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ABSTRACT

The analysis of a dispute over leadership of the Central Mosque in Kumasi, Ghana, demonstrates how local and national politics are related. The actual dispute began in the 1940s, more than a decade before Ghanaian independence, and continued until the early 1970s. The controversy

reflects the changing position of northern Muslim strangers in a southern Ghanaian city and the changing political significance of ethnicity and nationality. I argue that the position of strangers and local political events must be viewed in the context of national economic systems.

INTRODUCTION

The object of the present paper is to show through a particular case study¹ how national issues are reflected in local events. This would hardly seem to require demonstration, were it not that often national politics are believed to be divorced from local, apparently parochial, disputes. The very complexity of many local disputes may be one reason for this situation: with every major issue, minor tangential problems arise; the complex relationships uniting and dividing the participants can obscure the issues and their significant links with events taking place outside the local community.

A purely local interpretation could plausibly be given to the specific phases of the dispute over the control of the Central Mosque in the city of Kumasi which is described here. But this would obscure why certain issues, such as party affiliation and ethnic identity or citizenship, became important precisely when they did. To demonstrate the significant relationships between local and na-

tional issues underlying the events in Kumasi, it is necessary to sort out a considerable body of detailed and complicated data, and it is important to bear in mind that this data makes sense only when the linkages between events on different political levels are understood.

In ethnically heterogeneous communities, such as the immigrant community in Kumasi, the traditional capital of the pre-colonial Asante kingdom and the administrative and commercial center of the modern Ashanti Region,² it is common for local politics to involve conflict between factions competing for overall power and for significant symbols demonstrating the consensus of the entire community. Among the Muslim immigrants in Kumasi, who come from many different areas of northern Ghana and the surrounding countries, control over the Central Mosque, like possession of royal and sacred regalia in some traditional African kingdoms, has come to symbolize the attainment of overall political power. From the time construction of the Mosque was started in the early 1950s disputes have been continuous. Yet the Mosque remains a symbol of the integration (in Islamic terms of the brotherhood) of the Muslim community. This is one reason why disputes over it have been so important to the participants. Those who control the Mosque are able to proclaim themselves representatives of the will of the whole community, symbols of communal and religious harmony. Opponents are chastised for bringing disintegration, "politics," and "tribalism" upon the polity.

The complicated historical background of these disputes could easily bury from analysis the

¹The research for the present paper was conducted in Ghana between 1965 and 1967 with subsequent visits in 1968, 1969, 1970, and 1974. The research on the Mosque was supported by the United States National Institute of Mental Health and the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. The 1974 visit was supported by the American Museum of Natural History. This paper was originally prepared for a seminar at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, in 1969. I have revised and updated it with details up to June, 1971; in 1974 the Mosque was open, and the controversy over the Imāmate had died down. Muslim affairs in the country as whole were then supervised by a government sponsored council.

I am very grateful to Dr. Barbara Callaway, Dr. Phyllis Ferguson, Dr. Jon Kraus, Dr. Charles Stewart, Ms. Elizabeth Stewart, and Dr. Ivor Wilks for reading earlier drafts and for their numerous and valuable criticisms and suggestions. Two members of the Kumasi Zongo community have read this paper, Mr. Ibrahim Abu and Mr. Yusuf Ibrahim, and I am most grateful for their encouragement and criticism.

²I have used the spelling Asante to refer to both the Asante people and the area of the country known traditionally as Asante. The administrative area known as the Ashanti Region is referred to as it appears on Ghanaian maps and documents.

important links between the local and national political levels. Yet through all the phases of the Mosque dispute the issues that arose at particular times (for example political parties, ethnic loyalties, changing economic opportunities, citizenship) were important in a larger context than that of Kumasi alone. Alliances and factions have shifted in a kaleidoscopic fashion but there has always been a pattern, sometimes reflecting mainly local arguments, and at other times, or even simultaneously, reflecting the participants' involvement in movements extending far beyond activities in Kumasi. Personalities as well as issues link the two political levels in such a way that the distinction between local and national levels is hard to maintain, except in an analytic sense. Factions in this dispute have always attempted to legitimize their claims to power by gaining support from authorities outside the local community. These authorities, including government officials, regard such disputes as purely local issues, yet the factions continually accuse each other, not without reason, of more or less successfully obtaining external aid. To the extent that these accusations are justified they reflect the participation, often covert, of nationally oriented politicians in local events.

Although this paper focuses on a limited series of disputes beginning in 1952, it is necessary to

set this material in the historical context of the growth of the immigrant community in Kumasi. The first section describes this growth and attempts to set out the main actors and factions in the various phases of the dispute. It also attempts to explain the historical background behind major cleavages in Kumasi between different immigrant groups, between factions within the local Asante population (a branch of the Akan linguistic group, the largest group in southern Ghana), between members of different political parties, and between Ghanaians and aliens. These alliances and divisions change and cut across one another, but are related to developments in the Ghanaian political scene as a whole.

The next section of this study deals briefly with Islam and culture in the immigrant community and is meant to give some of the ethnographic background to the disputes. It shows why the Muslims regard unity over the Mosque as so important, yet why disputes can still occur. This section also describes the cultural and ideological orientation of the Muslim associations, which were the main protagonists in the later phases of the dispute. A chronological account of the dispute follows and leads to a conclusion that deals with the links between the local disputes and major themes in contemporary and past Ghanaian politics.

GROWTH OF KUMASI MUSLIM COMMUNITY

Today the Muslim community in Kumasi is divided into two main sections, reflecting the historical pattern of the settlement in Asante of immigrants from northern Ghana and the surrounding countries. The oldest section of the community, known as the Asante Nkramo (literally, Asante Muslim), consists mainly of descendants of Muslims from north of Kumasi who settled in the town from the mid-eighteenth century, after the beginning of Asante expansion into the north, until the British conquest in 1896. The origins of the second section, known by the Hausa term Zongo (literally, stranger's quarter), can be traced to the beginning of the colonial period. The northerners in the earliest Muslim settlement came from the area that is

now northern Ghana, from the northwestern area of Banda, and from the kingdoms of Gonja, Dagomba, and Mamprusi, with a scattering of immigrants from what is now Nigeria (mainly Hausas) and Upper Volta (mainly Mossis). Most of the Asante Muslims trace their origins to Mande (now commonly called by the Hausa term, Wangara) Muslims and today occasionally refer to their northern origins. But the group as a whole has been socially and politically incorporated into Asante society. Within the context of Asante society, however, they form a distinct grouping on the basis of their religion, along with many Asante converts to Islam who do not claim northern origin (see Wilks, 1966).

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Asante Nkramo were an ethnically distinct "stranger" group in Kumasi (Asante)

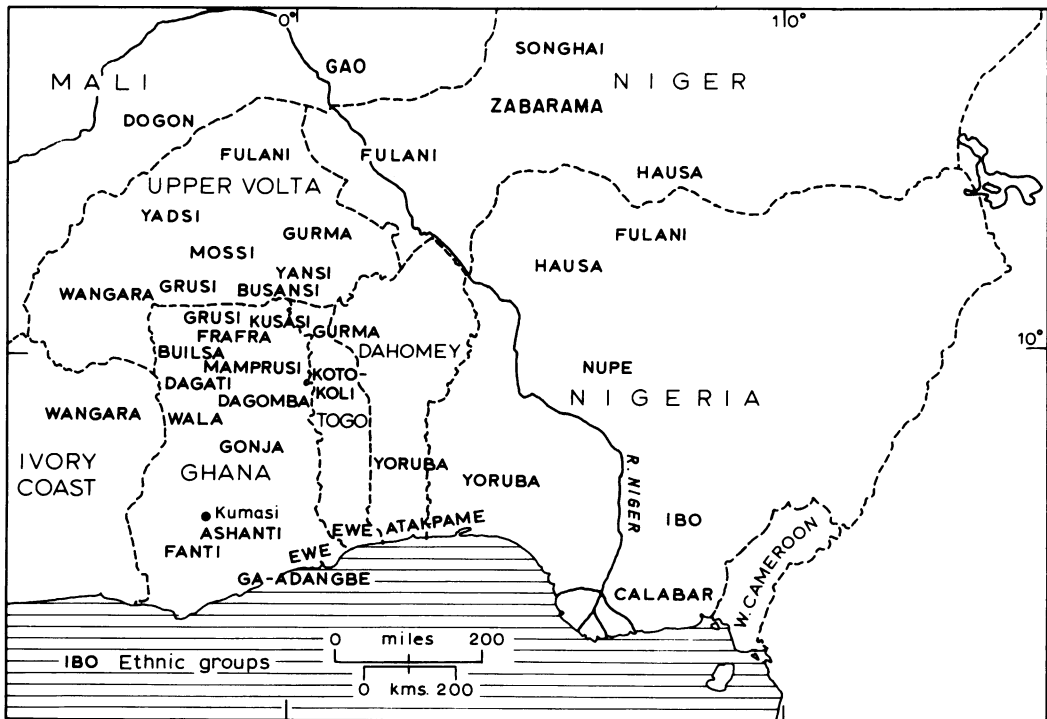


FIG. 1. Map of Ghana and surrounding country showing origin of groups discussed in text.

society. During this period the Muslim community consisted of an undifferentiated group of strangers, that is, people from territories beyond the limits of Asante authority, and provincials, people from Asante's northern hinterland. They came to Kumasi as traders, religious men, and farmers (there was a community of yam growers outside Kumasi) and remained in the area under the patronage of the king, the Asantehene, for whom they performed religious, economic, and political services. By the early nineteenth century some of the original group of northern provincials had been incorporated to the extent that they identified themselves as Asantes, not as strangers. Once this happened conflict developed between these Asante Muslims and the stranger Muslims (mainly Hausas) from outlying areas, some of whom experienced conflicts of loyalty as Muslims and as clients of the Asante rulers.¹ As a result, in or about 1844, limitations were

¹For example, when asked to give military service to the king to fight against Muslims in the Northwest

placed on the movements of strangers, in metropolitan Asante coastal traders were expelled, and northern traders were forbidden to come farther south than Salaga, Asante's important northern trading town.² In the aftermath of these problems an institutional answer to the "stranger problem" was sought. The Muslims were placed under the authority of the Nsumankwahene, the Asantehene's medical advisor (for want of a better translation: his responsibilities included both the physical and spiritual health of the king), and the Imāmate was set up, giving the Asante Muslims their own religious leader, the Asante Nkramo Imām, who was also an advisor to the king.

