RURAL MIGRANTS AND THE NEGOTIATION OF IDENTITY IN ASANTE: THE CASE OF DADEASE, 1930 – 1996.

By

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DECLARATION

I, Manna Duah do hereby declare that except for references that have been duly cited, this thesis is the product of my own research under the supervision of Prof. Adjayi and Prof. Addo-Fening It has neither in whole nor in part been presented for another degree elsewhere.

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Abstract

> An ethnic minority "is not the same...as a party, a trades union, or a pressure group. It is akin, rather, to a class, or an age group, or an interest group. (Crowley, 107)

This thesis addresses the negotiation of Identity from the historical perspective. It seeks to show how Kotokoli, Mossi and other African migrants to Rural Asante shaped and expressed their sense of be identity from 1930 to 1996.

The hypothesis to be explored by this research is that identity among migrants to a homogenous society is shaped during its *negotiation* by the migrants' perception of their immediate and remote contexts, be it political, social or economic. If the perception of either of these should change, Identity can be affected. Thus Identity is ever fluid and evolving.

Social Anthropologists Smith, Stewart and Winter for instance have argued this point in their work on Latvian immigrants in a small mid-west town in the United States of America after World War Two. Their research reconstructed, based on memory, the Identity their respondents assumed from their high school years through to mid-life. They concluded that people's perception of their history – that is whether they saw themselves as the Latvian Diaspora waiting out a Soviet invasion or as economic migrants – shaped how they saw themselves. Also people characterised themselves, either as Latvian, Latvian-American or American was based on how much they felt they belonged to the large Latvian community in which they lived or the larger American community.

This thesis does not seek to chronicle the collective experiences of migrants to Asante throughout the 20th Century. It rather seeks to show the how and why of Identity formation through a case study of a group of migrants who carved a niche for themselves in their host society. An understanding of the complex factors that go into Identity negotiation, belonging and exclusion would prove invaluable, particularly in nation building efforts and our understanding of the concept of a (trans)national Identity.

References

Crowley, J. "The Political Participation of Ethnic Minorities," *International Political Science Review* 22 no 1 (Jan 2001): 99-121.

Smith, A. G., Stewart, A.J., Winter D. G. "Close Encounters with the Midwest: Forming Identity in a Bicultural Context," *Political Psychology* 25 no 4 (Aug., 2004): 56-71.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to Prof. Yaw Bredwa-Mensah, Archaeologist extraordinaire. You are greatly missed and your life was a blessing.

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CONTENTS **PAGE**

Chapter One

Introduction and Proposal

The hypothesis to be explored by this research is that identity among migrants to a homogenous society is shaped during its *negotiation* by the migrants' perception of their immediate and remote contexts, be it political, social or economic. It examines the process by which migrants, mostly Kotokoli, Kanjaga and Mossi, to Dadease, a small town on the outskirts of Kumasi, have shaped and expressed their sense of belonging and identity from 1930 to 1996.

For the purpose of this study, identity is defined as one's sense of belonging, group expression and affiliation. The community and people one regards oneself to be part of define one's identity. The Cambridge Advanced Learners dictionary describes this as "feel(ing) that you are similar to someone in some way and that you can understand them or their situation because of this".

Negotiation is used to refer to the process by which an individual establishes a new identity when the perception of the social or historical background from which the individual emerged changes. The process involves interaction between the historical, political, social and present contexts.

The word "pagan" is used solely within the context of David Robinson's description of Kumasi as a "sea of paganism", and Andalusian al Bakri's

description of the "pagan Ghana" empire, thus referring to the non-Islam Asante as pagan.[1]

The study of migrants and strangers in West African society tends to focused on the Zongo. Zongos can be defined as "an enclave inhabited by strangers to a community". These strangers are separated from the larger community in which they live by a difference in race, religion, and language.

The Zongo evolved along the routes of African trade systems as itinerant traders moved across empires, kingdoms, and states. Islam became intricately linked to studies on strangers and Zongos in West Africa society because many of these itinerant traders were Moslem. They thus needed Zongos as a place to live separate from the indigenous pagan society with whom they trade as required by Islam. The Berbers of North Africa, for example, travelled into the West-Central Sudanese empires to trade in kola nuts, shea butter, gold, and slaves. Many of the Mossi, Mande, and Gao who traded south into modern Benin, Togo, and Ghana by the 18th century were also Moslem.

Andalusian al-Bakri has been credited with the first mention of a Zongo in West Africa dated 1068.[2] He described the Zongo in ancient Ghana as a settlement of Moslem traders, separated from the pagan kingdom by a distance of about 5 miles.

The History of Zongos in Asante dates to 17th Century when Kumasi, which became the capital of the Asante state, flourished along a southern bound

[1] David Robinson, *Muslim Societies in African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 124; Quoted in J. D. Hargreaves, "From Strangers to Minorities in West Africa," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 31 (1981): 100.

[2] Quoted in Hargreaves, "From Strangers to Minorities," 100.

route of the Trans-Saharan Trade system.[3] Itinerant traders passing through often put up shelter on the outskirts of the community to trade. In fact, by 1300, Mandinka from the Mali Empire had formed a Moslem enclave for traders in the Akan basin at Begho to facilitate trade.[4] The Asante Empire, by the time of its formation thus had a long relationship with these itinerant traders.

By the 19th century, Kumasi housed a Zongo community with a large Moslem population. Historians generally group migrants to Asante in two. This pre-19th century migrants received land from the Asantehene[5]. Their literacy opened up clerical positions for them in the palace and also provided religious services to the Asantehene. These migrants became incorporated into the Asante political entity over time, and their descendants are called Asante *Kramo*.[6]

Another round of migrants arrived to Asante in the early decade of the 20th century. These migrations resulted from events and conditions instigated by the British colonial enterprise. These migrants came from the area immediately north of Asante, many from the old trading towns of Salaga and Kintampo whose death knell had been sounded by the pacification of Asante.[7] These migrants moved to take advantage of newly created forms of employment in the colonial

[3] Enid Schildkrout, "Strangers and Local Government in Kumasi," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 8 no 2 (July 1970): 256.
[4] David Robinson, *Moslem Societies in African History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) 124.
[5] King of the Asante State.
[6] Schildkrout, "Strangers and Local Government," 256.
[7] Schildkrout, "Strangers and Local Government," 256- 257.

administration such as in the constabulary.[8] Others arrived to provide labor for the mines and large scale cash crop farms across central and southern Gold Coast.

Colonial Annual Reports and Records state that in 1909 for instance, a total of 444 migrants from Wa arrived in Tarkwa to work on the mines. More than 55,000 migrants were counted crossing the Volta by the ferry at Bamboi into southern Gold Coast between 1929 and 1930. At the end of the 1940s this figure exceeded 130,000.[9] The colonial government did all it could to actively promote these migrations, in the hope that it would revive internal trade which had all but disappeared in the wake of pacification of Asante at the start of the 20th century.

Research into Asante's relationship with Zongos and migrants has tended to focus on Urban Zongos. It is however, a well known fact that rural Asante has a sizeable migrant population. This migrant population is either ignored in discourses on minorities and identity or spoken about in a sentence or two as "a group of migrants who provide labor on farms who might get land as reward for good work. They however remain strangers." This, I believe is an over simplification of the issue of migrants and identity in rural Asante.

In an ethnically diverse society like Ghana, it is often tempting to believe that people's sense of belonging is the same as we have of them. It is also usual to

[8] Deborah Pellow, "The Power of Space in the Evolution of an Accra Zongo," *Ethnohistory* 38 no 4 (Autumn 1991): 424.

[9] For more details on numbers, economic reasons and effects of migration on these regions, see Carola Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History in Northern Ghana* (London: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).

group people according to their place of origin. A sense of identity is however more complex and nuanced.

My experiences growing up in Kumasi would illustrate this point. Until my teenage years, I and my childhood best friends had been oblivious to any ethnic difference between us. New arrivals to our social circle were however treated as different, irrespective of their ethnicity. With hindsight, I know at least one such new arrival whom we all viewed as different, as children are wont to, was from the same traditional area as one of my best friends.

My first awareness of our ethnic difference was when said friend went to a boarding school hours away from "home" because that was "where she is from," though she had not actually been there before. She begun to assume an identity different from the one we had shared as children. She was not the last of our group to go through a similar process. Though mine took about a decade longer, it eventually happened.

This experience however set me thinking about the concepts of "identity" and "belonging". How did some migrants become a part of the community while others remained outsiders? How and why do others, like my childhood friend undergo a change of identity along the way?

Hence began my interest in seeking to trace the process of forging "identity" to uncover which concrete circumstances lead to such a negotiation.

Historiographical Context

Historians have long been interested in the social, economic, and political lives of migrant communities in Africa south of the Sahara. Their work can be loosely grouped into three based on their research thrust and goals.

The first group deals with migrant communities as a footnote in the study of Islam in Africa. Most representative of this type of literature is David Robinson's work.[10] David Robinson in *Moslem Societies in African History* examined the Zongo in Kumasi as a Moslem society in "a sea of paganism."[11] He argued that migrant communities emerged in the course of the spread of Islam south of the Sahara and they were shaped by their role as religious advisors to their host states. It looked primarily at how these Moslem traders navigated the hazards of being Moslem in a pagan community. He studied the Zongo to analyze how they created a space for themselves within the larger Asante pagan community. He particularly looked at how the Moslem minority negotiated the political sphere, especially when it threatened the boundaries of Islamic dictates of proper behavior.[12] Asare Opoku's "Religion in Africa during the Colonial Era" argued that African Moslems tend to see Islam as one of many ways to be religious.[13] They thus complimented traditional religion with Islam, which was accepted in the Suwarian tradition. [14]

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[10] Robinson, *Moslem Societies*.
[11] Robinson, *Moslem Societies*,124
[12] Robinson, *Moslem Societies*,124,133-136
[13] K. Asare Opoku, "Religion in Africa during the Colonial Era," in *General History of Africa. VII, Africa under Colonial Domination, 1880-1935* ed Albert Adu Boahen, (California: University of California Press, 1985), 525.
[14] The Suwarian Tradition states that Moslems in West Africa can live within states and obey the authorities without attempting to remove the government. Form of Islam popularized in

The next group of work describes migrant communities as economic diasporas. This school comprises scholars such as Arhin[15], Eades[16], Hargreaves[17], Schildkrout[18] and Pellow[19]. These authors argue that migrants in states south of the Sahara are the purveyors of the extensive trade networks that crisscrossed the region from the 15th century. Others not involved in the trade migrated to take advantage of job opportunities spawned by the trade. They further argue that in the early 20th century, economic opportunities created by the colonial enterprise induced migrations. These jobs included work on railway lines, labor on cash crop farms and work in the constabulary.

The third group of writings includes those of Crowley[20], Cerulo[21], Howard and Shain[22] and Smith, Stewart and Winter[23]. These works are mostly in the fields of Psychology and Social Anthropology. These take up the issue of the classification of migrant communities as Diasporas. Crowley rejects the classification of migrant communities as a Diaspora as it assumes a dispersal of

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West Africa by Al Hajj Suwari of Mali. This also allowed for adapting Islamic belief to their local ones.

[15] Kwame Arhin, *West African Traders in Ghana in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century* (London: Longman, 1979)

[16] Jeremy S. Eades, *Strangers and Traders: Yoruba Migrants, Markets and the State in Northern Ghana*, (London: Edinburgh University Press,1993).

[17] Hargreaves, "From Strangers to Minorities."

[18] Enid Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo: The Transformation of Ethnic Identities in Ghana* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); see also Schildkrout, "Strangers and Local Government."

[19] Pellow, "The Power of Space."

[20] J. Crowley, "The Political Participation of Ethnic Minorities," *International Political Science Review.* Vol. 22, No. 1, (Jan 2001).

[21] K. A. Cerulo, "Identity Construction: New Issues, New Directions", *Annual Review of Sociology*. Vol. 23(1997).

[22] A. M. Howard, R. M. Shain eds., *The Spatial Factor in African History, The Relationship of the Social, Material, and Perceptua*l. African Social Studies Series 8 (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004) 261-290.

[23] A. G. Smith, A. J. Stewart, D. G. Winter, "Close Encounters with the Midwest: Forming Identity in a Bicultural Context," *Political Psychology* 25 no 4 (Aug., 2004).

people from a particular state to another, to form a community. This he regards as an over simplification of the facts as it happened. In his view an ethnic minority "is not the same...as a party, a trades union, or a pressure group. It is akin, rather, to a class, or an age group, or an interest".[24]

Smith, Stewart and Winter however disagree. They state that migrants are more than not, Diasporas as they do attempt to recreate their home community's organizational systems. These works also identified the indicators of identity as language, dress and other cultural symbols which were helpful to my study.

This research paper draws on all three directions works on migrants often work towards. It borrows from the first position's argument for considering Islam as the precursor for Zongos. Thus this research by looked at the roles Islam played in political intrigues and the socialization of the migrant communities. It draws from the third argument's position by examining the extent to which expressions of religion, ethnicity, and identity can be seen as an interest group.

This work is however heavily influenced by the historiographical argument which considers migrant communities in West Africa in the 20th century as economic diasporas. This is primarily because migration into my research area falls in the same time period. This enables analyses and comparison to be made between migrants from roughly the same geographical area in the same historical period.

[24] Crowley, "Ethnic Minorities,"107.

