Migrant Chiefs in Urban Ghana: An Exploratory Study
of Some Selected Dagomba Chiefs in Accra

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Abstract

Studies on migration have largely neglected the emergence of migrant chiefs in Africa's urban centers. Chieftaincy analysis has also not been adequately extended to those who are migrants and how they are selected and installed as chiefs in the cities. Through deliberately-provoked conversations with Dagomba migrant chiefs and their elders, the paper undoubtedly extends the frontiers of both chieftaincy and migration studies bringing to the fore dynamics of Dagomba migrant chiefs and their changing roles in Ghana's city of Accra. Reworking Blundo's administrative brokers, this paper reveals how migrant chiefs in urban settings liaise with state institutions to help solve certain problems migrants encounter in the city. The paper concludes that other actors in the urban space, such as youth leaders around Members of Parliament coming from migrants' home regions, could gradually take up the brokerage role in the city.

Key words: Migrants, Dagomba, Chieftaincy, Migrant Chiefs, Zongo

Introduction

Political change in Africa has not met the expectations of pre-independence analysts; whilst administrators were unprepared to deal with the vast numbers of migrants who were attracted to the burgeoning cities, agencies were constantly reorganized, and bureaucratic continuity was minimal (Barnes 1977: 26) in dealing with both migrants and city dwellers. In such a situation, the African urbanite obtains his living differently from the rural dweller 'and hence must seek different solutions to the problem he

faces' by turning to those authorities who 'hold before him the prospect of social, economic and political advancement' (Gutkind 1966: 261). Similarly, African migrants in the cities do not only look out for social networks based on ethnicity, religion, or hometowns but figureheads that emerged out of such socio-religious categories in migrant communities as points of call to help cushion the hazards of city life. Studies of such figureheads are sparsely populated in the dense literature on chieftaincy and migration in Africa. Scholars who examined the new nations in Africa in the context of political change assumed that subsequent political transitions would follow three directions; political systems would westernize, national loyalties would supplant ethnic loyalties, and mass participation in national affairs would increase (Barnes 1977: 27). Whilst the expected change has not come to pass, attempts have been made to explain not just the failure, but the new configuration of Africa's populations consisting of citizens and subjects, subjected to different and competing legal systems administered by plural political and legal systems. Thus, postcolonial Africa offered a fertile environment for scholarly interpretations of its social institutions. One of the post-colonial African institutions that has attracted academic attention is the traditional political system, the chieftaincy institution. While forms of authority that descend from social or cultural tradition are commonly understood as archaic, traditional authorities often survive and occasionally even thrive during the formation of modern states. Chieftaincies do not only endure in the Ghanaian countryside but also proliferate in new neighbourhoods on the peripheries of Ghana's fast-growing cities (Tieleman and Uitermark 2018). Not only has the institution of chieftaincy enjoyed the support and renewed interest from the educated elites and the wealthy within the Ghanaian society, it has also experienced a resurgence and formal recognition among migrants in stranger communities called zongos in the cities (Chambas, 1979; Pellow 1985, 2002, Schildkrout 2006, 1974). Cities have attracted attention because everywhere and with astonishing speed, they continually increase in numbers, size, population and sensory impact (Smith and Press 1980: 1). Such growth in cities has been partly attributed to, by scholars, as a consequence of migration from rural areas to the urban cities (Manuh et al., 2010). One main challenge migration posed to colonial administration in African nation-states such as Ghana, was how to govern multi-ethnic minority groups in the urban settings. These multi-ethnic minority groups were initially clusters of various migrant groups of different origins, ranging first from Yoruba, Fulani, Hausa, and later Dagomba,

Dagaaba and Frafra, among others. The colonial authorities were concerned not only about their presence in the cities but about their multi-ethnic nature and the kind of customary law suitable to apply to them as a group of people. The solution came from Indirect Rule the colonial administration extended to them as a convenient policy. In that sense, such multi-ethnic minority groupings were formalized and organized into social groups with common leaders selected by their people, accepted by the colonial administration and further recognized by the local indigenous traditional rulers under whose jurisdiction they settled as migrants. At the same time, this is also conceived as migrants' adaptive strategy in the city and the need to stay together, access security, and support by sometimes forming ethnic based associations with chieftaincy titles conferred on leaders or sometimes others voluntarily choosing their tribal headmen as chiefs (Skinner 1965, Schildkrout 1974, Pellow 2002). Particularly among northern migrants, political leadership or chieftaincy titles are seen as one of the ways by which they negotiate their ways through the turbulent political and economic terrain in urban Accra (Ntewusu 2012). Chieftaincy and migration have both received considerable scholarly attention. This article extends the frontiers of both by extending migration analysis to traditional figures who emerged out of migration to cater for migrants' needs in the urban sector. The paper therefore explores the selection and installation procedures of Dagomba migrant chiefs in Accra, and the various roles they play in their respective communities. The paper concludes by considering the dwindling influence of some Dagomba migrant chiefs and observes that the spatial locations of these chiefs are very crucial in analysing not just their roles but their continued relevance or otherwise among migrants in various urban spaces. We situate this paper in the context of migrant chiefs as administrative brokers.