The next influx of northern Muslims into Kumasi occurred from the late 1870s to the early

hinterland (for description see Dupuis, 1824, p. 98 and Wilks, 1966, p. 335f; 1971, p. 391).

²I am indebted to Dr. Ivor Wilks for much of this information, most of which has been published in Wilks, 1971.

1880s when Asante sought recruits to her army. These recruits were of varied ethnic origin, but Hausa was the lingua franca and most were identified as Hausas even though they were in fact Mossi, Yoruba, and members of other northern groups. Like the northern traders in Kumasi in the early nineteenth century, these northerners lived in Asante under the control and patronage of the Asante government. Throughout the nineteenth century, but particularly after 1844, control of trade, together with control of immigration, was largely in the hands of Asante authorities. The rise of an indigenous Asante merchant class was discouraged but a controlled stranger group was allowed limited privileges in trade and religious, political, and even military affairs (see Wilks, 1966). Consequently, during the latter part of the nineteenth century northern strangers continued to be incorporated into Asante society, so that during the British-Asante wars at the end of the last century some of them allied with the Asantes and later identified with the Asante Nkramo community.

Despite their assimilation into Asante society for some purposes, for example in situations in which religious identification is of primary importance, the Asante Nkramo identify themselves with the second, more recently established Muslim community described below. And, as Ghanaian citizens, some of the Asante Nkramo feel an identification with the northern Ghanaian immigrants who form one part of this more recent community. On Fridays and during special Muslim festivals both the Asante Nkramo and the Zongo residents worship together, after the Asante Nkramo Imām performs religious services for the king. The Asante Nkramo Imām also plays an important part in some Muslim associations that include both northern Ghanaians and non-Ghanaian immigrants who are part of the more recent Muslim community (the Zongo). Since 1935, when the Asantehene was restored to office after nearly 40 years of exile, the Asante Nkramo Imām has resumed his pre-colonial role as intermediary between the king and the stranger Zongo Muslims.

The origins of the second section of the Kumasi Muslim community (the Zongo) coincide with the next significant influx of northerners into Asante, at the turn of the century when

Asante-British conflict reached its peak. At this time northerners came to Asante under the aegis of the British as soldiers recruited to fight against the Asante, as camp followers, and later, after the British conquest, as traders and laborers. This community, although internally complex in its ethnic composition, has remained distinct from the local Asante population in terms of the persistence of "stranger" status in Kumasi, the use of Hausa as a lingua franca, and the preservation of customs associated with northern cultures. Politically these strangers, those from northern Ghana and those from more distant territories, were under the patronage of the British who tended to encourage the growth of the Zongo community for several reasons. First, the strangers, having no traditional rulers in Kumasi, were directly under the authority of the government; while the British were intent upon subduing the powers of traditional Asante chiefs, they had little hesitation in supporting strong leaders in the Zongo. Second, the rapid growth of the Zongo was a sign that trade was prospering; while these immigrants in Asante regained and expanded their control over almost all items of long-distance trade, including cattle, kola nuts, manufactured goods, and other items, the British derived substantial revenue in the form of taxes and tolls. Third, the strangers performed useful services for the colonial authorities; the immigrant leaders, in return for political recognition, promised to find jobs for new migrants while they offered their services to the government. "Voluntary" labor of this type was largely responsible for sanitation, road building, and much construction in Kumasi (see Schildkrout, MS, 1970b). With the development of industry and commercial cocoa farming in Asante (after the introduction of cocoa in 1907), northerners migrated south in large numbers. Many came as seasonal farm workers to rural areas, but others settled in towns such as Kumasi, provided labor and in some cases eventually became brokers for Asante and government employers seeking labor.

According to the 1960 Ghana census, less than half (42%) of the population in Kumasi at the time were Asante, and no more than 26 percent were "strangers," that is, non-Asantes, from southern Ghana. At least one-third of the population of Kumasi consisted of northerners, this

being a composite category used to describe both people from northern Ghana including the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Frafra (Tallensi), Dagati, Kusasi and others, and those from the northern savanna areas of the surrounding countries, including the Mossi, Hausa, Yoruba, Zabarama, and others. According to the census classification, 20 percent of the Kumasi population in 1960 were of "foreign origin." This included people defined legally as aliens because they or one or both of their parents were born outside of Ghana.¹

Although the citizenship laws have changed several times during the greatest part of the post-independence period, Ghanaian citizenship could only be conferred on people with Ghanaian parents. This meant that many second and third generation immigrants were ineligible for citizenship, were controlled by laws governing aliens, and were subject to all the pressures affecting aliens during the rise of nationalism.

Within the immigrant Zongo community northern Ghanaians and aliens are united by Islam and by their common status as strangers vis-à-vis the Asante; but recently, with the growing importance of national identity, a cleavage has emerged between these two sections. This has been important on a number of occasions since independence, but it was particularly accentuated in 1969 when the Busia government, in an attempt to "Ghanaianize" small capital enterprises, enforced measures designed to rid the country of alien competitors. Aliens were required to register and to obtain temporary residence and work permits. With these regulations the government intended to selectively issue permits only to immigrants in "useful" occupations; alien traders, of whom there were tens of thousands, were not generally issued permits.² These

measures drastically affected the demographic distribution of alien groups in Kumasi, because many immigrants, particularly the Gao and Zabarama (from Mali and Niger mainly) and the Yoruba (from Nigeria) fled the country in large numbers. Citizenship and the official policy toward aliens have direct relevance to local politics in areas like Kumasi having large immigrant populations. These issues are discussed below in reference to the Mosque dispute.

Brief Political History of the Zongo

Throughout the history of the Zongo community, internal political life has been characterized by tensions created by opposing pulls of centralization and decentralization. This has involved continuous debate between the different ethnic communities over the question of Hausa political hegemony. Hausa dominance became an issue very soon after the Zongo was founded, that is, after the British in 1902 made special provisions for the immigrants by allotting them a section of the town (which they have long since outgrown) known today as the "Old Zongo." Hausa hegemony, established in this early period, remains a source of periodic conflict, even today. As I have already described this (Schildkrout, 1970b) I will simply recapitulate the major issues here.

The basis of Hausa dominance in the Zongo in the early part of the century was largely economic. Hausas controlled much of the long-distance trade in kola and cattle, and 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. Although the Hausas have high prestige in the Zongo, as so many are successful in business and relatively well educated in Arabic and Islamic law, this has not prevented resentment from developing over Hausa political authority. As early as 1910 members of other ethnic groups, which were also expanding numerically and eco-

¹That is, if the parent born outside was the one through whom a person traces ethnic affiliation. According to the 1960 Ghana census persons of "foreign origin" were not necessarily aliens, but according to the law of 1957 and the law written into the 1969 Ghana constitution the two categories are in most cases identical. Although there is a later (1970) Ghana census, it is unreliable with respect to aliens, as enumeration was undertaken very soon after the 1969 decree requiring aliens to either register or leave the country.

²According to the 1960 census 12.3 percent of the total population were of foreign origin. More than

one-third (35.2%) of these were born in Ghana. See Ghana, 1964, volume III; and Addo, 1968.

nominally, protested against the government's institutionalization of Hausa dominance. Consequently, after this date the leaders of other ethnic groups were informally recognized as headmen with jurisdiction to solve disputes and help migrants within their own communities. Their authority derived directly from the British and was theoretically equal to that of the Hausa headman.

In the 1920s the British became interested in applying the principles of Indirect Rule, as defined by Lord Lugard in northern Nigeria, to the administration of local government in Ghana. Indirect Rule meant, in theory, that the British would rule through "natural" leaders. In Kumasi Zongo, with its Islamic, Hausaized culture, this meant to the British that the principles developed by Lugard could be applied as if the Zongo were a miniature emirate and could be administered through a hierarchy of rulers, in this case the tribal headmen. The Hausa headman known as the Sarkin Zongo, or Chief of Zongo, was then recognized as the apex of the "traditional" Zongo system and was given authority over all non-Hausa immigrants. In 1927 an amendment to the 1924 Ashanti Administrative Ordinance formally defined the Sarkin Zongo's powers and granted him a tribunal with jurisdiction over Muslims in the Zongo. The other headmen were ordered to disband their own unofficial courts and to serve as a jury on the Sarkin Zongo's tribunal.

This policy failed in the Zongo for the following reasons: many of the headmen resented the diminution of their authority and the loss of revenue from court fees and fines; non-Hausa headmen resented being relegated to the lower ranks of a formalized hierarchy; and opportunities for advancement in prestige and power for non-Hausa headmen were blocked by the government's attempts at applying Indirect Rule. In 1932 a series of riots marked the culmination of protests against the government's policy. The office of Sarkin Zongo was formally abolished and each headman was again allowed to hold his own unofficial court.

These developments reflected changes in the administration of Kumasi as a whole (see Schildkrout 1970a). Until the 1920s the British had attempted to break the power of traditional

Asante leaders. To this end the Asantehene had been exiled in 1896 and leaders without traditional claims to office, including leaders in the immigrant community, were given greater authority. But with the acceptance of the idea of Indirect Rule, the British began to heed Asante demands for the restoration of the power of the Asantehene. Prempeh I returned from exile in 1924 and was made Kumasihene in 1926. His successor, Prempeh II, was recognized as Asantehene in 1935, when the British version of the precolonial "confederacy" was set up.

