atorsa, 9 May 1964.
[22] Ibid.

and embezzlement of council funds.[23] In April 1964, the Regional Commissioner instituted an inquiry into the allegation, which exonerated Alhaji Baba from embezzlement charges on the assertion that the money collected from Konkomba farmers for moving their seed yam was properly accounted for. [24] However, accounting for the money paid was obviously one thing and the arbitrariness of the levies was another. By exonerating Alhaji Baba, the state officials in Tamale had implicitly sanctioned discriminatory and arbitrary levies against the Konkomba settlers, which served to legitimise their marginality. However, Atorsa's petition reveals an interesting turning point in Nawuri-Konkomba relations. There was a shift in the alliance system, where the Konkomba became increasingly allied with the Nawuri against the Gonja.

In the subsequent years, the activities of the Dusaiwura caused resentment among the Konkomba and caused them to form close alliance with the Nawuri. Meanwhile, a large number of the Konkomba continued to migrate out of Alfai.[25] In July 1964, J. M. Zakariah, the District Commissioner, reported that,

> Alhaji Baba's maltreatment and extortion has compelled many Konkombas to migrate last year and this year some are prepared to migrate en bloc from the District, to the detriment of the Kpandai Local Council. This has led to and still leads to a regrettable flop in population in the District.[26]

He reckoned that the Konkomba emigrations were as a result of their being ignorant of their civil liberties and rights. He suggested that it was out of ignorance that the Konkomba chose to migrate instead of stay on and fight for their rights.[27] It is doubtful if the Konkomba had any chance in fighting for their rights in a completely Gonja dominated local government. All the ten permanent employees of the Alfai Local Council, including the District Commissioner were all ethnic Gonja.[28] Apart from taking control over traditional institutions and the police, Alhaji Baba was well connected with the top politicians in Tamale and Accra making the District

[23] Ibid.
[24] Ibid.
[25] The Kanakulaiwura (the chief of Kpandai), however, distanced himself from the activities of the Dusaiwura. In a letter to the President, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, Kanakulaiwura stated that the maltreatment that was causing so much resentment among the Konkomba was emanating from 'members of a single Jawula family, with Alhaji Dusaiwura as the backbone of all these maltreatments'.[25] He was of the view that with the firm action of the District Commissioner, J.M. Zakariah the mass movement of 'the poor Konkomba' from the district would cease. See PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/161, A Letter From Kanunkulaiwura, Iddi & Subjects, 25 November 1964.
[26] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/161, Report on the Activities of Alhaji Baba Dusai-Wura, Chairman of Kpandai Local Council, 23 July 1964.
[27] Ibid. In order to reduce this ignorance, the District Commissioner embarked on public education of the masses through rallies and meetings. On 18 July, the Dusaiwura attempted to interrupt a public meeting organised by the District Commissioner.
[28] Ibid, Move to Eliminate Extortion, Fraud, Maltreatment of People, Stealing Embezzlement of Council funds/Property; and Embloc Migration of People, Kpandai District, 19 September 1964, 2.

Commissioner powerless in his attempts to protect the Konkomba.[29] In this situation, the only option available to the Konkomba was exit. James Scott has observed that resistance of subordinate groups were disguised, muted and veiled. This is because the realities of unequal power relations meant that their political action should be concealed and cryptic.[30] Mobility was a classic example of such a disguised resource for politically weak groups, such as the Konkomba. Moving away from centres of oppression and exploitation had always been the preferred option for the Konkomba when they came into conflict with powerful state actors. It is not surprising that the Konkomba resorted to mobility once again when they came under pressure from Alhaji Baba. However, moving to Nanumba district was a miscalculation for the Konkomba. In the 1960s, the relationship between the Konkomba and the Nanumba was evolving into a 'feudal' system where the Konkomba were coming under the severe economic exploitation of Nanumba chiefs.

Tributes, Land Rent, and Konkomba Exclusion in Nanun, 1961-1979

In spite of Nkrumah's opposition to colonial rule, the independent Ghanaian state was built on colonial political structures of ethnic territories introduced by the Native Authority system. Administrative districts continued to be based on ethnic groups. The Nanumba-sub district was based on the Nanumba ethnic group centred on Bimbilla and all powers were consolidated in the hands of the Bimbilla Na.[31] Unlike East Gonja where the Gonja allowed the Konkomba to have their own headmen in predominantly Konkomba settlements in the 1950s, in Nanun, such a privilege was not available. With the exception of Gazere Najombi who acted as the headman of Lungni, no Konkomba was recognised as a headman in Nanumba district prior to 1979. Even so, Najombi was removed in 1970.[32] Exclusion from traditional leadership and positions of power at the local level was the major demonstration of the growing Konkomba marginalisation in Nanun. Without local headmen to settle petty disputes among them, the Konkomba were completely dependent on their Nanumba hosts.

In 1961, the District Commissioner brought up the issue of Konkomba representation on the Nanumba State Council. On 15 August 1961, it was resolved that the secretary sends out

[29] Ibid.
[30] J. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcript*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 137.
[31] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/35, Nanumba Kingdom, 1931.
[32] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/135, Appointments, Depositions and Deaths of Chiefs in Nanumba, A Letter from District Office, Yendi, 7 September 1970.

summons to every chief who had Konkomba settlers on his land to bring two Konkomba elders each to the next meeting on 29 August. These Konkomba elders and the state council would together decide suitable Konkomba representation on the council.[33] At the next meeting, a letter from the District Commissioner explaining the need for a Konkomba representative was read out. It stated that it was necessary for the Konkomba to have representation on the Nanumba State Council because they constituted a substantial part of the population in Nanun. In so doing, the state could enlist their cooperation, and such representation would promote effective implementation of government policies as well as help project the principles of socialism. In particular, the government required Konkomba cooperation in the implementation of its policy of fee-free education, which could only be achieved through a credible Konkomba representation on the state council.[34] However, the Nanumba chiefs denounced the District Commissioners' advice. The Juo-Na rejected any idea of encouraging Konkomba involvement in Nanumba State affairs and argued that it would be impossible to choose a Konkomba representative to the satisfaction of all the different Konkomba groups in the Nanumba district.[35]

The rejection of Konkomba representation has very little to do with the inability of finding an acceptable Konkomba representative, but with the Nanumba fear that the chosen Konkomba representative might obtain the status of a chief in the eyes of the Konkomba and compete with Nanumba chiefs for control over the Konkomba in Nanun. The District Commissioner anticipated this kind of reasoning and tried to assuage the fears of the chiefs by assuring them that the Konkomba representative would carry out only government policies and would not interfere with the authority of Nanumba chiefs over their Konkomba subjects.[36] In spite of this assurance, the Nanumba chiefs rejected Konkomba representation on the council arguing that the Konkomba were only strangers in Nanun and that the question of 'Konkomba representation be put away forever.'[37] Denying the Konkomba political representation was one way by which the chiefly groups excluded the Konkomba settlers from full membership of their new communities. Keeping the Konkomba settlers outside the Nanumba State Council perpetually consigned them to the political margins of their host communities.

[33] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/111, Nanumba Traditional Council Constitutions and Proceedings, Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the Nanumba Traditional Council, Bimbilla, 15 August 1961.
[34] Ibid, Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the Nanumba Traditional Council, Bimbilla, 30 August 1961.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.

Having excluded the Konkomba from decision-making at the local state level, the Nanumba chiefs got the free hand not only to construct but also to transform Nanumba customary practices into an exploitative instrument against the Konkomba settlers. In 1967, the Council had affirmed the powers and authority of chiefs over matrimonial cases, criminal offences, and the general responsibility to ensure peace and order in the district.[38] During this period, large numbers of Konkomba settlers continued to arrive in Nanun because of the floods of Akosombo dam in the Krachi district and exploitation by the Gonja in Kpandai. By the late 1960s, the Konkomba constituted the largest ethnic population in Nanumba district with over 20,000 inhabitants against the 18,000 Nanumba.[39] In Konkomba migration process, a key factor was the ability of the prospective migrant to establish contact with a prominent individual in their destination. Once the first Konkomba family was settled in an area, the subsequent migrants simply established contacts with their kinsman who sought permission from the chief on their behalf.[40] It is possible that in the 1960s, Konkomba immigrants simply obtained land from their earlier relatives who had settled in Nanun for some time and paid very little regard to the Nanumba chiefs. One Nanumba lamented that, during the 1970s 'there had been the establishment of over forty-five new Konkomba houses around Opijua, Gundoo and Nyankpani areas without saying even good morning to the traditional chiefs'.[41] The Nanumba resented the situation where the Konkomba created new settlements without permission from Nanumba chiefs. In a direct response to the increasing Konkomba settlements in Nanun, the council resolved that chiefs should be informed whenever new settlements were being established in the district, which would allow them to monitor and control the growing Konkomba settlements.[42]

Peter Skalnik, an anthropologist who studied Nanumba in the 1980s, suggests that the Konkomba immigrants who came to Nanun in the 1940s agreed to pay allegiance to the Nanumba chiefs in return for land to settle and farm. This, to him, included payment of tributes in the form of labour and provision of foodstuffs.[43] On the contrary, the Konkomba insist that they paid no tributes to Nanumba chiefs in the colonial period. They argue that the custom that required the Konkomba to supply annual labour and a portion of their farm produce to

[38] Ibid, Minutes of 2nd Meeting of the Nanumba Traditional Council, Bimbilla, 27 August 1967.
[39] Skalnik, 'Nanumba Chieftaincy Facing the Ghanaian State', 94.
[40] Interview with Unanjin Kpadin, Former local NDC Chairman, Chamba, 8 January 2017.
[41] Recorded in S. Sa-Ed, 'Inter-Ethnic Conflicts: Its Effects on Educational Development in the Nanumba District of Northern Region of Ghana' (B. A. Long Essay, U.D.S. Tamale, 1999), 36.
[42] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/111, The 3rd Meeting of the Nanumba Traditional Council Held at the Bimbilla Local Council Hall, 18 November 1967.
[43] Skalnik, 'Nanumba Chieftaincy Facing the Ghanaian State', 93.

Nanumba chiefs was a postcolonial construct.[44] The principle of tribute paying in Nanun was that something should be given to the chief as acknowledgement of his suzerainty.[45] The actual value of the tribute was immaterial so long as something was paid. This was always in the form of farm produce or labour and every man paid according to his ability as a matter of duty.[46] Besides this form of tribute, there was also the usual hunter's tribute of one leg of any animal killed and one tusk of an elephant to the Bimbilla Na.[47] Strangers were, however, not to pay tribute. As H. W. Amherst, the Assistant District Commissioner of Bimbilla, notes 'I do not think that the present given by a stranger on settling in Nanumba land is properly tribute, but is more likely the usual present of a supplication.'[48] In 1931, Amherst reported that there was some Konkomba population at Joeli and there was no question of rent paid by them.[49] Even if the earlier Konkomba settlers on Nanumba land paid tribute, as Peter Skalnik claims, it was scrapped after direct taxation was introduced in 1935. This tax was a commutation of tribute in labour or kind, which the chiefs collected and retained a percentage of the tax collected in their villages.[50] As late as 1961, the Bimbilla Na told Mr. Appiah, a land tenure investigation officer, that all citizens were free to settle and farm in Nanun wherever they liked without any restriction and this included strangers.[51]

Extraction of labour and foodstuffs from Konkomba settlers in Nanun began in 1969. This was a direct consequence of the policies of the pro-chief governments in Accra. After the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966, the National Liberation Council (NLC) government of General J. A. Ankrah made efforts to restore the powers and authority of the chieftaincy institution. When K. A. Busia took over power after the 1969 election, he continued the process of restoring the authority and autonomy of the chieftaincy institution. As a sociologist, Busia was a strong advocate of chieftaincy and resented the distortions the institution had been subjected

[44] During an interview with Uninkpel Tamanja, he stated that when they first settled at Nakpayili they did not farm for Nanumba chiefs. Farming for chiefs started only when they arrived at Nanto in the 1970s. He recounted thus, 'They would ask you to go and farm for the chief and when there is a funeral, they took drink and a cow leg.' Ubor Tibineen Mpoamor even went further to claim that in the past, the Nanumba chiefs had no authority over the Konkomba and every Konkomba was free in Nanun but the educated Nanumba brought the Konkomba under Nanumba chieftaincy. Interview with Ubor Tibineen Mpoamor, Konkomba Chief of Nakpa, Nakpa, 13 January 2017.
[45] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/35, 'Nanumba Kingdom', 29.
[46] Ibid, 29.
[47] Ibid, 30.
[48] Ibid.
[49] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/30, Informal Diary of Ass. District Commissioner, H. W. Amherst while in Bimbilla, 25 September 1931.
[50] See B.G. Der, 'Tax Collection in Northern Ghana, 1909-1950, An Aspect of Administrative History, Part Two, And Taxation Under Indirect Rule', Unpublished Manuscript, Department of History, U.C.C, Cape Coast, n. d.
[51] PRAAD/T. NRG8/2/111, Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the Nanumba State Council Held on Saturday, March 4, 1961.

to during Nkrumah's era.[52] Efforts to restore the chieftaincy institution to its pre-Nkrumah influence was accompanied by a hightened ethnic competition and discrimination (tribalism) that threatened the progress and unity of the country.[53] Ethnicity in Ghana was intimately connected to the land. During the colonial period, land northern lands were still under the colonial government. Under Nkrumah, land was under the direct control of the Minister Responsible for Lands, and this did not change significantly after Nkrumah was overthrown in 1966.

The change came in 1969 when the new constitution vested all lands 'in the appropriate stool on behalf of and in trust for the subjects of the stool'.[54] By this provision, the traditional authorities obtained some level of control over land. It was therefore not a coincidence that attempts to extract labour and payment of foodstuff from Konkomba settlers in Nanun began in 1969. It all began with a document produced in October of that year by the Nanumba State Council titled 'Nanumba Customary Regulations and Procedures'.[55] This document outlined all the customary practices of Nanun including chieftaincy, marriage, festivals, taboos etc. But of paramount importance for the Konkomba were those regulations dealing with land tenure and the powers of chiefs. It provided that chiefs had the right by custom to appeal to their subjects to help them on their farms and 'it shall be obligatory for people to assist the chiefs. Failure to comply with this, the chiefs shall demand an amount of N¢10 from the person who failed to work on the farm'. [56] In a peasant economy of the 1960s, a fine of N¢10 was enough deterrent to ensure compliance. Until 1969, a fine in monetary terms for refusing a call for labour by a chief was unknown in Nanun.[57] Another provision in the document that strengthened the hands of the Nanumba chiefs over the Konkomba was the provision that chiefs were allowed to allocate land to 'people who wished to settle for farming within their villages and to get quantity of foodstuff yearly from the farmer concerned till a specified period of

[52] This view is expressed in his own work, *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti: A Study of the Influence of Contemporary Social Changes on Ashanti Political Institutions*, (London: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, 1951).
[53] PRAAD/H. VRG/ED/966, Kete-Krachi Field Reports, 9 February 1970. See also Talton, *Politics of Social Change in Ghana*, 133.
[54] Bening, 'Land Policy and Administration'. 'Stool' is the symbol of chiefly authorty in southern Ghana.
[55]PRAAD/T. NRG/8/2/111, Minutes of the Nanumba Traditional Council, Bimbilla, 3-4 October, 1969, 5
[56] Ibid.
[57] P. Skalnik, 'Questioning the Concept of the State in Indigenous Africa', *Social Dynamics*, 9, 2 (1983), 18.

which the chief may wish'.[58] Settler farmers who wanted to migrate to another village were not permitted to sell their homes because they did not own the land.[59]

By the mid-1970s, these practices had evolved into strict customary obligations for the Konkomba. The Nanumba argued that these obligations were customary and binding on all residents of Nanun. The argument that labour and other services to chiefs were customary and ought to be honoured must have been legitimate in the past but not so in the 1960s and 1970s. In the past the chiefs were not paid. These services were a means by which the chiefs eked out a living. But in the 1970s, all-important chiefs in Nanun were paid from levies and taxes of the local council.[60] Secondly, the claim that the obligations were also binding on the ordinary Nanumba and therefore the Konkomba had no cause to complain was not supported by the facts. Although these customary rules were often framed in general terms, in practice, only the Konkomba settlers were expected to provide services in the form of labour and foodstuff. Nanumba citizens and other non-Konkomba settlers were not obliged to render such services.[61] Settlers of Islamic faith such as the Kotokoli, Hausa and Wangara were only required to render their services in spiritual terms, by offering prayers for the growth of the state, and against evil spirits and all forms of disasters.[62]

In June 1973, Bimbilla Na, Dasana Abudulai, instructed all his sub-chiefs not to allow strangers to freely settle in their villages until a written agreement was signed by the 'aliens' to abide by the customs and traditions of the Nanumba. Any migrant who refused to accept this agreement was to be denied permission to settle.[63] In so doing, the chiefs manipulated customs and traditions to serve their interests. By the 1970s, the very symbolic respect of tribute payment among the Nanumba had been transformed into a feudal arrangement where the Konkomba settlers had become a source of cheap labour for not only Nanumba chiefs but also the masses. Whiles in Nanun, the Nanumba chiefs exploited and consigned the Konkomba to the political margins, the Konkomba in the Krachi district succeeded in negotiating for political power and autonomy.

[58] PRAAD/T. NRG/8/2/111, Minutes of the Nanumba Traditional Council, Bimbilla, 3-4 October, 1969, 5.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Ibid, Minutes of the 9th Session of the Nanumba Traditional Council, Bimbilla, 4 March 1971.
[61] In 1978, this discriminatory customary requirement was formalised by the Alhassan Committee's recomendaions.
[62] Fuseini, 'A brief History of Nanung', 4.
[63] PRAAD/T. NRG. 8/2/111, Minutes of the Nanumba Traditional Council, Bimbilla, 4 June 1973

Konkomba 'Big Men' and Political Autonomy in Krachi District, 1960s-1970s

As has already been indicated in chapter five of this thesis, yam farming among the Konkomba gave rise to individual accumulation by the 1950s. This 'fostered the emergence of Konkomba "Bigmen."'[64] The term 'big man' refers to someone in a position of influence. This position is almost always 'achieved through personal charisma, by accumulating wealth in the form of cows, pigs, farm-size, number of wives, and other material goods that can be used to aid others, thus, placing them under an obligation.'[65] Some of these Konkomba big men in Krachi district included Osii of Buafiri, Nandi of Banda, Konja of Kpassa, Bikamba, Muyiba and Bignali of Kpandai, and Sanja and Bagnaja of Burai.[66] Although these men were wealthy by the standard of the rural economy of the period, as William Shack has argued, status and wealth are not inevitably linked to political power and authority.[67] Though these big men enjoyed some influence and respect among the Konkomba, they lacked political power and authority. The endurance of their influential position would later be measured by how successful they managed to convert their wealth into political power and authority. Ray Kea has shown how entrepreneurs in Akan societies of the eighteenth century converted their wealth into social status.[68] Ivor Wilks, for instance, analyses how wealth in Asante was easily converted into political status and vice versa. For Wilks this link between wealth and political power was 'important determinants of behaviour in late twentieth century Ghana.'[69] Paul Nugent affirms that this process continued into the colonial and postcolonial periods where the wealthy bought their way into chieftaincy positions.[70] Two Konkomba big men succeeded in skilful converting their wealth and influence into political power and authority in their host areas. These were Ubor Nandi of Banda and Ubor Konja of Kpassa.

Ubor Nandi's rise to power was partly the outcome of his enterprising endeavours and hard work, but also very much the result of the struggle between the Nchumuru and the Krachi over the control of land rents in the Nchumuru areas of the Krachi district. During the colonial

[64] Talton, *Politics of Social Change in Ghana,* 167.
[65] J. Manboah-Rockson, 'Chiefs in Post-Colonial Ghana: Exploring Different Elements of the Identity, Inequalities and Conflicts Nexus in the Northern Region', https://dspace.ucalgary.ca/bitstream/handle, accessed on 14 March 2018, 2-3.
[66] Interview with Mukanjor Bignali, Kpandai Chief, Kpandai, 9 January 2018.
[67] W. A. Shack, 'Open System and Closed Boundaries', 45.
[68] R. Kea, Settlements, *Trade and Polities in the Seventeenth-Century Gold Coast* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).
[69] I. Wilks, 'The Golden Stool and the Elephant tail: Wealth in Asante', in I. Wilks (ed.), *Forests of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the kingdom of Asante,* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1993), 159.
[70] Nugent, *Big Men, Small Boys and Politics in Ghana,* 19.

period, all the groups in Krachi, including Nchumuru, Adelle, Achode, Tapa, and Ntrubu were all under the Krachi Native Authority headed by Krachiwura. Immediately after independence, Nkrumah promoted all these subordinate chiefs to divisional status and made them independent of the Krachiwura.[71] After the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966, the Krachiwura attempted to regain his authority over the Nchumuru and other chiefs who had been made independent. Even before 1966, a bitter struggle had ensued between the Nchumuru and the Krachi for control over the Nchumuru areas where many Konkomba settled. This struggle was manifested in the struggle over the control of land rents. By the 1940s, the host groups in Krachi had imposed land rent on Konkomba settler farmers.[72] The collection of this land rent brought about a serious debate over land ownership in the district, and pitched the host groups (Nchumuru and Krachi) against each other and allowed Nandi to negotiate for political authority.