Literature Review

Migrant Chiefs in Ghana in Historical Perspective: The Zongos as Early Migrant Communities

Migrant communities predate modern-day Ghana. Such communities owed their existence to early migrants from neighbouring French West African territories and today's Nigeria who settled in the then Gold Coast. Enid Schildkrout's People of the Zongo: the transformation of ethnic identities in Ghana (1978), Deborah Pellow's Landlords and Lodgers: Socio-spatial Organization in an Accra community (2002), and Samuel Ntewusu's

Settling in and Holding on, a socio-historical study of Northern traders and transporters in Accra's Tudu (2012) continue to remain very significant contributions on the formation and understanding of migrant communities in Ghana. Though none of these works were written with migrant chiefs as a focus, yet the depth of analysis provides some glimpses of how these communities were administered by people normally considered the first comers. These early settlers included mainly the Hausa, Yoruba, Fulani Nupe, Kanuri from the Nigerian Protectorate whilst from the former French West African migrants were Zambarma, Kado, Gruma, Chakosi, and Basari (Drekte, 1968; Sulemana, 1994; Hardi, 2009; Ntewusu, 2005). The migrant communities these strangers established are normally referred to as the Zongo. The term 'Zongo' is "a Hausa word which means a segregated quarters at the periphery of towns and cities" (Sulemana, 1994: 28). Andalusian al-Bakr has been credited with the first mention of the term 'Zongo' when in 1068, he described it as "a settlement of Muslims traders, separated from the pagan kingdom by a distance of about 6 miles" (Amoah-Boampong & Duah, 2014: 92). As a Hausa term, Zongo could mean quarter (Schildkrout, 1974: 114), quarter for strangers (Pellow 1985:422), "stranger quarter" (Pellow 2002: 1), and the residentially segregated quarters where strangers, especially Muslims, settle (Sulemana, 1994: 28-29). It is also the camping place of carriers (porters) or a lodging place of travellers (Ntewusu et al, 2016: 125, Ntewusu, 2020: 365), a special ward in larger towns (Skinner, 1965: 60), or an enclave inhabited by strangers to a community (Amoah-Boampong & Duah 2014: 90-91). Writing about Zongo communities of Atebubu and Kintampo, Arhin (1971, in Ntewusu, 2005: 2) observed that Zongos were semi-permanent settlements where most transactions took place and where the Zongo houses were used as warehouses for their goods. While such communities are also sometimes referred to as squatter settlements, slums or "Mohammadan Communities", the term 'Zongo' has dominated literature on migrant settlements in Ghana. By the year 2020, they were over twenty Zongos in Accra including Cow Lane, Zongo Lane, Tangasi Line, Tudu, New Town, Adabraka, Madina in the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (Ntewusu, 2020: 365), and Mossi Zongo and Hausa Zongo in Tamale Metropolis (Tielmann 2019). Mention must also be made of Casentini's (2018) work on Migration networks and narratives in Ghana: a case study from the Zongo, which serves as one of the few studies of Zongo in Tamale, the capital of Ghana's Northern Region. Casentini points out the challenge for most researchers studying Zongo communities, a 'somewhat fragmented social situation' where it is

'almost difficult to identify a collective image of a community' (Casentini, 2018: 458). Even though her respondents said there were not under the control of chiefs, she found traditional figureheads 'representing' the Mossi community. The early development of Zongos by Hausa speaking people made it easier for later immigrants to be acculturated into such communities with Hausa eventually becoming a lingua franca. The single lingua franca tended to become the solution not because everyone had planned it that way, but because, once a language had a head start by being the language of a numerically dominant people, others discovered the advantage or even the necessity of learning it (Greenberg, 1965: 52, Ntewusu, 2005). Having established the Zongo as communities, the early immigrants from French and British West Africa, created leadership positions and titles within the Zongos, called Zongo chiefs.

Migrant Chiefs as Zongo Chiefs

Migrant chiefs have a long history in colonial Ghana, as captured in colonial records utilized by geographers (Mensah & Teye, 2021), historians (Arhin, 1971; Ntewusu, 2002; Amoah-Boampong & Duah, 2014), anthropologists (Schildkrout, 1974; Pellow, 2002;, and sociologists (Baba Zakaria, 2016) in analysing migrants' community formation in Ghana. Much earlier works by Kuper, (1965), Drekte (1968), Skinner (1965), Grindal (1973), Sulemana (1994), Hardi (2009) among others, have also contributed to the knowledge of the establishment of Zongo communities. In all these scholarly works, migrant chiefs have been at the peripheries. Migrant chiefs were usually seen belonging to the first comers of immigrants (early arrivals) in the Gold Coast. As the first to have migrated into the Gold Coast, such a migrant established a working relationship with the local rulers and the larger indigenous host communities who collectively recognized him as the first of his kind in their community. With the passage of time and with other migrants joining, these first comers became de facto leaders and were subsequently recognized as such by the local rulers, those migrants who joined later and the colonial administration. The first comer principle has therefore continuously become widely recognized as a prerequisite to becoming a migrant chief (Chambas, 1979; Berry, 2002). Chief Brimah (sometimes Braimah) is reputed to have been the first migrant chief in colonial Ghana. He was a Fulani man born in Ilorin in the late 1820s (Brimah, 2001: 1), though to others (Ntewusu et al 2016: 125), Brimah was "of mixed Yoruba and Fulani parentage". When

Brimah and others migrated to the Gold Coast in the 1870s, he first settled at Salaga before migrating to Accra to join other migrants of northern origin (Brimah, 2001; Ntewusu et al, 2016:126). He served as a mediator in conflicts arising within the migrant community, then referred to as the Muslim or 'Mohammedan' community. In spite of initial protest from the Hausa community in particular, Brimah was successfully recognised as the first migrant chief in 1902 by the king of the Ga on whose land the migrants had settled, and subsequently, in 1909 by the colonial administration. The early struggle for power, particularly between Alhaji Brimah and some early Hausa migrants to the Gold Coast, deserves mention here. King Tackie Tawiah, then paramount Chief of the Ga people 'in 1888 had made it known to his sub-chiefs and elders that he had conferred a chieftaincy title on Chief Brimah 1, to be the headman of the Muslim community in Accra' (Brimah, 2001:30). This recognition was confirmed by the Acting Governor of the Gold Coast, Major Herbert Bryan, C.M.G but not without opposition from the Fulani community represented by Alhaji Mohammed Ali. Acting Governor Bryan maintained his position in favour of Alhaji Brimah, justifying it as follows:

> The majority of you wish to have Alhaji Brimah as your headman. The number of people in Alhaji Brimah's favour is much greater than that of the people who wish Alhaji Mohammed Ali to be their headman and I intend to proceed with the expressed wish of the majority. Though I know Alhaji Mohammed Ali's father, for whom I had great respect, yet I consider Mohammed Ali to be too young to be the headman of the Mohammedan Community in Accra. I have known Alhaji Brimah for over five years now and I believe he will make a good headman for the Mohammedans. He is a rich man and will be able to help materially in the upkeep of the mosque and to see that it is properly furnished. He will also be able to help the poorer members of the Mohammedan Community. I understand that he has already being doing these things and I hope that those good traits in his character will be maintained and developed (Brimah, 2001: 54).