By this time it was apparent that in the Zongo, centralization of political authority in the hands of the Hausa headman could not work, and the British were relieved to transfer some of the burden for Zongo affairs back to the Asantehene, who then became an intermediary between the various headmen and the government. While the Asantehene maintained a strict policy of noninterference in Zongo affairs, he consistently opposed re-centralizing power in the office of any one headman. The Asantehene was thus able to keep peace for many years—until party politics began in the late 1940s.

Immediately prior to independence in 1957, while the Convention People's Party (CPP) was consolidating its rise to power, the relationship between the central government and the Zongo seemed to repeat the pattern of the 1920s and 1930s. The Asantehene found himself in opposition to a strong national political force, this time not the British but rather Nkrumah and the CPP. After independence, as after the British take-over of Asante, the national government attempted to diminish the Asantehene's authority while promoting the rise of a strong leader in the Zongo.

This strategy coincided with an important split within the Zongo between two rising Hausa leaders: Ahmadu Baba and Mutawakilu. The Hausa headman Ahmadu Baba, supported by most of the other headmen in the Zongo, strongly supported the Asantehene in opposition to the CPP. The Asantehene in 1954 had become a leader in a predominantly Asante party, the National Liberation Movement (NLM), which opposed Nkrumah's party. Ahmadu Baba and many of the other Zongo headmen had also become involved with a party that opposed the CPP, the Muslim Association Party (MAP),

formed in 1953, and closely aligned with the NLM. In 1958 after regional, tribal, and religious parties were banned by the CPP government, these two parties joined with others to form the United Party (UP).¹

Mutawakilu, after unsuccessfully contesting Ahmadu Baba for the office of headman, joined forces with the CPP. Therefore, while the Nkrumah government was determined to oppose the Asantehene, the NLM, and its support in the Zongo, that is, the MAP, it supported the ambitions of Mutawakilu, recognized him as joint constituency chairman of the Kumasi CPP, and supported his attempts to obtain Ahmadu Baba's office in the Hausa community.

By independence in 1957 Mutawakilu's power in the CPP was strong enough to enable him to run local affairs in Kumasi Zongo with the backing of important leaders in the national party organization. His power was directly rooted in Accra, and therefore he was able to remove from office, or recommend for deportation or detention, many Zongo leaders who still had support but who refused to support the CPP.² The most important case of this kind was the deportation of the Hausa headman, Ahmadu Baba, and a Yoruba leader, Alfa Lardan. Both were prominent religious and political leaders in the Zongo and both were powerful organizers of the MAP.

After these deportations early in 1958, Mutawakilu was proclaimed Sarkin Zongo of Kumasi by a Cabinet ruling from Accra. With such a direct line to the highest echelons of the CPP, Mutawakilu's powers were almost unlimited for a short time. In his capacity as a CPP official and as Sarkin Zongo, he placed CPP supporters in all Zongo headmanships and suppressed the activities of all anti-CPP associations.

Mutawakilu's rise to power and his intense effort to combine party office and chieftainship did not last long. In little more than two years he had provoked so much opposition in the Zongo, even among Hausa CPP supporters, that the

government intervened. Other Muslim leaders in Kumasi, members of the Muslim Council, a nationally organized CPP association, began to push for Mutawakilu's removal as Sarkin Zongo on the specific grounds that he was governing the Kumasi Muslims autocratically. Many were also angered at Mutawakilu's self-protective denial of Nigerian identity, demonstrated by his refusal to participate in celebrations of Nigeria's independence, and his refusal to cooperate with the newly formed Nigerian Community, an organization which many Muslim Council leaders joined. Under pressure from this powerful faction, Nkrumah and his cabinet agreed to abolish the office of Sarkin Zongo once again. Mutawakilu was still recognized as the Hausa headman (after much opposition from a powerful faction within the Muslim Council) and as joint constituency chairman of the CPP, but once his powers as Sarkin Zongo were removed his blank check to rule the Zongo disappeared.

The abolition in the 1930s of the office of Sarkin Zongo had given greater autonomy and power to each headman, whereas in 1961 when the office was abolished for the second time a very powerful Muslim association, the Muslim Council, controlled mainly but not entirely by Hausas rose to prominence. This group, like other Muslim associations which preceded and followed it, was composed largely of second and third generation immigrants who had considerable wealth, Islamic education, and influence in the Zongo. The rise of the Muslim Council in Kumasi Zongo marked a shift in the locus of political authority from individual headmen, who were mainly first generation immigrants representing ethnic groups, to Kumasi-born immigrants whose status and prestige were based more on wealth and Islamic education than on ethnic identity. From 1961 until the coup that overthrew Nkrumah in 1966, the Muslim Council, under the aegis of the CPP, was in control of politics in Kumasi Zongo, and consistently attempted to diminish the political influence of the headmen whom Mutawakilu until 1961 had used for support.

It is important to note that in the years preceding and immediately after independence the CPP/MAP and later the CPP/UP factions in the Zongo did not form primarily on the basis of

¹The regional, tribal, and religious parties were formally banned with the passage of the Avoidance of Discrimination Act of December, 1957. See Austin, 1964, p. 377. The rise of the MAP is described in Austin, 1964, *passim*; Jon Kraus, MS; and Price, 1956.

²He was in close contact with the Minister of Interior who issued these orders.

ethnic cleavages. Ethnic categories were often used to describe the factions,¹ but these were not descriptively accurate stereotypes. All ethnic groups were in actuality split along party lines.² In the late 1950s it was common for disappointed contestants for Zongo offices, including the headmanships, to join the CPP with hopes, usually justified, of ousting their earlier opponents through party support.

There was also a tendency in the Zongo, as elsewhere in Ghana, for people to stereotype the MAP/CPP struggle as "generational" associating "youth" with the CPP. In the ideology of the CPP this appeal to youth went along with a strong anti-chief orientation. In the Zongo, this did not accurately reflect the reality of political cleavages. Mutawakilu did attempt to mobilize young men and the urban unemployed³ into a pro-CPP organization called the Muslim Youth Congress,⁴ but the MAP also had a section of

¹For example, some Mossi MAP supporters claimed in the late 1960s that the only Mossi to support the CPP were those who had been "influenced" by Hausas. These individuals were well aware that major MAP leaders were Hausa, but they were able to ignore this for the sake of argument.

²One may, nevertheless, note two "ethnic" tendencies, although to these generalizations very important exceptions must be cited. The first is that strongly Islamized, centralized groups tended to support the MAP in the early 1950s. Groups that were less centralized, less Islamized, tended to be more enthusiastic about the CPP. This split reflected, perhaps, prior economic and political competition within the immigrant community between these two sectors. It is worth noting that Mutawakilu, a key exception to this generalization, drew much of his support from non-Hausas, including Frafra, Grusis, Kusasis, and others who were often not Muslims and who had not been successfully integrated into Zongo political and religious organizations.

The second generalization is that the CPP drew support from itinerant migrants who tended to belong to certain ethnic categories (Gao, for example). Short term migrants were also less well integrated into Zongo political and religious organizations, including the MAP. But here too there are exceptions: in all these groups there were some long settled immigrants who took a prominent role in the MAP. The Gao headman, for example, was deported by the CPP government in 1958, and settled Gaos tended to support the MAP. Thus migration patterns were really more significant variables than ethnicity.

³School leavers were less of an issue in Zongo where few immigrants had attended any but Arabic schools.

⁴The CPP first created an organization called the

"young men," or "action troopers," as the youths on both sides were called. Both parties had significant support from young men, many of whom were willing to take to the streets to fight party battles with intense religious fervor. Although the MAP did ideologically stand for "chiefs" and traditional authorities in general, Mutawakilu was unable to link his appeal to youth to an anti-chief stance, as was done by CPP leaders in other areas of the country. He drew heavily on aspirant Zongo headmen for support and he was deeply committed to becoming Sarkin Zongo.

In the Zongo, then, generation, age, ethnic identity, and even party ideology were not so important in drawing lines of cleavage as were struggles for power based on contests between opposed personalities within ethnic communities and within the Zongo community as a whole. Most of these conflicts began earlier but continued into the CPP period (1952-1966), becoming elaborated and intensified with the addition of party organization and resources.

Despite all the moves toward centralization that took place under the CPP, first in the office of Sarkin Zongo under Mutawakilu and later in the Muslim Council, the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966 by the military and police marked the return to a period of decentralization that resembled the situation in the years after Prempeh II resumed the office of Asantehene in 1935. In 1966 the Asantehene again began to act as an intermediary between the Zongo leaders and officials of the military/police government, the National Liberation Council (NLC). Each ethnic community appointed its own headman and asserted its autonomy and its intention to govern its own internal affairs. Ahmadu Baba and many other deported and detained MAP leaders returned to Kumasi and resumed their traditional offices as headmen and elders. Although the MAP no longer existed and no organization formally incorporated all these Muslim leaders, a strong anti-CPP sentiment united the Zongo leaders and their supporters for several months after the 1966 coup.

Muslim Youth Association in 1949 (Kraus, MS, p. 759). This seems to have been absorbed into the MAP, and the later youth organization, led by Mutawakilu, was called the Muslim Youth Congress.

The ethnic communities, which emerged after the coup, based both on traditional polities (such as the Mossi, Hausa, and Yoruba groups, for example) or on nationality (such as the Upper Volta Union, or the Nigerian Community) proclaimed themselves to be a-political, complying with the NCLs ban on political activities and the general disgust with "politics"—an activity identified with disunity and factionalism. These communities performed two main functions. First, in many of them as soon as the most unpopular leaders were ousted, numerous "civil" disputes such as marriage and divorce cases, inheritance disputes and so forth, were brought to the reinstated headman for settlement. Second, ethnic associations became forums where the needs of the membership were expressed. A-political as these ethnic communities were, it was not long before politicians outside the Zongo, anticipating the return to civilian rule, began to seek support from various groups in the Zongo.