Research Questions

The central question for this thesis is what factors account for and are more relevant across time in the process of negotiating identity?

The other research questions are:

What impact does access to economic opportunities play in identity negotiation?

Does gender pre-incline the level of assimilation of a migrant?

Is there a universally accepted set of indicators always present in each process of forming an identity?

How does patterns of identity negotiation change over time or remain the same?

Objectives

This work more specifically sets out to find answers to the following questions.

What role does language play in the negotiation of identity?

What economic activities were typically open to migrants?

What role do economic opportunities play in influencing identity formation?

Does having social values similar to the host community's values promote integration?

What factors influenced their decision to move to the research community?

Did the abolition domestic slavery influence the influx of migrants into the community and the host reaction to the migrants?

Did these migrant remain isolated or have contact with the big zongos in Urban Asante?

Did they maintain contact with their home lands?

How does contact or lack of it affect their perception of identity?

How was the zongo managed internally?

Did they have access to the local political authority and how does that access or lack thereof affect the migrant community relationship to the local authority?

Literature Review

There is a wealth of secondary materials on migrant communities in Africa south of the Sahara. This section will discuss three seminal works which shall impact this research.

In her study of the Sarbon Zongo in "The Power of Space in the Evolution of an Accra Zongo," Pellow looked at the attraction Accra held for migrants, especially from the early 20th century due to factors created by colonialism. The breakup of the Salaga market in the interior and the opening of the southern trade route due of the pacification of Asante freed labor and opened the migration route.[25] She stated that the migrants in the Sarbon Zongo remained introverted and mixed with the locals only for commerce. These migrants strove to maintain strict Moslem values which frowned on social interaction outside of trade and proselyting with non-believers.

Leaders of the zongo however received custodial rights over the land they settled from the Ga chiefs who thus became their patrons.[26] Periods of power struggles over Ga chieftaincy invariable led to these custodial rights being

[25] Pellow, "The Power of Space," 424.
[26] Pellow, "The Power of Space," 414, 415.

questioned by parties not from the same royal household as the chief who had originally granted these rights.[27]

This work will examine the issue of introversion in the area of research to find out if migrants were introverted and how far that affected identity and the relationship between the host and migrants. The issue of migrants' access to land, who granted it and under what conditions are relevant issues which would help shape the attitudes of a migrant community. This issue will be looked at in this research as it will also be enlightening.

In *The People of the Zongo,* Schildkrout looked at the Mossi Community in Kumasi from the time of its settlement in the early 20th century through to independent Ghana. She argued that Zongo had a feel of community due to living arrangement saw members of one family spread across the Zongo in different houses to make room in each house to accommodate new arrivals.[28]

On the issue of identity she published that first generation Mossi migrants followed the Suwarian tradition of Islam and strove to maintain traditional Mossi customs. They also formed fictive kinship ties with other migrants. This seemingly easy negotiation however did soon lead to conflict between followers of the Suwarian tradition and Moslem Conservatives who were on the rise in the West African region after the 19th century Jihads led by Hausa reformists such as Usman dan Fodio.

Second generation migrants and their negotiation of identity birthed this conflict. Unlike their fathers' the children of the Mossi migrants tended to have family in

[27] Pellow, "The Power of Space," 433.
[28] Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo*, 98, 119.

the Zongo in Kumasi and did not need those fictive kinship ties. The second generation also emphasized Moslem culture over Mossi customs. Conservative Islam in West Africa thus became synonymous with the Hausa at the time when they were gaining in numbers in Urban Zongos. Older Mossi thus tended to accuse the younger generation of becoming "Hausa".[29]

Schildkrout also argues that changes in the historical context brought a corresponding change in the perception of migrants in Kumasi. Thus while migrants were perceived as 'sojourners' in the colonial era, they were classified as 'aliens' in post-independence Ghana.

The issue of living arrangements and intra-ethnic relations within the migrant community is an interesting one. This work looks at living arrangements and its influence on identity in my area of research. It also looks at intra-ethnic relations within the Zongo to trace any tension between the different ethnic groups. It examines if the host community had better relations with particular ethnic groups and if this helped integrate such groups into the host community. This work will also look at the sometimes contradicting needs of different generations of the same ethnic groups.

One literature that greatly contributed to this work is Smith, Stewart and Winter's "Close Encounters with the Midwest: Forming identity in a Bicultural Context."[30] This work influenced my research paper as it investigated migrants who by-passed the urban center, which historically attract migrants because of its ethnic/cultural heterogeneity and the economic opportunities available.

[29]Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo,* 139, 143.
[30] Smith et al, "Close Encounters."

This work traced Latvian immigrants in a small mid-west town in the United States of America after World War Two. They reconstructed, based on memory, the identity their respondents assumed in the culturally plural society in which they lived during their high school years.

Smith et al argued that identity negotiation is influenced by the remote political and social as well as immediate context, both factual and perceptual.[31] Thus how people perceived themselves, either as Latvian, Latvian-American or American is based on how much they felt they belonged to either society – the large Latvian community in which they lived or the larger American community in which the Latvians lived. People's perception of their history – that is whether they perceive themselves either as the Latvian Diaspora waiting out a Soviet invasion or as economic migrants – shaped how they saw themselves.

Smith et al also argued that peoples' relationship with their native and host cultures are independent of each other. It should thus not be assumed that a stronger identification with one means weaker identification with the other. They identified four different patterns of identity, of which a person can have different patterns at different times in their life. These patterns are *Separated* in which people identify with their native, not host culture; *Assimilated* where they identify with host and dis-identify with native; *Marginalized* where people do not interact with both cultures and *Integrated* where they identify with both.[32]

This work is of relevance to this research as it investigates migrants who settled on the outskirts of bigger cities just as in my research area. They by-passed

[31] Smith et al, "Close Encounters," 611.
[32] Smith et al, "Close Encounters," 614.

the urban centre, though cities historically tend to attract migrants because of the economic opportunities available and their ethnic heterogeneity. It will be enlightening to find out the extent to which their findings on the different patterns of identity negotiation in their research area are applicable in my area of research. These patterns are used as yard sticks in this research. Their arguments on the influence of similarities between the dominant values of the native and host cultures and the policy of the host group toward immigrant groups will be explored in this research. The migrants' perception of their past and gender in identity negotiation are also explored in this work.

Significance/Contribution to Learning

My choice of Dadease is informed by the fact that discourses on migrants and identity have often concentrated on urban and peri-urban areas with the traditional pull factors for migrants: railway lines, trade routes or noteworthy markets and cash crop producing areas. The 1960 Census of Ghana shows that the population in urban and trade areas were an ethnic mix by mid 20th century.[33] Asante were just above 40 percent of the general population in Kumasi and Northern migrants were 37 percent. After centuries of migrations due to the extensive trade networks which crisscrossed the sub-Saharan region, urban centers therein were heterogeneous.

Migrants to rural Asante are mentioned, often as a footnote which acknowledges their presence as "a group of migrants who provide labor on farms

[33] I rely on figures provided by Schildkrout in "Strangers and Local Government," 255.

who might get land as reward for good work. They however remain strangers." This, I believe is an over simplification of the issue of migrants and identity in rural Asante. The very fact of the absence of the traditional economic pull factors ascribed for migrants and the more socially homogenous ethnic and cultural landscape of rural areas would thus offer a different view of the process of negotiation of space and identity.[34]

The experiences of migrants in rural Asante would be necessarily different from those in urban areas as their context would also be necessarily different. This research seeks to contribute to discourses on migrants and minorities by allowing these migrants and the issues that are raised therein to be viewed in contexts different from that often written about – economic migrants who stimulate trade or laborers who are assimilated into the family.

This research does not seek to chronicle the collective experiences of migrants in small towns or villages across Asante or even in my research area. It argues for how identity negotiation in rural communities is necessarily different from that often dealt with in urban/trade areas. It seeks to trace the historical process of identity formation, with a case sample which produces effects different from that oft recorded on identity negotiation in Asante. This work aims to show this through a case study of migrants in a rural community who have managed to carve a niche for themselves.

It seeks to show that identity is influenced by historical and social factors which may not be as important or present in urban communities because of the

[34] Smith et al, "Close Encounters," 613.

different economic and political contexts at play. It aims to show this through a case study of migrants in a rural community who have managed to carve a niche for themselves.

Though this work follows the lives of a group of migrants, it is less concerned about theories on migration. It is rather a particular study on the process of forming an ethnic identity, and exploring the possibility that in contradiction to traditional discourses on Ghana, ethnic identity is not immutable. It is an evolving factor, which changes across generations.

Sources and Methodology

My choice of Dadease was because I had some background knowledge about the community as I had been there a couple of times, though this knowledge was very limited. I was able to fill in some gaps before my first research trip through conversations with people I knew who were familiar with the community. This background information was very helpful in formulating questions to meet my research aims.

This research uses archival records at the Kumasi Regional Office of PRAAD for the historical reconstruction of the arrival of the migrants and the political, social and economic structure in place in the host community. These documents include ARG. 1/2/2/15; ARG/1/3/1/49; ARG.1/20/1/2; ARG.1/20/4/33 and ARG.1/28/6. Files on litigation cases involving members of the migrant community will be used to form a picture of relations migrants and their host

across time. Some of these files are ARG.1/6/5/1/308; ARG.1/15/33; ARG.1/3/201 and ARG.1/2/1/136.

Besides archival materials, my fieldwork involved collection of oral data in my research area. My interviewees included people from the courts of the Asante and Zongo chief, elderly members of the community and heads of families. The elderly members of the community includes people who had contact with the earliest migrants as children in the 1930's and others who had grown up with their children in the 1950's and 1960's.I also interviewed younger people such as those in their 20's to get an idea on transmission of history and also to find how far negotiation of identity was still going.

I have tried as much as possible to collect my oral data in a conversational setting, often with three people other than myself. This started unwittingly when I went on my first day of interviews with my guide/facilitator. I realised people spoke more in a conversational setting. Where people's recollection was challenged, I ended up with different stories, which was always good for giving balanced analyses. I had few interviews with just one person. In a couple of cases, there were others in the room when the interview was conducted though only one person answered my questions.

I also observed rites of passage within the migrant community, to see how it has evolved and changed.

Limitations of Study

The very factors that make Dadease ideal for this research, its small size and difference from the (peri-) urban centers of Effiduase, Kumawu and Kumasi make it a difficult subject to research on. Dadease is itself completely absent from government records from the colonial through to the current period. The only event that has led to archival records being kept on the town itself is the attempted destoolment of the Dadease chief from 2000 to the present day. This attempt is linked to the host community's relationship to the migrant community. I have tried, without success to get access to files on this from the Manhyia archives to no avail. The record would have proved helpful in understanding the extent of the Migrant Community influence on local Government. I have thus relied on information from witnesses in the case to reconstruct as much as possible.

This research's use of oral data have taken into account Vansina and Henige admonitions on feedback, making up of facts and other pitfalls in the use of oral narratives. I shall however not write off data with incidences of feedback as irrelevant and unusable. This is because history is not just the retelling of past events. It is also about how people see such past events, and what they bring to bear on the past. I hope to do this in my paper as I have the opportunity and access to the people whose life this is. These oral data will be used in conjunction with written materials, both archival and secondary.

I acknowledge that as I write, I shall stumble across different perspectives I had not considered. Some of these will lead me down other paths to question identity construction. I look forward to these new insights and directions.

Chapter Division

A couple of themes run through each of the chapters as to work towards answering the questions of migrants and identity. The theme of social character of migrants present the best canvas on which to view changes in a people's identity. It thus shows how events in the economic and political sphere of life affect the people. Another theme which will run through the next three chapters is how the factors covered therein – economic, political and social – influenced the migrant community's negotiation of identity. These themes will help guide analyses of what influenced identity and perception of identity.

Chapter two is entitled "Immigrants as Sojourners in the Colonial Era, 1930-1951." It will briefly identify and describe the migrants and community the research covers. Substantively, it will cover extensively the migrant community's interaction with its hosts from the 1930s through to the end of the colonial period in the late 1950s. The chapter will be grouped under the sub-topics *Politics and the Migrant, Migrants and the Economy and Socio-Religous Life of the Migrant.* It shall address the phenomenon of the early migrants and seek answers to questions such as:

What factors influenced their migrations to rural Asante? Political, Social or Economic?

Who are the early migrants?

What form of political organization did the earliest migrants institute?

What relationship did the migrants develop with the Asante political leadership?

How did religion affect identity negotiation among migrants?

What was the economy of Dadease?

How did the migrants fit within this economy?

How did migrants navigate the social realm – in their relationship with their Asante hosts and with other migrants?

The third chapter examines changes in the process of negotiating identity under the second generation of migrants. It looks at the years from 1951 through to 1977. It seeks to identify the historical and social contexts that shaped migrants and their relationship with the Asante in this period, particularly the political changes of this period and its' attendant policy changes. Chapter three will address questions such as:

Was there a break in understanding between the two generations?

How did the second generation migrants renegotiate their identity?

How far is their integrated identity renegotiated?

What are the effects of nationalism on identity?

In what ways does gender affect the process of negotiation?

In what way would ethnicity influence the pace of identity negotiation?

What changes, if any, do the new generation of migrants introduce to the socio-political relationship between the Asante and the migrants?

What was the impact of 1958 and 1969 Deportation Acts on the early migrants?