In 1909, Brimah was gazetted by Governor Nathan as the first non-indigenous Muslim chief in Accra (Sulemana, 1994: 27). Brimah's appointment as migrant chief, and the protest raised by certain sections of the heterogeneous migrant community, especially the Fulani community represented by Alhaji Mohammed Ali (Brimah 2001) who felt the chiefship should have come to them. The early struggle for power particularly between Brimah and some

early Hausa migrants to the Gold Coast also deserves mention here as it exposes the heterogeneous nature of the so-called Muhammadan community which was perceived by the local community and the colonial administration to be homogeneous, and all being labelled as Ntafo (Arhin, 1971: 66) or pepeni (Lentz, 2006: 151). Tracing the origins of leadership in Sabon Zongo, a poor migrant neighborhood in Accra, Deborah Pellow (2002) pointed out that the historical development of the first Zongo community in urban Ghana to Mallam Nenu, a native of Katsina in northern Nigeria. Mallam Nenu came to Accra as an Islamic scholar and spiritual consultant. He is reputed to have laid the foundation of a Hausa community in Accra called Zongo Lane (Ntewusu et al, 2016: 124), Zongo Lane is regarded as the first Zongo, developed in 1881. Going by the principle that the ''founder of a Zongo community naturally became the Sarikin [head] of that zongo'' (Berry, 2001: 61), Alhaji Nenu would have been, undoubtedly, the first ever zongo chief in the then Gold Coast. In Madina, Dagadu was the founder of Madina Zongo, and thus became Sarkin Zongo from 1965-2001 (Berry, 2001). The founder and the first chief of Madina as a migrant community in Accra, is Alhaji Chief Seidu Kardo. Alhaji Seidu, a Malian immigrant, acquired the land for settlement during the late 1950s (Quarcoo 1959). Soon after he was permitted entry to the new site (Madina), he began a little settlement, and by 22nd October 1959, twenty five houses had been built over whom he was later installed as a chief of Madina by the first Parliamentary Secretary-Mr. Paul Tagoe, with the approval of the La-Mantse (Quarcoo et al, 1967: 16). Nuhu became a Zongo chief of Dadease following his father who was the first Mossi migrant to Dadease. When other migrants joined him later, the Chief of Dadease made him the Zongo chief in the town recognizing him as the head solely of the Mossi and being referred to, by Asantes as Mossifoohene (Amoah-Boampong and Duah, 2014). By the early 1970s in Ghana, Sissala migrants who settled in Mamobi had already installed a migrant chief alongside other stranger communities where any ethnic group had sufficient representation (Grindal, 1973: 336), or where a headman was accused of "not being properly concerned with their customs and practices, particularly when Muslims and Non-Muslims comprised the part of the old headman's constituency" (Lentz, 2006). Towards the end of the 1970s, there were twenty-one migrant chiefs in Nima alone as a Zongo community. Even then, "few studies of community leadership have made recruitment the central focus of their enquiry" (Chambas, 1979: 66). Besides the first comer principle is a migrant's resources and, more importantly, generosity with those resources. Migrant chiefs initially established

themselves as such by 'providing others with lodging' which meant enacting the traditional role of the mai gida or patron. Such a man not only needed to have money but also had to be generous with others (Pellow, 1985: 431, Acquah, 1958: 101). Pellow contrasted Alhaji Sha'-aibu Maikudinera who had money but could not rally people around him because of his stinginess, with 'other early settlers such as Braimah Butcher, Kadri English, and Shardow (Pellow, 1985: 431) who did not just build themselves up in business but "were able and willing to take in the homeless or the visiting Yoruba, Hausa and Nupe respectively to 'lodge', feed and help them adjust to life in Accra" (Pellow, 1985: 431). From the literature thus explored, there is still no known study detailing the processes through which migrants create chiefs in the city. This article, therefore, is a preliminary attempt at exploring the chief making process in migrant communities in urban settings.

Theoretical underpinnings: Migrant Chiefs as Administrative Brokers

Brokers as a concept has been used and applied in different contexts, one being facilitators used when certain actions considered illegitimate are to be carried out (Endres, 2014: 615). In other instances, brokers could also act as landlords at market centres, facilitating economic relations between itinerant traders and settled craftworkers (Cohen, 1969; Morgan et al, 2010: 84). Blundo analyzes brokers within the moral economy of corruption where specialized brokers are employed as part of distancing strategy on the part of officials, allowing them to yield to corruption without exposing themselves directly (Sidy Cissokho and Cadenza, 2017: XVII). Knowledge brokers, on the other hand, are normally referred to as administrative brokers who help citizens deal with an administration that they do not understand. Similarly, knowledge brokers allow bureaucrats to deal with a population that they do not understand (Gopfert, 2016: 45). Earlier studies borrow and modify Blundo's brokers in different contexts. In his study of surveillance in Niger, Gopfert notes as follows:

> I borrow the term "broker" from Giorgio Blundo's (2001, 2006) studies of intermediaries in public bureaucracies, although I use it in a slightly different manner. Whereas Blundo focuses on the role of these intermediaries in the citizens' access to bureaucracies, I focus on the bureaucrats' access to citizens, or more precisely, to knowledge of them (2006: 44).