The ethnic communities which became active after the 1966 coup also had economic aspirations. Because these issues enter into the Mosque dispute it is necessary to mention them here. The economic and political goals of the various associations involved in general terms "making the group strong." This meant securing jobs, market stalls, and sectors of trade for their members. Soon after the coup a government official suggested to some of the headmen of northern Ghanaian groups that they form a cooperative trade association on the basis of their Ghanaian identity. It was suggested that such an association would consolidate the transport, kola, cattle, and livestock trade in northern Ghanaian hands, to the disadvantage of the Hausa, Mossi, and other groups composed mainly of aliens. Although this trade association never materialized, the show of interest in northern Ghanaian demands, or the stimulus to these demands, from politicians outside the Zongo encouraged the Ghanaians to see their own interests as opposed to those of the aliens in the Zongo, with whom they had previously cooperated. This division became increasingly important in the years after the coup and was clearly expressed in the 1969 phase of the Mosque dispute.

The reassertion of ethnic identity after the coup, and the formation of groupings on an ethnic basis, did not stop many of the same individ-

uals in the Zongo from uniting into larger, multi-ethnic associations for other purposes. A number of important, formally constituted, national associations organized local branches after the coup, although all of them had originated in an earlier period. These associations were seen as religious groups by their members, yet all were in fact actively engaged in secular politics, on the local and national levels. The profusion of these groups both expressed underlying conflicts and divisions in the Zongo and contributed to these conflicts.

The first important Muslim association, which was active in the period relevant to a discussion of the Mosque (1952 onward), was the MAP. Later, when the CPP was firmly in power, the MAP was officially disbanded (in 1958),¹ although for some time it was merged with other minority parties in the UP. The CPP also had support from a nationally organized Muslim association, the Muslim Council, which, with CPP backing, controlled local Muslim affairs during the early 1960s. The leadership of the Muslim Council, like that of the MAP, was predominantly of non-Ghanaian origin, and the Council's primary role, as far as the government was concerned, seemed to be to keep political control in Muslim areas. This association was disbanded by the military government in 1966, as it was affiliated with the CPP. Its prominent position was then contested by two other groups, the Muslim Community and the Muslim Mission, both of which traced their history back to the years before the coup but which had remained inactive while the MAP and the council were in control.

The Muslim Community, like the council, was largely composed of non-Ghanaians of "foreign origin,"² including second, third, and fourth generation Hausa, Yoruba, Mossi, and other immigrants but also included some important indisputably Ghanaian citizens, in particular the Asante Nkramo Imām. It claimed to have been formed in the early 1930s,³ and after 1966 was

¹With the passage of the Avoidance of Discrimination Act. Also, by this time the MAP's vote-getting ability had suffered nationally, due to the fact that other parties were putting up Muslim candidates and getting Muslim votes (see Price, 1956).

²This is the Ghana census categorization and does not always coincide with citizenship.

³Price (1954, p. 108), mentioned an organization

reconstituted as a national organization with its main office in Accra. It included former members of both the MAP and the Muslim Council.

The Muslim Mission was formed after independence (in 1958) specifically as an organization of Ghanaian Muslims. It opposed first the Muslim Council and later the Muslim Community on a number of grounds, among them citizenship and education. The Mission claimed that both the Council and the Community were organizations of aliens, and that they permitted and even encouraged superstition and ignorance as well as illiteracy (in English) among their followers. The Community in turn claimed that the more westernized Mission leaders were simply political opportunists who represented a very small power-hungry clique in Kumasi and perhaps in the national arena as well. Although this study deals mainly with events up to early spring of 1970, it is necessary to add that in an effort to reconcile these factions, the Busia government proposed, in May, 1970, to form a national council of Islamic affairs which was to take over the assets of the disbanded Muslim Council¹ and which, it was hoped, would reconcile the Mission and the Community. After the overthrow of the Busia government, the National Redemption Council set up another Muslim advisory council which was still functioning in 1974. It included members of both communities: Ghanaian Muslims and those of non-Ghanaian origin.

I believe it useful at this time to review some of the points that I have made in this summary that are relevant to the Mosque controversy.

(1) There is a division between the Asante Nkramo community and the Zongo community, and the Asante Nkramo Imām plays an important role as intermediary between the strangers and the traditional Asante authorities.

(2) The Zongo community consists of northern Ghanaians and aliens, and many of the aliens

were actually born in Kumasi, although this does not necessarily confer citizenship upon them.

(3) There has been a progression of nationally organized Muslim associations which played major roles in Kumasi politics in different periods. The MAP was most important in the 1950s when factions, formed in Kumasi around two Hausa leaders—Ahmadu Baba and Mutawakilu, associated with the MAP and CPP, respectively—fought for local power and national influence. The MAP was superseded by the Muslim Council as the dominant organization in the Zongo, when the CPP's position was secure nationally; but Mutawakilu, in emphasizing his role as "chief" and in failing to support the Nigerian Community, had failed to secure his position in the local branch of the Muslim Council, and played only a minor role in CPP affairs once the Council had taken control. When the Council was disbanded by the NLC in 1966, two other national associations with Kumasi branches became active—the Mission and the Community.² While the Mission had tried to supersede the Council during the CPP period on the plea of nationalism, the Nkrumah government had been tolerant of Ghanaians of "foreign origin" as long as they served the CPP and controlled the dissident Muslims. After the 1966 coup the government's policy toward these people became more consistently xenophobic and the Mission was given a chance to assert itself. Finally, it is useful to remember that the factions which formed in the Zongo in the period of party conflict in the 1950s cut across ethnic cleavages; after the coup, when formal political parties were banned, ethnic and national identity became more significant as bases for association and political action.

Cultural Background:

The Importance of Islam in Kumasi

The importance of Islam in the Zongo is related to a pattern of Islamization that predates the colonial period in West Africa (see Wilks, 1968). Some of the early migrants in Kumasi were Muslims before they left their homelands. These include the Hausa, Zabarama, and Fulani,

²Another group of Muslims in Kumasi were the Ahmadiyya, but they never took an active role in politics and are therefore not relevant to this discussion.

called the Gold Coast Muslim Association which was formed in 1932 and became active in politics in 1939 when it allied itself with the Mambii party in the Accra Town Council elections. Price stated that this organization later became the MAP. In the late 1960s, when Muslim Community members traced the origin of their association, some mentioned 1938 as the date of its inception. It is likely they were referring either to the same Muslim Association or to a Kumasi branch.

¹*Ghanaian Times*, May 29, 1970, p. 5.

and others from Muslim groups of Dioula origin which had been incorporated into the Voltaic states of Mossi, Mamprusi, and Dagomba several centuries earlier. Many other migrants converted to Islam when they settled in Kumasi. Among other things conversion facilitated the establishment of business relationships among traders in the Zongo; it made it easier for migrants to find spouses and accommodation; and, when one was able to acquire sufficient Islamic education to prove one's orthodoxy, it conferred considerable prestige.

Kumasi today is one of the most important centers of Islamic education in Ghana. Many orthodox Muslims run Arabic schools and until recently very few immigrants were willing to send their children to government or mission schools. Many immigrants regard English schooling as a first step toward conversion to Christianity and, as many Asante have become Christians, the immigrants fear that education in such schools will lead to assimilation into Asante society and to a relative weakness in the Zongo community. In contrast, conversion to Islam is regarded as a positive, even an upward, move by many migrants who abandon their traditional cultural patterns as they become incorporated into the ethnically heterogeneous Zongo. In adopting Islam, migrants facilitate their assimilation into this community, for Islamic values, albeit a Hausa version, provide a highly valued cultural model for Muslim immigrants from many ethnic groups.

Islam has been so important as an integrating force in Kumasi Zongo that many of the immigrants feel that they are united by a common body of law and custom that is distinctive to this community. The immigrants claim that Kumasi Zongo has its own "constitution," referring to a body of laws and norms that govern the behavior of the immigrants. For some years a group of Muslim leaders in the Zongo formed a committee which specifically publicized and determined those rules of *Mālikī* Muslim law which they agreed should be regarded as "Kumasi custom."

In many respects the version of Islam that is found in the Zongo is a Hausa one; traditional Hausa customs are often described as Muslim customs by the immigrants. This is due to the early numerical, economic, political, and religious

dominance of the Hausa as indicated above. Most second generation immigrants speak only Hausa, and many immigrants of non-Hausa origin have been assimilated into the Hausa group. It is difficult to say whether the Hausa have retained their prestige and pre-eminence in some fields, Islamic education for example, by admitting into their group non-Hausas who gradually assume Hausa identity, or by excluding outsiders. In any case, second and third generation immigrants of different ethnic groups are culturally indistinguishable; their customs and values are no longer associated with particular ethnic categories, they know little about their parents' traditional culture, and ethnic differences do not often affect daily social interaction. Although their way of life is similar in many respects to that associated with Hausa culture, it is preferable to speak of Zongo culture to indicate that the emerging way of life in Kumasi Zongo is the result of the social and cultural integration of immigrants from many groups and not simply the persistence of any one cultural tradition (see Schildkrout, 1974).

Despite extensive social and cultural integration, an ideology of patrilineal descent continues to segment the Zongo population into distinct ethnic communities based not upon persisting cultural differences, but upon the different places of origin of tribal and national groups. These differences are transmitted over generations through patrification.¹ They are only relevant in certain situations, but they are potentially of great political importance because they can provide the basis for the formation of political factions or economic interest groups, and because they are regarded as status categories by most of the Muslims.