How different is the economic activities pursued by this generation different from their fathers?

"From Sojourner to Alien, 1978 to 1996" looks at the arrival of a new wave of migrants in 1978 to a vastly different terrain. It analyzes the changes this brings within the political climate of the decades. It seeks answers to questions including:

Who are the later migrants?

Why did they migrate to Dadease?

What economic opportunities were open to these migrants?

Why does the current zongo chief all but deny the existence of migrants in Dadease before 1978?

Why was the Dadease Zongo formed after decades of migrant presence in the town?

How far does this change identity negotiation among the different groups of migrants?

Why did these early migrants lose the rights migrant pioneers historically held on behalf of their hosts, as landlord/patrons and the chiefly family of migrants?

What is the relationship between the early migrants and the later migrants?

What is the relationship between the Asante and the early and later migrants?

What role did religion play in inter-ethnic relationship in this period?

The final chapter addresses major findings and makes conclusions to the research.

CHAPTER 2

IMMIGRANTS AS SOJOURNERS IN THE COLONIAL ERA: 1930-1951

This chapter shall examine the factors that pulled migrants to rural Asante. It shall examine what role these factors played in migrants' negotiation of identity and its' interaction with their host community. The first sub-section – *Urban Push and Rural Pull Factors* – explore political and economic pressures in urban/trade centers which would encourage migrants to seek new spheres and homes. It will also examine the factors that would attract migrants to rural Asante.

The sub-topic *Migrants, the Political and Economy* examines the political structures and organization migrants formed upon their arrival in Dadease. This would help set the background against which migrants carried out their economic and social activities. It will also examine how migrants negotiated to fit within the rural economy.

The chapter also examines the effect colonial authority had on migrants in Dadease. The final section examines religion and the effects of the culmination of migrant's efforts in their political and economic life and how it affected identity.

A left turn at the main roundabout at Ejisu off the Kumasi-Accra road and a few minutes down the road are well known towns such as Effiduase and Oyoko. Dadease is a small town you suddenly burst upon after about 20 minutes out of

Effiduase. The road is quite abandoned, and there are no stream of lorries laden with foodstuffs for sale in Kumasi.

Not quite a town and not completely a village, Dadease is an interesting example of the many communities which dot the landscape of rural Asante. The tarred road passes right through the centre of the village and is in a very good condition. The town is connected to the national electric grid and electricity supply is as regular as can be expected anywhere across the country. Mechanized boreholes, some perhaps with filtration devices, supply households with water.

The town derives its name from a big *Dade* tree under which the first settlers are said to have lived. Dadease serves under the Oyoko Bremanhene in Asanteman. The population is small, and is swelled up occasionally by residents of Kumasi and surrounding villages who come to spend a weekend or two regularly with family members in Dadease.

Migrants in Dadease include Akotokoli and Kanjaga from the Upper Volta, Mossi from Burkina Faso, Frafra and Grunshi from the Northern Territories, Gao from the French Territories and Yoruba and Hausa from Northern Nigeria.

Urban Push and Rural Pull Factors

The reasons for the 20th century trend of migrants moving from urban to rural Gold Coast has been unexplored by historians. This trend is however quiet easily discerned by exploring the deteriorating conditions faced by migrants in

urban centers in this period. In Asante for instance, this push was due to particular political and socio-economic developments.

Local Politics and the Migrant

Politically, the start of the 20th century saw a political vacuum in Asanteman caused by the exile of Asantehene Prempeh II. The political structures of such an urban trade centre which the Zongo had been established to work within had been weakened by pacification. The weakening of these traditional states through the establishment of colonial authority meant many traditional governments were unable to exercise the level of control they previously held over their guests. In fact, migrants could and did use the plurality of authority that existed to their benefit. Schildkrout and Pellow argued for the opportunity such plurality gave migrants, allowing them another party, the Colonial government, to appeal. [35] The Colonial Government however, often had little grasp of the complexities of ethnic relations within the country, and in Kumasi, this led them to make decisions which often led to problems in the urban Zongo. For instance, already existing tensions between the wholly Hausa block and the more traditionalist Mossi and other non-Hausa groups was exacerbated when the Head of the Hausa section was de facto recognized by the Colonial Government as the head of the entire Zongo. [36] This led to rioting in the Kumasi Zongo in the late 1930s. This example set by the colonial authority of meddling in

[35] Deborah Pellow, "The Power of Space in the Evolution of an Accra Zongo," *Ethnohistory* 38 no 4 (Autumn 1991): 251.

[36] Enid Schildkrout, "Strangers and Local Government in Kumasi," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 8 no 2 (July 1970): 260.

Zongo affairs to wily-nily promote section heads who are seen as sympathetic, and the replacement of those viewed as hostile, was continued by the Nkrumah Government in the late 1950s and in the period after the 1966 coup that overthrew Nkrumah.[37]

These tensions seem to have made the Kumasi Zongo's non-Hausa elements more likely to move to new areas such as rural Asante. This assertion is supported by the two facts; None of the earliest migrants to Dadease were recent arrivals, but had lived in other Urban Zongos before settling in Dadease and there is an almost complete absence of Hausa migrants to Dadease and its surrounding towns. Rural Asante was fairly cut off from the Urban centers and thus away from the manipulation of traditional political structures by the central government and the conflicts it wrought.

Migrants and the Economy

Economic conditions meanwhile were becoming unattractive for migrants in Urban Asante. In 1910, the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti, proposed to the Acting Colonial Secretary that Ashanti should adopt to register all native servants employed by Europeans in Kumasi, much like in South Africa[38] Under the proposed law, any native employed by a European resident in Ashanti must have lived in Kumasi for at least 30 days prior to application for license to work as a native servant, thus targeting migrants. He proposed a punishment of 5 pounds or

[37] Schildkrout, "Strangers and Local Government," 260.

[38] ARG 1/2/30/1/11, "Native Servants in Ashanti," Correspondence from Chief Commissioner Ashanti to the Acting Colonial Secretary, 17th January 1910.

one month imprisonment as punishment for failure by a native servant to register. The Acting Chief Commissioner of Ashanti argued that this was a way to keep records on the character of people employed in the homes of Europeans and reduce the frequency of petty theft at the homes of Europeans.[39] The agreed with the principle of registering native servants, the Acting Colonial Secretary agreed to this proposal, his only objection was to the proposed liability of Europeans for failure of their native servants to register.[40]

Not only did migrants face such roadblocks in their attempts to find jobs, but those involved in the traditional migrants occupation of trade found they were viewed with increasing hostility within Urban Kumasi for their economic activities.

In a series of petitions and replies involving sections of Kumasi's migrant population, the Traditional Council and the Colonial Office in Kumasi, a story of this conflict over migrants and commerce can be seen.

The Gao, from France's territories north of the Gold Coast were a section of Kumasi's large migrant populace. In 1942, they formed a gang of porters to take care of the bulk trade in the Kumasi central market. This was to reduce the large number of itinerant traders who roamed the market. The plan had been for the porters to hold stalls in the wholesale section to receive food crops from the women traders from the rural areas. They would then sell the goods out on

[39] ARG 1/2/30/1/11, "Native Servants in Ashanti," Correspondence from Acting Chief Commissioner Ashanti to the Acting Colonial Secretary, 25th June 1909.

[40] ARG 1/2/30/1/11, "Native Servants in Ashanti," ACS letter No. Case1184/09 dated 9.12.09 attd

commission basis.[41] They became an intricate part of the economy of Kumasi within a decade of taking over this job. They held a monopoly of the wholesale section of the Kumasi central market where they sold food crops such as groundnuts, shea butter, beans and yam.[42]

They saw themselves as hardworking, tax paying members of the Asante Community who contributed their part to the economy of Asante.[43] The Kumasi Town however saw their activities differently. They argued that the Gao, who constituted the bulk of these porters, were a socially and economic disruptive. Their range of offenses ranged from tampering with the weight of bagged goods and restricting the flow of staples such as yam and plantain to the retail section by practicing hoarding. The council held the Gao solely responsible for the inflated prices of food stuff. They also accused them of flouting market bye-laws with impunity and being the cause of the outbreak of typhoid in Kumasi due to their lack of sanitary practices.[44]

In spite of a flurry of petitions to the Council and Chief Commissioner, the Gao were removed from the central market to the Bantama Market and ordered to restrict their activities there.[45] They soon faced conflict new conflict with the

[41] ARG 1/2/30/1/11, "Native Servants in Ashanti," Extract from minutes of the monthly meeting of the Kumasi Town Council held on Wednesday the 24th March, 1948 at 2.30 pm within the council chamber.

[42] ARG 1/2/30/1/11, "Native Servants in Ashanti," Letter to Chief Commissioner through District Commissioner 31st March 1948. No. 11

[43] ARG 1/2/30/1/11, "Native Servants in Ashanti," Letter to Chief Commissioner through District Commissioner 31st March 1948. No. 11

[44] ARG 1/2/30/1/11, "Native Servants in Ashanti," Enclosure 8

[45] ARG 1/2/30/1/11, "Native Servants in Ashanti," Minutes of a meeting of the Kumasi Divisional Council held on the 22nd day of July, 1948. No. 81

Hausa in the Bantama market, and were bonded to be of good behavior by the Kumasi Divisional Council.[46]

Though the Native Servants Law was not passed and the Gao were allocated a place to ply their trade, it became obvious that, restrictions were gradually being put in place which to made life uncomfortable for some of the migrants.

Thus besides being involved in political and religious conflict with the Hausa,[47] the migrants now faced economic restrictions targeting migrants.[48] This in itself is a surprising occurrence in a society which had a long history of free trade and enterprise for its large trade and migrant populace.

At the time urban migrants were experiencing "push factors", rural Asante was also gaining "pull factors" which were attracting people with an eye for enterprise.

With growing unfavorable economic and social conditions in urban areas and the mines peopled by labor conscription from the Northern territories[49] employment opportunities were narrowed to employment in colonial establishment. Migrants could join the constabulary whiles the educated could become clerks though neither of these jobs paid as much as traders or laborer on farms earned.[50]

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[46] ARG 1/2/30/1/11, "Native Servants in Ashanti," Minutes of a meeting of the Kumasi Divisional Council held on the 22nd day of July, 1949. P. 81

[47] ARG 1/2/30/1/11, "Native Servants in Ashanti."

[48] ARG 1/2/30/1/11, "Native Servants in Ashanti," P 18

[49] See Carola Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History in Northern Ghana* (London: Edinburgh University Press, 2006) on conscription of labour from the Northern Territories.

[50] Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History*, 141.

The start of the 20th century saw a boom in cash crop exports from Africa. Ghana soon situated itself as a leading exporter of crops such as cocoa, rubber, kola nuts and palm nuts. The farms which produced these crops were situated on the fringes of urban centre such as Kumasi. Food crops going from these villages to urban centers were nothing new, as the villages had long fed trade towns. Market women often bought food crops from the farmers and brought them to urban centre for sale. In fact, the wholesale section of the Kumasi market was created to cater for and control the myriad itinerant traders who brought these crops for sale.[51] Migrant traders thus had a long history of participating in this trade to cart food crops for sale in urban centers, alongside the native women market traders.

The enterprise was however available to those established traders who could raise the money upfront to buy the crops, or had an established relationship with the farmers or the Asante market women. Such traders were supplied with crops to sell on commission basis.[52] Non-trader migrants thus had to find an alternative economic opportunity. An employment opportunity, previously unavailable, presented itself in the form of the abolition of slavery in Ashanti and the Northern territories.

Hitherto, slaves and other un-free forms of labor such as pawns had fulfilled the bulk of Asante's labor needs. Though abolition did not lead to a large

[51] ARG 1/2/1/218 "Goa Community in Kumasi," Extract from minutes of the monthly meeting of the Kumasi Town Council held on Wednesday the 24th March, 1948 at 2.30 pm within the council chamber. Enclosure A

[52] ARG 1/2/1/218 "Goa Community in Kumasi," Kumasi Town Council, Report of the Special Committee appointed to enquire into the function of the Gao Traders in the Central Market and to make recommendations for the elimination of the alleged trade monopoly exercised by them.

scale exodus of slaves from Asante, as it did in other areas of the colony, it left rural Asante without its traditional labor pool. This created a new avenue for urban migrants. Oral tradition in Dadease is replete with stories about members of the community who had acquired a few slaves to provide labor on family-owned farms. [53]

The place to make money and plant roots for many migrants in the aftermath of tensions now in the farming communities across the middle belt of the country. Whiles in places such as Akyem Abuakwa, migrant farmers moved into land they acquired,[54] in rural Asante migrants became the source of labor on the family-owned farms.

Whiles these urban push and rural pull factors does explain the growing attractiveness of migration into rural Asante, the fact still remains that Dadease was still, to all intents and purposes at best a small town. The economy of many communities surrounding urban centers turned to large scale cash crop farming during this era thus centering the economy on land. Dadease and surrounding villages such as Sekyere never became big cash crop centers. There were no large cocoa or palm nut farms to attract laborers and traders to the extent which Akyem Abuakwa attracted migrants in this period.

[53] See Akosua Perbi, *A Indigenous Slavery in Ghana from the 15th to the 19th Century*, (Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2004) for more information on the abolition of indigenous slavery in Ashanti and its political, social and economic effects.