By reconceptualizing Blundo's brokers, Mirco observes that just as administrative brokers could help citizens deal with an administration that they did not understand, knowledge brokers also allowed bureaucrats to deal with a population that they did not understand (2006: 45). We however situate our study of Dagomba migrant chiefs in Accra within the context of administrative brokers as discussed by Blundo. For Blundo, the starting point of understanding administrative brokers is to pose questions such as: How does the African state work in reality? How do public administrations function in everyday life, what forms of interaction exist between the public services and their users? Who -sociologically speaking-are the civil servants of today and how do they perceive their functions? (Blundo, 2006: 799). In analysing selected state institutions of three African states, Blundo points out the "actors who do not belong to the traditional governmental sphere but yet play a part in the control of public affairs, establishing a complex relationship with the state (Blundo, 2006: 800). Administrative brokers are crucial to users and beneficiaries of state services where the state institutions such as justice, administration of customs, public health services, and procurement do not have enough personnel and logistics to serve the public, and thus, serve as an "interface between the public services and their users (Blundo, 2006: 816). We thus modify Blundo's administrative brokers to analyse how migrant chiefs are able to serve as intermediaries between migrants and the modern state, to meet the needs of the migrants.

Methods

Data for this article is part of a study on Migrant Chiefs in Accra that commenced in 2014. The paper benefited from secondary and primary data sets. The secondary data was obtained from both hard and soft copies of monographs, articles, edited book chapters, and published conference proceedings. While physical copies of the secondary data were obtained from various libraries in Ghana, search engines such as Google, Jstor and Sage were used to obtain electronic copies. Dagomba migrant chiefs in Accra constitute the population for this study. From a population of ten chiefs (Baba Zakaria, 2016: 87-88), the number of Dagomba migrant chiefs in Accra had increased to 23 by the end of 2021. The Secretary to the Greater Accra Dagomba Chief who goes by the title 'Paramount Chief of Dagombas in Accra' revealed that the number of Dagomba chiefs in Accra could increase. Out of the 23 Dagomba migrant chiefs, nine were sampled without following any particular order except that the Greater Accra Dagomba Chief was the

first to be sampled and interviewed. The rest of the respondents were not contacted as data was becoming repetitive and saturated especially after the fifth respondent. A multi-stage sampling technique was employed, beginning with the snowball sampling method. Snowball sampling is based on an initial binomial sample, and with s=k=1, so that each individual asked, names just one other individual and there is just one stage beyond the initial stage (Goodman, 1961: 149). As a convenience sampling, it may not necessarily be applied "when it is difficult to access subjects with the target characteristics", and "where a study recruits future subjects among their acquaintances (Ghaljaie et al., 2017: 2). Neither is it also only used to search for "participants whose "populations are socially invisible or "hidden" in the sense that their activities are clandestine and therefore concealed from the view of mainstream society (Watters and Biernacki 1989: 417). Nor used only "to gain access to individuals who live outside the boundaries of normative heterosexuality (Browne, 2005:49). Snowball is one of the most popular methods of sampling in qualitative research where the researcher usually starts with a small number of initial contacts (seeds) who fit the research criteria and are invited to become participants within the research (Parker et al, 2019). Thus, the Paramount Chief of the Dagomba in Accra (Accra Dagomba Chief) was the first to be identified and interviewed alongside other elders in his palace in Accra Newtown. After the first interview with the Greater Accra Dagomba Chief, the snowballing procedure was used to purposefully reach out to other Dagomba migrant chiefs in the Accra Metropolitan Area. Initial phone calls were made to book appointments with migrant chiefs in their palaces/ homes. Most times, the chiefs brought together some of their elders, spokespersons, and their personal secretaries who helped to provide answers to very pertinent issues relating to the selection criteria, installation procedures and various roles Dagomba migrant chiefs perform in respect of Dagomba migrants in Accra. Deliberately provoked conversations were used to obtain various responses on issues that bother on our respondents' biodata, growth, migratory histories, settlement patterns, marital life, size and nature of their households, political, religious and economic lives, coexistence with other chiefs, and, the various roles Dagomba migrant chiefs perform in respect of Dagomba migrants in Accra. An interview guide was the main instrument; all the chiefs were approached personally and were interviewed using the same guide in their various homes/palaces. All interviews were conducted in English and Dagbani. Deliberately provoked conversations were used to obtain various responses

fromthe respondents' One focus group discussion was held at the palace of a migrant chief with three other migrant chiefs and some of their elders. Data was col-lected from 2014 through 2021, and was manually organised and transcribed along relevant themes. Phone interviews were occasionally conducted with respondents to help clarify or extend interviews in selected areas. These phone calls enabled quicker cross checking of information from one migrant chief with another with the overall objective being to ensure validity of data.

Results and discussions

Zongo Chiefs and Migrant Chiefs

Early migrants from other parts of West Africa to the Gold Coast were sometimes labelled by the indigenes as aliens, foreigners or strangers vis-à-vis the immigrants from the then northern territories (Schildkroud, 1974; Pellow, 1985). North south migration in Ghana has been substantially covered by geographers, historical anthropologists, and sociologists. These migrants from the North arrived in the Coast to join the early migrants in the Zongo communities. They included the Sissala, Frafra, Kusasi, Dagara, Dagomba, Nanumba and Mamprusi. The Zongos thus became a mix of two categories of migrants thereby creating two categories of chiefs; Zongo chiefs and migrant chiefs. Migrant chiefs generally consider themselves different from Zongo Chiefs. This is how one of the respondents expressed it:

> We are Ghanaians. We are not like the Zongo even though we are in the Zongo community. As indigenous Ghanaians, our chieftaincy is different from the Zongo Chiefs, the same way our people [subjects] are different from Zongo people.