There is some economic specialization in the Zongo, but no single group has been able to monopolize any one sector of the economy. The Yoruba provided most of the traders in manufactured goods until the 1969 government decree required them to obtain residence and work permits, but they have always faced serious competition from the Zabarama and others. Many of the cattle traders are Hausa, but they compete with the Fulani, the Mossi, and certain

¹Rights to membership in a social unit (category or group) through the father.

northern Ghanaian immigrant groups, particularly the Gonja and the Dagomba. The domination of most economic activities by several different groups at the same time has, on the one hand, intensified economic competition within the Zongo and, on the other, made it advantageous for traders to form alliances, partnerships, and patron-client relationships across ethnic lines. Only in recent years have such alliances formed on the basis of national identity, with Ghanaians attempting to limit competition by ousting aliens.

Leadership patterns in the Zongo to some extent follow those of ethnic differentiation, in that each ethnic community has a headman and a group of titled elders. Each headman also appoints an Imām, or Chief Priest, who officiates at "life-crisis" ceremonies, such as naming ceremonies, marriages, and funerals, advises the headman on points of Islamic law, and leads prayers on certain occasions. The headmen and their officials perform many services for their communities. They arbitrate internal disputes, help migrants adjust to urban life and perform the ritual services mentioned above. To some extent they represent their communities to outsiders, that is, to government officials or to non-immigrants. The Ghanaian government, the traditional Asante authorities, and many others usually pass through the headman in order to communicate with members of particular groups. The headmen have never been officially recognized as chiefs but they have been informally recognized by government officials as representatives of their respective communities.¹

With the exception of the Hausa headman other headmen are first generation, that is, rural born immigrants. In recent years these leaders have been challenged by the growing number of educated urban born Muslim leaders who do not identify primarily with their ethnic groups. These leaders claim to speak for the Zongo as a whole, and regardless of ethnic identity, they cooperate in the multi-ethnic associations mentioned earlier. This shift in the leadership pattern in the

Zongo has meant that politics is rarely a matter of simple interethnic competition. Leaders in the Zongo are united and divided on issues of religious, economic, and political policy and do not necessarily act as representatives of ethnic communities. In a sense we are dealing with two systems of leadership, one based on the pattern of ethnic segmentation and symbolized by the tribal headmen, their officials, and their Imāms, another based on more universalistic criteria of recruitment to leadership roles, including Islamic education, wealth, and length of residence in the town.² A few leaders are able to work in both systems, at times as representatives of the interests of a particular ethnic community, at other times as leaders of the Zongo Muslims.

The focal point of communal life among Kumasi Muslims is the Central Mosque. There are also many neighborhood mosques which serve local, ethnically heterogeneous congregations, and there are two mosques known respectively as Mossi and Yoruba mosques. These also serve ethnically mixed congregations but derive their names from the identities of their founders. When the Central Mosque is not closed, due to frequent disputes over its control, it stands as a symbol of the unity of the entire heterogeneous Muslim community (in Arabic, the *'umma*) in Kumasi. It is used for Friday prayer, for Ramadan celebrations, and for other Muslim festival occasions, and it is meant to be used by all Kumasi Muslims, not only those of the Zongo.

A distinction must be made here between the Friday Imām, the Imām al-Jum'a, who is the Imām of the *'umma*, the Muslim community as a whole, and the Imām al-Bilad, the king's Imām, who in this case is the Asante Nkramo Imām. Until the 1968-1969 phase of the Central Mosque dispute, which was over the succession to the Friday Imāmate, both the Friday Imām and the Nā'ib, his assistant, have always been Hausas. The Hausa Imām has been recognized over the years as Imām al-Jum'a, that is as ritual leader of the whole Zongo, even though he has no authority to intervene directly in the religious affairs of non-Hausa. In a sense he has two sepa-

¹Chiefs had to be recognized by the Governor of the Gold Coast in the colonial period and, according to the 1969 constitution, must be recognized by the National House of Chiefs. The headman's position is more fully described in Schildkrout, 1970a.

²Because of their Islamic education, wealth, and personalities, some of the Muslim leaders are believed to have considerable mystical power, a belief supported by a strong tradition of Islamic mysticism in West Africa.



FIG. 2. The Kumasi Central Mosque under repair in 1968.

rate roles, that of Friday Imām and that of Ḥaṣa Imām, just as the political head of the Hausa community is known both as Hausa headman and as Sarkin Zongo. Even after the office of Sarkin Zongo was officially abolished the Hausa headman continued to play certain ritual roles that expressed his position as a leader of the entire Zongo. On the main Muslim festival days he leads a procession of Muslims, including the other headmen, to greet the Asantehene and the representatives of the national administration. He acts as an intermediary between the national government and the other headmen, and is often asked to arbitrate disputes between non-Hausa groups in the Zongo. Non-Hausa headmen are presented to him for recognition when they assume office even though he has no authority in their election. The Hausa Imām in his capacity as Imām al-Jum'a and the Hausa headman in his capacity as Sarkin Zongo are then symbolic

leaders of the immigrant (Zongo) community as a whole. However, as the Central Mosque was built for all Muslims in Kumasi, not only for the Zongo Muslims, the Friday Imām's congregation is much more inclusive than the stranger community alone.

The Central Mosque Controversy: 1952-1966

It should be apparent that the Mosque dispute was in fact many disputes, or to express it differently, many phases in a single dispute. The issues in each phase have varied but all have reflected continuous struggles for power within the Muslim community which were in one way or another indicative of changing issues in the Ghanaian national political scene. National events gave different leaders at different times opportunities to compete for power locally and to express their success by demonstrating control

of the one symbol of consensus in the Muslim community—the Central Mosque. In the account that follows, I describe the changing personalities, events, and issues.

Soon after he was elected Hausa headman in 1948, Ahmadu Baba successfully appealed to the Asantehene for a plot of land on which to build a Mosque for all Muslims in Kumasi. Ahmadu Baba was a wealthy transport-owner and landlord, and he contributed a sizable portion of the funds to build the Mosque, but most of the money was raised in a public campaign. In the next few years party politics came into play and Ahmadu Baba's opponents from earlier years, now aligned with the CPP, began to use the Mosque fund to attack his leadership.

Significantly, Ahmadu Baba's former rival for the office of Hausa headman, Mutawakilu, led the campaign against him. By 1953 Mutawakilu was persistently accusing Ahmadu Baba of embezzling Mosque funds. After the MAP was founded in 1953, the dispute over the funds was expressed as one between the MAP faction led by Ahmadu Baba and others and the CPP faction led by Mutawakilu. By the spring of 1953 the MAP faction decided to take action against the slander they believed the accusations to be. Ahmadu Baba sued a Hausa CPP member for slander and succeeded in winning £200 in damages and costs in the Kumasi Divisional Court. The magistrate ruled that no misappropriation of funds had occurred.¹

This was hardly the end of the controversy. Mutawakilu, dissatisfied with the court's decision, decided to take the case to the Asantehene, whose opposition to the CPP was not yet clear. Under the auspices of the Muslim Youth Congress, a CPP organization he was leading, Mutawakilu brought a complaint against Ahmadu Baba to the Asantehene's court. The Asantehene set up a commission of inquiry (the Kyidomhene Commission) to investigate, but it too ruled that no misappropriation had been demonstrated. The Muslim Youth Congress appealed this judgment and requested a further investigation. On October 9, 1953, *The Ashanti Pioneer*, a Kumasi newspaper, reported² that the Commission's

hearing had been postponed for a week. On this day, the paper said, as the parties were leaving the Asantehene's palace "some sort of guerilla fighting started." Four people were wounded, 10 were arrested.

During the Commission's recess Ahmadu Baba brought evidence showing that Mutawakilu had altered the Mosque accounts. *The Ashanti Pioneer* reported on November 25³ that the Kumasi State Council had said that "owing to doubt established about the genuineness of the minute book tendered in evidence by Mutawakilu on behalf of the Muslim Youth Congress, it did not desire to pursue any longer investigations of the objections raised by the Youth to the findings of the Kyidomhene Commission of Enquiry."

Fighting between the two factions occurred frequently, yet in January, 1954, Ahmadu Baba and the Hausa Imām, Malam Chorumah, broke ground for the Mosque. There was little pretense about the "a-political" nature of the undertaking by this time. By June, MAP activities were organized at the Mosque site. *The Ashanti Pioneer* reported on June 14 that: "one hundred and thirty five members of the Kumasi Zongo CPP who had resigned to join the MAP were admitted at a ceremony held yesterday at the site of the new Mosque near the Labour office, in the presence of Alhaji Amadu Baba, Sarkin Zongo, and the tribal heads, including the Imām Malam Chorumah. Fifty-five of the resigned CPP members squatted before the Chiefs and made some confessions. . . . Alhaji Amadu Baba urged the people not to call the young ones who had now come to them as converts 'tubas'. It was only a misunderstanding that had made them stay away for a while . . . Prayers were said and the new converts were given a voluntary gift of £5.11.0 by the gathering."⁴

Ghanaian independence in March, 1957, solidified the leadership of the CPP and gave Mutawakilu confidence and support in his local campaign. The CPP had begun to use its national power to eliminate opposition from religious and regional factions, and in August, 1957, deportation orders were issued on the two major MAP

³"Youth vs. Amadu Baba Case Closed."

⁴"Tuba" is an expression describing converts to the faith. It probably derives from the Arabic *talib* (pl. *tulba*), student or disciple.

¹*Ashanti Pioneer*, June 17, 1953.

²"Four Wounded in Muslim Clash."

leaders in Kumasi, Ahmadu Baba and Alfa Lardan. Although they appealed against the orders on the grounds that they were citizens of Ghana by birth, an act of parliament was passed (Act 1 of 1957) during the court proceedings legalizing the deportations. Citizenship was thenceforth defined so that birth alone did not confer Ghanaian nationality, and the two MAP leaders were deported to Nigeria before their case was concluded in court. Although these measures were ultimately intended to keep peace in the most troubled areas, the government declared a state of emergency in Kumasi immediately after the deportations.