[54] The nature of the acquisition of land by these tenant farmers in Akyem Abuakwa has been extensively covered. See R. Addo-Fenning's *Akyem Abuakwa, 1700-1943: From Ofori Panyin to Sir Ofori Atta*, (Trondheim: Trodheim Studies in History, 1997) and K. Firmin-Sellers, "The Politics of Property Rights," *The American Political Science Review* 89 no 4 (Dec., 1995)

Thus political and religious considerations, and the general cooling in their welcome in Urban Zongos, seem to have played a bigger role in the decision of migrants to move to rural Asante towns such as Dadease.

Migrants, the Political and Economy

In drawing an image of political organization among the migrants and their relationship with the Asante local authority, one of the first people I talked to was the Zongo chief of the town, Nuhu. At the palace of the Zongo of Dadease, the Chief told the story of the coming of migrants to Dadease and the founding of the Zongo

> "My Father (Salifu) was a herbalist. He lived in other villages in Asante before he moved here. They had tried to make a Zongo in other places. Others had even tried here (Dadease). My father and others had tried in Asekyerewa (a neighboring town), but it died. He decided to move to Dadease because the rivers here are twins so they are very powerful. People would consult him from all over so he moved here and run his business from Dadease. This was in 1978. The chief gave him land and he built this house. He was first here. Others came to join him and he was made the first Zongo chief in this town."[55]

Nuhu's assertion about the founding of the Zongo community in 1978 was confirmed by other Asante interviewees. Dadease's history with migrants

[55] Interview with Mossifoohene Nuhu. 7th June 2010.

however dates back to the 1930's when migrants, mostly Kanjaga, Kotokoli and a few Yoruba settled. Evidence for their existence is twofold.

Oral tradition tells of one such migrant, Jato a Kotokoli and his wife Abuyaa. He lived around Ntensua Kwanso[56] before moving to Dadease in the 1930s. He was a kola nut trader. Jasere, a Mossi, was another early migrant. He lived for awhile in Wuante[57] before moving to Dadease. There were many other such stories about migrants and strangers such as a handful of (freed) slaves pre-dating Salifu. They are referred to by the Asante in every day conversations about the migrant community.[58] My companion/guide, who is over 70 years and an indigene of the town, had told me on the journey from Kumasi about migrants in the town from when he was a boy. Other Asante elders I had talked with mentioned also migrants in the late 1930's. There were many other such stories about the earliest migrants to the town. They are referred to by the Asante in every day conversations about the migrant community. I received such references not only from the very elderly Asante who met these early migrants, but also from middle-aged people who met the children of these earlier migrants, before the arrival of Salifu.[59]

The foremost evidence for the existence of the early migrants can be found not just in the collective memories but in the way the chief of the Zongo is addressed. On the second day of research my guide informed a group of Asante

[56] A neighbouring Asante village.
[57] An Asante neighbouring village.
[58] Interview with Abena Mansa 9th June 2010.
[59] Interview with Abena Mansa 9th June 2010.

that we were going to the "Mossi foo hene."[60] This implicitly recognizes him as the head solely of the Mossi in the town, thus excluding all migrants of different ethnicity.

These migrants who precede Salifu have however become silenced in the official historical record of the Zongo. This is due to one reason – their negotiation of identity. The rest of this paper looks at this process among the early migrants, and its effect on their relationship with their host and the later migrants. It shall also look at the negotiation of identity of the later migrants – those who came with or after Salifu – and its effect on their relationship with their hosts.

Oral tradition clearly states, that the earliest arrivals lived within the Asante community with the Asante. Early migrants thus lived literally next door to the Asante. Respondents recollected interactions with migrants one of which included a memory of walking to the house of an *alata*[61] to buy things at night.

From the earliest of times, the first migrants to a community could and most often did receive land and some form of rights over it from their hosts.[62] The pioneers thus enjoyed a landlord status.[63] These landlord rights almost invariable morphed into political authority over the Zongo, granted by the local authority.[64] Others who wanted to settle in that same community joined these pioneers.

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[60] Chief of the Mossi, an ethnic group from the north of Ghana and mostly Burkina Faso.

[61] Though *alata* is used to refer to all people of Nigerian descent, in this era, *alata* often refers to a Yoruba and rarely an Igbo. These are from the animist and Christian south of Nigeria. The Hausa, also from Nigeria easily distinguished by their religion, Islam are referred to as Hausa.

[62] Pellow, " The Power of Space," 430, 431

[63] Hargreaves, "From Strangers to Minorities" 101, 102; Schildkrout *People of Zongo* 98, 119; Pellow, "The Power of Space," 435.

[64] Pellow, "The Power of Space," 430, 432.

Schildkrout and Pellow agree on the importance that living arrangement play in the negotiation of identity. Schildkrout recounted that in the Kumasi Zongo families built several houses to make room in each house for newly arrived guests, who would regard the family hosting them as their patrons.[65] Thus members of the same family would live in different houses all across the Zongo. This she maintained fostered a feeling of belonging and family across the zongo. Pellow has also argued that by living in a space far removed from the larger Ga community and not taking part in activities with them except for commerce, the Sarbon Zongo in spite of its ethnic diversity become unified as a people.[66]They lived within the Asante. They did not attempt to establish themselves as patron for newly arrived migrants, but depended on Asante families for patronage.

Migrants within this period however choose to live within the pagan Asante community and practiced Islam in accordance with Suwarian traditions. Thus fitting Crowley's definition of migrants and were not a Diaspora. The issue of political control of these earliest migrants is intertwined with issues of religion, identity and culture. It remains virtually impossible to analyze one without the other.

These early migrants thus lived under the direct political control of the local traditional authority. There is no evidence that they sought a form of independence as was common across Zongos in West Africa.

The early migrants were able to do this for a myriad of reasons, both cultural and religious. Having being sojourners in Asante long before arriving in

[65] Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo*, 98, 119.
[66] Pellow, "The Power of Space," 422, 432.

Dadease, many were accustomed to, and accepting of, Asante customs. Two of the famed early migrants to Dadease – Jato and Jasere were not new arrivals to Asante. They were known to have lived in other villages and towns, travelled extensively through Asanteman before settling in Dadease.

These living arrangements fostered closer links with the Asante than with other migrants. By living within the Asante community, they were announcing their willingness to be co-opted into the host polity. They were thus not introverted but mingled with the Asante with no constraint. This very character of the early migrants thus made them more easily absorbed into the Asante community, disguising them from being easily identified as strangers. Their incorporation into the Asante Political control influenced their negotiation of identity. The more they lived in accordance to Asante customs and had cases judged by Asante laws, the more they were viewed by the Asante as no longer stranger. Their sense of belonging to the Asante community was thus strengthened.

Migrants and the Rural Economy

Whiles the urban push does give reasons to account for the move from urban centers, and the rural pull factors did account for the attraction rural Asante had for these migrants, the fact still remains that Dadease was still, to all intents and purposes, at best, a small town. The economy of many communities surrounding urban centers turned to large scale cash crop farming during this era thus centering the economy on land. Dadease and surrounding villages such as

Sekyere never did become big cash crop centers. There were no large cocoa or palm nut plantations to attract laborers and traders the like of which Akyem Abuakwa attracted in this period. Oral tradition states that though Dadease's market days used to be quite popular, it attracted people from surrounding villages at its height, not traders from urban centers.[67]

The economy of Dadease, like many other villages evolved (and still evolves) around access to land. People farmed, and sold their produce in the market on market days. Hunters sold game and store keepers bought their produce from Kumasi to resell. Though Dadease never was a notable presence in the cash crop industry, Dadease's market days used to be quite popular and at its height attracted buyers of food crops from surrounding villages.[68] Access to land was thus the first step to being a part of any such community.

The earliest migrants, by settling within the community did not receive land formally from the political authority of the community as the people of urban centers did.[69] . Migrant could thus gain access to land and shore up their economic strength through inter-marriage and patronage. The earlier mentioned Jasere for instance married Maame Adjoa Ntoso, a local woman in the 1950s. He thus received access to land which though not his to sell or will, he could farm and live off all his life.[70] Any progeny of such relationships were adopted into the Asante matrilineage in line with Asante customs. These children became de facto

[67] Interview with Kwame Nsiah, Akua Bronya and Akwasi Awuna, 7th June 2010.
[68] Interview with Kwame Nsiah, Akua Bronya and Akwasi Awuna, 7th June 2010.
[69] J. M. Allman, "'Hewers of Wood, Carriers of Water": Islam, Class, and Politics on the Eve of Ghana's Independence," *African Studies Review* 34 no 2 (Sep., 1991): 4; Pellow, "The Power of Space," 423, 429.
[70] Interview with Akosua Bronya, 9th June 2010

citizens with the same rights as any other Asante children. They received Asante names, and Asante tribal markings. Migrants who sought co-option through patronage would rent out their services as laborer. They could find their good service rewarded with a piece of land with the same conditions attached as above. One interesting story I came across in my research was that of a family who acquired a slave from the north. The man was eventually emancipated by the family and he became classified in the town as an ah)ho)[71]. He remained under the patronage of the family, marrying from the family and receiving land to farm on for his life time.

Others such as Abuyaa, the rice seller, remained and maintained their close spatial and socio-political relation with their host as it remained vital in pursuit of their economic undertakings. Her food was popular among school children and many such locals remembered her with a wistful smile when talking about her. Others such as the Yoruba shop keeper popularly called *alata* also needed a close spatial relationship with the Asante.[72]

The economic opportunities open to migrants were thus directly linked to their ability to navigate the social sphere of living within the Asante community. This economic system thus ensured the continued dependence of migrants on their social links with the Asante to retain their economic status. Migrants' co-option into the Asante polity was a choice these early migrants made for its practicality in meeting their aspirations.

[71] Vistor/stranger. Interview with Kwame Nsiah, 9th June 2010.
[72] Interview with Abena Mansa 6th June 2010

This social negotiation of the early migrants, though most likely started as a way to ensure access to vital economic resources changed the face of these early migrant community. Most of the children of the early migrants eventually had local mothers, and became Asante.

This social co-option necessarily affected their cultural systems. Their cultural and religious background as members of the Suwarian tradition of course enabled this phase and allowed for their absorption into Dadease community. Their acceptance of inter – marriage show cultural and religious change which most urban Moslem migrants in this period would have considered *Haram*[73] and rather married other migrants' children or sent home for wives when their men came of marrying age. This inter-marriage was very acceptable to both the local Asante and migrants conflicts from this period. Migrant women were seen as very desirable because children from such unions remained the man's family. Any economic activities undertaken by these women were encouraged and supported as they would end up as part of the man's property. For these women, they gained a family and support base. One of my interviewees had married one such woman, and the children and grandchildren of that union remain in the man's house as a part of his family. Yaa Adae, a Kotokoli migrant who sold koko in Dadease in the 1960s married Opanin Kojo Manu. She had two children from an earlier relation with a fellow Kotokoli. Opanin Manu married her and raised her two children.[74]

Local women were also accepting of marriage proposals from migrant men. These men would need to have some skill, wealth or prove himself as a

[73] forbidden
[74] Interview with Akosua Bronya and Kwame Nsiah, 7th June 2010.

hardworking and trustworthy person before they would be viewed with interest by the eligible women in town. Their enterprises would become a part of their property to be passed on to the children of such unions. Migrant men were satisfied with this arrangement as this ensured the passing on of property to their children within the matrilineal society.

Gender was thus an important factor in assimilation. Women's reproductive abilities meant they could produce children for the Asante men – children whose labor would belong exclusively to the man. Women were therefore more likely and easier to assimilate into the family. Eventually, migrants' negotiation which was tailored to meet an economic need soon led a base of children who though of mixed parentage were identified as Asante. They received much of the same rights, in as far as property owning is concerned, as other full Asante cousins.

Their extent of assimilation due to their political choices should not be over stretched. These people remained migrants, and stories about their migrant ancestors were well told. They were also accepted as part of the fabric of society, thus becoming a part, though distinct, of the Asante social structure of Dadease.

Another factor that enabled the early migrants' closer ties to the Asante community was religion. The Suwarian Tradition allowed a mixing of Islam and their tradition cultures made them able to live with and inter-marry their Asante hosts. The earliest migrants, by remaining politically under the control of Asante had to also navigate the social sphere of the town according to the rules of the Asante. The male migrant could enhance his position in society by inter-marriage

with an Asante woman. One popular example in Dadease is Jasere, a Mossi, who married Maame Adjoa Ntoso), an Asante.[75] A freed slave could also marry an Asante woman to help to cement his place in the town as he received a piece of land from his patron's soon after the fact.

Another migrant, Jato, a Kotokoli and his wife Abuyaa arrived in the 1930's. The elderly Asante seem to have fond memories about Abuyaa and thought highly of her. One such interviewer laughed every time her name was mentioned. No one could seem to tell why this was so. This fondness could be attributed to her reputed friendliness especially to the children of the town. She sold cooked rice, thus many of her customers were little school children who would have fond memories of her. The couple died childless, and Abuyaa was regarded as the cause.[76] Jato never made the attempt, as far as was publicly known, to take a second wife as is wont of Mohammedans to have an heir.

Migrants' negotiation of the social sphere according to Asante rules does not mean they were not free to make their own rules. In the socio-religious spheres, the migrants retained an interesting mix of Asante and their native customs. This enabled them to be true to their traditions as they had fought for in urban zongos while remaining on good terms with the host Asante by respecting Asante customs.