Migrant chiefs hardly consider themselves as part of Zongo chiefs even as they reside in a Zongo community. They do not also consider their 'subjects' as Zongo people, and they occasionally refer to the Zongo people as "the strangers". Nevertheless, in the eyes of the indigenous people, these migrants were homogenous. The similarities between northern Ghanaian migrants, especially the Muslims with those from West Africa in terms of religion and traditional culture made it difficult for them to be differentiated by the indigenous Ga population and other Akan-speaking people who lumped all of them as the 'Mohammadan' community with Hausa as a lingua franca. Since Hausas controlled much of the long-distance trade in kola and cattle,

the first important leaders in the Hausa community were successful traders and landlords (maigida; pl. masugida). This led to their political recognition by the colonial authorities, and between 1896 and 1919 the British informally recognized a succession of Hausa businessmen and religious leaders as heads of the heterogeneous Zongo community (Schildkrout, 1974: 117). In spite of the British attempt to lump all migrants under one leadership as witnessed in Accra (Brimah, 2001), Kumasi (Schildkrout, 1974) and Attebubu (Arhin, 1971), other migrant groups always found ways to establish their own chiefs either by using their increasing numbers or arguing for cultural distinctiveness as a necessary condition to have a leader who would settle their differences based on their norms and values (Lentz, 2006). Early migrants from Ghana's northern regions including the Dagombas did not settle in urban areas of colonial Ghana but rather in the cocoa growing areas and mining communities (Lentz, 2006; Hikma, 2021). It is very possible that there could have been early migrants from Northern Ghana and then Upper Volta to the south of the Gold Coast. Zimmermann's account of Takai (a Dagomba traditional dance) dancers in Accra in 1852 (Ntewusu, 2005: 30) is the rarest account of possible early Dagomba presence in the city. By the close of the 20th century, there were only two Dagomba migrant chiefs in the Greater Accra Metropolitan Area: Greater Accra Dagomba Chief and Madina Dagomba Chief installed in 1993, 1999 respectively. Today there are twenty three Dagomba chiefs spanning across the Greater Accra Metropolitan Assembly. Since his installation in 1993 as the Paramount Chief of the Dagomba in Accra, Alhaji Chief Abdul Kadiri, continues to install most of the Dagomba chiefs in the ever-expanding new settlements in the peripheral urban areas of Accra including Adenta, new Legon, Amarhia, Pokuase Mayera, and Ofankor, Assofan, Lomnava.

Selection Criteria

In the late 1970s, Chambas found that of the 21 migrant chiefs he had interviewed in Nima, more than 50% of them said they had links with chiefly (royal) families (Chambas, 1979). Earlier in the 1960s, "many of the forty-two Mossi serkin in the Gold Coast made contact with the Mogho Naba of Ouagadougou and other Mossi potentates and obtained from them the nam or symbol of sovereignty over the migrants" (Skinner, 1965: 76). Clinging to royalty to boost one's chieftaincy position, many of the Dagomba migrant chiefs narrated how, even remotely, they are related by blood, to royal

families in the Dagbon kingdom. The Madina Dagomba migrant chief traces his royal lineage as follows:

> My paternal grandfather was Sabali Lana Issah [chief of Sabali] in the Dagbon kingdom in Northern region of Ghana. He gave birth to my father, Alhaji Munkaila. This explains why people call me Issah. Thus, my father is qualified to a chieftaincy title in the Dagbon kingdom.

Such narratives as found above resonated in interviews with several other Dagomba migrant chiefs in Accra. For instance, the Kasoa Dagomba chief narrated that his grandfather was the first Ya Naa's Zaachina (youth chief). Similarly, the Ashale Botwey Dagomba Zongo Chief traces his descent to Yendi where his father was the Yani Moli (Dzemoli), the Deputy Imam to the Ya Naa's (king of Dagbon) Imam (Yaan Limam), an important elder in the Damba celebrations of the Ya Naa. All the chiefs were selected by a selection committee of a sort. At the first stage of selection, the selection committee proposes the candidate to the wider Dagomba community in a particular area. The selection committee is made up of two sets of elders – those who had served in the court of the former chief, and a group of elders who happened to be early Dagomba migrants in Accra and are successful in their various fields of endeavour. However, being a royal was not considered a necessary criteria for selection. The requirements that are mostly considered in selecting the chief are: the number of years the candidate has spent in the present location, ownership of his personal house (and not a tenant), being multilingual (ability to speak a minimum of two additional languages-Ga and Akan-besides Dagbani) and somehow financially resourceful. These criteria remain largely unchanged as Grindal observed almost half a century ago:

> While the methods of selection vary from tribe to tribe, the zongo chief is usually an elderly man who is a more or less permanent resident of Mamobi and who through his wisdom and deeds has earned the respect of his fellow tribes- men. This element of respect is very important since the chief has neither the legal nor the ritual means to support his authority (Grindal, 1973: 336).

Similarly, among the recruitment criteria for chiefs that Chambas outlined was the requirement that the chief has stayed in the community for a

considerable length of time. This would make the person not only familiar with the city but enable them to have the necessary important contacts which would aid the chief's ability to 'help members of the group when they are in difficulty' (Chambas, 1979: 71). Ownership of a car and a person's ability to speak Ga and Hausa languages have also been added as criteria of selecting a Dagomba migrant chief. The gradual expansion of the Greater Accra region has correspondingly witnessed the emergence of more migrant chiefs in the peripheral urban communities of Kasoa, Ashaiman, Tema, Agbogbloshie, Adenta, New Legon, Rosa Rosa, Amarhia, Botwe, Danfa, Amasaman.