According to the Nchumuru, land rent was instituted by Nana Kwasi Sekyere, the Nchumuru chief of Bejamso and Nana Yaw Kpebu of Krachi to enable them defray the cost of attending Territorial Council meetings in Tamale.[73] Initially, the rent was paid in farm produce but later it was converted to £2. Osii Konkomba of Buafiri assisted in the collection of these fees from the Konkomba. The normal practice was that each chief collected rents from farmers in his division. The Krachiwura would then send his linguist to the Nchumuru chiefs who in turn nominated representatives to go round with the linguist to mobilise the rents collected. The chiefs then rendered accounts to the Krachiwura and the money was shared among the Nchumuru and Krachi chiefs. This process of collection seems to have proceeded smoothly until 1951 when Krachiwura Nana Besemuna II began to collect the dues alone without involving the Nchumuru chiefs. Because the Nchumuru chiefs were no longer involved in the collection process, all the money collected went into the pockets of Krachiwura and his sub chiefs. The Nchumuru regarded this as a cheat and protested against Krachiwura collecting land rents from settlers on Nchumurulands.[74] To resist this intrusion of the Krachiwura, Bejemsohene petitioned the regional administration for a separate Local Council in 1953 but his petition was turned down. In 1959, Nana Bedemgya II who had succeeded to the Krachi stool at the abdication of Nana Besumuna II, sought to strengthen his control over Krachi lands

[71] PRAAD/H. VRG/NA/21, Krachi Traditional Affairs, Restoration of Krachi Traditional Area to Its Former Position, 3 June 1968.
[72] PRAAD/H. VRG/AD/944, Land Cases-Kete-Krachi District, Kwaku Sekyere IV, Bejamsohene, 8 January 1968.
[73] Ibid. The money collected was tribute meant for the maintenance of the stool (royal court) and should not be confused with basic rates collected by a Local Council.
[74] PRAAD/H. VRG/AD/944, Minutes of the Meeting Convened by regional Committee of administration at state Cocoa Marketing Hall, Kete Krachi, 7 February 1968, 1.

by appointing non-Nchumuru persons to leadership positions in the disputed area. It is against this background that Nandi's role as a Konkomba chief has to be understood.

In September 1959, Nana Bedemgya II appointed ten Konkomba elders as headmen of various villages in the Nchumuru traditional area. At the head of these Konkomba headmen was Nana Nandi of Banda.[75] By the 1950s, Nandi was well known throughout the Krachi district as a wealthy farmer. Nandi had been born in Mobiik near Saboba on the bank the Oti River. Nandi's father, Jabul, had migrated to Sabongida in East Gonja in the early 1940s to escape the British punitive measures after the Jagbel incident. During this migratory movement, Nandi was still a young man. In the early 1950s, Nandi migrated from Sabongida to Banda where he founded the current village of Nandikrom near Banda. After investing enormous energy in taming the thick forest and wild animals in the area, he opened up the area through the construction of a road to link up the Krachi-Yendi main road with the village.[76] Through hard work, Nandi became influential and commanded respect and reverence from across all Konkomba clans around Krachi.

In the period before 1959, Osii of Buafiri acted as the leader of all the Konkomba settlers in Krachi district.[77] The decision by the Krachiwura to bypass Osii and elect Nandi as the Konkomba chief is not difficult to explain. As a big man, Osii's position was not permanent. It had to be constantly negotiated, and as he advanced in age, he lost his charisma and wealth, hence his position. Nandi's enterprise in founding the village of Nandikrom was certainly a factor. Ivor Wilks has suggested that those who founded the very first settlements in precolonial Asante were real entrepreneurs regarding the enormity of the task involved in clearing enough of the primary forest to sustain permanent agricultural settlement. Such people were rewarded with chieftaincy titles, special privileges and the right to command popular deference.[78]

According to some sources, Nandi was just appointed from above due to his friendship with Wilhem Henkel, the District Commissioner of Krachi in the 1950s.[79] Others believed that he

[75] PRAAD/H. VRG/NA/479, Krachi Traditional Affair, District Commissioner's Office, Kete Krachi, 3 September 1959. These elders included Nnoma of Chinderi, Ngbayii of Borae, Tafeni of Banda-Buya, Jaayoon of Grubi, Naanma of Mamata, Nmange of Chinderi, Nimalang of Borae, Yaangur Gyato of Banda and Nibite of Papatia.
[76] Interview with Mpoebi Mpoagma, Nandi Secretary, Nandido, Banda, 9 January 2017.
[77] PRAAD/H. VRG/AD/944, Particulars on Krachi-Nchumuru Relationship and the Collection of Land Dues in Krachi-Nchumuru Traditional Area, 17 January 1968, 3.
[78] Wilks, *Forest of Gold,* 139-144.
[79] Interview with Uninkpel Kuyoon Bikanyi, Linguist in Nandi's Court, Chanderi, 9 January 2017. Wilhem Henkel (1904-1987) was the son of one of the early German colonial officials in Kete Krachi with an African woman. His received early education in both Kete Krachi and Palime. Back in Krachi, he was employed as a teacher and

worked his way to power through service to the colonial and postcolonial state as a mobiliser of the Konkomba for roadwork.[80] Before 1959, Nandi had become prominent in organising the Konkomba for roadworks and acted as a link between the Konkomba and government officials. As a wealthy and charismatic leader, Nandi commanded the respect of government officials including Henkel. As a friend of the District Commissioner, Nandi found it easy to work his way to a chieftaincy position in an era when government appointed chiefs. But this could hardly have occurred if the Krachi and Nchumuru were in good terms. Whatever the case may be, Nandi became the first Konkomba chief to be gazetted and all the Konkomba in the district accepted him as their chief. Nandi continued to be influential in the 1960s. As a Konkomba chief, Nandi was allowed to settle internal disputes among the Konkomba and represented their interests at the Krachiwura's court. Although he did not have a seat in the Krachi traditional council, he was nevertheless recognised as a chief responsible for appointing all Konkomba headmen. The elders of Nandi family claim that he appointed not less than fifty Konkomba headmen to serve under him.[81] His influence was so widely accepted that he conferred on Kwame Nkrumah the title of a Konkomba chief when the latter visited Krachi.[82]

In the 1970s, Nandi was selected as the best farmer in the Krachi district. As part of the award, he was sent on a tour abroad, and this greatly enhanced his fame as a leader.[83] But his association with the political class, particularly Acheampong's regime brought him into serious trouble after the regime was overthrown in 1979.[84] In spite of this, Nandi continued to be influential as a Konkomba leader and how influential he remained in the 1980s can best be gauged from a letter from the Krachiwura's palace dated October 1982. The letter affirmed that the leadership of any Konkomba citizen could not be accepted 'unless it was sanctioned and approved by Nana Nandi and his elders through the customary norms and usages of the Konkomba community domiciled in Krachi.'[85] During the 1981 Konkomba-Nanumba conflict, Nandi represented all the Konkomba in Nawol and continued to represent the Konkomba on all matters in Krachi district and beyond till his death in November 1994.[86] His contemporaries

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he later became the first district commissioner under Nkrumah. See S. A. Ntewusu, 'The Impact and Legacies of German Colonialism in Kete Krachi, North-Eastern Ghana', ASC Working Paper, 121 (Leiden, 2015), 17-8.

[80] Interview with Mpoebi Mpoagma, Nandi Secretary, Nandido, Banda, 9 January 2017.

[81] Interview with the elders of Nandido, Nandido, Banda, 9 January 2017.

[82] Interview with Mpoebi Mpoagma, Nandi Secretary, Nandido, Banda, 9 January 2017

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid.

[85] A Letter from Krachiwura, Nana Kwabena Obridjoh II, 31 October 1982, in the possession of Nandi's Family, Banda.

[86] Interview with Uninkpel Kuyoon Bikanyi, Linguist in Nandi's Court, Chenderi, 9 January 2017.

saw him as the liberator of the Konkomba in the Krachi district and the man who spearheaded the transformation of obnoxious Konkomba traditions.[87] Nandi's influence as a big man and his association with the powerful host group (Krachi) made him such a powerful personality. However, while the hosts' environment inspired the establishment of the Konkomba chieftaincy, Konkomba culture and social organisation determined the trajectory this chieftaincy would take. No matter how astute Nandi was as a leader, he was unsuccessful in weaving the numerous Konkomba clans together into a united group. During his campaign tour in the Krachi district in 1971, E. Y. Yarney, the Member of Parliament for Saboba, exhorted the various Konkomba groups living in the Krachi district to 'unite and form a single Konkomba tribe'.[88] Nandi failed to unite all the Konkomba under a single leader with a structured chieftaincy tradition of succession. After his death in 1994, the Konkomba reverted to their clan-based loyalties after refusing to recognise his successor.[89]

As Nandi was rising to prominence in Banda, Ubor Konja was emerging as the leader of the Konkomba settlers in Kpassa. Like Nandi, Konja founded the village of Kpassa. During the colonial period, Kpassa area was an uninhabited hunting ground opened to the Nawuri, Krachi, Achode, Nchumuru and Adele hunters. In 1927, it was reported that there was 'little prospects of this land being used for any purpose other than hunting'. [90] As late as 1955, the area was still empty. In January that year, the Regional Political Officers of the Volta Region, in the company of officers from the Krachi district, trekked from Nkwanta across this area to Kpandai and reported that the area was well watered, suitable for agricultural development and extremely well stocked with game.[91] The first Konkomba settler to move to Kpassa area was Ubor Konja. Konja belonged to the lineage of Mantiib of Kpajotiib clan. He migrated from Tchare in Togo to Nanteng in the early 1930s.[92] After staying at Nanteng for some time, Konja moved southwestward to Bladjai in Kpandai area. At Bladjai, Konja accumulated a considerable amount of wealth in cattle and came into conflict with the local Nawuri as his beasts destroyed their crops. In the early 1950s, Konja moved to Kpassa to avoid trouble with the Nawuri.[93] At about the same time Ugbenja Nyachel founded Damanko, Ugnalijah Babila

[87] Ibid.
[88] PRAAD/H. VRG/AD/ 259, Krachi District Report, Krachi District Reports for the Month of November 1971.
[89] Interview with Mpoebi Mpoagma, Nandi Secretary, Nandido, Banda, 9 January 2017.
[90] PRAAD/H. VRG/AD/944, Letter from District Commissioner's Office, Kete-Krachi, 3 February 1927.
[91] PRAAD/H. RAO/C/597, Buem-Krachi Distric Quartely Report, Quarterly Report for the Jasikan District for the Quarter ending 31 March 1955.
[92] Interview with Atta Niena, Secretary to Kpassa-Bor, 23 January 2017.
[93] Ibid.

founded Sibi and Tikpi Balija of the Kuchatiib clan founded Bonakye south of Kpassa.[94] These settlements grew rather slowly until the mid-1960s.

In 1948, Kpassa did not exist and in the census of 1960, only thirty people were recorded in the area.[95] In 1962 when a survey was conducted on the Jasikan-Damanko road, the only inhabitants of Bonakye were the family and relatives of Balija.[96] The construction of Jasikan-Damanko road opened up the area for settlement. By 1965, Konkomba settlers moved from all directions particularly Krachi district, due to the flooding of the Akosombo, to occupy the stretch of land between the Bonakye, Damanko and Tinjasi.[97] With a growing population, the Kpassa area became a contested space. Various states, particularly the Nanumba and the Achode states, began to struggle for control over the area, enabling the Konkomba settlers to use the dispute that had emerged between the two groups to obtain some measure of autonomy. In 1927, there had been a dispute among the Krachi, Achode, Adele and Nawuri over Kpassa land. The immediate cause of the dispute was the question of tributes in ivory. They all agreed that in the old times there was no boundary between them, and that the land was 'no-man's land'.[98] The district commissioner believed that the Nanwuri hunters who first discovered the place were of Achode origin, and therefore in reality the land was Achode territory and only recently has a distinction been made between these groups.[99] This same fluidity between ethnic boundaries brought the Nanumba into contestation over the land when many of the people of Nawuri origin in the area began to identify themselves as Nanumba.

From the perspective of the Achode people on the southern end of Kpassa, the territory belonged to the Achode. The Nanumba on the north of the territory on the other hand, claimed suzerainty over Kpassa lands. Both states began to use Konja, the first settler, as evidence of their rights over the area but ultimately employed the modern state institution, the local council to legitimise their control. The Achode argued that Konja settled at the village of Kpassa with the permission of the Shiarewura (paramount chief of Achode) on the recommendation of one

[94] J. Jejite, 'Konkomba Position Paper of the Konkomba in Damanko, Kpassa, Sibi, Bonakye, Abunyanya and Naabu Areas to the Permanent Peace Negotiation Team at Accra', 6 January 1998.
[95] PRAAD/A. ADM 5/2/10, 1960 Population Census of Ghana, Alphabetical list of Localities, 46.
[96] Jejite, 'Konkomba Position Paper of the Konkomba in Damanko'.
[97] Interview with Atta Niena, Secretary of Kpassa-Bor, Kpassa, 23 January 2017. Krachi district was the most affected by the Akosombo floods. In 1960 the Volta River Project Manager, Mr. G. B. Boahen carried out a population count of the proposed inundation area and found the total population in the Krachi district likely to be affected to be over 15,000. This was an increase of about 65% over the estimated population based on the 1948 census. PRAAD/H. RAO/c/597, Buem-Krachi District Quarterly Report, Quarterly Report for the Jasikan District for the Quarter Ending 31 December 1964.
[98] PRAAD/A. ADM 56/ 1/ 343, Native Affairs, Krachi District, 3 February 1927.
[99] Ibid.

Abongo Grumah.[100] The Nanumba version is that Konja migrated from the republic of Togo and settled in Kpassa with the permission of the Bimbilla Na. On his settlement, it was made clear to him that he was only permitted to farm in the area and for that privilege; he was expected to owe allegiance to the Bimbilla Na through Chebori Na, a condition Konja accepted and fulfilled through the payment of basic rates to Bimbilla Local Council until 1965.[101] According to the Nanumba, in 1965 Konja approached the Bimbilla Na to be made chief of Kpassa, but his request was turned down with the explanation that it was against Nanumba customs to enskin a stranger as a chief. It was also made known to him that the area was under the Chebori Na who owed allegiance to the Bimbilla Na.[102] The refusal of the Bimbilla Na to accede to Konja's requests according to the Nanumba was the turning point. Being determined to become a chief, Konja felt that the only alternative was to turn elsewhere and therefore he transferred his allegiance to the Shiarewura in the Volta Region.[103]

Konja denied the Nanumba narrative and while not repeating the Achode account, he largely agreed with them.[104] According to Konja, he settled at Kpassa with the permission of one Ayim Nawuri. Initially, Ayim informed him that the land belonged to the Krachi but after the settlement had been established, Abongo Grumah who was settled at Portripor introduced him to the Shiarewura. Konja agreed to have recognised Shiarewura as the overlord of Kpassa and accepted to pay rent to him but Shiarewura did not enforce payment.[105] Although Konja admitted to have paid basic rates to the Bimbilla Local Council through Bimbilla Na, he claimed he had done so under duress as the Bimbilla Na threatened to imprison him.[106] This was the case because in 1960, the instrument that established the Local Councils mistakenly included Kpassa in both Bimbilla and the Krachi Local Councils (Achode was within the Krachi local council).[107] This enabled both the Nanumba and Krachi local councils to claim jusridiction over Kpassa. Bimbilla Na then took advantage of this abnormality and began to exercise power over the inhabitants of the area by assisting Bimbilla Local Council to collect basic rates from Konja. Although the rates were not land rent, the collection of rate

[100] PRAAD/H. VRG/AD/944, Statements Recorded at Kpassa during an Inquiry into the Land Dispute between Shiarewura and Bimbilla-Na, 25 January 1967, 2.
[101] Ibid, A Report on Land Dispute Between Bimbilla-Na and Shiarewura over Kpassa Area, n. d.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Ibid, Statements Recorded at Kpassa, 1.
[104] Ibid, 3.
[105] Ibid, Statements Recorded at Kpassa, 2. The payment of land rent by Konkomba settlers had been established in Krachi district since the 1940s. Initially Konja obtained a moratorium for two years until he was fully settled but the payment was never enforced.
[106] Ibid, 3.
[107] Ibid, A Letter from Regional Administration, Volta Region, 24 September 1968.

strengthened the chief's hold on the territory since every chief assisted in the collection of rates in his jurisdictions. Once the Bimbilla Local Council collected rates in Kpassa, the area automatically fell under the jurisdiction of the Bimbilla Na. With this knowledge, the Shiarewura protested against Bimbilla Local Council collecting basic rate in Kpassa.

Perhaps for the reasons alluded to by the Nanumba, Konja and the other Konkomba settlers in Kpassa openly supported the Shiarewura and began to resist Bimbilla rate collectors while inviting the Krachi authorities to collect basic rates in the area.[108] The strategy of the Bimbilla Na was to harass Konja and the other Konkomba settlers with state police stationed in Bimbilla. For example, in 1967 Babila, the Konkomba headman of Sibi, was arrested by the police from Bimbilla and taken to the Bimbilla Na's palace on the allegation that he had invited Shiarewura to Sibi and recognised him as the landowner by presenting to him hundred tubers of yam, a sheep, and asked him to curse the Bimbilla Na. Although Babila denied the charges, the police locked him up for two days. [109] On the second day, they brought him before a council of five Nanumba chiefs and warned him to stay out of Kpassa affairs before setting him free.[110] During the late 1960s, the Cherebori Na, moved to Kpassa town from his village of Cherebori to firmly establish his control over the inhabitants of the place. Konja claimed that immediately after the Cherebori Na arrived in Kpassa, he began burning the crops of the inhabitants.[111] In October 1970, it was reported again that policemen and a bailiff from Bimbilla arrived at Sibi and arrested the chief of Sibi on the allegation that that he had allowed revenue collectors from Nkwanta to collect levy from his subjects.[112] The Krachi district administration quite rightly interpreted the arrests and civil summons as an attempt to coerce the settlers to serve the Bimbilla Na.[113] The dispute presented Konja and the Konkomba settlers the opportunity to negotiate for political power and autonomy but the intransigence of the Nanumba made the Konkomba to shift towards the Achode.

In May 1967, the Volta Regional administration wrote to their counterparts in Tamale to use their 'good offices to prevail upon the Bimbilla Na, the Bimbilla Local Council and the police to refrain from any acts which may intensify the unrest in the area'.[114] The Bimbilla Local

[108] PRAAD/H. VRG/AD/944, A Letter from Chebori-Na Kpebu to Bimbilla-Na, 18 April 1969.
[109] Ibid, A Letter from the District Commissioner's Office, Kete-Krachi, 14 April 1967.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid, A Letter from Regional Administrative Officer, S.C. A. Chinery, Tamale, 9 August 1967.
[112] PRAAD/H. VRG/NA/21, Krachi Traditional Affair, Krachi District Report for the Month of October 1970.
[113] PRAAD/H. VRG/AD/944, A Letter from Kete-krachi District Administration Office, 31 March 1967.
[114] Ibid, A letter from Regional Administration, Volta Region, 20 May 1967.

Council also complained about the activities of Krachi authorities in the area.[115] The struggle between Achode and Nanumba over Kpassa lands revealed how chiefs took advantage of their control over local government institutions in the independent period to establish authority over peripheral areas, which was neither part of their traditional domain or state. In the midst of the struggle, the Konkomba evidently exploited the power vacuum to dominate the area. Konja became a prominent Konkomba chief of the area and with the support of the Shiarewura, Konja installed Konkomba headmen in all the Konkomba settlements in Kpassa area. Konja equally exploited Nanumba threats to Achode control over Kpassa to maintain his control over the area. For instance, when in 1972, Shiarewura made attempts to replace the Konkomba headmen of Damanku, Sibi, and Bonakye with local Achode in a move to strengthen his hold over the Kpassa lands, the attempt was abandoned in return for Konkomba support against Nanumba threats.[116] Until 1979, when the dispute was decided in court in favour of the Bimbilla Na, Konja acted as the de facto chief and owner of Kpassa area.