This made the migrants less strangers as they inter-married with the local women. Any progeny of such relationships were adopted into the Asante mother's family in line with Asante Customs. These children were thus fully Asante, with

[75] Interview with Kwame Nsiah, 9th June 2010
[76] Interviews with Kwame Kuma, Nana Acheampong and Kwame Nsiah, 7th June 2010

the same rights as any other Asante children of the time. They received Asante names, and Asante tribal markings.

There were no inheritance conflicts in this period. This would be not just because as a migrant population who had chosen political dependence on their hosts, they had no choice than to follow Asante inheritance customs. This, I believe can be also attributed to the fact that following this Asante custom was inherently beneficial to the economic and political aspirations of the migrants. As migrants who had often come with next to nothing and eked out a living selling and providing labor on family owned farms, few of these migrants would have earned enough in their life to bequeath for relations. Moreover, they had no relatives in Dadease to fight over any such properties. The Asante inheritance custom however ensured that not only would they often receive land from the woman's family to farm and pass on to their children at death, but these children would be eligible to inherit much more wealth from their mother's family.

By inter-marrying with the Asante women, the migrants may have lost their place as strangers but gained children who as part of the Asante social, political and cultural sphere. They may have arrived as migrants with next to nothing in their pocket but their children would be Asante.

The early migrants never built a mosque or a formal place of worship. The absence of a place of joint worship however does not mean the early migrants abandoned Islam. The Islamic faith unlike Christianity does not require adherents to attend a formal place of worship. Moslems are allowed to worship and pray on

their own without an Imam. The early migrants thus practiced their religion in private.

Through a mix of compromise and plain obedience to Asante customs, the early migrants of this period became a part of Dadease's socio-political sphere. People may have still remembered they were strangers as evidence by their ability to point out the children of these migrants. They however received rights that made them a part of the community and aided them to retain a sense of belonging to both worlds. These children thus became recipients of a dual heritage.

Colonial Authority and Early migrants

Pellow and Schildkrout variously refer to the dual political system under colonialism and independent nation state for giving migrants another authority which to appeal to, should they fall out with the host traditional political authority.[77] Schildkrout draws on the experience of Asante, after pacification, during the period of the exile of the Asantehene Prempeh.[78] The one such example is that discussed more extensively above, of the Hausa headman. [79] In Accra, Zongo headmen vacillated between the local authorities and colonial authorities for the legitimization of their rule. The colonial government took part in securing land for migrants and was consulted alongside the Ga landlords in cases of struggles for leadership position in the migrant community.[80]

[77] Pellow. "The Power of Space," 421; Schildkrout, "Strangers and Local Government," 251.
[78] Schildkrout, "Strangers and Local Government," 251.
[79] Schildkrout, "Strangers and Local Governmen,t" 260.
[80] Pellow, "The Power of Space," 426, 432.

There is however no evidence to show that having a dual political authority affected migrants in Dadease, in allowing them new patrons to appeal to if they ever became unpopular with their Asante hosts. Dadease remained virtually untouched by the colonial authority in the late colonial period. As such, Dadease is an example of one of the many small towns whose daily life was little impacted by the political authority of the colonial era. This does not mean that the community folks were unaware of colonialism.

This virtual absence of a second authority might be explained as follows: Dadease, being on the eastern side of Asante should fall technically under the Commissioner for the Eastern Province along with neighbors such as Kumawu.[81] Dadease however fall just out of the Municipal boundary and through the 1940s and 1950s, the issue of who was to be in charge of such villages and towns was unclear. [82]

The only awareness of the political control colonialism brought, still remembered by people is a story about the old *dade* tree under which the town was formed. Oral tradition states that when the main street that passes through the middle of the town was built, people had expected the contractors to build around the tree as it was a landmark. The District Commissioner for Effiduase passed through town to inspect the road and after some trouble negotiating the road

[81] ARG1/3/1/212, "Kumawu-Asekyerawa Land Dispute," In the Chief Commissioner's Court of Ashanti held at Kumasi.

[82]ARG1/3/6/11, "Control of Villages Adjacent to Municipal Boundaries."

ordered it cut down.[83] Townspeople believed that the only reason that he did not go mad over such a sacrilege was because he was white.

Dadease being so far off the colonial radar has never featured in colonial records on migrants, or on political conflicts. There are no oral traditions about colonial interference in migrant politics. The only awareness of the political control colonialism brought, still remembered by people is the destruction of the old *dade* tree which tradition states the town derives its' name from, on orders of the District Commissioners to enable the road passing through the town to Effiduase to be built.

This virtual absence of interference by the colonial authorities thus left their migrants isolated in a bubble with only the local authority to deal with.

Conclusion and Findings

Changes economic and political landscape of urban areas sparked off among migrants a search to found new zongos from the 1930's. The early migrants in the years leading to Independence may have been viewed by the colonial authorities as sojourners, but they had at that time negotiated an *Integrated* identity as they identified with the host Asante culture and their native culture equally.[84] Neither sense of identity was less strong. This negotiation process was set into motion by their decision to live within the host community under Asante law. This decision required them to make appropriate concessions

[83] Interview with Kwame Nsiah and Akosua Bronya, 7th June 2010. I have found no record of this event in the colonial files.

[84] Smith et al, "Close Encounters," 614. See also chapter 1

and changes in their way of life to fit into the fabric of Asante society and not stick out as strangers.

The willingness of the Asante Traditional Council to recognized the zongo as a separate political unit with considerable autonomy after its' foundation show neither host nor migrant community were unfamiliar or hostile with the practice. In fact many of these migrants moved from places such as Effiduase which had Zongos with political independence.

The early migrants' co-option into the Asante polity was thus a choice they made for myriad reasons. The early migrants' willingness to follow and accept Asante custom meant they were incorporated into the fabric of Dadease society. They retained their native customs whiles practicing Asante rules.

Economically, their survival in rural Asante was dependent on their continued dependence on their social links with the Asante to retain their economic status. Migrants could enhance their position in society by inter-marriage with an Asante. Inter-marriage thus helped assimilate migrants. Their social co-option also benefitted migrants as it allowed for their children to make political, social and economic gains that would have otherwise not being available for the descendants of migrants. Laborers and freed slaves could be rewarded with land to work for their upkeep. Thus their economic opportunities were directly linked to their ability to navigate the social sphere of living within the Asante community.

Another reason that allowed for their absorption into Dadease was religion. The Suwarian tradition allowed the early migrants to assimilate to an

extent within the Asante community. Through a mix of concessions and accommodation, the earliest migrants slowly became a part of the Asante community and strengthened their own position in the community. Their extent of assimilation due to their political choices should not be over stretched. These people remained migrants, but were accepted as part of the fabric of society. The earliest migrants became a part, though distinct, of Dadease.

Chapter 3

THE EARLY MIGRANTS AND SECOND GENERATION MIGRANTS: 1951-1977

Through the 20th century, the British viewed migrants from the northern territories, Nigeria and Sierra Leone as desirable economic migrants. They boosted internal trade networks, which had all but died in the shadow of pacification. The British government thus undertook measures throughout the 20th century to encourage migration, even commencing conscription in the Northern territories to southern mines.

The newly instituted Ghana, soon made clear that it viewed migrants who were originally from outside Ghana, whether they were born inside or outside the country as strangers and aliens.

The chapter will examine the influence the second generation of the early migrants in Dadease brought to bear on the process of negotiating an identity. It shall question whether an Integrated identity was retained and trace the factors that affected same. It also examines religion, economic opportunities and social negotiation among migrants in my research area in this period.

This chapter refers to the migrants in the second half of this period as the second-generation migrants. This is because this period deals with the children of

the earliest migrants who were at that moment in their youthful prime—the time they could best effect change.

Migrants and the Nation State

The late colonial period saw Dadease still untouched by the arguments of independence. Though this was the hey-day of Moslem Association Party, MAP was for all intents and purposes, an urban zongo phenomenon. The early migrants still seemed more interested in becoming a part of the host's society than in politics. In fact, it seemed the more political expression became vocal in the cities, the more the early migrants remained silent. Those who wanted out of the political volatility of the (peri-) urban areas had moved in rural areas, and trickles of migrants continued to arrive in Dadease during this period.

On independence, Local Authority schools throughout Ghana were flooded with momentos to mark the occasion. Abena Mansa recalled as a school child receiving cups at the Dadease Local Authority School to mark the independence of Ghana.[85] She and many of her classmates, both Asante and migrant children could hardly grasp what that meant, but celebrated as guided by their teachers.

The independent Government of Ghana replaced the colonial authority as the source of authority to appeal to in traditional conflicts. The precedent for this had been set by the British with the introduction of the principle that even though the traditional method of choosing traditional rulers would be respected, this had

[85] Interview with Abena Manasa, 8th June 2010.

to be done with the blessing of the political power.[86] This meant that though the colonial authority would not interfere directly in the process of choosing a chief, the government held the right to withhold recognition from chiefs to whom they objected. Refusal to grant recognition meant that development projects stalled, as there would be no authority for the state to work through.

The Convention People's Party (CPP) followed this position principle. It did directly intervened in some instances, an example being reinstating the position of the Sarkin Zongo in1953, though the position had been abolished because of rioting against him in 1930.[87] Zongo headmen who were perceived as MAP sympathizers were also replaced with CPP members.[88]

In July 1960, Dadease experienced its first brush with the government in independent Ghana. Dadease became as caught up in the United Party (UP) /CPP debate as the rest of the middle belt of the country. A scuffle broke out between CPP and UP supporters in Effiduase, a neighboring town. U.P. supporters from Dadease who were in Effiduase for trade activities were involved. Many of the UP supporters in Dadease fled to Kumasi to avoid arrest.[89]

There was no migrant community factor to this rioting, and their virtual absence in mention in the events, makes them even more invisible. The actual rioting for instance did not take place in Dadease. The Akan extended family system solved the problem for UP members. CPP family members such as an

[86] Deborah Pellow, "The Power of Space in the Evolution of an Accra Zongo," *Ethnohistory* 38 no 4 (Autumn 1991): 421.

[87] J. M. Allman, "'Hewers of Wood, Carriers of Water": Islam, Class, and Politics on the Eve of Ghana's Independence," *African Studies Review* 34 no 2 (Sep., 1991): 21.

[88] For more on the CPP and the Kumasi Zongo see Allman "Hewers of Wood."

[89] Interview Akua Bronya, Kwame Nsiah, 7th June 2010.

interviewee's aunt intervened on behalf of their UP family members, asserting their position as card bearing members of the party.

The virtual absence of migrants in political events up to the end of the 1950's and even into the 1960's shows that for this period, migrants retained the integrated identity the first migrants had crafted. They retained their adherence to Asante culture and added their native culture where possible.

A Tale of Two Deportation Acts

The 1958 Alien's Deportation Act was independent Ghana's first official act against migrants. To migrants in Dadease, this was another act of Government that was not felt in the community. This can be explained by the fact that this was a political action against political opponents of the Convention People's Party. It targeted anti-CPP and Moslem Association Party (MAP) members who were of foreign extraction or even Moslem and was limited to urban Zongos.[90] Migrants, particularly those not involved in the middle belt's struggle against Nkrumah were left alone. MAP never gained enough ground in Dadease to constitute much opposition against the CPP. Dadease migrants did not even practice strict Islamic dictates like MAP advocated. They were neither active in nation-state politics. They were thus unnoticed and remained unscathed by these events directly.

While urban zongos were going through this turmoil, Dadease remained peaceful. There is no single account of politics in the Nkrumah era pitting migrants against their Asante hosts.

[90] Allman, "Hewers of Wood," 21.

The situation in 1969 was vastly different. The 1969 Aliens Compliance Order had perhaps the most effect a government policy had up to that time, on Dadease. People's recollections on the Deportation Act was however mixed up with their memories of notable Kumasi migrants who were deported. People mentioned as migrants who had been deported turned out to be, upon further probing, migrants from Kumasi. The early migrants however did live in fear of deportation, and made further efforts to appear as Asante as possible. As an interviewee described, "being a foreigner was criminalized." Oral tradition also told of a man, a migrant, who was given a note to carry around by the District Commissioner for Effiduase. The note stated that he was to be left alone, as he was Ghanaian.[91]

This Order set in motion a series of events that changed life for migrants in Dadease. This difference in the reception of and reaction to the two Acts is two-fold. The first is the target of each Act. As discussed above, the 1958 Act targeted MAP members. The 1969 Deportation Order, however, was mostly a government response to rising economic tensions. The worries raised by the Kumasi Traditional Council in 1949 were still valid as many people felt the migrants were pushing Ghanaian women out of their jobs as traders. Popular sentiment turned against those migrants who many felt were undercutting them in the market and taking over all economic activities.

The second generation migrants in Dadease were more affluent than their fathers. As Asante, they were entitled to the same land holdings as their maternal

[91] Interview with Kwame Nsiah, 9th June 2010.

cousins. They also held properties their fathers had acquired in their lifetime. Some of the migrants had become small-scale traders buying food crop surpluses and carting them to larger markets for sale. An interviewee recalled that Gao men used to go from house to house in Dadease at harvest time with sacks and a weighting scale to buy crops from family who needed to exchange their surplus for money. Their relative prosperity meant that migrants who trade, no matter how modest their gains, stood to be classified as blood-sucking Shylocks. Thus migrants in Dadease had good reason to fear deportation

The second factor that made the effect of these Deportation Acts different was the different social negotiation of these migrants. The 1958 Act was during the lifetime of some of the early migrants. These were migrants who had made much effort from the beginning to be or at the very least appear assimilated into the Asante community did not stand out as strangers. They relied on their Asante "family" gained either through patronage or marriage to navigate the political and social spheres. These early migrants were also of the Suwarian tradition and were not known for the strict Islamic dictates MAP members were renowned for.