By this time the Mosque had been opened, but hostility between the MAP and CPP factions in the Zongo was so great that they refused to worship together. Whenever the two sides met at the Mosque, fighting broke out. The MAP faction felt that the Mosque had been built largely with their money and labor, and they were bitter about the deportations and accusations of misappropriation of funds. The CPP faction on the other hand claimed that the Mosque was their rightful place of worship, for no matter which side had started the project the Mosque had been built for all Muslims in the town.

The question of which side had the right to worship in the Mosque became academic when Mutawakilu was made Sarkin Zongo in 1958. As soon as his accession to office was announced, the government declared the Mosque a "protected place" (under the state of emergency regulations). All gatherings, for prayer or other purposes, were prohibited and individuals performed their Friday prayers at the old Yoruba Mosque and at neighborhood Mosques, each faction taking care to avoid gathering where the "enemy" could be found.

To the Muslims in Kumasi it is a matter of great importance that Friday prayers be held and also that all Muslims in one town worship together on this day. The disunity provoked by these political disputes was regarded as a serious religious matter, for although there are no specific Qur'anic sanctions against communities that do not worship together, there is a general feeling that this bodes ill for the whole community, and also that any leader who claims legitimate authority over the entire community should be able

to unify his congregation so that they can pray together in peace.

Given these attitudes Mutawakilu could not very well pretend to be a legitimate political leader in the Zongo while the Mosque remained closed. He began to apply for weekly police permits to use the Mosque. Such permits were issued for several months in 1958, and the Hausa Imām (the *Imām al-Jum'a*), Malam Chorumah, switched his allegiance from Ahmadu Baba to Mutawakilu, joined the CPP, and continued to lead Friday prayers. Although the police and the administration in Kumasi seemed to believe that unity had been achieved, as violence had become less frequent, many former supporters of the MAP, now members of the UP, refused to worship with the CPP faction at the Central Mosque and used other small mosques. Occasional fighting occurred at these sites, and by 1959 the most ardent opponents of the CPP prayed only in their homes.

By the end of the 1950s open conflict between the CPP and its opponents had lessened because the CPP was firmly in control nationally and locally. In his capacity as Sarkin Zongo, Mutawakilu had replaced those MAP headmen who had refused to support the CPP.¹ Some MAP supporters switched allegiances and actively supported the CPP, whereas others attempted to be as a-political as possible. As all open opposition had been eliminated, the next phase of the Mosque dispute involved factions within the CPP and reflected the growing shift in the Zongo from the leadership of single headmen to that of members of associations, in particular to the local party members and to the local branch of the Muslim Council. The first dispute to develop

¹Among the deported headmen were the leaders of the Mossi and Gao communities. The Busansi headman was served with a local deportation order; and the Mamprusi, Dagomba, Kusasi, Zabarama, and other headmen were removed from office and replaced by CPP supporters. Some, including the Yoruba and Fulani headmen, eventually agreed to support Mutawakilu and retained their offices. The only other period when a Sarkin Zongo had claimed the right to appoint headmen was between 1927 and 1932, when the British pursued a strong policy of centralization in the Zongo. Then too the policy failed, as each community claimed that a Hausa leader had no authority to make these appointments. (See Schildkrou, 1970b.)

after 1958 stemmed from a growing conflict between Mutawakilu and other Muslim leaders in Kumasi. Mutawakilu's opponents within the Hausa group attempted to oppose the power which chiefly office conferred on him by joining and working through the Muslim Council. The members of the Council in Kumasi opposed Mutawakilu's "iron rule" in the Zongo and demanded his dismissal as Sarkin Zongo and the abolition of the office.¹ They were successful in 1961: the office was abolished and Mutawakilu was therefore no longer Sarkin Zongo. Although he tried in many ways to reassert his power, first by becoming Hausa headman and later by trying to take over leadership of the Kumasi branch of the Council, Mutawakilu was never able to regain his former position of authority. From 1961 until 1966, leadership shifted among different members of the Muslim Council, and it was this group that obtained weekly permits to use the Central Mosque. It also controlled a committee known as the Mosque Building Committee, which handled the collection of funds for building and maintaining the Mosque.

The Muslim Council faced opposition from another quarter, which, although it did not provoke a large dispute over the Mosque before 1966, pointed to the main cleavage that was to occur after Nkrumah's fall. In 1958 the Muslim Mission was formed, including in its membership only Muslims of Ghanaian nationality, both northerners and southerners. The Mission disagreed with other Muslim groups, including the Muslim Council, on a number of ideological issues such as the need for more Western-type education and the need to purge Islam of numerous magical practices and superstitions, but its main opposition was based on nationalist sentiment. In 1962 some "indigenous Muslims of Ghana," as they called themselves, sent a petition to the Government objecting to what they regarded as the domination of the Council by "alien" Hausas. They maintained that independence had been gained to free the people of Ghana "from all forms of foreign yoke and domination, including

the domination of religious groups by foreigners."² Their plea to obtain control of the "responsible positions" in the Muslim Council was unsuccessful, for Nkrumah was still prepared to support non-Ghanaians in key positions, but the sentiment that inspired the petition remained and reappeared in 1966 after Nkrumah was overthrown.

The Mosque Dispute: 1966-1970

The main cleavage to emerge after the coup, once the Muslim Council was dissolved, was between the two Muslim associations—the Muslim Mission and the Muslim Community. The argument between these two factions goes back to the early years of independence and involves many issues, all of which were later expressed in the dispute over the succession to the Friday Imamate. I have mentioned the question of citizenship and the way in which the Mission had attacked the Council before 1966 for being an organization of aliens. Later the Mission had attacked the Muslim Community on the same grounds, but its claim was weakened by the fact that there was a split in the Asante community. The Asante Nkramo Imām not only supported the Community, but was its vice president,³ and many of the so-called aliens were actually able to claim Ghanaian citizenship by virtue of maternal ties.

The significance of the Asante Nkramo Imām's position opposing the Ghanaian dominated Mission becomes clear in light of an ongoing dispute within the Asante community. The Asante regional branch of the Mission was led mainly by Akans from the Brong (western) area of the Ashanti region who had a long tradition of opposition to Asantes from the Kumasi region. In the period of party conflict, the Brong people strongly supported the CPP, whereas the Kumasi people on the whole supported the NLM and later the UP. This dispute can be traced farther

²Petition by Head Representatives of Ghanaian Muslims, dated May 3, 1962, Kumasi Regional Office, File 2268.

³In August, 1970, he was elected president, replacing Ahmadu Baba who died in September, 1968. *The Ghanaian Times*, August 5, 1970.

¹Letter dated March 10, 1960, from Secretary, Ghana Muslim Council, Kumasi, to Regional Commissioner, Kumasi. Kumasi Regional Office, File 2268, p. 100.



FIG. 3. Men and women from Kumasi Zongo working as volunteers to repair the Central Mosque. The work is done on Sundays, to the accompaniment of drumming.

back in the history of Asante; it goes back to the pre-colonial period, when Kumasi asserted control over the northwest, which continued right through to the post-independence period (see discussion in Austin, 1964, p. 293f; Tordoff, 1965; and Busia, 1951). Although it is difficult to claim that the Brong/Kumasi split among the

Muslims was directly continued from the pre-colonial to the CPP to the post-coup periods, many Asantes actually did perceive a continuing pattern of fission along these lines. The disagreement between the factions was brought into the open in the late 1950s when the Asantehene arbitrated a case between a leader of the Asante re-

gional branch of the mission and the Asante Nkramo Imām over the fees, ostensibly too high, charged in a Mission school in Kumasi. In bringing this case before the Asantehene the Asante Nkramo Imām implicitly asserted his right to control the Muslims in the Mission. The Asantehene ruled that he could not compel the leaders of the Mission (who were predominantly Brongs) to follow the Imām's leadership. It was felt that the Asantehene tacitly gave his assent to the split within the Asante Muslims at this time.

If the Asante Nkramo Imām was unable to assert his control over all Muslims in Asante, he was, on the other hand, still able to maintain that the aliens in the Muslim Community and in the Zongo were "his strangers." At various times he has stated that these strangers should be regarded as "Kumasi people" (*Kumasifo*), who had a long-standing right to live in Kumasi under the auspices of the traditional Kumasi authorities. In the role of a patron, the Imām supported the aliens in the Zongo and took their side in the Mosque dispute, thereby weakening the Mission's major claim against the Community.

The present Muslim Community was organized in 1966 although it claims to be the same organization as one with the same name started in 1938. This is a matter of some controversy because the lease to the land on which the Mosque is built is also in the name of the Muslim Community. The Mission claimed that the earlier use of the term "community" did not refer to a corporate body in any legal sense. In any case the Community that claimed control of the Mosque after the 1966 coup was formally organized in Accra in 1966 and its Kumasi branch with Ahmadu Baba as President and the Asante Nkramo Imām as Vice-President, was founded soon after. Muslims in Kumasi who had formerly been allied with the CPP and the UP (MAP) factions united in the new association abandoning their former party differences. In the months following the coup the Community drew support from almost all Muslims in the Zongo, at least to the extent that the leaders faced no opposition there. Northern Ghanaians and aliens in the Zongo were united in support of the Community, although later, when the Muslim Mission became active in the Mosque dispute, many of the Ghanaians, particularly Dagombas and Gonjas, left the Mus-

lim Community and opposed it in hopes of gaining economic and political power from groups of alien origin.

Disputes around the Mosque started again very soon after the coup. The first one related to the Mosque Building Committee. This committee continued through the early 1960s under the leadership of the Muslim Council but after the 1966 coup its composition was questioned. Ahmadu Baba, who returned from Nigeria a few months after the coup, had been reinstated as Hausa headman and began accusing Malam Chorumah of trying to maintain a committee of CPP sympathizers although the Party had been disbanded. Ahmadu Baba brought this case to the Asantehene, who ordered that the committee be disbanded and a new one appointed to include members of both the CPP and UP factions. This was done, and differences between Ahmadu Baba and the former CPP members seemed to be resolved. As the Mission had not yet become active in the Mosque dispute, it appeared that peace had finally been restored.