The Formation of the Konkomba Youth Association, 1970s

In the 1970s, the factors that sustained Konkomba social life on the margins of the state had changed. Empty lands had shrunk and frontier territories for exit mobility had disappeared. The Konkomba had become less mobile and turned towards political and social mobilisation of their ethnic group as the means to resist domination and oppression. Konkomba ethnic mobilisation was also part of a more general process of political and social change in Ghana. In the 1970s, there was a proliferation of youth associations in northern Ghana with the aim to organise their ethnic groups for self-help initiative. Carola Lentz ascribes this development to the political vacuum created by the ban on party politics in the period.[117] For Lentz, youth movements provided an important forum for the discussion and validation of local interests during the period of ban on party politics.[118] This reason however does not adequately explain why the historically stateless and mobile groups, such as the Dagara, Konkomba, Bimoba, Vagla and Lobi were among the first groups to form youth associations, in spite of their relative isolation from national party politics during the period.[119] These groups had not been part of

[115] Ibid, A Letter from Yendi District Administration, 5 May 1969.
[116] PRAAD/H. VRG/ NA/21, Krachi Traditional Affairs, Monthly Report for July, Kete Krachi District, 4 August 1972, 2.
[117] C. Lentz, '"Unity for Development": Youth Associations in Northern-Western Ghana', *Africa*, 65, 3 (1995), 399.
[118] *Ibid*.
[119] *Ibid*. The first ethnic youth and development associations in the north were founded by the Konkomba, Bimoba, Bassari and the Dargati.

the Northern People's Party (NPP) and the Northern Youth Association (NYA), which brought northerners into the wider Ghanaian national politics.[120] It would appear that youth associations among the stateless groups sought to fill a certain vacuum in the groups' social and political organisation, which was itself the result of the lack of a central authority. Ethnic-based youth associations emerged to represent exclusively ethnic interests.[121] Among the non-centralised groups, youth associations helped to broaden political perspectives beyond kingship and village levels and allowed the educated leadership to mobilise and manipulate important segments of the population. It was also in response to their increasing marginalisation and their exclusion from land and political representation. Youth associations became the means for mobilising ethnic groups to challenge their exclusion.

It was within this context that the Western educated Konkomba mobilised the Konkomba to form the Konkomba Youth Association (KOYA) in 1977. In the 1970s the Konkomba settlers in Nawol, particularly in Nanun came under increased oppression and exploitation. The Konkomba also experienced similar treatment in their homeland in Eastern Dagbon. As early as 1954, a group of Konkomba western educated young men, mostly teachers in Saboba came together and formed the Konkomba Youth Improvement Association (KYIA), primarily as an organ to voice the grievances of the Konkomba in Eastern Dagomba.[122] In 1955, the British colonial government noted the already influential position attained by this association in Dagomba.[123] However, after 1956, the association waned and ceased to exist by the late 1960s due to the persecution of its leaders by Nkrumah.[124] During the active years of KYIA, its

[120] See Ladoucer, *Chiefs and Politicians*, 112-120.
[121] B. Talton, "Food to Eat and Pito to Drink': Education, Local Politics and Self-Help Initiatives in Northern Ghana', 1945-1972, *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, New Series, 7 (2003), 216.
[122] Interview with Pastor Udin Siela, A founding Member of KYIA, Saboba, 5 July 2009. The main people behind KYIA were Pastor Udin Siela, I. B. Bawa, Nakoja Namuel, E. Yarney, Samson Mankrom and Dewey Hale. Dawey Hale was an American missionary working with the Assemblies of God mission among the Konkomba in the 1950s.
[123] PRAAD/T. NRG 8 /3/195, Togoland Report, Annual Report on Togoland 1955, 4.
[124] During the 1956 plebiscite, KYIA favoured separation and supported the Togoland Congress led by S. G. Antor against the Convention People's Party's platform of union with the Gold Coast. The association argued that separation from Gold Coast was the best course to Konkomba emancipation from Dagomba rule. Even though their platform was defeated in the plebiscite, the Konkomba voice was heard for the first time on a national issue. By supporting separation, the Association came into conflict with Nkrumah. After the plebiscite, the leaders of the Association suffered political persecution and Dewey Hale, the Assemblies of God Missionary who supported the Konkomba teachers to form KYIA was deported for 'political incorrectness'. Many Konkomba teachers were transferred away from Saboba and the association became dormant and died a natural death by the 1960s. Interview Isaac Sukpeen, Former KOYA President, Saboba, 6 January 2014. See also Wienia, *Ominous Calm*, 50.

activities did not extend beyond Eastern Dagomba and the Konkomba in the diaspora continued to lack a united voice at the time they came under intense exploitation and oppression in Nawol.

Whereas membership of KYIA was based entirely around Saboba, KOYA, which came to have the most profound influence on local politics in northern Ghana,[125] was formed by the initiative of diasporic Konkomba. One important Konkomba personality in the formation of KOYA was Daniel Ngula who was already a university graduate working in Tamale by the 1960s. Born in Yendi in the 1930s, he received his elementary education at Yendi Primary and Middle Boarding schools before proceeding to Mfantsipim School in Cape Coast for his secondary education. From Mfantsipim, he studied Agriculture at the then Kumasi College of Technology, and subsequently won an American Government Scholarship to study for his Bachelor's degree at San Louis Obispo Campus, California State University, graduating in 1966.[126] While in the United State, Ngula was profoundly influenced by the American Civil Right movements of the 1960s. As he observed,

> I closely watched events in the United States and saw how blacks started agitating for freedom in America. Their revolt attracted my attention and motivated me to reflect on the slavery treatment given to the Konkombas. Closely I watched the blacks' agitations for freedom every day and was motivated to ask, if the blacks in America could liberate themselves by embarking on a journey of "self-fight for freedom", why couldn't we the Konkomba do same in Northern Ghana?[127]

When Ngula returned to Ghana, he organised the emerging small group of educated Konkomba in Tamale to meet occasionally to discuss Konkomba liberation strategy. The members of this group included George Uka, Anthony Adams Bukari, Joe Likaln, Samuel Kwaku, and Daniel Ngula. The meetings were initially held in the house of Daniel Ngula but it was later transferred to Attah Asibi Hotel.[128] Back in Saboba, similar meetings had been held by a group of new generation of Konkomba teachers posted to the Saboba primary school.[129] Key among these were, Alfred Opel Kotin, James Bagee, Daniel Torbi, James Niena, Gabriel Nabuer Lasim and Gladis Lasim.[130]

However, the move to form a united youth group did not emanate from these groups but from two young students in the University of Ghana and Bimbilla Training College – James Mualen

[125] Talton, 'Food to Eat and Pito to Drink', 216.
[126] D. K. Ngula Obituary, Biography, 5 December 2015, 2.
[127] Ibid, 12.
[128] Ibid.
[129] The Saboba primary school was started in 1951 by Yao Wumbei, the first Konkomba teacher. Interview with Daniel Jobor, Retired educationist, Jilmani, Wapuli, 16 April 2017.
[130] G. N. Lasim, Konkomba Youth Association (KOYA), Unpublished Manuscript, 28 March 2013.

and Joshua Yakpir. Having witnessed the maltreatment and the exploitation of Konkomba settlers in Nanumba, James Mualen wrote a letter to all influential Konkomba people reminding them about the need for a collective action to liberate their fellow kinsmen in Nanun.[131] This letter was widely distributed reaching Daniel Ngula and the Saboba group who were already thinking of forming a liberation movement. When the Saboba group received the letter, they called a meeting on 17 October 1976 at the courthouse in Saboba to discuss the way forward. It was at this meeting that an *ad hoc* committee was formed under the chairmanship of Gabriel Lasim with the task to see to the establishment of the Konkomba Youth Association.[132] This committee contacted the Tamale group and moved to work towards the inauguration of KOYA the following year. On 9 April 1977, KOYA was inaugurated in Saboba with the Northern Regional Commissioner, Lt. Col. R. K. Zumah, in attendance.[133] The constitution of KOYA called on all Konkomba to 'henceforth unite' and work together to 'alleviate many of the factors that confined the Konkomba to social and political minority status in Ghana'.[134] The difference between KYIA and KOYA was that the latter took on a Pan-Konkomba nationalist perspective and responsibility to represent all Konkomba in Ghana. KOYA focused on strengthening immigrants' links with their homeland and fostering of collective identity as the means to Konkomba liberation. It was also conscious of protecting Konkombaland and preventing it from falling 'into the hands of foreigners and undesirables.'[135]

KOYA, Land Ownership and the Alhassan Commission, 1978-1979

Barely a year after its inauguration, KOYA was called upon to defend Konkombaland from being annexed by their centralised neighbours. In 1977, the National Redemption Council government of K. A. Acheampong accepted the decision of the Lands Commission to return northern lands to their rightful owners. Since the colonial period, the northern lands had been under the ownership of the state. In order to ensure a smooth transfer of the land to the traditional owners, the government set up a committee under the Chairmanship of a renowned lawyer, R. I. Alhassan 'to determine the ownership of lands and the position of tenants in the

[131] Interview with Joshua Yakpir, Retired Educationist, Saboba, 9 January 2017. See also Celebration of Life Daniel Kojo Ngula Celebration of Life, Tribute by KOYA, 12. Joshua Yakpir claim that he wrote the letter on the advice of James Moalen and got Mbiba Jayem who was a clerk at the Bimbilla Training College to type it. Yakpir was also involved in the distribution of the letter. One letter went to Naval Captain Dama, a military officer, Daniel Ngula, at Tamale, Ubajiba then a teacher at Akropong School of the Blind and the Saboba group.
[132] G. N. Lasim, Konkomba Youth Association (KOYA), Manuscript, 28 March 2013.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Konkomba Youth Association Constitution, 1977.
[135] Ibid.

Northern and Upper Regions'.[136] The handing over of northern lands to its owners was ostensibly to correct the inequalities in the land tenure system in Ghana. However, it was a bargain for the big northern Chiefs to support Acheampong's Union Government proposal – the military and civilians coming together to form a government. This arrangement was to be subjected to a referendum and the government required the support of the chiefs to obtain the require percentage of 'Yes votes'[137] On 14 February 1978, the committee was inaugurated in Tamale and took evidence and testimonies from the Dagomba, Gonja, Mamprusi, and Nanumba on their claims to land.[138] On 13 March 1978, KOYA appeared before the commission sitting at Salaga and requested time to submit their evidence on their claims to Kikpakpaan and on 2 May, KOYA submitted their evidence in a form of memorandum.[139] They claimed ownership over the Oti plains, which included the whole of Eastern Dagbon but they accepted that some of this territory had been lost to the Dagomba. They delineated their current lands as sharing 'common boundaries with the Basares and the Kabres in the East (Sangmal), Nayile and Sanguli in the Zabzugu area to the South; the Sunson locality towards Yendi, Kitebu (Tekasu), Adare in the north and Tunsung near Tuwua in the North West.'[140] According to KOYA, Konkombaland land was to be vested in *Bininkpiib* and *Bitindam* of Kikpakpaan.

The Dagomba on the other hand claimed that they had conquered and annexed all the lands KOYA had laid claim to. In fact the Dagomba claimed that the Konkomba were a conquered people without an independent existence.[141] The Alhassan Committee upheld the Dagomba claim and declared that 'the land the Konkombas now claim should be vested in them is under the Ya Na by conquest but is currently predominantly inhabited by the Konkombas.'[142] The decision that the Konkomba had no legitimate claim to an area they evidently inhabited much longer than the Dagomba should be viewed from the perspective of the British reconstruction of the past in northern Ghana. Talton describes how through Dagomba informants, the colonial officials invented narratives of a complete Dagomba control over the Konkomba during the

[136] Report of the Committee on Ownership of Lands and Position of Tenants in the Northern and Upper Regions, 1978, 2.
[137] Nugent, *Big Men, Small Boys and Politics in Ghana*, 29.
[138] Report of the Committee on Ownership of Lands, 2. Initially the committee was first charged to submit their report within one month from the date of inauguration but it was soon realised that the task was enormous and the one-month deadline was inadequate.
[139] Ibid, 4.
[140] Ibid, 5.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid, 6.

precolonial period.[143] Such a reconstruction of the past was important for the creation of political and ethnic hierarchies envisioned by the British colonial administration. The committee's decision to accept the Dagomba conquest narrative and reject Konkomba indigenous argument in Eastern Dagomba was merely an affirmation of a colonial narrative that had shaped the political and social realities of the region.

The finding of the committee was not entirely unexpected considering its composition. Out of the twelve members of the committee, nine were from Northern Ghana. Six of these nine members belonged to the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Nanumba and Gonja ethnic groups. In fact, while the Chairman of Committee was a Dagomba from Tamale, 'J. K. Wumnaya, a Gonja, sat in the Committee as the representative of the Yagbunwura, J. S. Nabila was a prince from Kpasinkpe, a non-royal division of Mamprugu'.[144] There was no representation from the non-centralised groups in northern region, such as the Konkomba, Nchumuru, Nawuri and Bassari, who constituted a substantial part of the population of the region.[145] The Alhassan Committee's power to determine legitimate land ownership carried greater consequences for Konkomba status in Ghana. It had the opportunity to reverse the colonial legacy of ethnic privilege and inequality based on chieftaincy, and restore equality for all groups including the Konkomba. However, it rather confirmed and further entrenched existing social inequalities by supporting the chiefly groups. Whilst seeking to correct inequality in land administration in the country, the committee rather excluded the non-centralised groups from land ownership. The committee's decision completely disenfranchised and dispossessed the Konkomba of any authority they had wielded over Kikpakpaan prior to 1978. In Ghana, land was closely associated with belonging and therefore without land rights, the Konkomba became effectively a stranger group not only in their new homes in Nawol but also in the whole of northern Ghana.

The Konkomba Youth Association was gravely incensed by Konkomba dispossession of land in Ghana. One member of the Association observed that the decision of Alhassan Committee 'sent shivers down the spines of every Konkomba'. He noted, 'Here we were without land, our ancestors had been considered to have had no land, and our children and those of them yet unborn would have no land in the Northern Region.'[146] The idea that generations to come

[143] Talton, *Politics of Social Change,* 36-46.
[144] C. Maasole, 'The Land Factor in Konkomba-Nanumba Crisis of 1981', *Ghana Journal of Development Studies*, 8, 1 (2011), 44.
[145] According to the 1960 census figures, the Konkomba were 110,150, only second to the Dagomba who numbered a little over 217,000. Population Census, 1960 Special Report 'B', 28-30.
[146] Quoted in C. Maasole, 'The Land Factor in Konkomba-Nanumba Crisis of 1981', 46.

would remain landless was considered unacceptable and needed immediate remedy. The sense of outrage among Konkomba elites induced by the committee's report was aggravated by the Nanumba section of the report. It recognised Nanumba 'customary law and usage' and distinguished 'indigenous' Nanumba from settlers (Konkomba) and declared that 'a stranger had no automatic right of use of land in Nanumba. He could only use land subject to the permission of the chief and could only use it 'for as long as he continues to live in Nanumba and does not offend Nanumba custom'.[147] If a stranger was of 'bad character or contempt for authority', he could be denied the privilege to use the land. The stranger was also required to give a larger quantity of his produce to the chiefs than the citizen. Unlike the citizen, the stranger in Nanun was not permitted to burn the bush, hunt or fish without the prior consent of the chief.[148] The document emphasised the discretionary powers of Nanumba chiefs over the settlers in Nanun and the right to expel them if they offended Nanumba customs.

Though the Acheampong government was unable to implement the findings of the Alhassan Committee due to it removal from power in 1979, the findings of the Committee became the basis on which subsequent land policy in Northern Ghana was formulated. For example, the 1979 constitution declared:

> For the avoidance of doubt it is hereby declared that lands in the Northern and Upper Regions of Ghana which immediately before the coming into force of this constitution were vested in the Government of Ghana are not public lands…all lands…shall vest in any such person who was the owner of any such land.[149]

In this formulation, the assumption was that the 'the owners of any such lands' were those provided in the Alhassan Committee. This formal documentation of land tenure in northern Ghana based on the findings of the Alhassan Committee reinforced Konkomba image as a landless group and sustained their identity as strangers in Ghana. While similar customs were formalised in Dagbon and Gonja, it was in Nanun that they became a social reality in the next few years. As the Nanumba sought to implement these provisions, they met with resistance from an increasingly liberation-oriented Konkomba community under the leadership of the newly formed KOYA.

[147] Report of the Committee on Ownership of Lands and Position of Tenants in the Northern and Upper Regions, 1978, 13.
[148] Ibid, 14.
[149] Quoted in Jönsson, 'The Overwhelming Minority', 15-16.

Ethnic Mobilisation and Nanumba-Konkomba Conflict, 1979-1981

Since the 1950s, the Konkomba elite made efforts to construct a united Konkomba ethnicity in Eastern Dagomba.[150] In the 1970s, the call for a united Konkomba identity received support from a new source – the Konkomba settlers in Nawol. It must be noted that before 1979, the Konkomba settlers in Nanun were required by Nanumba custom to pay tribute in the form of foodstuff and to bring to Nanumba chiefs, a hind leg of any big animal slaughtered at a funeral or killed in a hunt. Additionally they were to offer free labour every year on the chiefs' farm. By the 1970s, the Konkomba had become known for their dominance in the yam cultivation. In western Nanun, the dominance was cemented after the release of the forest reserve (*Sofiya*) in the north west of Bimbilla within the triangle between Bimbilla, Salaga and Yendi.[151] The willingness of the Konkomba to stay on their farms in the bush for days and even weeks made them the most productive yam farmers in the country.[152] During this period, yam production had become a major factor in Konkomba social and political identity.

When the Konkomba settlers began to accumulate wealth from their production, the Nanumba chiefs began to make extra demands. Unlike in the Krachi district where accumulation was leading to enhanced status and power for the Konkomba settlers, in Nanun the growing wealth of Konkomba farmers through yam production rather attracted more repression and exploitation. The yam wealth became a source of envy and resentment against the Konkomba by Nanumba chiefs who now demanded sharecropping arrangement from Konkomba settlers as their production increased. For instance, the Kpatihi Na suggested in 1973 that the Konkomba settlers should be made to pay a fixed quantity of produce after harvesting their crops:

> It would be appreciated if the Konkombas known to be the best farmers in the Nanumba Traditional area, would each on harvesting his crops, rice, maize, millet, guinea corn etc., give one bag of the produce out of every fifty bags of the produce to their respective chiefs from whom they acquired land to farm.[153]

The District Commissioner noted in the margins of the copy of the document that if this condition was imposed on the Konkomba, they would abandon farming and cause trouble. The Commissioner was right to predict that if such conditions were imposed on the Konkomba,

[150] Talton, *Politics of Social Change in Ghana*, 111-5.
[151] Interview with Lakidi Binjin, 12 January 2017. In 1913, the Germans decleared a large part of Nanun a natural reserve and this reserve was preserved by both the British and the independent Ghanaian governments.
[152] Talton, *Politics of Social Change in Ghana*, 159.
[153] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/2/111, Nanumba Traditional Constitutions and Practice, Minutes of the Nanumba Traditional Council, Bimbilla, 26 March 1973.

they would 'cause trouble'. In fact, the Konkomba were already showing signs of resentment against their exclusion from political authority. But the Nanumba chiefs wanted more powers to bring the Konkomba into complete subjection and ensure a peaceful co-existence even as they exploited them.[154] What was most irksome for the Konkomba was the fact that they were not allowed to have their own leaders who would settle petty quarrels and matrimonial cases.[155] Through dispute arbitration, the Nanumba chiefs and the government magistrate in Bimbilla subjected the Konkomba to severe extortion and exploitation. This extortion was most prevalent in matrimonial cases. As Peter Skalnik observes:

> The authorities in both instances (chief and government magistrates) were not really familiar with Konkomba marriage customs but they knew very well that the Konkomba are ready to give anything for the solution of their disputes. This was used to the arbitrators' advantage as they usually demand some material remuneration (in money or kind) from both sides in the dispute… a large source of income for the court of Bimbilla Na came from such arbitrations.[156]

Like the pan-Africanist movements of the early 1900s, KOYA leaders stressed the common suffering of the Konkomba and the need for a united voice against their marginality. It was with these ends in view that they started to mobilise the Konkomba throughout Nawol to resist discriminatory levies and appoint their own leaders.

In 1979, KOYA began to organise meetings in Konkomba settlements in Nanumba and East Gonja districts ostensibly to change outmoded Konkomba customs but mainly to mobilise the Konkomba into a united force to resist extortion and oppression.[157] After KOYA held the first two meetings at Bimbilla and Kpandai, the Nanumba became suspicious and began to censor the association's activities in Nanun.[158] The Nanumba authorities subsequently banned KOYA meetings and all Konkomba gathering on Nanumba land.[159] However, KOYA defied the ban, continued to mobilise and encouraged the Konkomba to appoint their own elders to adjudicate internal disputes.[160] In late 1979, the KOYA local branch of Bimbilla elected Ali Kamshiegu as the local Konkomba headman responsible for settling internal disputes among the

[154] Ibid.
[155] Brukum, 'Ethnic Conflicts in Northern Ghana', 139-40. Skalnik, 'Nanumba Chieftaincy Facing the Ghanaian State', 93.
[156] Skalnik, 'Questioning the Concept of the State', 20.
[157] Interview with Isaac Sukpen, Former KOYA Chairman, Saboba, 21 November, 2012.
[158] Maasole, 'The Konkomba and the Inter-Ethnic Conflicts', 294.
[159] KOYA Memoradum to the Four-Member Committee Appointed by MPs from Naorthern and Upper regions to Investigate the Konkomba-Nanumba Conflict, 1981.
[160] Interview with Ali Adolf, Son of Ali Kamshiegu, Saboba, 12 February 2018. On 26 October 1979, a meeting was held in Bimbilla with the blessing of the Bimbilla Na, and 29 October another in Kpandai. The subsequent meetings in Chechaki, Kpassa, Makayili and Lungni were disrupted. See Memorandum Submitted by KOYA to a Four-Member Committee Appointed by the Honourable Members of Parliament from the Northern and Upper Regions to Investigate the Konkomba-Nanumba Conflict, 1981.