The second generation of the early migrants were less likely as their fathers were to retain the status quo. The second generation of migrants had a different approach to identity. Born in Asante, they refused to retain the system of patronage with Asante families which had been vital to their fathers. Many of these children had Asante mothers or an Asante parent and saw no reason why they should act like or have less rights than the full-blooded Asante in the family.

The conflict between first and second generation migrants also played out in the Kumasi zongo.

These children had also been introduced to the rise of Moslem Nationalism working with their fathers trading in the larger markets in Effiduase and even Kumasi. The generation were thus beginning to express themselves as Moslem. This is evidenced by the fact that more of the early migrants in the period began to wear the Jalabiya[92]. Their children were given Moslem names in addition to their Asante names. A small meeting place was arranged for Moslems in the community.[93] Their social expressions such as dress, tribal etchings and social rites thus had began to identify the second generation migrants as having a Separated identity by late 1960. This burgeoning identity was however crushed in its early stages by the Aliens Compliance Order of 1969.

The most notable effect of the 1969 act was that migrants in Dadease gave up these Moslem dresses and started to wear the Asante cloth. Women however did not give up the mayafi.[94] It was a widely held conception that the target of the Act were the men, and thus migrant women were safe from deportation even if they had the social expressions of migrants. Stranger women remained more likely to be incorporated into the family. Migrant women were also more likely to find husbands among the Asante. One of my interviewees had married such a stranger woman, and the children and grandchildren of that union remain in the man's house as a part of his family. As mentioned earlier Yaa Adae, a Kotokoli

[92] Moslem dress worn by women.
[93] Interview with Mossifoohene Nuhu, 7th June 2010.
[94] Interview with Kwame Nsiah, 9th June 2010.

migrant who sold koko in Dadease in the 1960's had attracted the attention of Opanin Kojo Manu. She had two children from an earlier relation with a fellow Kotokoli. Opanin Manu married her and raised her two children.[95]

The second generation migrants did not completely abandon their culture. One way in which they found expression for their ethnicity was through religion. A place of worship was set up at an empty lot in the market. This meeting place marked the first semi-official gathering of Moslems in Dadease. This prayer time was not curtailed by the Aliens Compliance Order. There were a number of Asante converts to Islam in Dadease, Opanin Manu was an example. The practice of the religion was not enough to tip towards the verge of deportation. As long as one refrained from Moslem dress on daily basis, spoke Asante and was addressed with an Akan name, religion alone, in Dadease was not enough to warrant deportation.

The start of some form of organized Islam in Dadease did not change the character of Islamic religious practice in the town. The adherents of Islam remained of the Suwarian Tradition. This can be seen in their continued presence in the town, living alongside the pagan Asante. Inter-marriages continued, an act conservative Islam would not have allowed. The practices of Islam in Dadease thus remained liberal allowing for a mix of Islam, Asante and a myriad of cultures to exist side by side. By the end of the 1960s, Asante remained the dominant culture among the migrants.

[95] Interview with Akosua Bronya, 7 June 2010

Migrants and the Economy

This period saw another economic opening for migrants in small-scale trading. Following the steps of early migrants such as Abuyaa, their women sold cooked foods such as rice and porridge. Others operated small shops and an interviewee recalled walking to the house of an *alata*[96] to buy a candle at night. These traders gained a reputation for being astute businessmen. They made sure to retain customers and went out of their way to cultivate relationships with them to ensure they would not go to other traders. An interviewee related that anything you asked for was available.[97] In the rare circumstance that it was not available, they would ensure to acquire the product within the shortest possible time and inform possible consumers.

The backbone of Dadease's economy remained agriculture. Migrants remained a part of the local economy by remaining the main source of labor for the family owned farms in Dadease. A popular belief in the community in this period was that specific ethnicities were better suited for particular spots in the economy. The Kanjaga, Grunshi and Kotokoli in particular were seen as hard workers and better suited for farm work.[98] The Alata and Gao were seen as traders. This perception thus influenced the buying choices in the pre-abolition era

[96] Though *alata* is used to refer to all people of Nigerian descent, in this era, *alata* often refers to a Yoruba and rarely an Igbo. These are from the animist and Christian south of Nigeria. The Hausa, also from Nigeria easily distinguished by their religion, Islam are referred to as Hausa.

[97] Interview with Abena Mansa, 10th June 2010.

[98] Interview with Kwame Nsiah, 9th June 2010.

with many families with slave-buying power preferring Mossi and Frafra. This perception carried over and influenced the decision to hire farm workers.

Farm workers could integrate into the family faster. This is because trusty farmhands were more likely to receive gifts of land from the family, land which would remain tied up in the family thus ensuring that these migrants remained under the patronage of the family.

This perception influenced the negotiation of identity for migrants in this period. Kotokoli were more likely to work as farmers and laborers on family-owned farms and marry into the family unit, thus become a de facto Asante. The Alata for instance, though living within the community were more likely to work as traders, thus making them less likely to be absorbed into the family unit and thus remaining outsiders for all intents and purposes.

The role of the Mossi in the farm economy and family unit influenced the reaction of the Asante to the Aliens Compliance Order of 1969. The host community worried that a deportation of the people who were the main labor force in the town's economy would be very damaging and took steps to prevent it. Migrants who were in danger of deportation were claimed by the Asante as members. Ethnicity thus played a huge role in the process of negotiating and identity throughout this period.

Summary of Findings

From 1950 to 1978, identity negotiation was propelled by the political intrigues of the time, thus changing the course of identity. From the mid 1960's

migrants though still respecting Asante social expression had begun to redevelop their ethnic cultural allegiances. This can be seen in attempts to organize themselves through religion. This attempt could have been influenced by MAP's call for a return to a purer Islam. The historical reality of the Aliens Compliance Act of 1969 however changed their course.

Whereas their lack of involvement in party politics and their assimilated identity in the 1950's kept them from being in danger of deportation, the different circumstances of 1969 meant no one was safe. Thus, though no migrant in Dadease was deported, the 1969 Act changed the process of identity negotiation. Social expressions in naming, clothing and language was further suppressed. Interviewees mentioned how the long white shirts Mohammedans are famous for vanished in this period

Migrants in the second generation also took up in earnest the job often associated with migrants in the early 20th century – trade. Ultimately in answering the question of whether politics in the nation state united or divided migrant and host in Dadease during this period, the answer was neither.

Chapter 4:

IMMIGRANTS: FROM SOJOURNERS TO ALIENS[99], 1978 - 1996

This chapter will seek to construct an image of the migrant community from 1978 to the start of the second government of the 4th Republic in 1996. This is to enable a full image to be drawn of the migrants' negotiation of identity and the changes the community went through. It shall also look at the changes the historical period and social context brought into Dadease and how this affected migrants and their negotiation of identity. It shall also examine the participation of migrants in multi-party politics, and the effects of this on migrant identity formation.

Throughout the 1970s, migrants remained in the bubble created by the Aliens Compliance Order of 1969. Religion and identity remained separate, so Islam was practiced as a religion, not an expression of identity. This meant Moslem dress and names were not shown. The early migrants also retained their place in the economy of Dadease. A development in the late 1970's however changed the story of migrants in Dadease.

Waves of migration to Dadease had never truly stopped, and a few migrants had trickled in since the 1930s. Rural Asante remained a popular

[99] I acknowledge J. Allman as the source of this phrase.

migration destination for many Grunshi, Kotokoli and Frafra as it gave them employment choices they are familiar with in farming, and a new world of opportunities.

Some migrants were small-scale traders, either itinerant or migrants seeking for a permanent home to settle. These migrants followed the example of the early migrants and lived within the town. With the threat of deportation gone, some of the newly arrived migrants, particularly the peripatetic, began to wear Moslem dress.

The event which most altered the make-up of Dadease and identity negotiation thereof was the 1978 foundation of the Dadease Zongo after almost half a century of migrant presence. Asante oral tradition states that the land for the Zongo was given to the first chief, Salifu, in 1978 by the Asante chief Kwaku Iesu.[100] Salifu was one of many itinerant traders who trolled the Asante countryside to find a village not yet with a Zongo. This can be ascribed to the political benefits attached to being the founders of a Zongo. From the earliest of times, the first settlers in a Zongo received some form of rights over the land they settled from their hosts.[101] Others who wanted to settle in that same community joined these pioneers and received allotments from the land they had been granted. The pioneers thus enjoyed a landlord status.[102] These landlord rights almost invariable morphed into political authority over the Zongo.[103]

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[100] Interview with Osei Boateng, Kumasi on Saturday, 5th June, 2010

[101] Deborah Pellow, "The Power of Space in the Evolution of an Accra Zongo," *Ethnohistory* 38 no 4 (Autumn 1991) 430- 431.

[102] J. D. Hargreaves, "From Strangers to Minorities in West Africa," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 31 (1981): 101-102; Enid Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo: The*

Salifu was a Mossi itinerant herbalist and a practicing Moslem. He was greatly influenced by the Hausa religious movement of the period, and was a conservative. Thus, he insisted on practicing separation from the pagan locals. He however believed in and practiced mysticism. He believed in consorting with spirits and dwarfs to learn the mysteries of herbs. He reported to have been kept by dwarfs for two weeks to learn the mysteries of his trade.[104] This would put him at odds with conservatives particularly in urban areas.

He was soon joined other like-minded Moslems from surrounding communities. Hargreaves, Pellow, Lentz and Schildkrout agree that as earlier settlers sent home monetary or material goods, others migrated to join them. Provision was made by the earliest migrants to create space for such new arrivals through the unique living arrangements of families.[105]

The first issue raised by Mossifohene Nuhu's account is that his father and others had moved and lived in other towns and villages on the outskirts of Kumasi. He and his followers were thus not new arrivals to Asante. This account was collaborated by others in the community. Nuhu also stated that his father had moved around in an attempt to found a zongo in one of these villages. Thus Dadease was not his father's first attempt at starting a zongo, but it was the only one that thrived.

Transformation of Ethnic Identities in Ghana (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978) 98, 119; Pellow, "The Power of Space," 435.

[103] Pellow, "The Power of Space," 430,432.

[104] Interview with Nuhu Salifu, 7th June 2010.

[105] Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo*, 98, 119.

Various events could even lead to these political rights being questioned. Political partisanship in independent Ghana has at various times affected the rights of the pioneer families to rule.[106] The CPP for instance replaced headmen they believed to have MAP or National Liberation Movement (NLM) sympathies. Migrants could rarely take a political position in direct opposition to their host community. Thus in a time of conflict between the CPP and the Asante-dominated NLM, few migrant headmen could have taken a position against their Asante hosts.

Wrangling over chieftaincy within the host community has also led to conflict over Zongo headship. A notable example has been the case of the Sarbon Zongo when conflict arose within the Sempe stool houses. The winning house granted landholder rights the faction of the zongo community they viewed as sympathetic to them.[107] This attempt was however stopped by the high court and the right of the pioneer family was re-affirmed.[108]

In fact, the local authority, colonial government and post-independent judicial authority have almost consistently sided with the pioneer family. The principle of the headship of pioneers had thus been affirmed across Ghana.

Pioneers were viewed as liaisons between the host and the migrants. The landlord status gave the pioneer the responsibility to represent the interests of the local authority in the Zongo, and the interest of the migrant community to the

[106] Pellow, "The Power of Space," 432; Schildkrout, "Stranger and Local Government," 263, 264; Schilkrout, *People of the Zongo*, 98,119.
[107] Pellow, "The Power of Space" 433.
[108] Pellow, "The Power of Space" 433.

local authority and government.[109] They acted as patrons of new arrivals. This would require them to arrange work for migrants, provided storage for goods brought for trade.[110] This gave them privileges and raised their standing in the community. The race for pioneership influenced the many intra-migrations within the rural communities to be the first to start a Zongo. Few of the migrants in this research area were new arrivals to Kumasi.

From 1978, the Zongo chief held court on his compound which became the palace of the Zongo chief. This compound is on the edge of the community and faced the surrounding forest, away from the town. Migrants took cases involving Islamic law to the Zongo chief for arbitration. The Islam practiced after Salifu though considerably conservative, was still along the lines of Suwarian tradition. A new place of worship was acquired and all Dadease Moslems, irrespective of sect, worshipped there under one Imam, the chief of the Zongo. [111] This place of worship helped unite all Moslems in Dadease whether migrant or Asante. Thus Islam which had united Zongos across urban Ghana had done the same for Dadease.[112] This unity stemmed from the Moslem identity which developed among migrants in Dadease irrespective of their ethnicity. Moslem dress, names and culture began to rise in Dadease soon after the mosque was built. Under Salifu, the new group of migrants negotiated a separated identity.

[109] Pellow, "The Power of Space" 432, 433; Enid Schildkrout, "Strangers and Local Government in Kumasi," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 8 no 2 (July 1970): 261, 262.