It was not long before this newly constituted Mosque Building Committee became the focus of a new wave of discontent, this time on an ethnic basis. The headmen of some of the More-Dagbane speaking groups complained that they were not sufficiently represented on a mainly Hausa body. The committee then asked them to send representatives to it, and each group elected two members. The campaign to raise funds for the Mosque continued, and labor (paid and voluntary) was recruited to begin repairs and additions to the Mosque.

This was a minor dispute over the constitution of a committee determined to repair and use the Mosque; it was an internal dispute involving different ethnic groups within the Zongo, all demanding an equal voice in Zongo affairs. This conflict was soon eclipsed by the much larger conflict between the Muslim Mission and the Muslim Community. The Mission brought a formal complaint against the Community to the NLC Political Committee. It claimed that leadership of Muslims in Ghana should be in the hands of citizens and that the Muslim Community deviated from the teachings of the Qur'an and encouraged superstition. An attempt at reconciliation was made on the national level and the two

sides were asked to form a single Muslim council. Unable to agree on the name of the new body or the proportion of each side's representation, no compromise was reached and the NLC was forced to recognize two independent organizations, with the provision that both stay out of politics.

These events occurred on the national level. Leaders of the Kumasi branch of the Muslim Community went to Accra to meet with the NLC leaders and with the delegates from the Mission, and they spoke with confidence as leaders of the Zongo community as a whole. The Mission had not yet become a factor in internal Zongo politics in Kumasi, as there had been no occasion to divide the immigrant community.

On August 1, 1968, this occasion arose with the death of Imām Chorumah, the Friday Imām. One-and-a-half years had passed since the coup, and aspiring politicians throughout the country were beginning to mobilize support wherever they could. It is not possible to state precisely what role outsiders, that is, nationally oriented politicians who were not members of the Kumasi Zongo Community, played in this phase of the Mosque controversy. In some instances intervention was clear, but in others it was covert. It is well to point out again, however, that the Mission's more westernized manner found favor with politicians and administrators and that several Muslims serving in the military government were also members of the Mission. The attempt to Ghanaianize the economy was also a crucial element in this phase of the dispute, because this generated hostility to aliens and raised Ghanaians' hopes of gaining economic and political power, in the Zongo and in the country as a whole. National politicians are known to have suggested to several leaders of Ghanaian groups in the Zongo that a cooperative trading association excluding aliens might be formed to advance the position of northern Ghanaians, particularly in long distance trade, an area where competition was still keen. Soon after the ban on politics was lifted there were suggestions that a political party of northerners might be formed, although the subsequent ban on regional or ethnic parties by the NLC prevented this from developing.

When Imām Chorumah died the Zongo com-

munity followed its customary practice of electing a new Imām. The Hausa community, in consultation with the main Muslim "*ulama*" and the tribal headmen elected a successor to both the offices of Friday Imām and Nā'ib. The former Nā'ib was elected to the Imāmate and a new Nā'ib was appointed. There was no apparent opposition within the Zongo to the appointment of a Hausa, or to the promotion of the former Nā'ib. For more than 50 years the Friday Imāmate of Kumasi had been vested in a Hausa and although there must be an election and the office cannot be the property of a descent group, there had never been any objection to the election of a Hausa who served both as Hausa Imām and as Friday Imām. In this instance, however, the succession took place in a political climate which was increasingly xenophobic; politicians and the public were particularly sensitive to outcries against aliens because the press and certain politicians were intent upon blaming them for the country's ills. It is significant that opposition to the appointment of Hausas as Imām and Nā'ib did not generate in the Zongo even though it eventually gathered support there.

On the day the Asantehene was about to formally recognize the new Imām, the Chairman of the Regional Committee of Administration in Kumasi intervened to stop the ceremony. According to the accounts of the Chairman and the Mission, the Mission had sent a letter to the Administration stating that they had their own candidate for the office and that they had not been consulted about the decision to appoint a Hausa as Friday Imām. At the same time, a member of the NLC government, reputedly a Mission member himself, advised the Regional Chairman to delay the ceremony so that the Mission's objections could be investigated.

The Mission had been preparing to make a bid for the Imāmate even before Malam Chorumah died. They had appealed to the Asante Nkramo Imām to take the office himself but he refused. According to the Chairman of the Regional Committee of Administration the Asante Nkramo Imām was "selling his birthright to aliens." The Asante Nkramo Imām, on the other hand, claimed that the two offices were distinct and that the Friday Imāmate had traditionally been given to a Hausa (interview, February, 1969). He

disagreed on the significance of nationality and cited passages of the Qur'an to show that Islam did not recognize the validity of such qualifications.

When the Regional Administrative Officer intervened to stop the Asantehene from recognizing the Hausa Imām, he also closed the Mosque supposedly to maintain peace. As the end of Ramadan approached, the Chairman attempted to find a neutral outsider to lead the prayers. Unable to find such a person in Kumasi he summoned the Imām of the Ghana army, a prominent Muslim in Ghana. When this man arrived to lead the prayers, the Community protested and refused to pray under his leadership because, they claimed, he was a member of the Mission.

At this point the Regional Committee recognized that an investigation into the dispute was in order. The Administration agreed to examine the Community's claim that the Hausas they had nominated were, in fact, Ghanaian citizens. After considerable investigation they were convinced that by virtue of these men's maternal ethnic affiliations, they were qualified for citizenship. The Mission counterclaimed that they were not true citizens in the same way that Asantes or Dagombas were, but as this had become a legal question they were unable to win their case. Nevertheless, during this period many articles appeared in the Ghanaian press erroneously describing the Community as an organization of aliens. The prevalent view was that all members of certain ethnic groups, regardless of their place of birth, were aliens.

While the Administration was attempting to arbitrate the dispute, the Muslim Community urged that the case be taken to the Asantehene. The Chairman of the Regional Committee of Administration refused to allow this and the Asantehene, known to be the traditional patron of strangers in Kumasi was strongly urged to stay out of the matter. The Community then called for an election to determine the succession but the Mission, whose membership was comparatively small, refused on the grounds that their case rested on a question of principle. As the dispute became a matter of national debate, two NLC members alleged to be members of the Mission and both northern Ghanaians, came to Kumasi to arbitrate. A compromise solution was

then proposed and accepted by the Mission, but not by the Community. The solution was that the Mission concede its claims to the Imāmate to the Hausa candidate, and their candidate, a Dagomba, would become the Nā'ib. In proposing this solution the chairman of the Regional Committee maintained that the Community had followed a principle of succession from Nā'ib to Imām (interview February, 1969). The Community denied that such a principle existed and claimed that it was only a coincidence that such a pattern had obtained in the past. The Community suspected that the Administration was attempting to formalize such a pattern in suggesting that the Mission appoint the Nā'ib, and they feared that such a solution would be unstable and even personally dangerous for the Hausa Imām. It did seem to be the case that the Administration and the Mission were attempting to formalize a principle of succession: the Chairman of the Regional Administration explicitly noted that many traditional kingdoms in West Africa had principles of rotating succession (interview February, 1969).

After this arbitration the Administration again attempted to open the Mosque, but hostilities were still too great to avoid the violent quarrels that followed. On one occasion many people were arrested and several were injured.

The Muslim Community then decided to fight the case in court and based their suit against the Mission on their claim to ownership of the Mosque. The case centered around the distinction between the notion of community, as an unbounded, unincorporated—in the legal sense—group, and the notion of a corporate body. The fact that a distinction between informal and formal organizations had not always been clear determined the outcome of the case.

The Community sued the Mission for interfering with their property and maintained that the Mission had caused them a serious loss of revenue in the form of Friday contributions. They demanded a court order for possession of the Mosque and an injunction restraining the Mission members from entering or interfering with the Mosque. The defense rested its case on the claim that the Community did not exist as a corporate body until 1966 and that before then the Mission and the Community were members of a general

community of Muslims in Kumasi who were collectively referred to as the Muslim or Mohamadan community. The defense claimed that the two groups, the Mission and the Community, were formally constituted in 1958 and 1966, respectively.

The question of the ownership of the Mosque rested on the interpretation of the meaning of the word community—whether or not the Muslim Community in whose name the lease of the Mosque ground was issued was the same group as the association that existed at the time of the trial. The question of the ownership of the Mosque plot first came up in the early 1960s when the Muslim Council was in competition with Malam Mutawakilu. Each had applied for a lease to the Mosque, and in 1965 a lease was executed between the government and the “Muslim Community acting by Mohammad Chiroma (chief Imām) and Mohammad Mutawakilu as its registered Trustee (sic) of the Community.”¹ However, the judge found that there was no evidence that the plaintiffs were a corporate body, as this was legally defined by the Trustees (Incorporation) Act of 1962. The judge ruled that title to the Central Mosque was in the Muslim Community, Kumasi, which comprised both parties in the dispute, because when the Mosque was started the two factions in the Zongo had not been separated.

At the end of the court proceedings, in February, 1970, the dispute was still unresolved. The court had clearly recognized that it was a political rather than a legal matter and that a solution would have to be found out of court. The Administration continued to urge acceptance of the compromise solution they had proposed, but for some time the Community refused to accept the Dagomba candidate as Nā'ib.

During the long court case many changes occurred on the national political scene and these eventually affected the behavior of the parties in the Mosque dispute. Political parties were formed

in the early part of 1969 and elections were held in August, giving Busia's Progress Party (PP) a clear victory. Although many of the Muslims were aliens and as such were not eligible to vote, no questions about citizenship were asked during voter registration and politicians encouraged Muslims to participate in the elections. Campaigning was active in the Zongo, and the Progress Party, still identified with opposition to the CPP, won a clear majority there.