Konkomba of that town.[161] Ali was an ex-service man who had lived in Bimbilla, and acted as Konkomba language interpreter in the Bimbilla Na and the Magistrate's courts since the 1950s.[162] Many Konkomba villages in Nanun followed the Bimbilla example and elected their Konkomba headmen. In Chamba, the Konkomba elected Bijiba. In Lungni, they elected Binyam Njodem and at Makayili, they made Nlibe the Konkomba leader.[163] Following their election of headmen, the Konkomba did not only stopped sending their disputes to the Bimbilla Na and the Magistrate's court but they also ceased rendering services to the Nanumba chiefs.[164]

In East Gonja, the Konkomba staged a similar defiance of Gonja authority. Growing Konkomba resentment and hostility to Gonja rule began in the 1960s and in 1979 the Konkomba stopped payment of rent and land tribute to the Gonja chiefs at the instruction of the KOYA.[165] However, Konkomba relations with the Gonja did not explode into open conflict until 1992 when the Konkomba entered the Nawuri and Gonja conflict on the side of the Nawuri. Unlike the Gonja who accepted the Konkomba defiance in good faith, the Nanumba saw the Konkomba rejection of Nanumba chiefs as a subversion of Nanumba sovereignty. More importantly, the Nanumba exploitation of Konkomba constituted a major revenue for the Bimbilla Na's court and Konkomba defiance meant a substantial loss of revenue to Nanumba aristocracy. What, however, irritated the Nanumba public even more was the fact that in some parts of Nanun the Konkomba stopped selling yams to the Nanumba traders who served as middlemen in the lucrative yam trade and began to send their yams directly to the market centres.[166] Talton documents a fascinating connection between the founding of the Konkomba yam market in Accra and Konkomba political agency in the north.[167] By establishing their own market in Accra, the Konkomba were able to circumvent the Nanumba middlemen in the yam trade.

The Nanumba became increasingly resentful of KOYA activities in Nanun and tension emerged between the two groups. By January 1980, the situation further degenerated after the

[161] Interview with Ali Adolf, Son of Ali Kamshiegu, Saboba, 12 February 2018.
[162] PRAAD/T. NRG 8/5/99, Nanumba District Council Minutes, Minutes of the 9th Meeting of the Staff and Finance Committee of Nanumba District Council Held 8 November 1957.
[163] Interview with Bijiba Barnabas, Son of the First Chief of Chamba, Chamba, 9 January 2017.
[164] Ibid.
[165] Memorandum Submitted by the Gonjas on the Peace Negotiations in the northern Conflict, September 1994, 10.
[166] Skalnik, 'Nanumba Chieftaincy Facing the Ghanaian State', 93. Talton, *Politics of Social Change in Ghana*, 159. Wienia, *Ominous Calm*, 59.
[167] Talton, *Politics of Social Change*, 159.

Nanumba forceful evicted Ali Kamshiegu from Bimbilla.[168] Although Ali returned to Bimbilla, the tension was fast escalating and ordinary Konkomba were no longer safe in Nanumba dominated communities.[169] Ethnic conflict in the form of social unrest had virtually begun but the KOYA branch in Accra hoped that sanity could prevail through dialogue. They scheduled a meeting with the Bimbilla Na to diffuse the mounting tension but Nanumba youth disrupted the meeting, insisting that 'no negotiation was possible with slaves'.[170] When the officials of the Accra branch went back to Accra, they wrote to the Bimbilla Branch assuring them that 'the association will take prompt action whenever your rights as citizens were threatened.'[171] It was now clear that the youth associations of both groups were neck deep in the mounting tension.

By early 1981, the situation in Nanun only required a spark to explode. The spark came on 23 April 1981 in a quarrel between the son of the Bimbilla Na and a Konkomba youth in a Pito bar.[172] In the scuffle, the Konkomba youth stabbed the chief's son and fled. During the search for the culprit, the chief's secretary, Mohammed Seidu was shot and killed by some Konkomba youth who had gathered in Ali's house. Sporadic shootings between Nanumba and Konkomba residents of Bimbilla followed in which eight or more people were killed.[173] Nanumba youth looted and burnt Konkomba houses in Bimbilla. The next day, Nanumba youth roamed the streets of Bimbilla in search of Konkomba to kill. During the day, Nanumba warriors went to Kabuliya, a Konkomba village about four kilometres from Bimbilla, and destroyed it.[174] Fighting spread across the Oti to Kpassa lands where the Konkomba nursed grievances against the Nanumba aristocracy for depriving them of their control over Kpassa lands with the installation of a Nanumba chief. The pretext came when the son of a leader of Damanko village was killed in the Bimbilla affray. The Konkomba slaughtered several hundreds of Nanumba in Damanko and Kpassa.[175] The quarrel between the two young men had plunged the Nanumba and the Konkomba into a bitter ethnic conflict but most observers agree that the youth's quarrel

[168] Statement by Ali Kamshiegu.
[169] Interview with Ali Adolf, Son of Ali Kamshiegu, Saboba, 12 February 2018.
[170] The Report of the Fact-Finding Mission sent to Bimbilla by the KOYA Branch in Accra, 1981.
[171] Ibid.
[172] Maasole, 'The Konkomba and the Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in Ghana', 301. Maasole argues that the quarrel did not concern Pito but rather a young woman whom both the chief's son and the Konkomba youth were interested in. He proposed that the war should be christened a 'Lady's war' rather than the popular 'pito war'.
[173] Ibid, 302.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Skalnik, 'Questioning the Concept of the State in Indigenous Africa', 22.

was just the spark of a situation on the verge of explosion. The explosion was the culmination of a long process of exploitation and oppression of the Konkomba.

In the next weeks, Nanumba youth mounted roadblocks and harassed Konkomba travellers. On 19 June, Nanumba warriors and youth crossed the Oti River in an attempt to sweep across all Konkomba settlements on their way to Kpassa. After overrunning a few Konkomba settlements south of Bimbilla, the Nanumba force ran into a stronger Konkomba force and had to retreat.[176] On June 21, the Konkomba attacked and destroyed Wulensi, the second biggest Nanumba town. Sanitation workers reportedly buried 520 corpses at Wulensi, excluding most of those who must have fled to the surrounding bush.[177] The next day, the Konkomba of Chamba attacked and burnt down Dakpam village, killing at least nine people.[178] The next target of the Konkomba was to take Bimbilla but 'soldiers did arrive in time to save the district capital… from imminent attack by Konkombas who had completely surrounded it.'[179] The hostility ended with the deployment of soldiers to the area. President Hilla Limann appointed Justice Lamptey Commission to enquire into the causes of the conflict in order to find a lasting solution to the conflict. However, as both sides awaited the report of the Commission, Flight Lieutenant J.J. Rawlings overthrew the Limann government and blamed the conflict on the 'waning Limann Administration.' He dismissed the Commission of Inquiry and disbanded the soldiers stationed in Bimbilla.[180]

Locally the Konkomba and the Nanumba continued to apportion blame. The Bimbilla Member of Parliament, Adam Marshall, described the Konkomba as 'a sociological problem' because of their inclination towards violence and urged the government to be bold and punish them.[181] During the reconciliation ceremony on 11 July in Bimbilla, Mamadu Dasana, the regent of Bimbilla, called the conflict 'our price for accepting Konkombas as brothers and sisters.'[182] He narrated how they had stayed peacefully with the Konkomba after accepting them as immigrants fleeing from Dagbon, until KOYA began to mobilise the Konkomba in Nanun against Nanumba authorities. He stated that, since 1979, KOYA executives rejected the

[176] Wienia, *Ominous Calm*, 64.
[177] P. Waldmeir, 'Causes of Fighting in Ghana', *West Africa*, 20 July 1981.
[178] Wienia, *Ominous Calm*, 64.
[179] *Ibid*.
[180] P. Skalnik, 'Chieftaincy and State: The Dragging History of the Nanumba-Konkomba Conflict', Ghana Newsletter, Issue 17, November 1985, 20.
[181] 'Konkomba-Nanumba Clash- 160 So Far Dead', *Daily Graphic*, 2 July, 1981. 'Statement of the Nanumba-Konkomba Affair by M.A. Adam, Member of Parliament for Nanumba', *Daily Graphic*, 6 July 1981.
[182] Speech by Mahama Dasana, Regent of Bimbilla on the Occasion of the Visit of His Excellency Dr. Hilla Limann, President of the Republic of Ghana to Bimbilla on Sunday, 11 July, 1981.

authority of Nanumba chiefs and appointed their own leaders. He identified Konkomba refusal to obey Nanumba customs as the main cause of the conflict, and asked whether it was not proper that 'wherever one goes he has to observe the customs of the people he puts up with'? He called the conflict 'a war on the Republic of Ghana and not Nanumbas.'[183] The Nanumba chiefs insisted that they had the right as landowners to appoint chiefs for Konkomba villages in Nanun and exact from them tribute in the form of unpaid labour and foodstuffs, according to custom.[184] The Konkomba on the other hand saw Nanumba 'customs' as infringing on their basic human rights.[185] They warned that they would reject any Nanumba custom that bordered on 'forced labour' and 'forced contributions', and emphasised their right to appoint their own headmen and settle domestic and matrimonial disputes. The Konkomba through KOYA called for an end to Nanumba customary exploitation, which they believed was bolstered by Nanumba control over the district administration.[186]

Whilst the Konkomba considered 'their subjection to Nanumba chiefs a violation of their citizenship rights, the Nanumba considered the Konkomba rejection of Nanumba authority a violation of their traditional rights as autochthons in Nanun.' [187] In the next decade after the conflict, the Konkomba continued to install their own leaders to the fury of Nanumba authorities and ordinary people. Having failed to persuade the government to force the Konkomba to obey their customs, they grudgingly accepted Konkomba continued stay in Nanun. So while Konkomba were not forced to pay tribute, coexistence was now shrouded in mutual distrust. While the Konkomba evidently used their numerical power and newly found unity to resist discriminatory levies and exploitation, they remained on the margins of the Nanumba state.

Conclusion

The chapter attempts to demonstrate that following independence, the Konkomba experienced a drastic shift towards vulnerability in their social position. This was so because of the weakness or rather, the lack of strong state institutions at the local level after independence. Despite the anti-chief stance of Nkrumah after, chiefs became much more influencial at the

[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid.
[185] 'Human Rights in Bimbilla', *West Africa,* 8 June 1981.
[186] KOYA Press Statement Submitted by the Konkomba Youth Association (KOYA) to His Excellency, the President, Dr. Hilla Limann during his Visit to the Northern Region to Settle the Nanumba/Konkomba Conflict on Saturday 11 July 1981.
[187] Wienia, *Ominous Calm,* 6.

local level in the absence of state authority. In many respects, the state and the traditional authorities became fused, allowing the latter to take advantage of state power to supress and exploit ethnic strangers. This narrative of a deteriorating Konkomba social status in Nawol must not be over-generalised. In some areas like Kete-Krachi district, Konkomba settlers obtained a reasonable measure of political authority and autonomy, which enhance their social status. The chapter showed that Konkomba big men in Kete-Krachi district took advantage of the disunity among their host groups to transform their wealth and influence into political power and authority and represented the Konkomba in decision making at the local level. Once the Konkomba obtained a voice in the traditional hierarchy of the political system, their social position was improved.

In Nanumba and Gonja districts, the situation was different. The Konkomba came under serious exploitation and the extortion from the hosts' chiefs and the local councils. Since chiefs controlled the local councils, they were able to institute and enforce on the Konkomba discriminatory levies and tributes. The chapter has shown that eventhough the Konkomba resorted, as usual, to mobility to evade this increased extortion and exploitation, this strategy failed. Many Konkomba settlers, who migrated from East Gonja into Nanun to avoid exploitation by Alhaji Baba Dusaiwura, faced similar, if not worse, treatment from the Nanumba chiefs in the 1970s. Whilst the exploitation and extortion was being entrenched and formalised by the Ghanaian state, it had become obvious to the most cursory observer that the numerical and economic strength of the Konkomba in Nanumba and East Gonja districts in the 1980s had become contradictory to their social and political status as a subordinate group. The Alhassan Commission, which recommended the handing over of northern lands to the four traditional chiefly groups, set the stage for Konkomba mobilisation. Alhassan Commission's recomendation defined the Konkomba as settlers without right to land and hence as outsiders who did not really belong. This exclusion from full membership of the Ghanaian state brought both the homeland Konkomba and those of the diaspora together to begin a mobilisation that provided a united voice against oppression and exploitation. With increasing democratisation in Ghana in the 1990s and growing ideas of equality before the law, it was just a matter of time that the Konkomba would demand equality with their centralised neighbours in northern Ghana. The next chapter discusses how this demand was articulated and expressed within the politics of belonging.

Chapter Seven

Democratisation and Exclusion: Chieftaincy, Land Rights and Conflicts in Northern Ghana, 1990s – 1996

Introduction

Recent studies on Africa have demonstrated the link between land ownership and local political authority – chieftaincy.[1] Consequently, struggle over land and chieftaincy has been a major cause of many ethnic conflicts in northern Ghana.[2] Before 1990 the Konkomba had no government recognised chiefs and land in Ghana. Without rights to have their own chiefs and control land in northern Ghana, the Konkomba had been on the margins of the Ghanaian society. Following the move towards constitutional rule in the 1990s, they felt that opportunity had come for them to gain land and political rights. However, while democratisation created the political space to demand equal rights, it at the same time reified the rights of the dominant ethnic groups over land rights and traditional representation. This chapter focuses on the paradoxical effects of democratisation, which led to exclusion and violent ethnic conflicts between the Konkomba and their neighbours (Dagomba, Nanumba and Gonja). It examines the Konkomba demands for equal rights to land and political representation during the period of democratisation in Ghana and analyses the events leading to the 1994 conflict. It further illustrates how democratisation shaped local belonging in northern Ghana and argues that process of democratisation in Ghana succeeded to institutionalise Konkomba marginality in the Ghanaian society. In addition, the chapter examines the differentiated ways in which the Konkomba sought to challenge their exclusion in the various areas they inhabited. It shows, above all, that the 'native-stranger' divide based on ethnicity was significant in access to resources and political rights and continued to be salient within the local politics of belonging in the period of democratisation.

[1] Kuba and Lentz (eds.), *Land and the Politics of Belonging*. Lentz, *Land Mobility, and Belonging*. Lund, *Local Politics and the Dynamics of Property* and Lund 'Property and Citizenship.'

[2] Brukum, 'Ethnic Conflict in Northern Ghana'. Bogner, 'The 1994 Civil War in Northern Ghana'. Jönsson, 'The Overwhelming Minority'. Mahama, *Ethnic Conflicts in Northern Ghana*. Pul. 'Exclusion, Association and Violence'. C. Lund, '"Bawku Is Still Volatile": Ethno-Political Conflict and State Recognition in Northern Ghana', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41, 4 (2003), 587-610 and C. Mbowura, 'End of War, No Resolution, No Lasting Peace: A Historical Study of Attempts at Managing and Resolving the Nawuri-Gonja Conflict', in A. Sulemana and S. Tonal (eds.), *Managing Chieftaincy and Ethnic Conflicts in Ghana* (Accra: Woeli Publishing Service, 2016), 191-213.

Chieftaincy, Land Ownership, Exclusion and the 1994 Conflict

Chieftaincy had been an integral part of the political administration in Ghana since the colonial period. In the 1960s, the first president of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, attempted to eliminate chiefs from politics by transferring their powers to local councils. Although he was not entirely successful in breaking chiefly power, he succeeded in making chiefs dependent on the central government.[3] However, following the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah in 1966, there was a resurgence of chiefly power as subsequent governments made efforts to restore the influence of chiefs to the pre-Nkrumah era.[4] However, the tables turned when Jerry John Rawlings overthrew Hilla Limann in 1981. Chieftaincy, again, came under serious threat as the new Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) government emphasised 'power to the people' as a way of ensuring genuine grassroot participation in the decision-making process.[5] However, when the PNDC government began to move towards democratic rule in the late 1980s, chieftaincy regained a central role in Ghanaian politics.

By 1989, the PNDC government had enacted several laws and instruments that gave legal backing to the involvement of traditional institutions in governance.[6] In 1992, these laws and instruments were incorporated into the new constitution. Consequently, article 270 of the the new Constitution deprived the government of powers to interfere with chieftaincy affairs and reaffirmed the autonomy and independence of the chieftaincy institution. In addition, the Constitution restored the 1971 Chieftaincy Act that established the National House of Chiefs. In both the spirit and letter, the new Constitution established parallel traditional political institutions, which shared power with the central government in what Donald Ray, has termed 'divided sovereignty.'[7] At the local level, there was a bifurcation of political authority where inhabitants were simultaneously citizens of the modern state and at the same time subjects of the traditional authorities.[8] Although this bifurcation applied to both the Konkomba and the

[3] Rathbone, *Nkrumah and the Chiefs.*
[4] See Naomi Chazan, *An Anatomy of Ghanaian Politics: Managing Political Recession, 19669-1982* (Boulder: Westview, 1983).
[5] P. Nugent, *Big Men, Small Boys and Politics in Ghana: Power Ideology and the Burden of History, 1982-1994* (Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1996), 48. M. Owusu, 'Tradition and Transformation: Democracy and the Politics of Popular Power in Ghana', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 34, 2 (1996), 329. P. Skalnik, 'Rawlings' "Revolution" in Ghana: Countrywide and District Levels, *Asian and African Studies,* 12 (1992), 190-203.
[6] Owusu, 'Tradition and Transformation', 337.
[7] D. Ray, 'Divided Sovereignty: Traditional Authority and the State in Ghana', *Journal of Legal Pluralism*, 37-38, (1996), 181.
[8] C. Boone and D. K. Duku, 'Ethnic Land Rights in Western Ghana: Landlord–Stranger Relations in the Democratic Era' *Development and Change*, 43, 3 (2012), 672.

chiefly groups, the salience of the Konkomba case was that, they had no chiefs of their own and were subjects of the chiefs of their neighbours.

The increased importance of chieftaincy in the democratic dispensation gave rise to demands by the non-chiefly groups like the Konkomba for their own chiefs. Before the 1990s, the Konkomba were not keen on having chiefs of their own. In the 1960s, Isaac Bawa had unsuccessful attempted to create a Konkomba paramountcy. He failed because many Konkomba had been opposed to the creation of a Konkomba paramountcy.[9] Since then the Konkomba remained ambivalent towards chieftaincy. As late as 1980, KOYA noted that the Konkomba did not 'attach much importance to chieftaincy as other tribes.' They regarded chieftaincy as a symbol of colonial oppression and exploitation.[10] Lacking chieftaincy, the Konkomba must have been happy to see the powers and authority of chiefs under siege by the PNDC government. The restoration of chieftaincy to position of influence in the 1992 Constitution therefore evoked uneasy feeling among the Konkomba, crucially so, when all lands in northern Ghana were vested in chiefs. Although land rights varied throughout Africa, claims to land was fashioned around social belonging mediated by ethnicity. Chiefs held land in trust for their subjects, who were practically the ethnic groups to which the chiefs belonged. It is for this reason that struggle over land was manifested in conflict over chieftaincy within the level of ethnic groups.[11] Having rights to chieftaincy was very important not only for the acquisition of land but also local belonging.

Besides their role in mediating local belonging and land ownership, chiefs came to be involved in resource distribution of the modern state. The association of chiefs with state resource distribution and bureaucratic authority increased chiefly influence and authority in northern Ghana. This resurgence of chiefly authority reflected a broader pattern in Africa, which emerged during the democratic transition of the 1990s.[12] During this period, chiefs became '*development brokers',* facilitating the delivery of development projects.[13] However, as Kate

[9] Talton, "Food to Eat and Pito to Drink', 222.
[10] Memoradum on Konkomba Lands Submitted by the Konkomba Youth Association to His Excellency, the President, Dr. Hillla Limann on His Visit to the Northern Region to Settle the Nanumba-Konkomba Conflict, 11 July 1981.
[11] S. Berry, *No Condition is Permanent: The Social Dynamics of Agrarian Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), 113. Lund, *Local Politics and the Dynamics of Property,* 10.
[12] F. Nyamnjoh, 'Might and Right: Chieftaincy and Democracy in Cameroon and Botswana', in W. van Binsbergen (ed.), *The Dynamics of Power and the Rule of Law* (Leiden: LIT Verlag/African Studies Centre, 203), 122. K. Baldwin, *The Paradox of Traditional Chiefs in Democratic Africa,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 4.
[13] K. Baldwin, *The Paradox of Traditional Chiefs in Democratic Africa,* 10.