[110] Schilkrout, *People of the Zongo*, 98, 119; Pellow, "The Power of Space," 435; Hargreaves "From Strangers to Minorities," 101, 102.

[111] Interview with Kwame Nsiah, 7th June 2010.

[112] Allman, "Hewers of Wood," 4. See also Schildkrout, "Strangers and Local Government," 257 and Pellow, "The Power of Space," 429.

Salifu led the people who he had arrived with, in an informal capacity till his death in the mid1990's.

Though Salifu seemed to have done a good job uniting the myriad migrants in Dadease, tensions simmered underneath. His death in the mid 1990s blew the lid of this cauldron of resentment between the earliest migrants, and Salifu's followers.

This conflict was based on landlord rights. A group of the descendants of the oldest migrants to Dadease challenged Salifu's son Nuhu for the position of headship of the Zongo. There claim was rooted in the tradition of pioneership translating into headship. Salifu was not the first migrant into Dadease. Thus historical precedent dictates that he should not have received landlord rights over migrants in Dadease. The early migrants had not only been in the town longer, but had also built stronger familial ties to the host community. They argued that the right to be head of migrants in Dadease should be restored to them now, since they had been by-passed from the start.

Nuhu and his supporters countered this claim, challenging the identity of this group as migrants. Nuhu's supporters argued that Zongos were created for Moslems traders to avoid *haram*. This injunction was seen carried out by Moslem itinerant traders across sub-Saharan Africa. Al-Bakri stated quite clearly that Moslems had to live separately from the homes of the pagan people of ancient Ghana.[113] Since the earliest migrants had disregarded this key component of

[113] Quoted in Hargreaves "From Strangers to Minorities," 100.

Islam, separateness both physically and ritually from pagans, they were not true Moslem and thus not real migrants. The early migrants were not proper Moslem and thus did not qualify to rule the Zongo as they are not real Moslems.

Thus the very living arrangements made by the early migrants in an attempt to fit economically into the community became an identifier as non-Moslem. While this argument may be seen as an over stretching of the fact, the Moslem character of Zongos have been well documented.

Islam has been an identifier and unifying force throughout zongos in West Africa. The Islamic character of zongos was taken for granted, especially since their creation as part of practically every state across the Western Sudan was to cater for Moslems involved with the myriad trade networks. By the mid to late 20th century, migrants to Asante Zongos who were neither Moslem or from Moslem states such as the Talensi converted to Islam soon after migration to the South.[114] In fact, the Kumasi Zongo retained it Moslem character, and today southern people who may be recent arrivals and live in the Zongo are almost always Moslem.

Nuhu and his supporters also argued that the earliest migrants were not true migrants but rather Asante. The ones with Asante mothers thus belonged to their mother's family and the extended family system had absorbed the migrants who were paternally Asante. Their access to property and social ties which the "true strangers" i.e. Nuhu and his father's followers did not have, were justification for their exclusion from the group. Thus the very social negotiation

[114] Allman, "Hewers of Wood," 4. See also Schildkrout "Strangers and Local Government," 257; Pellow, "The Power of Space," 429.

undertaken by the earliest migrants in an attempt to strengthen their position within the local community thus became a cause to disqualify their descendants from headship of the Zongo.

They argued that the early migrants were Asante, not strangers. The Asante court agreed with Nuhu and his line was declared the chiefly line of the zongo.

Asante Migrants Relations

Tension between the Asante and the migrants was soon sparked by political partisanship. From its inception, migrants and Zongos were aware that their continued presence within the state depended on their ability to retain the patronage and remain in the good grace of their host. The colonial government affirmed the rights of local governments to remove strangers from their land if they failed to meet traditional obligations. [115] Thus in a time of conflict between the CPP and the Asante-dominated NLM with their MAP allies, few migrant headmen could have taken a position against their Asante hosts.

In early independence Ghana, the MAP, widely regarded as the party of Zongos, was aligned with the NLM, which was also seen as an Akan party. However, political activism was barely visibly in Dadease until 1992 with the re-introduction of multi-party elections. With a newly defined sense of identity, they did not have their predecessors' political inhibitions. Neither did they feel a sense

[115] ARG1/3/1/14, "Strangers in Kumawu Lands."

of subjugation to their hosts. Migrants got actively involved in nation-state politics, often campaigning or running themselves.[116]

The local Asante became widely viewed as supporters of the United Party/NLM inspired National Patriotic Party(NPP) while migrants were viewed as members of the National Democratic Congress(NDC), the NPP's biggest rival. This has raised tensions and led to grumblings on the side of the Asante, particularly after the 1996 elections that the migrants voted en masse for the NDC. This grumbling and complaining is the extent to which the tensions have gone to this day.

Party politics has however affected the reception of migrants in this community which has in turn affected the identity of migrants. Though Ghana has the secret ballot, everyone seems to know who voted for which party. Migrants who vote NDC are treated as part of the Zongo by the Asante. The Asante are less willing to give them economic concessions and considerations. Recent migrants such as Agya Yaw who vote NPP are viewed as "part of us". [117]

Social Negotiation

Perhaps encouraged by the Islamic character of the later migrants, early migrants begun to dig into their past and rediscovered their dual ethnicity. For instance, Akua Fokuo who had grown up alongside other children within the town began to express a Moslem character. This was through dress, language and naming. Kwame Manu who he had an Asante mother and was thus Asante,

[116] Interview with Kwame Nsiah, Akua Bronya 8th June 2010.
[117] Interview with Abena Mansa, Kame Nsiah, Akua Bronya, 9th June 2010.

renewed his connection to his father's background through religion. He also forbade his children to marry Asante, insisting they should look for a Moslem to marry. Moslem names and dress became prevalent and many of the early migrants moved into Salifu's Zongo.

This renewal of allegiance to their migrant parent's background, I believe was a natural step. The process had been halted in 1969, but without the fear of deportation, it had been resumed. The children of early migrants were less likely than their fathers to accept the status quo. They had economic power and tended to be educated. They viewed the identity their fathers had created as placing them at a position of subjugation to the full Asante. The early migrants thus drawing inspiration from the later migrants began to assert and explore their ethnic diversity. In fact, throughout the 1980s, these two different groups of migrants got along cordially.

Identity negotiation among the later migrants changed under Nuhu when the second generation migrants undertook to renew their social connections to their fathers' homeland. Salifu had long lost contact with his homeland, after decades roaming the Asante rural towns. He had told his son stories about Mossi land he remembered. After Salifu's death, Nuhu and his siblings decided to reactivate their links to their fathers' homeland. They have since contacted cousins and other extended family in Burkina Faso and remained in contact, sending home money, goods, and often visiting each other.[118]

[118] Interview with Mosiefoohene Nuhu, 9th June 2010.

Economic Opportunities

The changes in economic opportunities best reflected the changes that went on with the migrant community and the host community's reaction to it. Early migrants by this period were a part of the town's elite due to their wealth and social connections cultivated through years of patronage and marriage. Their children asserted this newfound influence through a myriad of ways.

Through the 1980s, many remained traders thus retaining the zongo's trade character. Others ran their family-owned farms, hiring from among the newly arrived migrants to work the farms. Migrants remained the main source of labor for farms. The Asante also worked out a new source of labor for their farms. Families hired from new arrivals from many of the old towns from which the early migrants came such as Kotokoli and Kanjaga to work on the Asante family-owned farms . Migrants who moved to rural Asante for the employment opportunities they were familiar with in farming were quickly employed. These migrants would often send home for family and friends to join them. Asante women continued to marry these men. It is believed that marrying the men would help them forget their past and any hankering they might develop for it.[119] One of my interviewees, Akua Bronya is married to one such migrant, Agya Yaw. Her Kotokoli husband is trusted enough by the family and he now runs the family-owned farms. On the day of my interview with him and his wife, he was contemplating the best ways to deal with "strangers/visitors who were encroaching on family land."

[119] Interview with Kwame Nsiah, 7th June 2010.

In the 1990s new sources of employment opened up which they promptly took advantage of. Kwame Manu, the descendant early migrant is a member of Dadease's Unit Committee and in charge of the sale of lands. Salifu, and his son after him, also have an important economic role. They both served as religious advisors, herbalists and spiritual healers. Both migrants and the Asante consult Nuhu, just as they had Salifu, for their reputed prowess in medicine. Throughout our interview, his minion in his spiritual work attended Nuhu. This career made them both respected and feared.

Conclusion

Though the Aliens Compliance Order was passed in the previous decade, the complete alienation of migrants in post-colonial Dadease was not until this period. The very social negotiations that allowed the early migrants in previous chapter to adapt into the society went against them in their quest for headship of the migrant community. Thus, religion was not just used to disqualify the early migrants from headship of the Zongo, but it also gave them an identity different from the later migrants. Later migrants, by their practice of a stricter form of Islam, were unable to fit into Asante political structure like the early migrants, and stood out as strangers. They took over the headship of the Zongo they founded.

The early migrants however abandoned the niche carved for them by their fathers generation and joined the later migrants. The arrival of Salifu coincided

with the late 1970s conservative Islamic revival across Moslem communities in West Africa; a call to return to a strict Hausa brand of Islam. Descendants of the early migrants and the Salifu-led migrants began to assert for themselves a Moslem identity. This Islam character was still Suwarian in many respects, though less strict than the Hausa had demanded. Following Islamic dictates of separation from the pagans, Salifu lead many of the early migrants to move from the town to build homes inside the zongo.

The changing employment opportunities and choices made by the descendants of the early migrants show the changes their identity has undergone through these years. The early migrants, in seeking to assert their independence and throw off their perceived subordination to the Asante gave up their jobs as labor on the Asante farms. They began to explore their identity as Moslems and the ethnic identities of their migrant parent(s). The Asante found a new source of labor among recent Kotokoli and Grunshi migrants preferred the patronage of the Asante to settling in the zongo.

Political authority in the colonial era and nation-state Ghana had an impact on the early migrants to an extent. There is no evidence to show that having a dual political authority affected migrants in Dadease, in allowing them new patrons to appeal to if they ever became unpopular with their Asante hosts. Multi-party elections however caused a disconnect between the migrants and hosts with each voting for opposing parties. This has caused some resentment among the Asante who dread that a migrant from the opposing party might one day be their

representative in Parliament. That to them, will mean they have lost their political authority over their town.

Over the two decades covered during this period, migrants moved from an *Integrated* to a *Separated* identity, where they identified with their home, not host cultures.[120]

[120] A. G. Smith, A. J. Stewart, D. G. Winter, "Close Encounters with the Midwest: Forming Identity in a Bicultural Context," *Political Psychology* 25 no 4 (Aug., 2004), 614.

Chapter 5

MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This works started with the hypothesis that identity is a creation of the historical and social context in which it was created. Thus a myriad of factors shape identity in different ways. The four different patterns of identity negotiation identified at the start of this study were: *Separated* in which people identify with their native, not host culture; *Assimilated* where they identify with host and dis-identify with native; *Marginalized* where people do not interact with both cultures and *Integrated* where they identify with both.[121]

Early Migrants, 1930 – 1977

The factors that caused the move to rural Asante were two-fold pull and push factors – economic and political. Economic reasons were central to migration patterns in twentieth century colonial West Africa. The economic prosperity of the Gold Coast within this period which attracted migrants particularly to the south is well documented. The economic pull for migrants to Asante and states further south through the early 20th century has been ascribed to the colonial enterprise. While Pellow and Allman looked at the colonial

[121] A. G. Smith, A. J. Stewart, D. G. Winter, "Close Encounters with the Midwest: Forming Identity in a Bicultural Context," *Political Psychology* 25 no 4 (Aug., 2004), 614.

constabulary and the founding of the Kumasi Zongo in 1904[122] Lentz looked at the recruitment drive in the Northern territories to feed the cash crop farms and mines south.[123]

The research however revolved around the less documented move from these (peri-) urban centres to rural areas with none of the job opportunities which have been ascribed as the reason for migration. The rush to rural Asante was because economic conditions in urban centres such as Kumasi had become unfavourable while rural Asante's economic opportunities where becoming more attractive to migrants. Rural Asante offered opportunities in small-scale trading. Early migrants gained access to land, around which the economy of rural Asante evolved through the negotiation process.

Political conditions in (peri-) urban areas thus did their part to push migrants. By the mid to late 20th century, migrants to Asante Zongos who were not from areas where Islam had flourished and were not Moslem themselves, such as the Talensi, converted to Islam soon after migration to the South.[124] Though Islam had been a unifying force in urban zongos, the unifying power of Islam should not be over exaggerated. Islam also caused much of the contention between the various generations of migrants. These conflicts often evolved around arguments on the form of Islam practiced.

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[122] J. M. Allman, "'Hewers of Wood, Carriers of Water": Islam, Class, and Politics on the Eve of Ghana's Independence," *African Studies Review* 34 no 2 (Sep., 1991): 3.

[123] Carola Lentz, *Ethnicity and the Making of History in Northern Ghana* (London: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 140.

[124] J. M. Allman, "'Hewers of Wood," 4. See also Enid Schildkrout, "Strangers and Local Government in Kumasi," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 8 no 2 (July 1970): 257; Deborah Pellow, "The Power of Space in the Evolution of an Accra Zongo," *Ethnohistory* 38 no 4 (Autumn 1991): 429.