Recognition, and Installation

All the respondents mentioned the fact that the processes of making a migrant chief would normally start with selection, followed by recognition, and finally installation. In following such a sequence of activities, all the Dagomba migrant chiefs interviewed were first selected by their own people, recognized and endorsed by the indigenous Ga traditional authority, with state officials tacitly approving by attending the installation. For instance, the selection of the Dagomba Paramount Chief in 1993, had to be endorsed by King of the Ga State, Nii Amugi, that of Madina in 1999 by Nii Ayettey Krawkrawnya, and Nii Awushi Tetteh II for the Kasoa Dagomba chief, and recently, in 2019, Numo Clement Bortie Kudjo, head of the La Traditional Council, recognized the Dagomba migrant chief of the Ashalley Botwe. In all cases, the selected Dagomba candidate had to provide some cash, a box of schnapps, and a ram. Installation is first done in the various palaces of the Dagomba chiefs mimicking certain Dagbon traditional practices of installation including the wearing of a gown, the sitting on a floor or on animal skin to be enskinned. In some instances, a delegation travels from the Ya Na, the king of the Dagbon kingdom in the Northern Region of Ghana, to witness the enskinment and to give the Ya Na's blessing to the installation process. Afterwards, the migrant chief proceeds with a large following to the palace of the local Ga ruler on whose land this migrant chief has settled. Here, the migrant chief is formally recognized and endorsed publicly. This recognition of migrant headmen has a precolonial history right from the first zongo chief when King Tackie Tawiah, then paramount Chief of the Ga people "in 1888 publicly conferred a Chieftaincy title on Chief Brimah 1, to be the headman of the Muslim community in Accra" (Brimah, 2001: 30). The installation process always ends in the palace of the Ga traditional

ruler where libation is poured to the gods, a ram is slaughtered, and its blood smeared on the feet of the new migrant chief. In some instances, the new chief is made to sit on a stool but not given it. After the ceremony, drumming and dancing displaying the Dagomba culture take place all the way to the migrant chief's palace where there is more merry-making and plenty of food for all. What appears to have gradually disappeared in this process is state recognition which was imperative during the British colonial administration. Today, state representatives attend the installation ceremony of Dagomba migrant chiefs on their accord, and their presence or otherwise does not invalidate the legitimacy of the chief.

Being a Royal is not a Prerequisite for selection to be a Migrant Chief

Most of the migrant chiefs tried to prove that they had royal lineage from their places of origin. However, having royal blood as a migrant has not yet been proven as necessary and sufficient conditions for the selection and installation of a migrant chief, though it could be an added advantage during a competitive selection process. Earlier in colonial Ghana, there were a special class of Mossi migrants considered "relatives of the traditional Mossi chiefs or of other officials" (Skinner, 1965: 75) called Nakomce, who "claim royal status because the Dagomba horsemen, from whom they descend, were royal" (Schildkrout, 1978: 21), and who "have the exclusive right to possess nam, the power to rule or govern" (op. cit p. 24). It is therefore less surprising that most of the early Dagomba migrant chiefs have chiefly relations in the Dagbon Kingdom in the northern regions of Ghana. With the exception of the Nakomce who were royals from Burkina Fasso and who tried to impose their chiefship authority over commoners even as migrants in Ghana (Schildkrout, 1974; Skinner, 1963), a person's status as a royal in his place of origin does not necessarily count very much in making him a migrant chief in stranger communities. It also does not really matter whether or not migrants coming from societies that have experienced politically centralised chieftaincy structures are those who establish migrant chieftaincy institutions. Urbanization, but more importantly, early Zongo communities and their chiefs serve as equalizers and avenues for harmonization where the issue of superiority and first comer relations among the northern migrants especially in Accra has been nullified, making Accra a leveller (MacGaffe, 2013). It is also important to note that migrants from non-chiefly societies from the North

were not quick to establish chieftaincy in stranger communities compared to those from the ancient, centralised kingdoms in the North.

Variations in the Installation Process

It is also worth noting certain differences in the installation processes. The process requires that the selected chief goes to the palace of the indigenous/host rulers where certain rites are performed alongside some sacrifices before the second installation process is done in an open space in any part of the city. In the case of the first level, host rulers require ram or sheep, a number of bottle of schnapps and some amount of money. The schnapps are taken by the elders of the Ga chief, part of which is used to pour libation to the gods of the land asking for their blessings for the new migrant chief. The new chief is then enstooled by being made to sit on the stool (the symbol of chieftaincy authority in the southern part of Ghana akin to the skin in the North). Then, the sheep is slaughtered, and the new chief made to step on the blood to seal the installation process. Another variation of installation is when some migrant chiefs are turbaned in the morning of the installation process before later going to the palace of the local rulers for the enstoolment. It is thus possible for a migrant chief to have been enskinned, enstooled, and turbaned, satisfying his own culture, the culture of the local indigenous rulers as well as that of the larger Zongo (Muslim) community. Irrespective of the form, once installed, migrant chiefs are recognised as having certain authority over their respective migrant community and expected to perform certain roles in the city with regards to their fellow migrants.

Migrant Chiefs as Administrative Brokers and More

One of the ways ethnic leaders become opinion leaders is 'through their ability to care for newer migrants' (Paller, 2019: 45). In the early days of Mossi migrants in Ghana, the Mossi chief in the Gold Coast played important mediating roles between the migrant and the local population. Very often, they functioned as labour recruiters for Ashanti chiefs and cocoa farmers, since many migrants sought them out to find food, lodging, jobs, protection and companionship. And even when the Mossi migrants found jobs on their own, they established relationships with the Mossi chiefs so that they might have someone to protect them and look after their welfare in the event of trouble, sickness, or death (Skinner 1965: 76). In Sierra Leone, Banton observes that "one of the most important services tribesmen demanded of