Baldwin admits, relying on chiefs to administer government development programs was not without its problems. Chiefs were interested only in 'facilitating the delivery of geographically [ethnically] targeted good'.[14] It is not surprising that the Konkomba complained that because of their lack of chiefs, they did not receive government resources meant for the development of their area.[15] Konkomba settlement pattern, usually in isolated and self-contained villages of entirely Konkomba households, were easy targets for discrimination in the provision of social amenities such as schools, roads, electricity and potable water.[16] This discrimination was more noticeable in Gonja and Nanumba districts where the Konkomba were not even allowed to have their own village headmen.

Before 1991, only the Dagomba, Nanumba and Gonja ethnic groups had paramount chiefs and representations at the Northern Regional House of Chiefs.[17] These groups regarded the Konkomba as immigrants who accepted the authority of their hosts as a condition for access to farmlands.[18] Although the Konkomba believed and regarded the Oti valley in Eastern Dagbon as their homeland, their neighbours regarded them as immigrants in Ghana. This label as immigrants became a source of their marginality. A crucial strategic tool the Konkomba adopted to challenge this marginality was to obtain their own state recognised chieftaincy. In June 1993, the Konkomba petitioned the National House of Chiefs – circumventing the Ya Na – for one of their chiefs to be elevated to a paramount chief with a traditional council and power to appoint divisional chiefs.[19]

In their petition for a paramountcy, the Konkomba argued that they were linguistically and culturally different from the chiefs, who ruled over them. They claimed that the prevailing situation where they were described as 'acephalous' and put under Dagomba, Mamprusi, Nanumba and Gonja chiefs was the result of the obsolete colonial policy of indirect rule.[20] They emphasised their ownership of the Oti plains and their numerical strength as the reasons that entitled them to a clearly defined traditional area of their own.[21] In a complete reversal of their earlier stance on chieftaincy, KOYA declared that, 'from time immemorial, the

[14] *Ibid*, 11.
[15] Interview with Ujan Mawon, local KOYA chairman, Lungni Branch, Lungni, 16 February 2017.
[16] Ibid.
[17] In 1991, the Mo obtained their paramountcy and became the fifth ethnic group to be represented at the Northern Regional House of chiefs out of seventeen ethnic groups. See Pul, 'Exclusion, Association and Violence,' 41.
[18] Skalnik, 'Nanumba Chieftaincy Facing the Ghanaian State', 93.
[19] Petition of Chiefs, Elders and the Youth of Konkomba Land to the National House of Chiefs for the Creation of Paramounct Stool for Konkomba land to be known as 'Ukpakpabur', 29 June 1993, 3.
[20] Petition of Chiefs, Elders and the Youth of Konkomba Land to the National House of Chiefs, 29 June 1993, 2.
[21] Ibid, 3.

Konkomba have always been ruled by a chief or traditional authority beginning from the Head of family to the Head of clan and Head chief of the clan.'[22] This statement registers a very noticeable shift of Konkomba perspective on chieftaincy. Considering the important role that chieftaincy had come to assume in development, it was not surprising that the Konkomba considered chieftaincy as a means to challenge their marginality. By embracing chieftaincy as a means of attaining political legitimacy, the Konkomba had come to conform to what Benjamin Talton believed was a colonial British definition of a legitimate ethnic group.[23]

The Konkomba application faced two significant, but related huddles. First, the petition needed to be approved by the Ya Na and the Regional House of Chiefs – a body made up of the chiefs of the four centralised groups, who were traditional enemies of the Konkomba. Second, the Konkomba required a territory (land) to be designated as Konkomba traditional area. But in the mean time, the Konkomba were wrong procedurely by making a direct application to the National House of Chiefs. To even expect a reply, the Konkomba were to withdraw their earlier application and re-route it through the Ya Na, the paramount chief of Dagbon, whose authority they sought to challenge. This was reluctantly done, and not surprisingly, the Ya Na turned down the application. In his reply to the Konkomba application, the Ya Na in a letter dated 22 October 1993 argued that the Konkomba had no allodial title to land in Ghana. According to him, the Konkomba who were now residents in Ghana were recent migrants from French Togoland.[24] Accusing the Konkomba of presenting 'a pack of false claims' in their application, the Ya Na proceeded to refute the Konkomba arguments for a paramountcy. First, the Dagomba chief took issue with the Konkomba claim that they were the second largest ethnic group in the Northern Region and suggested that an ethnic group that claim to be the second largest group in the Region should have more than just two representatives in the Ghanaian parliament.[25] He further presented population figures of the various districts in the Region to show that Saboba district, which was inhabited by the Konkomba, was the smallest in population and could not be constituted into a traditional area.[26] Moreover, the Dagomba elders contested the Konkomba claim that the British colonial policy of indirect rule was to blame for the existing system of Dagomba hegemony in northern Ghana. They insisted that the British only rationalised a precolonial arrangement in which the

[22] Ibid, 2.
[23] Talton, 'Food to Eat, Pito to Drink', 227.
[24] Reply to Konkomba Petition for Paramountcy, Dagomba Traditional Council, 22 October 1993, 6-11.
[25] Ibid, 2-3.
[26] Ibid, 3.

Dagomba had established their authority over the Konkomba.[27] They also cited lack of chiefly tradition among the Konkomba as one of the reasons why the Konkomba could not have a paramount chief. For the Dagomba, the institution of chieftaincy was completely unknown to the Konkomba customs and traditions and therefore the award of a paramountcy to the Konkomba would amount to the 'bastardisation of the chieftaincy institution'.[28] The Dagomba also maintained that the Konkomba application for a paramountcy was a strategy to obtain land through the back door.[29]

As expected, the Ya Na's refusal to grant the Konkomba a paramountcy gave rise to tension between the two groups. The tensed situation rapidly drifted towards armed confrontation and by November 1993, armed conflict became imminent as both groups began to stockpile arms. The government dispatched a twelve-member delegation to the chiefs and opinion leaders of the groups concerned to deal with the impasse but the delegation's intervention failed to diffuse tension.[30] As the tension increased, the Dagomba accused KOYA of harbouring secessionists' tendencies, and having clandestine connection with the National Liberation Movement of Western Togoland (Tolimo). One contributor to *West Africa* called KOYA, 'a terrorist cabal'.[31] In November 1993, a letter discussing arms supplies, secret meetings and preparations for the conquest of Kpandai and Yendi, purporting to be an internal communication within the Liberation Movement, was widely circulated in Tamale and Yendi. [32] The letter stated that the minority groups had made plans with the help of the National Liberation Movement to conquer Kpandai and later Yendi.[33] By presenting the Konkomba as secessionists, the Dagomba sought to portray them as hostile foreigners, thus neutralising their demand for 'traditional self-determination' in Ghana.

The National Liberation Movement of Western Togoland popularly known as Tolimo was a secessionist group, which began in the 1950s and dedicated to the unification of the two Togolands.[34] In the 1960s and 1970s, the agitation became militant and with support from the

[27] Ibid, 5.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid. See also M. Novicki, 'Mohamed Ibn Chambas, DeputyMinister of Foreign Affairs, Ghana', *Africa Report,* 1994.
[30]'Sarpong Calls for Committee to Study Chieftaincy Problems in N.R.', *Daily Graphic,* 3 November 1993.
[31] A. O. Frimpong, 'The Konkomba Factor', *West Africa*, 4-10 April 1994.
[32] A letter alleged to be from the National Liberation Movement of Western Togoland, Written in Soboba, dated 6 June 1989.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Brown, 'Borderline Politics in Ghana. S. Coleman, 'Togoland', *International* Conciliation, 509 (1956). D.E.K Amenumey 'The Pre-1947 Background to the Ewe Unification Question: A Preliminary Sketch' *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana,* X (1969), 65-84. D.E.K. Amenumey, 'The 1956 Plebiscite in Togoland under

Togolese government, they attempted to recruit and equip a group of dissidents.[35] This dissident group held meetings at Kpalime in the mid-1970s, planning to subvert the Ghanaian control over Western Togoland, for which reason the Ghanaian government became increasingly concerned.[36] Although this movement was based largely among the Ewe of southern Ghana, it involved some Ghanaian Konkomba. Some of these Konkomba included Isaac Bukari Bawa, Udin Siela, Johnson Bilido and Mbamba.[37] Bawa, an ex-District Commissioner of Saboba, became an influential leader of Tolimo after 1975.[38] However, this movement had ceased to be active after 1977 when the Togolese government, seeking to improve relation with Ghana, withdrew its support to the movement and called for an end to the meetings at Kpalime.[39] By the close of the 1970s, this group had ceased to exist. It is therefore not possible for a letter to originate from this group in 1989. The letter purporting to be an internal communication of Tolimo was therefore forged. It was dated 6 June 1989 to conveniently connect the 1991 and 1992 Gonja-Nawuri conflicts to the tensions emanating from Konkomba demands for a paramountcy. In 1991 and 1992, the Konkomba had assisted the Nawuri in their conflict with the Gonja. The combined Konkomba and Nawuri warriors drove the Gonja out of Kpandai.[40] In 1993, there was an uneasy truce and the Gonja were nursing revenge against the Konkomba because of the assistance they gave to the Nawuri in the 1992.[41] In Nanun too, tension already existed between the Nanumba and the Konkomba over the latter's refusal to honour Nanumba customary obligations, and the fact that since 1981 the Konkomba appointed their own headmen, ignoring Nanumba chiefs. By connecting the Nawuri-Gonja conflicts to the projected alliance among the non-chiefly groups against the chiefly groups, the Dagomba succeeded to draw the other chiefly groups (Nanumba and Gonja) into the Konkomba-Dagomba dispute.

In a press statement, KOYA distanced itself from any foreign group and insisted that they had 'no links with anyone in Togo to supply us with arms as being rumoured.'[42] They blamed the

British Administration and Ewe Unification', *Africa Today* 3, 2 (1976), 126-140. And Skinner, *The Fruits of Freedom in British Togoland.*

[35] Brown, 'Borderline Politics in Ghana', 592.

[36] *Ibid*.

[37] Interview with Josha Yakpir, Retired Educationist, Saboba, 20 April 2017 and also Interview with Udin Siela, Saboba, 12 January 2014.

[38] Brown, 'Borderline Politics in Ghana', 590.

[39] *Ibid,* 593.

[40] Mbowura, 'Nawuri-Gonja Conflict'. C. K. Mbowura, 'End of War, No Resolution, No Lasting Peace: A Historical Study of Attempts at Managing and Resolving the Nawuri-Gonja Conflict', in A. Sulemana and S. Tonah (eds.), *Managing Chieftaincy and ethnic Conflicts in Ghana* (Accra: Woeli Publishing Service, 2016), 199.

[41] Mbowura, 'End of War, No Resolution'.

[42] Press Statement of Konkomba Youth Association, KOYA, 6 November 1993.

'rumours [of war] and seditious publications' on disgruntled politicians who wanted to score political points' and assured the Ghanaian public that the Konkomba were not preparing for war against any group.[43] However, this assurance did not reduce the tension. By the beginning of 1994, northern Ghana was completely polarised on chiefly and chiefless lines and the situation required only a simple spark to explode. A quarrel between a Konkomba man and a Nanumba on 31 January 1994 over the purchase of a guinea fowl in the market of the Nanumba town of Nakpayili became the immediate trigger of the conflict.[44] The quarrel led to the murder of the Nanumba man by the Konkomba and on 2 February 1994. What began as a fight between two persons quickly engulfed their ethnic groups. The chiefly Gonja and Dagomba sided with the Nanumba while the 'non-chiefly' Bassari, Nawuri, and Nchumuru joined on the side of the Konkomba. In the next few days, the eastern part of the Northern Region from Gushiegu in the north to Damanko in the south and Saboba-Chereponi in the east to Tamale and Mankango in the west had become a battle zone.[45]

In April 1994, the government formed a Permanent Peace Negotiation Team (PNT) with the mandate to delve into the root causes of the conflict and make recommendations to the government. PNT worked to obtain a cease-fire agreement between the belligerents on 9 June 1994.[46] In spite of the cease-fire agreement, the conflict dragged on with ambush and skirmishes. In May 1995, the situation, again, exploded into a full-scale conflict in Nanun after a Nanumba ambushed and killed a Konkomba man who was returning from a market.[47] According to some estimates, by the time the conflict was over in 1995, there more than 135,000 internally displaced, and over 10,000 killed.[48] The fact that the tension, which began between the Dagomba and the Konkomba in Dagbon over Konkomba paramountcy demand, finally exploded in Nanun and expanded into Gonja indicates the complex relationships among the ethnic groups of the region at the time.

[43] Ibid.
[44] The 1994 conflict is popularly known as the 'Guinea Fowl War' because of the incident that finally sparked the violence but the conflict has very little to do with the fowl.
[45] Mahama, *Ethnic Conflicts in Northern Ghana*, 92.
[46] J. Kaye and D. Beland, 'The Politics of Ethnicity and Post-Conflict Reconstruction: The Case of Northern Ghana,' *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 27, 2 (2009), 185.
[47] Wienia, '*Ominous Calm'* 84.
[48] *Ibid*, 77-79.

Democratisation, Exclusion and the 1994 Conflict

The 1994 conflict has received enormous scholarly attention and has been interpreted from several perspectives. Some scholars have cast the conflict in the light of insubordination of a rebellious migrant group against the legitimate authority of their benevolent hosts.[49] Ibrahim Mahama for instance, declared that 'the war has been caused by the unwarranted desire of the Konkomba to change their status as settler farmers in Nanun, Dagbon and Ngbanya into land owners'.[50] Others attributed the remote cause of the conflict to the colonial process of state formation in northern Ghana where traditionally non-chiefly groups were disenfranchised and marginalised. A report declare that 'for centuries, the Konkomba and other minority ethnic groups lived as serfs of the Dagombas, Nanumbas, and Gonjas'.[51] Nana James Kwaku Brukum in particular described the conflicts as wars of emancipation, with one group determined to maintain the status quo and the other fighting to overthrow it.[52] Yet, others see the conflicts as the manifestation of the weakness of the Ghanaian state[53] and the absence of adequate democratic institutions.[54] Peter Skalnik is quite right to suggest that the conflict occurred as a result of a weak state. However, the weakness of the state was not caused by the absence of democrasation but its presence. The adoption of constitutional rule in 1992 rapidly diminished state authority and weakened its capacity to administer social justice. For example, land and chieftaincy rights were enshrined in the constitution, depriving the president of the power to exercise discretion on such matters.

While democratisation weakened the state in its redistributive power, it also created political space for marginalised groups like the Konkomba to demand more rights. Thus, democratisation stimulated struggles over belonging, leading to violent exclusion of supposed 'strangers'. In their 1998 publication, Geschiere and Meyer established how political liberalisation in Africa paradoxically leads to local mechanisms of exclusion based on autochthony.[55] The importance of elections during the period of democratisation made

[49] Martinson, *The Hidden History of the Konkomba Wars*. Mahama, *Ethnic Conflicts in Northern Ghana*. A. Boaten, 'Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflicts in Africa: Ghana's Example', *Anthropology of Africa and the Challenges of the Third Millennium, Ethnic and Ethnic conflicts,* PAA/APA, 1999, 1-8.
[50] Mahama, *Ethnic Conflicts in Northern Ghana*, 111.
[51] R. Ofori, 'Rawlings' Biggest Chalenge', *Africa Report*, May/June, 1994, 55.
[52] N. J. K. Brukum, *The Guinea Fowl, Mango and Pito Wars: Episodes in the History of Northern Ghana, 1980-1999* (Accra: Ghana Universities Press, 20001). See also Jönsson, 'The Overwhelming Minority.'
[53] Skalnık, 'The State and Local Ethno-Political Identities', 141–66.
[54] E. Akwetey, 'Ghana: Violent Ethno-Political Conflicts and the Democratic Challenge', in A. O. Olukoshi & L. Laakso, (eds.), *Challenges to the Nation-State in Africa* (Uppsala: Nordic African Institute, 1996), 102–35.
[55] Geschiere & Meyer, 'Globalization and Identity: Dialectics of Flow and Closure', 601–615.

'belonging' a central issue as groups that claim to be autochthonous feared being dominated by more numerous strangers. The questions of who qualified to vote where, and be voted for, became points of fierce contestation. Such contestations were evident in the tension that emerged between the Konkomba and the centralised groups leading to the 1994 conflict. Piet Konings' study of Cameroon shows how during the political liberalisation process in the 1990s, politicians exploited the division between autochthones and allochthones for political gains.[56] They promote a distinction between "ethnic citizens" and "ethnic strangers" rather than encouraging national integration.[57] Such a strategy served as vote winning mechanisms to consolidate power both at the national and local levels and in the process, intensified conflicts between people who claimed to be indigenous to a certain territory and migrants.[58]

With the introduction of multiparty politics in 1992 after a series of military interventions, population size became a sensitive issue and the chiefly groups began to entertain fears of being out-voted during local and national elections. Ethnic politics has been a notable feature of the Ghanaian politics since independence.[59] Voting on ethnic lines rather than on party lines made ethnic numbers crucially important for winning local and national elections. In Nanumba for instance, the Konkomba settlers had become a demographic majority. By the 1980s, the Konkomba made up about 49 percent of the population in Nanumba, 29 percent in in East Gonja, and 33 percent in Eastern Dagomba.[60] Obtaining power based on one-man one vote raised fears that the local Nanumba could lose their political power and related control of resources.[61] From the Nanumba point of view, such suspicions were not without foundation. They interpreted Konkomba migrations into Nanumba as a strategy adopted by the Konkomba to dominate them politically.[62] With their power and authority being threatened by the more numerous Konkomba, they began to emphasise the distinction between 'ethnic citizens' and 'ethnic strangers', and who should be excluded from elected representation at the regional and local levels in Nanun. In 1992, for instance two Konkomba politicians were prevented from

[56] Konings, 'Mobility and Exclusion'.
[57] *Ibid*, 170.
[58] *Ibid*.
[59] N. Chanzan, 'Ethnicity and Politics in Ghana', *Political Science Quarterly*, 97, 3 (1982), 461-485.
[60] In East Gonja the Konkomba were 29 percent with the Gonja, Nawuri and Nchumuru making up 34 percent. In Eastern Dagomba, the Konkomba were 33 percent of the total population. NORRIP Technical Report, The Northern Region, Ghana, A Descriptive Overview, Vol. I, January (1983), 5. The term minority and majority as used in identity politics has nothing to do with demography. It is used to describe a political arrangement between a socio-politically marginalized group vis-à-vis a dominant group irrespective of their population size.
[61] See Memorandum of the Nanumba Traditional Council and the Nanumba Youth Association to the Negotiation Team on the Ethnic Conflict in the Northern Region, 20 July 1994, 2.
[62] Ibid.

filing their nomination papers to contest the Wulensi and Bimbilla constituencies as parliamentary candidates.[63] The Nanumba argument was that the Konkomba seeking elective positions must return to Saboba, their homeland, to contest.[64] Such exclusions increased tensions between the two groups and culminated into the 1994 conflict.

Whilst the Konkomba had always considered their exclusion from traditional politics and land ownership objectionable, they found it even more so in the democratic dispensation. In their position paper, the Konkomba argued that their exclusion from traditional governance was 'unacceptable, undemocratic and not practicable in modern context.'[65] The move towards democratisation was understood as a liberating moment in which all ethnic groups must 'have equal representation in the modern state'.[66] For the Konkomba, this meant political and economic participation of all citizens, which had no place for exclusion. They interpreted their continued exclusion from traditional politics as a violation of the constitution, which rendered Ghana's independence meaningless to them.[67] For them, their exclusion from traditional politics relegated them to marginal status, and provided a basis for their discrimination and oppression by the chiefly groups. They complained that the four major tribes had monopolised everything in the region and they had been 'hewers of wood and carriers of water all this time.'[68] The existing ethnic power relations in the Northern Region to them represented 'a new and more oppressive form of traditional slavery' and they insisted that the time had come for a change.[69] This change would be attained through access to traditional representation and land rights. If the Konkomba agitation for equality with other groups contributed to the conflict, it was the democratic ideals of equal citizenship which fuelled these demands.