The Hausa tend to be stricter in their following of Islamic rules, which Northern Gold Coast Moslem converts tended to be of the Suwarian Tradition, and thus more lax, often mixing elements of traditional worship with Islamic rituals.[125] In Zongos dominated by the more strict Hausa in the 20th century, Islamization caused much conflict. In the Kumasi Zongo for instance, older Mossi accused the younger Mossi for abandoning their culture and becoming "Hausa".[126] There was anger at the power wielded by the Hausa Sarkin Zongo during the exile of Asantehene Prempeh II. This led to rioting by non-Hausa factions within the Zongo.[127] The office of Sarkin Zongo was eventually abolished. In the Sarbon Zongo, a section of the Hausa eventually broke away from Accra heterogeneous Moslem population to form their own community.[128]

The common thread of intra-migrations within Asante upon further research was proved to be because of political reason. These migrants were on the move to found a zongo so they could derive the political benefits that came with pioneership. Thus a common theme running through the stories of migration to Dadease is that none of these migrants were new arrivals to Asante. They had lived in and around Kumasi and other trade centres before moving to Dadease. They were thus leaving these religious-political conflicts for the chance to be pioneers in rural Asante.

[125] Conversation with Waseem bin Kasim Ahmed. See also Pellow for more on the conflict in the Sarbon Zongo from 424, Schildkrout's *People of the Zongo* 139, 143 and Schildkrout "Strangers and Local Government".
[126] Schildkrout, *People of the Zongo*, 139, 143.
[127] Hargreaves, "From Strangers to Minorities," 108.
[128] Pellow, "The Power of Space," 425-427.

The first step was in figuring out a method of political control. As pioneers, they could negotiate the relationship they wanted with their host. The early migrants choose to live within the Asante and remain under the direct political authority of the Asante. The early migrant never formed a system of political control separate from their Asante hosts. There is no evidence that the early migrants ever requested for land to form a Zongo and were refused. The willingness of the Asante to grant Salifu land to form a Zongo in 1978 and the good relations that existed between the Asante and the migrants in this period attest that such an attempt for a Zongo would not have been viewed with hostility.

The early migrants' political dependence on the Asante political authority necessarily contributed to their seeming ability to live as part of the community though they were technically strangers. The early migrants followed Asante custom not just for political expediency but also for political, economic and social aspirations The rural economic system ensured the continued dependence of migrants on their social links with the Asante to retain their economic status. A divorce or disagreement could lead to loss of land if goodwill has not been established. The economic opportunities open to migrants were thus directly linked to their ability to navigate the social sphere of living within the Asante community. Economic considerations thus largely affected social relations within this period.

The choice made by the early migrants to stay with the town next door to the pagan Asante is one such example. This choice necessarily accelerated their acceptance to the society and prospered their businesses. Abuyaa the rice seller

would not have made much profit, and had much impact on the youth of Dadease as she did, if she and her husband had adhered to the strict Islamic dictate for separation. Spatial deference as had been needed by the Sarbon Zongo in Accra would have created a different set of circumstances.

The 1950s and 1960s saw a different set of circumstances which the early migrants had to navigate. Whereas their lack of involvement in party politics and their assimilated identity in the 1950s kept them from being in danger of deportation, the different circumstances of 1969 meant a different set of rules were involved. Though Nkrumah's Deportation Act was barely noted in Dadease, the 1969 deportation Order changed the town. Though there is no record of a deportation, the migrants began showing less of a culture and identity that would be seen as different from the host community's after the Order was passed. One person said "The Aliens act made being an alien criminal, so those who used to were white robes even stopped"[129] This led to suppression of Alien dress and naming among migrants as they strove to look as Asante as possible. Rising sentiments among second generation early migrants on re-connecting to their migrant cultures were thus crushed.

The decades between 1950 and 1970 can be said to be straddling two extremes in migrants' negotiation of identity. It gave the signal that the migrant population of Dadease was not ready to remain forever hidden and unknown. They were already negotiating an identity different from that of their fathers. This was hastened however by the arrival of a group of migrants from Mossi-land.

[129] Interview with Kwame Nsiah, 9th June 2010.

Later Migrants: 1978

The late 1970s, the period of the arrival of the later migrants, saw a Moslem revival across Moslem communities in West Africa and a resurgence of the strict Hausa brand of Islam. The founder of the Zongo, Salifu and his followers thus followed the strict rules of Islam on housing, thus retaining their status as strangers. Salifu and his descendants were made chief of the zongo as they retained a Moslem character and remained ethnically different from the host community. The early migrants, by not showing enough Moslem character and their dual-ethnicity became ineligible for this position.

The later migrants, just like the early migrants before them, were faced with the opportunity to decide and form for themselves the kind of society they wanted to live in. Thus Salifu, a Mossi herbalist was able to propagate a stricter form of Islam than practiced by the early migrants. It was still lax enough to allow for the presence of dwarfs and spirits of the ancestors, to steal Salifu away for a couple of weeks to train him in the use of herbs.

The next section shall look at concepts such as ethnicity, religion, gender, and the view of zongos as diasporas. It shall examine these concepts to show how they affected the negotiation of identity among migrants in Dadease.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity, to a large extent influenced the kind of identity negotiated. This was due to Asante preconceptions about people's ability to do their jobs. Smith et

al raise a similar issue when they assert that similar values between the host and migrant cultures aid the process of identity construction. Thus, the Kanjaga, Kotokoli, Grunshi and others from decidedly farming communities were able to fit easier in the economy of Dadease. Their usefulness to the Asante in farming, led to the construction of Asante perception of these people as hardworking. The Asante were thus more likely to assimilate into the family unit workers in the farming economy. This made the process of negotiating and identity necessarily different for the Kanjaga, Grunshi, Kotokoli and other workers in the farming economy.

Religion

Religious values also affected the willingness on both the host and migrant side to participate in the assimilation process. Traditionalists and liberal Moslems were more likely to be viewed with welcome by the Asante. The similarity in their religious values or tolerance of the host will ensure that conflict would be less likely to develop. Such migrants would also be of more use to the host in the local economy, thus opening opportunities for them to advance their assimilation through inter-marriage and ties of patronage.

Migrants from such background would find their transition into the host society easier and thus the process of negotiating an identity would be less fraught with tensions and difficulties for them.

Asante Policy on Assimilation

The traditional policy of the Asante host community towards immigrant groups also explains clearly the different experiences of the two migrant groups. Asante traditionally assimilates strangers who were willing to be co-opted into the larger Asante polity. Religious freedom was allowed, and ethnicity was not a factor. The strangers were only required to show willingness to obey and respect Asante customs and tradition. Inter-marriage was allowed – even encouraged – as a way to help the strangers, be they of servile or free origin, to forget their past. To further this policy, it was forbidden to point out the servile origins of people. The willingness of the Asante to co-opt willing strangers into the society should not be over exaggerated. The ability of the hosts to point out people who were not of Asante descent, though not members of the Zongo shows that the stories about strangers in their midst were carried on through the generations.

In this vein, the case of early migrants was not unique. In other societies in West Africa, strangers could culturally incorporated, yet retained some notion of distinct ethnic identity, based on their different origins. Some Moslem groups, such as the Yarse in Mossiland, are still occasionally referred to as 'strangers' although they have been culturally assimilated into Mossi society.

The perfect example to explain this policy is through the story of the Asante Nkramo[130] and the people of the Kumasi Zongo. Quite distinct from the Moslems of the zongo, Asante Nkramo come from those areas of the north conquered or annexed by Asante in the mid-18th century. They are not considered

[130] Translate literally into “Asante Moslems”. Also spelt Asante Kramo.

strangers and are under the direct authority of the Asantehene, via the Imam who, since the 1840s, has been considered a member of the nsumankwaafo or Court Physicians. The distinction between the Asante Nkramo (Moslems) and the zongo Moslems has been more than an ethnic and chronological division. The Asante Nkramo were educated clergymen who soon found employment in the courts of the Asantehene and other big chiefs. They were employed as clerks, and spiritual advisors. The Moslems of the Kumasi zongo tended to be trade migrants and not as well educated.

The earliest migrants to Dadease like the Asante karma were migrants from areas which had political and economic contact with the Asante and a few were freed slaves. These migrants right from the beginning were thus situated to assimilate into the larger Asante polity. Though they were economic migrants and not as educated like the Asante Kramo, they choose incorporation.

In Dadease, ethnic division shown particularly through the form(s) of Islam practiced, and chronology separated the early migrants from the later migrants. This is much like one of the distinguishing factors between the Asante Kramo and the people of the Zongo in Kumasi.[131] Like the Asante Kramo before them in urban Asante, they succeed. They became a part of the social fabric, not complete strangers. They thus became ineligible for the headship of strangers in the town when this position became available as they were not stranger.

[131] Allman, "Hewers of Wood" 4.

Gender

The role gender plays in pre-disposing the form of identity to be negotiated is also note worthy. Women, by their reproductive ability were able to develop faster the assimilated identity the early migrants strove for. They received marriage offers which placed them within the family unit. Men had to however cultivate such relationships through complex systems of patronage. Men had to find employment, and gain respect and acceptance through showing their prowess as hard workers and malleable to Asante customs. After time, these men could gain patronage which would lead eventually to receiving land for their personal use. Marriage to an Asante woman would mark the crowning of their assimilation.

Migrants as Diaspora

The argument of migrants as diasporas is one which cannot be fully exhausted. Ultimately, it boils down to each group of migrants' perception of their historical context. Migrants such as the Asante Kramo seem to be a diaspora as they moved from a distinct area, the northern provinces of Asante. Their attempts to recreate the communities they had left behind was however inspired not by a nostalgia but by need. Islam being what they brought to the table of cosmopolitan Asante, they merely sought to provide these religious services to the Asante court.

Early migrants practiced their religion and kept enough of their ethnic expressions throughout the process of their identity negotiation. Though they failed to recreate the structures of their homeland to constitute a diaspora, they did not fully throw away their ethnicity. They may not have openly expressed their

difference but they kept some substance of it in their private life. Most early migrants for instance taught their children the rudiments of the native language and many of these children also had a second name from their native cultures.[132]

The later migrants were more concerned with outwardly recreating their home cultural and political structures. They requested spatial separation to achieve this. This re-creation was however superficial, especially with the first generation of these later migrants. They neither kept nor initiated contact with their homelands throughout their decades as sojourners in Asante. There also stressed to both their hosts and children that there were not recent migrants but had lived and learned in Asante for decades, thus establishing a base of familiarity with the Asante. The second generation of later migrants are as close to a diaspora as a migrant population in Dadease has been. These not only promoted their native cultures, but also reinitiated contact with their homelands. They have remained in contact since, learning from them and incorporating social rites from therein.

The 1990s ushered in a new era of migrant host relations in Dadease and changed the story of the negotiation of identity. As third and fourth generation of the early migrants re-connected with their predecessors' migrant background, they began to assert that ethnicity more openly. Migrants such as Kwame Manu could identify with both their mother's Asante heritage and their fathers' Mossi background. Descendants of the later migrants also reconnected with their past making more effort to learn and preserve their Mossi background.

[132] Interview with Kwame Nsiah, 9th June 2010.

The descendants of the early migrants now straddle an integrated identity, whereas their fathers had negotiated an assimilate identity. The first generation of the later migrants thought identifying with their native cultures, made a connection between their history and that of their host thus keeping an integrated identity, though barely so. The second generation of the later migrants however held firmly to a separated identity. Trickles of migrants from Kotokoli and Grunshi who have arrived through the years and taken the place formerly held by early migrants hold to an assimilated identity.

At the end of the day, peoples' relationship with their native and host cultures are independent of each other. It should not be assumed that a stronger identification with one means weaker identification with other. Thus Dadease's migrant population's negotiation of identity, and the host Asante's perception of same, is a constantly fluid process.

From the 1960s when migrants showed an assimilated identity through to 1969 when migrants were reminded that difference was not always welcome, identity has always been fluid. The late 1970s saw a "revival" of religious sentiment with the arrival of the Salifu led Mossi. This immediately introduced a community of migrants who held a separated identity. The 1990s to date has both groups of migrants often holding to a separated or integrated *identity*.

This study of migrants in the rural setting of Dadease shows the fluidity of identity. It brings to the fore that identity is not necessarily formed by headline grabbing news. Often, people's identity is shaped by what would best position them to make the most of their community. Thus whenever their needs,

expectations or perception of their socio-political contexts change, identity is often re-negotiated.

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Oral Sources

I interviewed most of my respondents over a period of June 2010. Some I have remained in contact with since, often contacting them to verify comments. The respondents are grouped according to age groups to identify the source of each information.

60 years and above

- Yaa Nkrumah(Deceased 2010)
- Akua Nsiah – Former Gene hemaa (Queenmother of the onion sellers Association, Kumasi)
- Nana Acheampong Ekuonahene of Dadease
- Kwame Kuma - Elder
- Kwame Nsiah, Abusuapanyin
- Prof. Bredwa-Mensah (Deceased)

40 years to 60 years

- Akua Bronya, Farmer, Dadease
- Abena Mansa, Housewife
- Akwasi Awuna, Farmer
- Members of the Court of the Zongo Chief
- Kofi Kodua – Pastor and Small-scale trader

35years and below

- Fati – Secondary School Leaver
- Mossifoohene Nuhu - Herbalist
- Bertha Duah - Teacher
- Waseem bin Kasim Ahmed - Student

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