their headman was that he helps them in obtaining employment as porters and labourers (Banton, 1965: 136). Therefore, as long as new migrants coming to the city would need food, accommodation, and jobs, the migrant chief expectedly would be relevant in the lives of such new migrants. And so far as the migrant's everyday life brings him into contact with fellow migrants, non-migrants and employers and the law enforcement agencies, the migrant could need the migrant chief. These presumptions are on the bases that the migrant chief serves as both an administrative broker and a knowledge broker. Indeed, Chambas (1979) reported that one reason migrants considered the length of stay in choosing a candidate for chieftaincy was because he would have established contacts to help his people. Thus, right from the onset migrant chiefs assisted migrants to find accommodation whilst sometimes, temporarily housing them, getting them recruited into various jobs, settling petty squabbles amongst them, assisting the indigenous authorities settle matters between migrants and indigenes, and sometimes carrying their dead bodies back home and ensuring equity in the distribution of their inheritance (Skinner, 1965). In playing all these roles and more, the migrant chief occasionally interacted with state institutions including labour/public works departments, hospitals, and local police stations or district courts. On a daily basis Dagomba migrant chiefs find people calling on them at their residences to seek help in one way or the other. Thus, these chiefs are perpetually on the move or on the phone solving one migrant's problem or the other. Ethnicity is thus key in the formation of networks and associations which are precursors to the institutionalization of leadership. Whilst ethnic based networks are key to the establishment of migrant chieftaincy, they exist after, and the migrant chief sometimes falls on such networks to reach out to state institutions to get a particular problem solved. Challenges and everyday troubles of the migrant in the busy city life can be self-reported to the chief, his elder, or through an important elder who might not be part of the elders but an elite or an opinion leader within that ethnic community. Besides those seeking the migrant chief's assistance are those visiting the migrant chief's palace to show gratitude over a particular service or assistance that has been rendered. Two key issues were readily identified: cases involving land and the police. At the palace of the Kasoa Dagomba chief, a young man from Wulensi in the Northern region of Ghana had returned to Kasoa and visited the chief to thank him for assisting him re-claim his land. This land was sold to Mr. Haruna and another person unknown to him. The second buyer had started gathering material to build on the same plot when Mr. Haruna got wind of

this development and called the Dagomba chief, who instantly went to the Kasoa, the district capital of the Ewutu Senya East Municipal Assembly, and lodged a complaint. He also informed the police upon advice by the assembly. That was duly done upon thorough investigations including involving the traditional landowners, Mr. Haruna was given the land back and advised to quickly put up a structure on the land. At Madina under the La-NKwantanag Assembly, the Madina Dagomba chief had to spend more time to secure a land bought by Mr. Mohammed when same land was resold. And, at New Legon Rosa, the Ashalley Botwe Dagomba Chief had to constantly call the police patrol team to come to the aid of migrants whose lands have been resold. Whilst double sale of lands in the urban areas are not new (Fuseini, 2019), The Kasoa Dagomba chief, brought out another dimension of it during this 'thank you ceremony':

> "Our people [from the north] don't know much about the Ga land customs and so sometimes, it's a deliberate attempt to swindle the migrant by double selling his land to an indigenous Ga person". This might be done not even by the chief. Such acts are usually perpetrated by the chiefs' elders or relatives of the chief who might not be an elder. It can even be the chief's son".

Whilst this phenomenon was not widespread, double, sometimes triple land sales involving Dagomba migrant buyers were a common phenomenon in Madina, Ashalley Botwe and Kasoa and surrounding communities. Without much knowledge of the Ga customs on land, and with no wherewithal to hire land guards, the northern migrant sometimes falls on the Dagomba chief in his area for assistance. Narrates another Dagomba chief:

> As for the land departments, we have their numbers, and often call them to assist us when our people are in trouble. Our boys sometimes also organise themselves and go to the land in dispute which can result in open fights leading to injuries. We normally don't want to engage in violent acts with the 'land owners. We always resort to peaceful resolutions as much as possible. When it gets heated and the police get involved, we always intervene. At both local police stations and district land departments, we have good friends there. We can't always pay money to get our people out of police station or get land documents for our people. We build relations with the officers

in these key places. Sometimes during Sallah, we invite them to our houses and we eat together. If not we send the food to the offices during working days so that both the big men and small boys enjoy the rice and the meat. Sometimes, the small boys are even more accessible when you are in trouble. And they can run to your assistance faster. Or the big man may ask the boys to come to your aid. So they must all know you. We are doing a lot but nobody pays us and the state doesn't even recognise us.

The Dagomba chiefs act as surrogate fathers to many migrants in various situations. The everyday life of the migrant chief is the solving of migrants' problems or at least listening to the problems and attending to migrants' functions. Right from migrants whose wives deliver to those organizing the payment of prestation or having wedding ceremonies to the bereaved, most often need one form of assistance or the other from the migrant chiefs. In contractual marriages between migrants or migrants and non-migrants, Dagomba chiefs sometimes act as the father of the groom or bride saving the biological fathers the trouble of having to travel to the city for that purpose. Also critical to the migrant chief is that: "Sometimes we even buy the burial shroud and pay for the graves (space) to bury our people", narrates one Dagomba chief. Migrants whose wives deliver have to pre-inform their chiefs of the date of the outdooring. The desire of Dagombas migrants in Accra to have Dagomba chiefs, elders and Imams, preside over their contractual marriages as well as the naming ceremonies of their children or over the funeral services of their loved ones who passed in the city was key in the institutionalization of Dagomba chiefs in Accra. More significantly, some of the Dagomba chiefs in Accra are able to assist Dagomba migrants to obtain birth certificates for their children from learned Dagomba Imams in the city. Same applies to wedding certificates. In all these, Dagomba migrant chiefs try as much as possible to avoid all criminal cases and only make attempts to assist in civil cases when subjects get into trouble with the law. This is to avoid getting themselves involved in criminal cases which can drag their reputation into the mud. Whilst Dagomba migrant chiefs limits themselves, to the extent to which they get involved in migrants matters, migrants now seek to extend their "administrative brokers" to members of parliament representing their constituencies, and other 'big' men (especially successful businessmen and women) in the city, as well as assemblymen and women.

The migrant chiefs, on the other hand, sometimes tend to rely on state actors such as assembly men and women, Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Chief executives (MMDCs), Members of Parliament to continue to offer a variety of assistance to the migrants.

Local authority and Social Influence: Roles and Responsibilities in Decline?