It is entirely reasonable to argue that the relative calm between the Konkomba and their neighbours during the military regime of Rawlings (1981-1992) was the effect of the depoliticisation of chieftaincy. In the early period of his rule, as I have already noted, Rawlings emphasised grassroot representation and weakened chiefly power.[70] The situation could also

[63] Konkomba Position Paper on Conflict in the Northern Region of Ghana with Reference to Nanumba-Konkomba Conflicts, Presented to the Permanent Negotiation Team, September 1994, 5.
[64] Ibid.
[65] *Ghanaian Times*, 21 October 1994.
[66] Konkomba Position Paper, July 1994 to the Permanent Negotiation Team into Conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana, 11.
[67] Petition of Chiefs, Elders and the Youth of Konkomba Land, 3.
[68] Konkomba Position Paper, July 1994, 10.
[69] Ibid, 11.
[70] See Nugent, *Big Men, Small Boys and Politics in Ghana.* P. Skalnik, 'Rawlings Revolution' in Ghana: Country and District Levels', *Asian and African Studies*, 1, 2 (1992).

be read as the consequence of the general restriction on political mobilisation at the time. In the 1980s, it was difficult for a mobilisation of any sort to occur without attracting the attention of state security. The regime saw any attempts to mobilise people outside the revolutionary agenda as a plot against it.[71] The ban on political activities and general intolerance of the political mobilisation must have kept the Konkomba quiet until the democratic dispensation. Whereas the escalation of ethnic tensions in 1994 has to be understood within the change in the political environment of Ghana, the conflict would have been averted if the president still had the power to grant paramountcy. The mounted tension in 1993 was largely because the Konkomba failed to obtain a paramount chief of their own. Some observers interpreted the government's failure to grant the Konkomba a paramountcy as a clear case of a neopatrimonial state caught up in its double-dealing game. Nana James Kwaku Brukum suggests that the NDC government could not take any bold steps to correct social injustice against the minority groups for fear of losing votes in elections.[72] In its front-page story of 31 October 1993, the *Ghanaian Chronicle*, an independent newspaper, reported that the Konkomba were preparing for a conflict against the centralised groups because of the chieftaincy snub.[73] According to the paper, the Konkomba felt even more aggrieved when the then ruling National Democratic Congress (NDC) government, which they had backed in the 1992 election in return for support of their chieftaincy claim, failed to respond favourably to their request.[74] The newspaper suggested that the government could not fulfil its promise to the Konkomba because it had also assured the other groups that it would maintain the status quo.[75]

It is certainly true that the Ghanaian state failed to act in a decisive manner to prevent the conflict, but this failure resulted from the state's attempt to democratise. Democratisation played a huge role to instigate the 1994 conflict. As Wienia points out, the conflict was 'not so much the criminalisation of the state… but rather a government deliberate inertia, caused by a dedication to the constitutional rule of law, which triggered violence.'[76] Whereas increased constitutional democracy provided grounds for equal citizenship for all groups, it at the same time entrenched the privileges of some other groups and yet completely excluded others. By the 1990s, the government and the president J. J. Rawlings in particular, had become

[71] Skalnik, 'Rawlings Revolution' in Ghana', 199.
[72] N.J.K. Brukum, 'Ethnic Conflict in Northern Ghana, 1980-1999: An Appraisal', *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 4-5 (2000/2001), 131-147.
[73] *Ghanaian Chronicle*, 31 October 1993.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid. See R. Ofiri, 'Rawlings' Bigest Challenge', *Africa Report*, May/June 1994, 55.
[76] Wienia, *Ominous Calm*, 13.

sympathetic to the Konkomba plight.[77] Obviously, the continued exclusion of the Konkomba from traditional leadership was incompatible with the democratic ideals of equal citizenship. One newspaper reported that President Rawlings reminded the chiefly groups in December 1991 that no ethnic group came to Ghana with land and suggested that he will be willing to support all minority groups in their quest for land rights.[78] In October 1993, Nana Akuoku Sarpong, the Presidential Advisor on Chieftaincy Affairs, made a speech in Accra in which he noted that the Government was aware of 'some cheating in chieftaincy' and it had decided that 'Every group must be able to install chiefs' because 'chieftaincy is not for only one group of people.'[79] In 1992, just before the coming into force of the 1992 constitution, the government granted the Mo their own paramountcy from the Gonja to become the fifth ethnic group to be represented at the Northern Regional House of Chiefs.[80]

The failure of the government to grant the Konkomba a paramountcy was not so much for fear of losing votes than its powerlessness to do so due to increased dedication to the rule of law. In the 1992 Constitution, the government had ceded all powers regarding the creation and promotion of chiefs to the traditional authorities. It would be recalled that the biggest challenge raised by the Dagomba against the Konkomba application for paramountcy was the Konkomba lack of land in northern Ghana.[81] In his December 1993 address of the Regional House of Chiefs in Tamale, Sarpong put the land issue to rest by suggesting that the issue of land and paramountcy could be treated differently. The Ya Na could approve the petition of the Saboba chief while the land issue was settled in the High Court.[82] In this address, Sarpong told the people gathered, the majority of whom were Dagomba, that, 'in the light of our democratic process minority rights must be respected' and that 'what lies at the base of the threatened peace is the right to be recognised as minorities in the midst of majorities.' He urged the chiefs 'to accept changes which evolve out of their own social processes than to force the hand of government into effecting such changes.'[83] The crowed heckled and booed him after the speech, and he had to be escorted out of the venue to avoid a mob attack. He had uttered the

[77] D. Tsikata & W. Seini, 'Identities, Inequalities and Conflicts in Ghana, CRISE working Paper', (Oxford, 2004), 25. See also Talton, *Politics of Social Change*, 172.
[78] 'A Myth is Broken', *The Statesmen*, Week Ending February 20, 1994.
[79] Address of Nana Akuoku Sarpong, Presidential Advisor on Chieftaincy Affairs to Dagomba on the Occasion of Out-dooring of Dagomba Community Chief for Greater Accra Region. See also *Ghanaians Times*, 2 December 1993, front page.
[80] Jonsson, 'The Overwhelming Minority', 509.
[81] See Reply to the Konkomba Application for a Paramountcy, Dagomba Traditional Council, 22 October 1993.
[82] Address of Nana Akuoku Sarpong, Presidential Advisor on Chieftaincy Affairs to the Northern Region House of Chiefs on 1 December 1993.
[83] Ibid. See also *Ghanaian Times*, 2 December 1993, front page.

unthinkable – the right of Konkomba to have their own chief.[84] On 20 December 1993, the Ya Na reminded the government that the 1992 Constitution did not permit government to interfere with chieftaincy matters.[85] It is obvious that by December 1993, if the government had powers over the creation of paramountcy, it would have approved the Konkomba paramountcy demand.

Had the government proceeded to elevate the Saboba chief to a paramount status without the blessing of the Ya Na, it would have been a violation of article 270 of the 1992 Constitution. The constitutional provision on the creation of paramountcies implied that the Konkomba could only get their paramountcy through the Dagomba traditional council, the very authority they sought to challenge, revealing stifling effects of constitutionalism on Konkomba ambitions. Clearly, constitutional democracy did not only provide space for equal citizenship, it also entailed exclusion. By making the Ya Na the sole authority to grant the Konkomba their paramountcy, the constitution closed off the channel employed by the Mo in 1991 and effectively excluded the Konkomba from the chieftaincy institution. This demonstrates the paradox involved in democratisation in Africa and demonstrates and reveals how marginalised groups in Africa further suffered exclusion and marginalisation during the era of democratisation.

Konkomba Demand for Autonomy in Eastern Dagbon, 1994-1995

Debates in the media and official circles during the conflict left no one in doubt that the Konkomba were fighting for their traditional autonomy from the Dagomba. Although the Konkomba had grievances in Nanumba and the Gonja areas, it was only in Dagbon that they laid claims to land and chieftaincy rights. During the negotiation, the Dagomba accused the Konkomba of being foreigners without allodial title to land in Ghana. Their position was that the Konkomba were not an indigenous ethnic group and no matter how long they stayed in Ghana, they could not acquire full citizenship with land rights.[86] They described as erroneous the Konkomba view that by virtue of the 1956 plebiscite, they had become Ghanaians. Perhaps denying the fact that the Konkomba were part of Togoland before it was partition, they insisted

[84] R. Ofori, 'Rawlings Biggest Challenge', *Africa Report*, May/June 1994, 53-57.
[85] Minutes of Courtesy Call on the Ya Na by a Twelve-Member Government Delegation Led by Nana Obir Yeboah Okumanini Dr. Obir Yeboah II, Paramount Chief of Effutuakwa and Member of Council of State at Ya Na's Palace on Monday 20th Day of December 1993, 5.
[86] Rely of Ya-Na and Dagbon Youth Association to Konkomba Position and Supplementary Papers to the Permanent Negotiation Team, 4 August, 1994.

that a foreigner who was in Ghana before the plebiscite did not acquire a Ghanaian citizenship by virtue of the plebiscite. They emphasised that 'He or she remains a national of his or her home country.'[87] The Dagomba further accused the Konkomba for attempting to drag Ghanaians into Togo by voting in the plebiscite against integration. Having failed to send Ghanaians into their 'homeland Togo', they turned around to use the plebiscite to gain Ghanaian citizenship.[88]

This controversy over Konkomba citizenship highlights how the shifting international boundary in the Konkomba homeland since the German period significantly affected their status in Ghana. Regardless of the number of years they resided in their new home, the Konkomba could not 'belong' because they were regarded as immigrants from Togo. This also reinforces the notion that full citizenship in Africa was obtained not by civil rights but by historical and ethnic belonging.[89] Since ethnic membership and local belonging were the major basis for asserting land rights under customary law, exclusion from the community was a strategy to deny the Konkomba any claim to land. As Lentz observes, in Africa 'non-territorial strategies of belonging have lost considerable grounds. Everybody must be able to point to a homeland or a home village if he or she wishes to participate fully and have a say in the local decision-making process.'[90] For the Konkomba to obtain full rights as ethnic citizens, they required both a territorial space and a traditional authority of their own recognised by the state. Their inability to acquire these rights placed them within the category of 'citizens on the margins.'[91]

Benjamin Talton has analysed how non-chiefly political system of the Konkomba effectively left them marginalised within the colonial process of state formation.[92] But a more important means of marginalisation for the Konkomba was their lack of land rights. In their demand for autonomy and political representation in the 1990s, land ownership became their biggest challenge. Konkomba landlessness was largely due to their high mobility. The high rate of Konkomba mobility in the precolonial and the colonial periods has been discussed in this thesis.[93] As Abayie Boateng obverses, 'because they [Konkomba] could not build permanent settlements, but rather lived on shifting cultivation basis, nobody gave them the chance as the

[87] Ibid, 3.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject.* Balaton-Chrimes, *Ethnicity, Democracy and Citizenship in Africa*, 83.
[90] Lentz, 'Land Rights and the Politics of Belonging in Africa', 2.
[91] Hiskey,'Caught at the Crossroads', 89.
[92] Talton, *Politics of Social Change.*
[93] See Chapter two, three, four and five.

original owners of the land.'[94] The Dagomba contended that as a 'nomadic tribe who move from place to place looking for fertile land to farm', the Konkomba could own no land in Ghana. They state that if today the Konkomba had no land to control, they should to blame no one but their ancestors.[95]

The Konkomba on the other hand maintain that they had land in Eastern Dagbon because they had lived there since time immemorial and argued that the Dagomba came to meet them in Yendi. Although they admit that they withdrew eastward on the coming of the Dagomba, they maintain that no one dispossessed them of their land.[96] In a rejoinder to a publication in a newspaper, they asserted:

> What the Dagomba have to accept is that they came and met Konkombas in the East. Every elderly Dagomba knows this fact. We Konkombas also accept that we were displaced further eastward by the Dagombas. We Konkombas are not today claiming Yendi, Sambu, Sunson, Gushiego etc. which are all old Konkomba towns. Dagombas must not also claim our new territory, which today has Saboba as capital. That is the only way there can be peace in the northern region.[97]

The allegation that the Konkomba were Togolese was unsustainable because the Anglo-French partition that formed the Ghana-Togo border divided the Konkomba into both British and the French Zones. However, the argument that the Konkomba had no allodial title to land in Ghana was not entirely baseless. In precolonial northern Ghana, earth priests (Tindanas) controlled land.[98] Since earth priests existed within both the chiefly and chiefless groups, land ownership was not exclusive. Carola Lentz points out that customary land tenure was not only inclusive, but its flexibility and fluidity allowed for renegotiation and interpretation to accommodate changing relations between first comers and late comers.[99] This traditional land tenure system gradually changed after the British established colonial administration over the Northern Territories in 1902. In 1927, the 'Land and Native Rights Ordinance (Northern Territories)' declared all lands in the Northern Territories, public lands.[100] This ordinance was opposed in the Legislative Council and in 1931, another Ordinance was passed declaring all Northern Territories' lands 'native lands.' However, the Governor retained final authority over the sale and management of land.[101] In effect, although administered by customary law, northern land

[94] Boaten, 'Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflicts in Africa', 4.
[95] Reply of Ya Na and Dagbon Youth Association, 2.
[96] Supplementary Paper on Konkomba Position on the Conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana, 3.
[97] 'Defusing the Storm'- A Rejoinder, April 1994.
[98] PRAAD/A. ADM 5/4/121, A Survey of Land Tenure in Customary Law, 8-9.
[99] C. Lentz, 'Land Rights and the Politics of Belonging in Africa', 11.
[100] Bening, 'Land Policy and Administration', 239.
[101] *Ibid*, 240.

remained legally a form of 'Crown Land' over which the colonial government had final control. Lund identifies this as legal pluralism.[102] Under Nkrumah, this land tenure did not change. The State Property and Contracts Act of 1960 preserved the control of northern lands in the president, administered by the minister responsible for lands. Under this regime, the chiefs continued to exercise customary powers over land.[103]

As pointed out in the previous chapter, in 1978, the land tenure system in northern Ghana was re-negotiated in favour of chiefs to the exclusion of non-chiefly groups. Lund suggests that chiefs used their influence to redefine and renegotiate customary land holdings to the exclusion of the *Tindanas* (earth priests) from land control.[104] However, in the Northern Region, it was not only the *Tindanas* who were denied control over land, but also non-chiefly groups like the Konkomba. Rather than working to chip away ethnic privileges and chiefly authority, state institutionalisation of land holdings, contributed immensely to shore up chiefly and ethnic control in the land domain to the exclusion of others. In 1992, the constitution recognised the four paramount chiefs, namely the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Nanumba and Gonja as custodians of northern lands. This implied that the Konkomba were formally dispossessed of any kind of land ownership right in Ghana. The Dagomba were therefore right to insist that the Konkomba claim to land was unconstitutional. While appealing to the constitution in their demand for equality with the chiefly groups, the Konkomba rejected the Dagomba use of the constitution to exclude them from land rights. In a letter to the Asanetehene, the Konkomba called the constitutional argument a deliberate attempt to use the constitution to deny them their rights. 'We think that it would be the most serious mistake to use the Constitution as a ploy to deprive us of our possessions'.[105] Clearly, whereas the constitutional provision on land ownership rendered the issue of land in the Northern Region non-negotiable, it did not preclude the Konkomba from a paramountcy.

By the end of 1994, a consensus had emerged among the peace negotiators (at this time inter-NGO Consortium and the PNT) and government that the Konkomba should be granted a paramountcy. The PNT then persuaded the Ya Na to accept this consensus.[106] On 20 December

[102] Lund, *Local Politics and the Dynamics*, 13.
[103] *Ibid*.
[104] See C. Lund, 'Who Owns Bolgatanga? A Story of Inconclusive Encounters', in R. Kuba and C. Lentz (eds.), *Land and the Politics of Belonging in West Africa* (Boston: Brill, 2006). W. MacGaffey, *Chiefs, Priests and Praise-Singers*, 177.
[105] A Letter from the Konkomba to the Asantehene, Signed by Ubor Bejilah on behave of the Saboba Chief, 8 March 1994, 3.
[106] Mahama, *Ethnic Conflicts in Northern Ghana*, 141-2.

that year, a formal reconciliation ceremony was organised at Yendi between the Dagomba and the Konkomba during which the Konkomba admitted that they erred by bypassing the Ya Na in their earlier petition for a paramountcy and a fresh application was presented to the Ya Na. The media reports carried the event as 'the Konkomba apology' for causing the conflict. The Ya Na's speech in which he thanked the Konkomba for their courage and good sense for admitting their guilt for 'waging a brutal and senseless war against Dagombas ... and now come repentant' substantiated these reports.[107] In reaction to the media reports, KOYA wrote to the Chairman of the PNT, requesting him to explain what happened in Yendi on 20 December to the public. They claimed that the ceremony did not amount to an apology and that the Konkomba 'rejected and would continue to reject a situation where one party seeks to rehabilitate its image by demanding an apology'.[108] This incident caused a serious setback in the peace process and led the Ya Na to revoke his earlier promise to grant the Konkomba a paramountcy.

Meanwhile, the Ya Na began to sow a seed of discord among the Konkomba chiefs by openly favouring the chief of Sanguli (Sangubor) against the KOYA supported Saboba chief (Uchabobor). This strategy achieved the desired result of splitting the Konkomba front. By January 1995, a deep crack had emerged between Sangubor and Uchabobor. The Sanguli faction, under the leadership of Samuel Dalafu, a literate and former Member of Parliament for Saboba constituency and heir to the vacant Sanguli Skin, began to distance itself from the whole project of a united Konkomba paramountcy. On 6 January, a letter from the regent of Sanguli, addressed to Uchabobor and copied to the Ya Na questioned the authority of the former to speak on behalf of all the Konkomba. The letter demanded that the Ya Na 'should first raise the status of Konkomba chiefs including Sanguli-Na who are senior to Saboba-Na before he makes Saboba-Na Paramout Chief.'[109] The Ya Na and the Dagomba authorities quickly seized upon this letter to further polarise the Konkomba.

In his reply to the new Konkomba application for the Paramountcy, the Ya Na dismissed the application once again, reiterating the Konkomba lack of land rights and their foreign status.[110]

[107] *Ghanaian Times*, 30 December 1994, 3.
[108] KOYA to the Chairman of the Permanent Negotiation Team, 15 February 1995. See also *The Independent*, 22-28 February 1995.
[109] A Letter from the Regent of Sanguli to Saboba-Na, 6 January 1995.
[110] A Reply to the Petition of Saboba-Na for Paramountcy and Traditional Council, Dagomba Traditional Council, 21 April 1995.

The Ya Na on this occasion however introduced a new element, which was directed against the Saboba chief and openly favoured the Sanguli chief for the paramountcy. He wrote:

> In the first place the chiefship of Saboba is a very recent creation. Many Chiefships were created by the Ya Na and some Divisional Chiefs in Dagbon for Konkombas long before Saboba. Examples are the Chieftaincies of Sanguli, Nambile Nahu and Nafebi. These Chiefships have not yet aspired to the status of paramountcy. Saboba cannot all of a sudden be raised to a paramountcy over and above the long existing Chiefships.[111]

The Ya Na substantiated his claim by citing the point raised in the letter of the regent of Sanguli, which demanded that, he raised chiefships that were older than Saboba, including Sanguli, before Saboba.[112] The seniority argument introduced by the Ya Na was an invention to divide the Konkomba front. In fact, the Germans created both Saboba and Sanguli chieftaincies in the late 1890s.[113] Under the British indirect rule system, both chieftainships were under the Dagomba divisional chief of Sunson until Saboba boycotted the enskinment of their chief by Sunson in 1989.[114] With the centrality of Saboba in the Konkomba liberation struggle, many Konkomba agreed that Uchabobor should be the natural choice for a Konkomba paramountcy.[115]

When it became clear that the Ya Na wanted to elevate Sanguli over and above Saboba, Uchabobor together with thirteen other Konkomba chiefs wrote to the Ya Na accusing him of scheming to impose a puppet chief on the Konkomba. They stated:

> We have realized that after several petitions and appeals to Ya-Na and the National House of Chiefs for Paramountcy and Traditional Council for Konkombas, the Ya-Na is till adamant and with impunity assuming power to impose a puppet chief of his choice on all Konkombas in the person of Samuel Dalafu. The unflinching support of Konkombas before the ethnic conflict is still behind Bowan Kwadin Chief of Saboba for paramountcy for all Konkombas.[116]

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[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid.
[113] For details on the circumstances leading to the German establishment of these chiefships see Kachim, 'African Resistance to Colonial Conquest', 162-172. The first chief of Saboba was Ukuyenja Pejul and that of Sanguli was Labalr. But unlike Sanguli where the chiefship had remained in a single family, that of Saboba had moved about quite a lot. The Saboba chieftaincy passed on to Uboagbanja Balen. When the British took over the area, Balen appeared to be anti-British and the chiefship was taken away from him and given to Telenyi with the instrumentality of the Sunson Na in the 1930s. Telenyi therefore became the third chief of Saboba and the first to be recognised by the Sunson Na. After Telenyi, the chiefship passed on to his brother Sakojim. Sakojim was succeeded by his son, Kwayadin who in turn was succeeded by Bowen at the close of the 1980s.
[114] Notice of Nomination, Election and Installation of Chabob-bor, Ubor Bowan Kwadin of Saboba, Chief Palace, 7 May 1989.
[115] Interview with Kenneth Wujangi, Former KOYA Chairman, Saboba, 8 January 2014. See Talton, 'Food to Eat and Pito to Drink', 223.
[116] Petition against the Installation and Purported Elevation of Samuel Dalafu as Paramount Chief of Kikpakpang (Konkomba State), Saboba Chief and 14 others, 25 July 1995, 1.