At the end of 1969, however, the Busia government began its campaign against aliens and many of the immigrants who had worked for the victory of the PP believed that they had been betrayed. Many Zongo residents experienced a loss of faith in the government in this period because the protection and assistance they expected their votes would bring was not forthcoming. They felt that the general attitude in the country and the government favored the Mission with its policy of Ghanaianization, and that given these circumstances they were fighting a losing battle.

As a result of these developments, in the spring of 1970 a new dispute developed within the ranks of the Muslim Community of Kumasi. Many of the younger men and a few of the elders began to think that they should give in to the Mission and the Administration on the issue of the Nā'ib. For some time a faction within the Community held out against this position and claimed that the events of the CPP years were repeating themselves, that the same people who had feared to oppose the CPP were giving way to pressure on this issue.

Eventually most of the Community members became convinced that given the government's attitude toward strangers they could not win their case. They accepted the compromise on condition that the Mission appoint another individual as Nā'ib.² It seemed, then, that as the Progress Party government stabilized itself, peace was at least temporarily restored in Kumasi. With power indisputably in the hands of one group on the national level, the open expression of deep local conflicts ceased. As in the pre-colonial peri-

¹“Judgement: Suit No. L.C. 73/68. Muslim community Kumasi per Alhaji Alhasan Melafia, Plaintiffs, v. Muslim Mission Kumasi as represented by 1. Chief Gonja, 2. Chief Dagomba, 3. Secretary of Muslim Mission. Defendants, in the High Court of Ghana held at Kumasi on Wednesday, the 18th day of February 1970 before Annan, J.”

²This is indeed what occurred. On a revisit to Ghana in 1974 I noted that the Mosque was being used under a Hausa Imām and a Dagomba Nā'ib, but not the same individual who had been involved in the original dispute.

od after 1844 when the Asantehene took firm control over the Muslim stranger community, and as in the CPP period when the Nkrumah government did the same thing through the Muslim Council, the Progress Party government attempted to create a single national body to supervise Muslim affairs. The government that followed the Progress Party, the National Redemption Council, maintained this control at

the national level, again appointing a Muslim council, including members of both the Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian communities. Thus, while administration is solidified and political activity is minimized at the national level, local disputes like those symbolized by the controversy over The Kumasi Central Mosque probably can be expected to remain dormant.

CONCLUSIONS

What factors emerge in all these disputes as the main reason for recurring factionalism in the Muslim community? The dispute over the Mosque has continued for almost 20 years, and although the factions have changed and the specific issues have varied, it may be possible to find some general themes underlying all these conflicts. Certainly, it is not the Mosque itself that has caused conflict, but deeper issues that prevent the realization of the ideal of unity which is expressed in the Mosque.

The first point to emerge is the most obvious—that the Mosque, as a symbol of unity for the entire Muslim community, is a means through which competition between groups may be expressed. It is accepted as a symbol of communal unity, but precisely because of this, conflicts about authority, power, and leadership, which actually divide the community, can be focused on it. Studies in other towns in West Africa and elsewhere have revealed similar conflicts over Mosques (see for example Proudfoot, 1959; and Behrman, 1970). This is, of course, nothing peculiar to Islam, but is similar to the problems surrounding chieftaincy or central authority in many societies. It may be, however, that in ethnically heterogeneous communities such disputes take a very special form, in that symbols of generalized authority may be dissociated from any specific group. Thus the Mosque is supposed to represent the general community, not any single ethnic group; its congregation is supposed to be one in which consideration of ethnic identity and nationality are subordinated to the principles of brotherhood and unity explicit in Islamic ideology. Yet, when subordinate ethnic identities both “tribal” and national persist, even in very restricted areas of social life, they may lead to the formation of factions and pressure

groups that can challenge Islamic ideals. Individuals have multiple identities, and identification with the most inclusive community may not always seem advantageous. In times of stress more particularistic loyalties emerge, even when these directly contradict the most valued religious precepts.

It would be wrong, however, to maintain that conflicts over the Mosque have been entirely based upon different ethnic groups' competition for political power. Economic factors also have been important, both in determining lines of cleavage between ethnic groups within the Muslim community and in determining the relationship between national policy and local events. Most of the people involved in this dispute are, ethnically, strangers in Kumasi and some are aliens in Ghana. At least part of the dispute, particularly the 1968-1969 phase of it, was a matter of competition between Ghanaians and aliens for scarce economic and political resources. Why is it that the issue of citizenship was so important in this phase of the dispute, and how do economic and political factors interrelate in earlier periods?

In the pre-colonial period, Muslims from the north were accepted in Kumasi as traders and religious leaders, even though they were not Asante citizens. They remained in the capital under the patronage and control of the king, who saw it in Asante interest to encourage an alien and dependent merchant class, while he thought it unwise to encourage the growth of a strong, independent trading community among Asantes.

To some extent the Asante Nkramo Imām's position in the dispute described here reflected this traditional attitude. He did not see the question in terms of opposed nationalities but rather in terms of the local relationship between the

strangers and the Asantes. He recognized that the Hausa candidate for the Imāmate had been shown legally to be a Ghanaian, but he maintained that even if this had not been the case, the Imāmate of the Kumasi Mosque should have gone to the Hausa candidate, because Islam specifically disallowed considerations of nationality or descent in the selection of an Imām.¹ The Asante Nkramo Imām said that the Hausa candidate was a "Kumasi person"; he had been born in the town and his people had a definite status there as strangers. The Dagomba candidate was also a stranger as far as the Asante Nkramo Imām was concerned, but he was not even born in Kumasi and moreover was denying his position as a Kumasi stranger in basing his claim for the Friday Imāmate on Ghanaian nationality. The Hausa candidate, on the other hand, recognized that he had a right to this office as a stranger in Kumasi, and he deferred to the Asante Nkramo Imām for advice and protection. The Hausas were not denying this traditional status relationship, but the Dagombas were.

During the colonial period, virtually no restrictions were placed on the activities of strangers, and crucial sectors of the economy were in alien (European) hands. The economic base of the African stranger community also developed without restriction in this period. Although competition between Ghanaians and aliens occurred, the government did nothing to restrict alien activity in favor of Ghanaians.

In some ways the rise of nationalism in the 1950s could have been expected to lead to the imposition of controls on alien activity, for once the economy was theoretically in Ghanaian hands, one could expect competition for limited resources to begin. However, as Nkrumah's economic policy was aimed at placing crucial sectors of the economy under public, or state, control (see Callaway and Card, 1971) he was able to allow alien economic participation. Like the Asantehene in the late nineteenth century, Nkrumah's policy encouraged the participation of aliens, both European and African, in the economy. Because they were aliens they were, theoreti-

cally at least, amenable to control; aliens could easily be deported when they overstepped the privileges the government allowed them. Like the Asantehene in the previous century, Nkrumah to some extent discouraged the rise of an indigenous trading community while he developed state enterprises with the assistance of outsiders.²

After the 1966 coup the Government's economic policy changed abruptly and so did the position of strangers. While large-scale outside investments still occurred, with fewer state controls placed on these investments, foreign economic competition to small-scale Ghanaian business was discouraged. The emphasis of the NLC and of the Progress Party government was precisely to encourage the rise of a Ghanaian middle class. This meant that African aliens, who controlled many small-scale business enterprises, were seen as a threat to the expansion of Ghanaian economic interests. Aliens increasingly became scapegoats for the "common man's" economic plight. In this period, then, the recognition of Ghanaian demands for a more equitable distribution of economic opportunities, led to a rejection of the contribution of strangers.

This new political climate created divisions and alliances with the Zongo community that were absent before nationality became a basis for political action. Competition between individual ethnic groups within the Zongo existed, but no basis for an alliance among Ghanaian groups was perceived before independence. This nationalistic idiom merely made it possible for certain aspects of economic competition to express themselves politically. It is highly significant that the Ghanaian groups that supported the Mission in the Zongo in the late 1960s were precisely those groups that included a significant number of cattle and kola traders, namely the Gonja and Dagomba. These groups had the most to gain from the elimination of the competition of the Hausa, Mossi, and other predominantly alien groups.³

²In the pre-colonial period, state enterprises included gold mining, some farming, and the control of long-distance trade.

³For a discussion of the participation of different ethnic groups in the Kumasi cattle trade, see Hill 1970, pp. 109-121. Although the proportion of Mamprusi traders is high, few reside permanently in Kumasi, and as a result few were personally involved in the Mosque dispute.

¹The contradiction here is clear, because there can be no rule that the new Imām must be a Hausa. This, however, was regarded as part of custom, a category of law specifically allowed by Islam, i.e., *ijmāʿ*.

The Mamprusi, also northern Ghanaians, are poorly represented in Kumasi (there were only 500 according to the 1960 census, as compared with 2100 Gonjas and 3830 Dagombas) and they have fewer traders permanently resident there. The Mamprusi seemed to see no advantage in breaking with Hausa ritual leadership in the Zongo, and they rejected the overtures of the Mission.

It can be argued that the same sort of issues were present in pre-colonial Asante. We know of a dispute in the late nineteenth century in which northern Muslims, long resident in Kumasi, opposed the Hausas on the grounds that the latter were strangers, whereas the northerners had already become politically incorporated into the Asante state (Wilks, 1966, p. 323; Bowdich,

1819, pp. 92, 403). In the recent dispute we again see immigrants from northern Ghana becoming aware of their national identity, and attempting to separate themselves from alien Muslims on this basis. Northerners living in southern Ghana, and in Asante, at times have felt disadvantaged in relation to the indigenous peoples, and it is not surprising that they should respond to suggestions that they improve their position through their claims to citizenship. This is perhaps an inevitable consequence of nationalism in whatever period it occurs. As the history of strangers in Kumasi and more specifically the history of the Mosque dispute shows, local conflicts are deeply affected by expanding and contracting opportunities in the largest polity to which the participants belong.

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