The political authority and social influence of migrant chiefs in Accra appear to be dwindling. The burden of caring for newer migrants is no longer placed on the shoulders of migrant chiefs like their predecessors. Interviews with a Dagomba migrant chief in the city. One of them narrates:

> Even when my father was the chief of Dagombas in this community, we used to see on daily basis the arrival of new migrants from the north. You would see some of them sleeping at the veranda right here with their pieces of luggage scattered around. Am talking about the late 70s to early 80s. And all their needs, right from feeding them to accommodating were upon my father. This was the situation until they would become familiar with the environment, link up with some other migrants from their hometowns, and possibly would go and stay with them…but even with that, they would still pass here daily to eat food, to spend some time and later retired to their friends' place for the night.

Hometown associations remain formidable networks in urban centres and whilst their leadership might not be out to compete with migrant chiefs for assisting migrants in the city, their existence appears a threat to the relevance of migrant chiefs. "The [Dagomba] politicians do not visit us. Maybe they think their votes are not here in Accra", laments a Dagomba migrant chief. The seeming decrease in migrant chiefs' influence is an increasing perception among politicians that Dagomba migrant chiefs are irrelevant in the mobilizing migrants' votes in the city of Accra to secure an electoral victory in their constituency of origin. Northern politicians in Ghana's parliament as well as parliamentary aspirants see their votes in Accra, and they know how to go about getting those votes. One of the major means of vote mobilization among migrants in the city is organising transportation for migrants to travel up north to register their names when the Electoral Commission initiates the process, and, also to return them to their constituencies to vote

for these politicians and their presidential candidates during. This political exercise takes place in Ghana's major cities with large migrant population especially Accra and Kumasi. Both major political parties of the ruling New Patriotic Party and the opposition National Democratic Congress engage in this vote mobilization. Indeed, in the 2020 General Elections to elect both the President of the Republic and the two hundred and seventy five Members of parliament, several Members of Parliament and parliamentary candidates of Tolon, Yendi and karaga, all in the northern region of Ghana, spent considerable time and resources, organizing and transporting migrants back to their home constituencies to register and later doing same to ensure the migrants return to vote for them and their affiliate political parties in their home constituencies. In the processes of vote mobilisation, new actors emerge and the position of old leaders of artisanal associations such as leadership of metal crap dealers, and Magazia of kayaye (female head porters) association become strengthened. Such leaders have gradually become close allies of Members of Parliament due to their role during vote mobilization in the cities for such members of Parliament. The neglect of Dagomba migrant chiefs of migrant politics represent a bigger picture indicating how the larger migrant chiefs are losing relevance and influence especially in urban politics. Everyday needs of new Dagomba migrants in particular and the general Dagomba migrant population in Accra such as food and accommodation issues go unnoticed to many Dagomba migrant chiefs. These and many more happenings in the city particularly around politics are what could contribute largely to reduce the irrelevance of Dagomba migrant chiefs in the future.

Conclusions

Forms of authority that descend from social or cultural tradition are commonly understood as archaic. Yet, these archaic traditional authorities often survive and occasionally even thrive during the formation of the modern state (Tielman and Uitermark, 2019: 707). This observation reminds us of the resilient nature of chieftaincy as an institution which continuously survives, transforms, and thrives in Africa's urban centres in the midst of modernization, democratization and increasing urbanization. Increasing urbanizations brings in its wake migration, and migrants to Africa's cities came along with chieftaincy refusing to be detribalised. Gluckman empahsized the discontinuity between the rural and the urban life claiming that "the moment [an] African crosses his tribal boundary to go to town, he is 'de-tribalized', out of the political control of tribes" (Banton,

1965:134). Whilst the migrant may be happy to be out of tribal control and thus becomes a townsman and a miner needing "not a chief but a trade union', the increasing population of the African migrant in the cities led to the establishment of another form of chieftaincy. Whilst knowledge about urban chiefs were limited since the 1960s argues Gutkind (1966), it was agreed that the migrant, in particular as well as some urbanites who have lived in towns for considerable time, turn to chief for help' (Gutkind, 1966:249). The static concept of 'traditional' society cannot withstand the historian's analysis (Qoquery-vidrovitch in Mamdani, 2006:39) and the sociological view that Ghana is a 'nation in transition from traditionalism to modernity' (Abotchie, 2006:178) needs a relook. Clearly, modernization has not crowded out chieftaincy. Strict adherence to the electoral process and the increasing democratization of the Ghanaian political process has not directly diminished the traditional relevance of chieftaincy in general and migrant chiefs in particular. In urban Ghana, traditionalism as in chieftaincy and, modernity, coexist. Actors in both chieftaincy and modern political institutions perform roles that overlap and complement each other though not sharply. The bifurcated nature of African states where we have citizens and subjects (Mamdani, 2006) plays out in urban Ghana leading to divided sovereignty (Ray, 1998). Besides citizens and subjects, one can also identify indigenes, 'citizens' and 'aliens' in urban Ghana. Migration has continu-ously played a critical role in Accra's development. Likewise, the establishment of Zongos by early migrants such Hausa, Fulani and Yoruba (Pellow, 2002, Ntewusu, 2012) from Nigeria, Mali and Niger has long since become part of the city of Accra. As heterogeneous communities, Zongos were the first destination points of most migrants from Northern Ghana. Gradually, the population of Dagomba, like many other northern migrants in the Zongos, increased. Population is the key determinant factor in the establishment of mi-grants' chiefs in the cities. Thus, as the numbers of Dagombas increased in the city, they looked among themselves and selected people who were (among the) first settlers, resourceful, multilingual in nature, had their own houses and had established contacts within the urban setting. Dagomba migrant chiefs like many other migrant chiefs, play various roles to assist their people. Such roles draw them closer to state institutions such as local police stations, lands departments, local assemblies where they resume the role of administrative brokers. However, it is possible that with increasing urbanization and politicization of migrants' votes, migrant chiefs could lose their relevance in the cities. New actors such as Members of Parliament and

youth migrant leaders working with these Members of Parliament, could emerge and assume the role of both administrative and knowledge brokers to the Dagomba migrant in Accra. It is thus crucial, that further research needs to be conducted from the migrants' perspectives regarding the changing roles of migrant chiefs in urban Ghana.

Acknowledgements

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