They called Samuel Dalafu a stooge whom the Dagomba were trying to use to divide their ranks and that the Ya Na's attempts to use Dalafu to destroy the unity forged by the Konkomba over the past years was doomed to fail.[117] They reaffirmed Uchabobor as the popular choice of all Konkomba chiefs throughout Ghana for elevation to paramountcy, and claimed that Samuel Dalafu was an agent of 'Dagomba imperialism' and vowed to resist his imposition on the Konkomba.[118]

Once the Konkomba began to fight among themselves, the Ya Na decided to elevate not one but three Konkomba chiefs to paramountcy – Nambibor, Sangubor and Uchabobor. The Ya Na' shrewdly calculated this action to appear as a compromise for the divided Konkomba but it was deeply polarising and destructive to the Konkomba course. The elevation of Uchabobor and indeed the granting of three paramountcies to the Konkomba was extremely satisfactory to everyone engaged in the peace process. They looked upon it as an extremely generous gesture, which would ensure lasting peace in northern Ghana.[119] Yet this decision was a source of irritation for the Konkomba. KOYA condemned the decision as a divide and rule strategy that should not be allowed to see the light of day.[120] In a letter to the National House of Chiefs, the Saboba chief warned that 'if the present elevation of Sanguli was allowed, the peace being sought in Northern Region will not be achieved.'[121] However, once the government and the peace negotiators were now on the side of the Ya Na, the Saboba chief was compelled to concede. By promoting several chiefs, the Ya Na did not only succeed in reducing the influence of Uchabobor among the Konkomba but he also succeeded in converting the power struggle between the Konkomba and the Dagomba to an intra-Konkomba struggle. More importantly, all the Konkomba chiefs elevated to paramountcy were expected to swear oath of allegiance and loyalty to the Ya Na and Dagbon. The Ya Na retained appointing authority over the chiefs and his rights in their territories remained the same as before.[122] Consequently, the Konkomba lost the traditional independence they sought at the beginning of the conflict. Essentially, what they obtained was integration into the Dagomba state, resulting in the Dagomba chiefs' continued political control over them.

[117] Response to the Ya-Na's Reply to the Petition of Uchabo-bor for the Elevation to the Status of Paramountcy and Creation of Traditional Council, Uchabo-bor's Palace, 6 June 1995, 2.
[118] Ibid, 3.
[119] Mahama, *Ethnic Conflicts in Northern Ghana,* 143.
[120] Reaction to Agreements on Issue Arising from Demands made against Each other by Dagombas, Konkombas and Bassaris at Kumasi IV, KOYA's Position, n. d.
[121] Saboba-Na to the President of the National House of Chiefs, Uchabo-bor's Palace, 29 May 1996.
[122] Mahama, *Ethnic Conflicts in Northern Ghana,* 143.

The Konkomba aspiration regarding land ownership was equally defeated as the existing land tenure system was upheld. The existing land tenure based on Dagomba customs was accepted as non-discriminatory and satisfactory to the aspirations of all citizens of Dagbon regardless of ethnic background.[123] According to the agreement, the Ya Na retained allodial title to all Dagbon lands and held the same as a trustee in trust for all the citizens of Dagbon, which included the Dagomba, Konkomba, Bassari and Anufo.[124] This agreement obviously fell short of what the Konkomba demanded at the start of the conflict. In response to the agreement, the Konkomba insisted that 'the final agreement arrived at after several months of the NGOs and NPI Consortium meetings seem to have failed to find a solution to the remote and immediate causes of the conflict'. [125] They observed that pertinent issues, which caused the conflict, remained unaddressed. They noted that the agreement on land and paramountcy did not only endorse the inequalities that existed between the groups but further legitimised the exclusion of the Konkomba from these rights. [126] This agreement legitimised and further pushed the Konkomba into the political margins of northern Ghana.

'We Deserve More than Co-existence': Konkomba Demands for Integration in Nanun and East Gonja

Unlike Dagbon where the Konkomba wanted autonomy, they demanded integration in Nanun and East Gonja. In these areas, the conflict resurrected the debate over Konkomba status, which emerged after the 1981 conflict. Following the 1994 conflict, the Bimbilla Na demanded that 'all Konkomba settlers in Nanun should go back to their homeland'.[127] The Nanumba had concluded that they could no longer live side by side with the Konkomba who waged a destructive war against them in 1981 and repeating the same carnage in 1994.[128] In their memorandum to the Negotiating Team earlier in July, the Nanumba Youth Association (NAYA) had expressed this idea in even much stronger terms. They stated that 'All Konkombas should vacate Nanumba land forthwith, as by their violent propensities and frequently destructive conduct, they have forfeited and abused privileges they have been

[123] Kumasi Accord on Peace and Reconciliation Between the various Ethnic Groups in the Northern Region of Ghana, 28 March 1996, 2.
[124] Ibid.
[125] Reaction to Agreements on Issue Arising from Demands made Against Each other by Dagombas, Konkombas and Bassaris at Kumasi IV, KOYA's Position, n. d.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Address of Bimbilla-Na Abarika Atta II on the Occasion of the visit of Members of Permanent Negotiation Team, 20 October 1994.
[128] Ibid.

accorded by the Nanumbas'.[129] They insisted that it was 'suicidal to continue living with the Konkombas on Nanumba land' and called the Nanumba-Konkomba relationship a 'marriage broken beyond repair'.[130] The Gonja expressed similar views about Konkomba continued stay in Gonja. They asserted that the Konkomba were committed to their annihilation and destruction after having engaged in unprovoked attacks on them on two occasions.[131] Using the analogy of a 'camel that drove its master out of the tent', the Gonja maintained that the Konkomba had stabbed them at the back, for which reason they had lost their privilege to stay on Gonjaland.[132] They concluded that in the face of 'unprovoked acts of aggression and wanton destruction of property we, the Gonjas, are firmly resolved that we can no longer co-exist with Konkombas on our land'.[133]

The demands made by both the Gonja and the Nanumba reveal the perception the host groups had of the Konkomba. It was clear that the Konkomba did not really belong in these areas and therefore could be expelled. The insinuation that the Konkomba were violent and warlike added further weight to the contention that they were hostile outsiders whose right to live in these areas could be revoked. While the Nanumba and the Gonja wanted their expulsion, the Konkomba demanded to be integrated. The resulting contestation between the groups, who claimed certain political and economic privileges as autochthons, and the Konkomba, who in spite of accepting their settler status demanded equal citizenship, exemplified the local ethnic 'politics of belonging' in northern Ghana. The Konkomba claimed that they were indigenous to the whole of northern Ghana stretching from Krachi in the south to Chereponi in the north. They assert that their ancestors occupied Krachi, Gonja and Nanumba areas before the current inhabitants of the area arrived. For this reason, the 'Konkombas within this area should have better or more privileges than settlers, since these Konkombas cannot in the true sense of the word be called settlers.'[134] The Konkomba built their indigenous narrative around Ali Kamshiegu's assertion that when Gmantambu[135] conquered Nanun he met a female Konkomba potter called Waapu, who was in fact the owner of the well that served as the only source of

[129] Memorandum of the Nanumba Traditional Council and the Nanumba Youth Association to the Negotiation Team on the Ethnic conflict in the Northern Region, 20 July 1994, 4.
[130] Ibid, 3.
[131] Memorandum Submitted by the Gonjas on the Peace Negotiations in the Northern Conflict, September, 1994, 14.
[132] Ibid, 13.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Konkomba Position Paper to the Permanent Negotiation Team into Conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana, KOYA, July 1994, 7.
[135] Gmantanbu is the name of the founding ancestor of the Nanumba state.

drinking water for the town of Bimbilla.[136] They cited a Dagomba academic M. D. Iddi whose interview they claimed revealed that the Nanumba 'came and met the Konkombas, Bassaris, Kabbiri and Nawuri people.'[137] Their argument was that they were not strangers in Nanun since their ancestors had been the first settlers of the area.

The Konkomba claim to indigeneity was a way of negotiating acceptance in their new home. Given their historical marginality and dispossession, the Konkomba appropriated indigeneity rather than autochthony. The term indigeneity is often presented as synonymous with autochthony, and both terms are used in reference to supposed earlier inhabitants of a territory as a guarantee for specific rights.[138] However, unlike the discourse of autochthony, which is usually associated with controlling or excluding supposed outsiders from access to a resource or territory, indigeneity has come to represent an affirmative strategy aimed at achieving equality for communities who had suffered historical marginalisation and material deprivation.[139] Tania Li has argued that the way people come to identify themselves as indigenous by realigning their relationship with particular spaces and communities was the product of agency and articulation.[140] The discourse of indigeneity was essentially a positioning adopted by the Konkomba to legitimise their claim. In doing so, history became an important means to achieve this. In Nanumba in particular, the Konkomba wanted 'equal rights with the Nanumbas as aborigins, but not to be singled [out] to keep tribal taxation or land tolls, except what is necessary to keep the traditional area moving'.[141] They insisted that their demand was integration into the existing traditional system, which would allow them political participation at the local level:

> We are aware it is not easy to integrate two peoples with different cultures into one society, but the time has come for both the Nanumba and the Konkomba to make a bold attempt towards a peaceful co-existence providing a strong unity in diversity.[142]

[136] Statement of J. Y. Ali Kamshegu on Settlement of Dagombas on Konkomba Lands and Some of the Taboos of Nanumba District to the Lamptey Committee into Konkomba/Nanumba Conflict, n. d.
[137] Konkomba Position Paper on Conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana – With Reference to Nanumba-Konkomba Conflicts Presented to the Permanent Negotiation Team, KOYA, September 1994, 2.
[138] Q. Gausset, J. Kenrick and R. Gibbs, 'Indigeneity and Autochthony: A Couple of False Twins?', *European Association of Social Anthropology,* 19, 2 (2011), 138.
[139] Balaton-Chrimes, *Ethnicity, Democracy and Citizenship in Africa*, 83. Gausset, Kenrick and Gibbs, 'Indigeneity and Autochthony'. J. Kenrick, and J. Lewis 'Indigenous Peoples' Rrights and the Politics of the Term 'Indigenous", *Anthropology Today,* 20 (2004), 4-9.
[140] Li, 'Articulating Indigenous Identity in Indonesia', 151.
[141] Konkomba Position Paper with Reference to Nanumba – Konkomba Conflict, September 1994, 5.
[142] Ibid, 6.

They were prepared to bury their differences, and co-exist as equal with the Nanumba and work together for the development of the district.[143] In advancing this aim, they agreed to accept the authority of the Bimbilla Na, renounce their claim to land rights in Nanun and accept Bimbilla Na's right to appoint chiefs among them.[144]

Although this position represented a serious concesion as compared with their demands in Dagbon, it was nevertheless a radical shift from their position in the 1960s and 1970s. Before 1981, the Konkomba only demanded a peaceful co-existence in Nanun and East Gonja. From 1981, there was a shift away from mere co-existence to equal access to resources and political participation. This demand grew stronger in the 1990s not only because the country was moving towards constitutional rule, but also because most of the Konkomba inhabitants in this period had been born in their new home. Unlike the earlier generation, the new generation of Konkomba leaders were born in Nanun and were no longer willing to accept the 'strangers' and 'native' divide as a justification of their exclusion from certain rights and privileges.[145] By the time the conflict broke out in 1994, the Konkomba no longer found co-existence in Nawol adequate and demanded for integration.[146] They understood their marginalisation as a problem of exclusion from full membership of their host communities and therefore resorted to the discourse of indigeneity as a strategy to negotiate acceptance.

Whilst the Konkomba resorted to the discourse of indigeneity to negotiate their belonging, the Nanumba elites turned to 'autochthonous discourse' to exclude them from land and political rights. Both the Gonja and the Nanumba contested Konkomba indigenous claim and insisted that the Konkomba were immigrants in Nanun and East Gonja. The Nanumba for example traced the earliest Konkomba settlements in Nanun to the early 1940s when they arrived as refugees fleeing from British reprisals after the Jagbel incident.[147] According to the Gonja narrative, the Konkomba settlements in Gonja were established in the 1930s.[148] Both the Nanumba and the Gonja held that the Konkomba were setlers who had no chieftaincy and land rights. However, the contestation became more intense in Nanumba when the Nanumba called

[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid, 2.
[145] Interview with Unanjin Kpadin, Former NDC Local Branch Chairman, Chamba, 8 January 2017.
[146] Konkomba Position Paper on the Conflicts in the Northern Region of Ghana – with Reference to Nanumba – Konkomba Conflict, KOYA, September 1994, 5.
[147] Memorandum of the Nanumba Traditional Council and the Nanumba Youth Association to the Negotiation Team on the Ethnic conflict in the Northern Region, 20 July 1994, 1.
[148] Memorandum Submitted by the Gonjas on the Peace Negotiation in the Northern Conflict, September 1994, 9.

upon the Konkomba leaders who acted as chiefs to step down.[149] The Konkomba replied that they had not installed chiefs but they only had elders to settle internal disputes, which 'they believe is a right nobody can tamper with.'[150] Considering that the Konkomba called their leaders *ubor*, which literally means 'chief', they could not have claimed that they had no chiefs. The Nanumba on the other hand, had always referred to the Konkomba leaders as 'headmen' (*kpemba* literally meaning elder) and yet claimed they had assumed the role of chiefs. The Konkomba on the other hand insisted that since their leaders were not enskinned and did not attend traditional council meetings they could not be regarded as chiefs. They then demanded the recognition of their leaders within the Nanumba system and wondered why the Nanumba were not willing 'to integrate the Konkomba politically and traditionally into the Nanumba society'[151]

The Nanumba however accused the Konkomba of adopting double standards on the issue of integration. The Nanumba argued that while complaining that they had failure to integrate or recognise their leaders, the Konkomba at the same time complained of imposition or suppression any time they attempted to integrate them based on Nanumba traditions and customs.[152] They questioned how the Konkomba could be integrated within the Nanumba traditional system while retaining their social and cultural traditions. The Nanumba greatly resented Konkomba refusal to accept Nanumba custom of buying chieftaincy titles in the normal faction as the Nanumba did. In Nanumba custom, competing royal claimants bought chieftaincy titles through rendering services to the appointing chiefs.[153] The Konkomba refused to comply with this procedure because they saw it as the imposition of Nanumba favourite candidates on them. Having failed to follow the procedure laid out by the Nanumba customs and traditions, the Konkomba complained that the failure of their integration was evidence of Nanumba unwillingness to renegotiate their social and political boundaries to accommodate them.[154] Yet, the Nanumba were ready to incorporate the Konkomba who submitted to Nanumba traditional and customary procedures. The Bimbilla Na made Kanjoo Naa Tagnam, a chief in Nanumba since the 1970s. In 1995, the Bimbilla Naa admitted his successor, Kanjoo

[149] Reactions of Konkomba Residents in Nanumba District to Conditions Laid Down by the Paramount Chief of the Nanumbas, n. d.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Konkomba Position Paper with Reference to Nanumba, KOYA, September 1994, 6.
[152] Protest against KOYA Activities in Nanung, Nanumba Youth Association, 6 October 2002.
[153] NRG/ 8/2/35, 'Nanumba Kingdom', 1931, 7.
[154] Konkomba Position Paper with Reference to Nanumba, 5.

Naa Nachipooan Gmabil Emmanuel to the Nanumba traditional council.[155]Although he saw himself as a representative of the Konkomba at the Nanumba State Council, the Konkomba in Nanun did not regard him as representing their interest.[156] This was because the Nanumba appointed him without Konkomba approval, which they saw as invidious and infringed on their rights of self-determination.

While demanding integration, the Konkomba paradoxically emphasised their ethnic difference. They demanded for the Nanumba recognition of Konkomba chiefs to represent Konkomba interest in the Nanumba traditional council and further requested for equal political rights for Konkomba citizens to represent the district at all levels without discrimination.[157] Thus, whereas the Konkomba agreed to be loyal to the Nanumba paramount chief, they rejected social and cultural integration into the Nanumba society. Issah Musah, a Nanumba youth leader, expressed worry about how the Konkomba had jealously guarded their ethnic identity while seeking integration into Nanun state. He blamed the Konkomba for the troubled relations between the two since they expected the Nanumbato alter their customs and traditions to suit their notion of leadership.[158] Musah attributed the Konkomba-Nanumba problem to the dislocation involved 'in marrying together two different political systems'.[159] He explained that being acephalous, the Konkomba 'do not and would not understand the working of the Nanumba state system and wanted traditions to be subjected to democratic principles.'[160] He suggests that if there was going to be any meaningful integration, the Konkomba had to be ready to give up their notion of chieftaincy as a democratic institution and adopt the patronage system of the Nanumba.[161] By rejecting Nanumba culture, the Konkomba have remained on the margins of the Nanumba society. The Konkomba attempts to negotiate their belonging in Nanun while retaining their ethnic identity underscores the salience of ethnicity in northern Ghana. The fact that ethnicity competed with citizenship and prevented Konkomba integration suggests that ethnicity remained central to struggle over belonging.

[155] Interview with Kanjona Nachipoan Gmabil, Kanjo Naa (the only Nanumba recognised Konkomba chief in Nanun), Chamba, 22 April 2017.
[156] Ibid. During my interview with Kanjo Naa, David Biwati, an influential Assembly Member and opinion leader of Chamba, a town regarded as the headquarters of the Konkomba in Nanun, expressed surprised that Kanjoo Naa represented Konkomba in the Nanumba state council. He was of the view that no Konkomba would recognise such representation since they were not consulted. Personal communication with David Biwati, Assemble Man, Chamba, 22 April 2017.
[157] Konkomba Position Paper with Reference to Nanumba – Konkomba Conflict, September 1994, 3.
[158] Interview with Issah Musah, Teacher and Youth Leaders, Bimbilla, 4 April 2017.
[159] Ibid.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid.

The peace accord signed between the Konkomba and their neighbours in 1996 appeared to have legitimised the Konkomba marginal position in Nanun and East Gonja.[162] This document completely shot down Konkomba demands for integration, on equal terms as citizens, and institutionalised the Konkomba position on the margins. In the agreement, the Konkomba acknowledged the Nanumba as the rightful owners of land in Nanun, and that 'Land ownership is not in dispute with the Bimbilla-Naa'.[163] Paramountcy was the preserve of only qualified Nanumbas. While the Nanumba were the indigenous group of Nanun, the Konkomba were as 'an important non-Nanumba community and brothers in development'.[164] Konkomba civil rights were guaranteed under the constitutions; however, they were obliged to observe Nanumba customary law and usage as well. Whereas the Konkomba social life was to be regulated by modern laws enshrined in the constitution, they were to obey Nanumba customary laws. This made them both citizens of the Ghanaian state and subjects of the Nanumba chiefs.

In Gonja, the agreement affirmed the Konkomba lack of land and chieftaincy rights.[165] However where there was a large Konkomba community, the Gonja chief may confer a leadership title that he deemed fit on any person who would serve under him.[166] Whereas in Gonja it was clear that the Konkomba had no right to choose their leaders, in Nanun the Konkomba were free to 'choose their headmen', but this freedom of choice was not expected to conflict with the interest of the Nanumba authorities.[167] This was stipulated in Clause 2 of the agreement between the Konkomba and the Nanumba:

> Konkombas shall be allowed to freely choose their headmen to be blessed by the Bimbilla-Naa or his delegated divisional authority provided this will not conflict with the interest of the Bimbilla-Naa and/or the princes of Nanun.[168]

With the power to approve or disapprove the Konkomba choice, the freedom of choice of leadership was a sedate delusion. Although the Konkomba settlers recognised the supremacy of their host traditions and customs and agreed to abide by them, there was a serious disagreement over what constituted the limits of the Nanumba traditions, particularly when these clashed with Konkomba constitutional rights. In the post-1996 period, the limits of

[162] Kumasi Accord on Peace and Reconciliation between the various ethnic groups in the Northern Region of Ghana, 30 March 1996.
[163] Ibid, 3
[164] Ibid, 4.
[165] Ibid, 6.
[166] Ibid, 6.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Ibid, 4.

Nanumba customary rights and the beining of Konkomba citizenship rights in Nanun became a source of conflict between the two.[169]

Conclusion

This chapter analysed how traditional institutions and the modern state interacted at the local level in Ghana to shape belonging and ethnic power relations. The constitution, which upheld inclusion and participation in Ghana, paradoxically guaranteed the exclusionary powers of the chieftaincy institution. Struggles over traditional institutions and access to resources were also contestations over history and power. This chapter demonstrated how Konkomba mobile lifestyle since the colonial period has come to define them as ethnic strangers even in areas they have lived since the precolonial times. Whereas the Konkomba accepted their status as immigrants in Gonja and Nanumba and were ready to be integrated into the host societies, they projected themselves as 'indigenes' of Eastern Dagomba and demanded traditional political autonomy and land rights. While providing the political space to demand equal treatment, the chapter argued, democratisation through constitutional rule was a means of exclusion of the Konkomba. It suggested that the 1994 conflict between the Konkomba and their centralised neighbours was caused by democratisation more than the lack of it. The chapter also argued that the Konkomba resorted to the discourse of indigeneity to negotiate their belonging. However, they failed to obtain this acceptance because they refused to give up their ethnic identity. More importantly, the chapter demonstrated that processes of democratisation stimulated exclusion and dispossession of the Konkomba in ways that shaped their status as outsiders.

[169] Wienia, *Ominous Calm,* 194.

Conclusion

Although mobility has been central to Konkomba social life, the role of mobility has largely been absent in the analyses of Konkomba historical experiences. In the existing historiography, the focus has largely been on the impact of British colonial policy in marginalising and excluding the Konkomba.[1] Benjamin Talton, for example, argues that the British colonial administration's reliance on chieftaincy disenfranchised and made the chiefless Konkomba second-class citizens in northern Ghana.[2] Giulia Casentini, however, recognises the transnational nature of the Konkomba society but also explains their marginality not as a function of their cross-border settlements and movements, but as a natural consequence of British colonial system's dependence on chieftaincy, echoing Talton's argument.[3] Framing Konkomba history from the perspective of mobility illuminates many aspects of their social and political life. Whilst this study acknowledges the role of colonial policy in shaping Konkomba social position and status, it argues that Konkomba marginality and exclusion in northern Ghana should be sought within their long-held tradition of a mobile social life.

By examining Konkomba history from the perspective of mobility, this thesis challenged the view that Konkomba marginalised position in northern Ghana was largely externally imposed. Conceptualising mobility as a political resource,[4] the thesis showed that the Konkomba employed mobility to stay on the margins of organised state, but this later became a source of their marginality. It traced the roots and origin of Konkomba mobility and examined its changing patterns as well as the factors that motivated and facilitated Konkomba mobility across geographical and cultural boundaries. Focusing on British colonial policy towards the Konkomba and interrogating colonial state making process, the thesis explored how both the colonisers and colonised mobilised, appropriated and competed over power and authority. Since mobility brought the Konkomba into contact with different social groups, inter-ethnic relations became important in Konkomba historical experiences. When social change and diminishing empty lands led the Konkomba to abandone mobility as a strategy of survival, attempts by their neighbours to keep them on the margins of the state led to tensions and conflicts. By examining the tensions and conflicts, the thesis revealed the differentiated ways

[1] Jönsson, 'The Overwhelming Minority'. Talton, *Politics of social Change*. Casentini, *Al Di là Del Fiume*. Casentini, 'Socio-Cultural and Political'.
[2] Talton, *Politics of social Change*, 14.
[3] Casentini, *Al Di là Del Fiume*. Casentini, 'Socio-Cultural and Political'.
[4] Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed.* Asiwaju, 'Migrations as Revolt'. Herbst, 'Migration, the Politics of Protest'.

in which the Konkomba negotiated their inclusion. Finally, it explored the obstacles and the extent to which the Konkomba achieved this inclusion. More broadly, the thesis engaged with debates around mobility and belonging as well as questions of marginality and exclusion to enrich our understanding of Konkomba history in northern Ghana.

Specifically, the thesis established that the Konkomba developed mobility in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a political weapon to resist the expanding neighbouring states. Since then, they have used mobility to evade political control of their neighbours and later the colonial state in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. However, the establishment of colonial rule increased and changed the pattern of Konkomba mobility by creating new incentives for mobility. The emergence of the Anglo-French border that cut through the Konkomba territory increased their mobility because it provided an opportunity for them to compare two colonial regimes – French and British. Most of the Konkomba migrants headed to the British territory because of the absence of direct taxation (at least until 1935) and a milder policy of forced labour. The haemorrhage of Konkomba population away from the French territory alarmed the French who sought to prevent the Konkomba from crossing into the British zone. However, while the British felt comforted in the knowledge that the French taxation and labour systems were deeply unpopular among the Konkomba, they were equally disturbed by the ability of the Konkomba to easily escape into the French zone after refusing to comply with British system of law and order. Well into the 1930s, the Konkomba employed cross-border mobility to resist colonial control in both French and British territories.

Although the border disrupted Konkomba notion of territory, it provided an opportunity for them to evade colonial taxation, forced labour and the colonial justice systems by simply crossing the border. The thesis has shown that rather than curtailing mobility, the creation of colonial border brought additional incentives for mobility. As chapter three demonstrates, many Konkomba young men eloped with women from one side of the border and crossed to safety on the the other side. As an international border, colonial officials could not pursue culprits who crossed it. While the border created a challenge for the colonial officials in their attempt to bring the Konkomba to colonial justice, it proved irrelevant as a barrier for Konkomba social interaction. Although there was an overall move towards restricting Konkomba cross-border mobility, the colonial officials had neither the personnel nor the capacity to adequately police the boundary. In fact, while the Konkomba rejected the colonial border in favour of their notion of territory as a continuous landscape, they appropriated the

European notion of the border as a barrier in their everyday resistance to colonial rule. The evidence provided in the thesis confirmed Casentini's assertion that the Anglo-French border in the Konkomba area remained porous and continually crossed for various reasons,[5] only serving as a barrier for the colonial authorities. In this way, the study buttressed Paul Nugent and Anthony Asiwaju's contention that the one-sided interpretation of colonial borders as constraints to African societies is untenable.[6] This thesis has shown that the Anglo-French border in the Konkomba area provided an opportunity for the Konkomba to continue to subvert colonial rule and stay beyond the reach of colonial authority.

Having tried in vain to curtail Konkomba mobility across the border through their individual efforts, the study argued, the French and the British attempted to cooperate. Whereas the two powers realised the need to work closely together to control the Konkomba, they found cooperation onerous. Whilst the British were often reluctant to interfere in the movements of the local population, the French intended to restrict such mobility and repeatedly requested their British counterparts to cooperate in returning migrants. The French attitude presented the British officials with an awkward dilemma because the individuals concerned often sought permanent resisdence in their territory. The different attitudes of the two powers towards local population mobility hampered any effective cooperation. Once the two powers failed to cooperate effectively, the Konkomba employed cross-border mobility to subvert colonial control. The ability of the Konkomba to appropriate the border to their own advantage reveals the limits of colonial power in enforcing colonial sovereignty upon mobile groups like the Konkomba. The thesis maintained that colonialism and colonial borders failed to curtail but rather increased Konkomba mobility and brought the European idea of territorial sovereignty into question. To this extent, the Konkomba were successful in influencing and shaping colonial policy in northern Ghana through cross-border mobility.

In the 1930s, the Konkomba added another pattern of mobility to their cross-border movement. This was the large-scale movement into areas south of their homeland. Colonial officials tended to attribute this southward movement in the 1930s to drought and poor soil fertility in the Konkomba homeland. These colonial records have influenced writers such as Cliff Maasole, Benjamin Talton, and Martijn Wienia to suggest that the Konkomba migrated southward in

[5] Casentini, *Al Di là Del Fiume* and Casentini, 'Socio-Cultural and Political Change', 167-70.
[6] Nugent, *Smugglers, Secessionists and Loyal Citizens.* Asiwaju and Nugent, 'Introduction: The Paradox of African Boundaries.' See also Daimon, 'Commuter Migration Across Artificial Frontiers' and C. Vaughan, 'Violence and Regulation in the Darfur-Chad Borderland c. 1909-1956: Policing a Colonial Boundary', *Journal of African History,* 54, 2(2013), 177-198.

search of fertile lands.[7] This thesis has challenged this view and argued that Konkomba southward migration was predominantly a political strategy to evade increased Dagomba exploitation and extortion (see chapter four). The direct involvement of colonial officials in the events leading to Konkomba migration influenced their perception of this reality and led them to take secondary consideration for a fundamental cause. The evidence provided in this thesis showed that although ecological factors must have played a part in Konkomba southward migration, Dagomba chiefs' oppression and exploitation led the Konkomba to migrate south, at least in the 1930s. Throughout the 1930s, the British colonial administrators did not entertain any alternative of ruling the Konkomba except through Dagomba chiefs. Such a policy led the colonial officials to support Dagomba chiefs in their oppression and exploitation of the Konkomba, forcing them to flee south in an attempt to evade Dagomba exploitation. The Konkomba had used this strategy to evade domination by their centralised neighbours in the precolonial period and continued to employ it as an instrument of resistance. They had also used mobility to evade French taxation and labour policies as well as against British justice system. The thesis contends that throughout the colonial period, mobility remained an enduring political strategy for the Konkomba.

British colonial policy towards the Konkomba was not rigid but was constantly changing in response to both local Konkomba initiatives and international context. In the early 1920s, the British favoured cross-border migration because they wanted to make use of Konkomba labour (see chapter three). However, this favourable British attitude changed as the constant border crossing made it difficult for them to establish firm control over their Konkomba population. Consequently, in the late 1920s, the local colonial officials in Yendi and Tamale shifted towards a violent strategy of controlling their Konkomba populations. Thus, the British increasingly adopted the French strategies of burning villages and crops to punish the Konkomba for their blatant disregard for colonial border rules. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, there was an ever-increasing convergence between the French and the British methods of administering the Konkomba areas. In this way, the thesis drew our attention to the extreme violence against the Konkomba, which was a significant aspect of the colonial rule and buttresses Franz Fanon's assertion that colonisation was a violent phenomenon.[8]

[7] Maasole, *The Konkomba and their Neighbours*. Talton, *Politics of Social Change in Ghana* and Wienia, *Ominous Calm.*
[8] Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 182.

As far as the administration of the Konkomba area was concerned, the British policy shifted from a Dagomba-centred Konkomba administration in the 1930s to Konkomba self-rule in the late 1940s. The Jagbel rebellion in 1940 caused the British to reconsider their administrative policy among the Konkomba and opened the possibility for the British to rule the Konkomba through their own chiefs. However, by the time this idea gained support, the Konkomba homeland had lost so much population through emigration that many colonial officials felt that a Konkomba Native Authority was no longer viable. James Anderson, however, believed strongly that the Konkomba area should be organised into a viable Sub-Native Authority. However, by this period, Konkomba mobility was no longer driven by political factors but by ecological problems and food scarcity. From the 1940s, ecological factors and the conditions of the Second World War aggravated the food situation in the Oti valley and made it impossible for Anderson to persuade the Konkomba to halt their emigration. By analysing the colonial and postcolonial census data, the thesis concluded that the Konkomba migration out of their homeland was massive. In 1948, the Konkomba became the largest single ethnic group in northern British Togoland (53,297), the majority of whom were outside their homeland.[9] The Konkomba movement into areas south of their homeland (Nawol) is particularly important for scholarly investigation not only because it was massive numerically, but also because it created serious long-term impact on the region's economic and political history. Not least for the Konkomba themselves.

The thesis contend that pro-Konkomba self-rule policy adopted by the colonial administration in the late 1940s eventually failed because of the large-scale Konkomba emigration from their homeland. Without their own Native Authority, the Konkomba remained on the margins of the colonial state without traditional authority and land, and this continued into the independent period. In this sense, mobility was marginalising for the Konkomba. While not completely discounting the general understanding of Konkomba marginality as a function of their lack of centralised political system, the thesis argued that Konkomba mobility, and ultimately, their large-scale migration out of their homeland in the 1940s shaped their status in northern Ghana as outsiders. There is no doubt that the British colonial policy in northern Ghana shaped local ethnic hierarchies but the group's social system ultimately determined the direction which this policy took. By analysing mobility as an important variable in defining Konkomba status, the

[9] See chapter five of this thesis, 120-1.

thesis contributed to our understanding of contemporary Konkomba position in northern Ghana.

In addition, the thesis concurs with the point raised by several other scholars that the massive migration of Africans into different ethnic areas occurred due to the conditions created by the colonial administration.[10] However, while the colonial state provided the opportunity for increased mobility into different ethnic territories, it paradoxically truncated the relative ease with which immigrants were assimilated into the host communities during the precolonial period. This freezing of ethnic boundaries left the Konkomba as a distinct ethnic group within the established ethnic political spaces. Although land was available and accessible to them for farming, the most important issue became their position within their host communities. In most of the places they came to settle, the host groups considered them as 'settlers', 'migrants' and even 'aliens'. As 'outsiders', the Konkomba faced considerable marginalisation and discrimination concerning political participation, and access to local and government resources. Therefore, colonial policy combined with mobility to render the Konkomba marginalised.

However, mobility was not completely marginalising for the Konkomba. Through mobility the Konkomba re-created their society and modified it according to the new social, political and economic contexts. By migrating to Nawol and other areas, the Konkomba became integrated into the colonial cash economy, leading to their domination of food crop cultivation in Ghana, particularly yam (see chapter five). Through yam production, some Konkomba became wealthy and used their wealth to obtain chieftaincy titles. By the 1960s, the Konkomba in Krachi district had successfully negotiated their autonomy and obtained chiefs of their own. However, unlike in Krachi district, where accumulation led to enhance status and power, in Nanumba and Gonja districts the growing wealth of Konkomba farmers through yam farming rather attracted more repression and exploitation. The local chiefs demanded sharecropping arrangements from the Konkomba as their production increased. Meanwhile yam wealth had conferred economic power upon a growing Konkomba middle class comprising of enterprising rural farmers and traders. This emerging class came together with the educated Konkomba in the 1970s to mobilise their ethnic group to challenge the authority of the hosts.

[10] Cleveland, 'Migration in West Africa'. Baker & Aina (eds.), *The Migration Experience in Africa* and Van Der Geest, 'The Dagara Farmer at Home and Away', 42.

The thesis also engaged with the shifting position of the Konkomba within the changing political and economic contexts. It revealed that during the colonial period, the Konkomba enjoyed some measure of autonomy and protection by the colonial state because of the contribution they made to the colonial economy. The colonial protection against exploitation and extortion of the host chiefs was adequate. Although the local groups, particularly the Nawuri and Nchumuru tried to exclude the Konkomba from local politics, the intense power struggle that existed among them, allowed the Konkomba to negotiate for political participation during this period. The thesis, therefore, argued that the Konkomba position in Nawol during the colonial period was far from being a position of marginality. Once the political authority of the country shifted to local elites at independence, the Konkomba began to experience a serious setback. As Daimon demonstrates in his study of Malawian migrants who evolved from being migrants to become part of the Zimbabwean society but later became alienated and excluded by the independent state, [11] the Konkomba also passed through these stages. Chapters five and six documented these changing position of the Konkomba by showing how the colonial state welcomed them as hard working food crop farmers, but after independence, they quickly became unwanted 'outsiders' and 'aliens'. In the 1960s, the Konkomba in East Gonja and Nanun experienced the shrinking of their liberties and political space. The host groups excluded them from participating in local government and denied them the right to appoint their own leaders. This exclusion allowed their hosts to oppress and exploit them through discriminatory levies and land rents. By the 1970s, the Konkomba had became a source of cheap labour not only for local Nanumba and Gonja chiefs but also for the ordinary people. Although the Konkomba was granted access to and use of land, they occupied a lower social status in comparison with other groups in the area.

Within the local level in northern Ghana, the Konkomba faced conditions typical of ethnic minorities and migrant groups elsewhere.[12] Because of their settlement pattern in isolated and self-contained villages of purely Konkomba households, it was very easy to discriminate against them in the provision of social amenities such as schools, electricity, water, and roads. The this concluded that Konkomba social status in the independent period was characterised by increased marginality. Rather than mobility, the Konkomba resorted to ethnic mobilisation as a means to challenge their marginality. Equally important was how the Konkomba defined

[11] Daimon, 'Mabhurandaya', 248.
[12] See the Nubians in Kenya. Balaton-Chrimes, *Ethnicity, Democracy and Citizenship*. See also Daimon, 'Mabhurandaya', and Mujere, 'Autochthons, Strangers, Mordernising Educationists'.

and interpreted their marginality and exclusion. By the 1970s, the Konkomba had abandoned mobility. Once mobility was no longer part of Konkomba political strategy, they redefined their position on the periphery of the state as one of marginality and exclusion. The study therefore established that the concepts of marginality and exclusion were socially constructed, appropriated, defined and redefined within specific social and political contexts. As long as the Konkomba remained mobile, they were content with being on the margins of the state. They hardly conceived their non-participation in politics as a form of marginality or exclusion.

The thesis also showed that the Konkomba employed different strategies to negotiate their inclusion. Konkomba ethnic identity formation was one of such strategies. In 1977, the Konkomba formed a strongly supported youth organisation, primarily as an organ to present a common voice for all the Konkomba in Ghana (pp. 162-5). The thesis agreed with Talton that Konkomba ethnic identity mobilisation was a means by which they challenged their marginality.[13] Through ethnic mobilisation, the Konkomba confronted their lack of land and chiefly rights, rejecting their status as outsiders. This mobilisation gave rise to the conflicts that emerged between them and their neighbours. The Ghanaian media described these conflicts as either 'Pito' or 'Guniea Fowl' wars and thereby trivialised them, but the conflicts were meaningful for the Konkomba within the context of their struggle for belonging in northern Ghana. While this struggle reflected the increased importance of chieftaincy, it demonstrated the Konkomba shift from a mobile to sedentary lifestyle.

Konkomba objectives and demands were not uniform in all the areas they settled. In Eastern Dagbon, for example, the Konkomba made claims to chieftaincy and land rights. They positioned themselves as an 'indigenous' group and demanded autonomy from Dagomba chiefs. In Nanun and East Gonja, in spite of accepting their settler status, the Konkomba demanded integration into their host societies in ways that would afford them equal rights as any other citizen of Ghana. However, while seeking integration in these areas, the Konkomba continued to project their ethnic identity as distinct from their host societies. Ethnicity became a barrier to Konkomba integration and left them on the margins of their host communities. Another factor that prevented the Konkomba from obtaining inclusion and equal rights, surprisingly, was democratisation. The thesis demonstrated that processes of democratisation entrenched the rights of the centralised ethnic groups and made it extremely difficult for the Konkomba to obtain equality. Democratisation excluded the Konkomba from traditional

[13] Talton, *Politics of Social Change in Ghana*, 152-5.

politics and deprived them of land claims, and therefore defined them as outsiders. The constitutional exclusion of the Konkomba from land ownership and chieftaincy rights represents the proliferation of constitutional safeguards for undemocratic institutions like chieftaincy and ethnic rights in their exclusionary and discriminatory forms. As Samantha Balaton-Chrimes argues in relation to Kenya, the ethnic based rights conferred by African constitutions raises important questions about the relationship between ethnicity and democracy.[14] Such safeguards have been a recipe for violent conflicts among ethnic groups in Africa. The thesis has shown that democratisation heightened 'native-stranger' divide within the local politics of belonging leading to violent conflicts. Whereas democratisation created space for the Konkomba to articulate their feelings about their exclusion, it paradoxically engendered closure by ensuring constitutional safequards for the privileges of the dominant groups. The process of democratisation in Ghana therefore contributed to restrict rather than promote equal rights and access to resources. The failure of democracy to provide equality for all groups in northern Ghana was because postcolonial political structures continued to be based on colonial frameworks of ethnic and customary rights.

The thesis concurs with Carola Lentz, Sara Berry, Christian Lund, and Richard Kuba and Carola Lentz that there is a close relationship between ethnicity, land rights, chieftaincy and belonging (citizenship) in Africa.[15] I argued that this relationship was established and enforced by colonialism. As chapters four and five have shown, the colonial state constructed a framework that linked land ownership to chieftaincy, ethnicity and belonging through the Native Authorities. Since the Konkomba were highly mobile during the colonial period, they failed to obtain a Native Authority of their own, which became the basis of their exclusion from modern form of traditional authority and land rights. Once they were excluded from land and chieftaincy rights, their belonging came into question. This is because land was an important source of belonging and the basis for political inclusion and access to resources. In making claims to land and traditional authority, ethnicity stood out as the most efficient means of mobilisation.

Without a constitutionally recognised traditional authority, the Konkomba effectively remained on the margins of the Ghanaian state. By showing how mobility kept the Konkomba on the

[14] Balaton-Chimes, *Ethnicity, Democracy and Citizenship,* 154.
[15] Lentz, *Land Mobility and Belonging* and Kuba and Lentz (eds.), *Land and thePolitics of Belonging.* Berry, *Chiefs Know their Boundary*. Lentz, 'Land Rights and the Politics of Belonging'. Lund, *Local Politics and the Dynamics of Propert* and Lund, 'Property and Citizenship'.

periphery of the Ghanaian state and shaped their identity as outsiders without land and traditional political authority, the thesis revealed the way historical and social experiences of the Konkomba as a mobilile group combined with colonial state formation process to shape Konkomba belonging in northern Ghana. In doing so, it established a nexus between mobility, ethnicity, belonging and marginality. In this sense, it went beyond the mere explanation for mobility to show the various ways by which mobility often leads to marginality and endless search for belonging. The thesis expands on James Scott's idea of mobility as 'a state-evading technique' by showing that such evasive movements could lead to marginality and exclusion. Thus, in Konkomba historical experience lie the basis for appreciating the reciprocal connection between mobility, marginality and belonging.

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