Language in the Elephant's Stomach: National Identity, Local Ideology, and Linguistic Solidarity in Nima, Accra

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Abstract

This dissertation spotlights a linguistically and culturally diverse community in Accra, Ghana called Nima. Predominantly home to Muslim immigrants and their descendants, this neighborhood, locally deemed a *Zongo*, serves as the backdrop to a deeper investigation of Ghanaian nationalistic dynamics and local ideologies around Hausa language and Zongo life. I use these overarching ideas to document and investigate the ways in which an emerging local variety of Hausa language has come to reflect the existential complexity and undergirding values of Nima's community members. The Nima community is often playfully called *tombin giwa* (the elephant's stomach) in the local Hausa language variety because it is said that one can find anything and everything inside. While this is often in reference to material items, such as spices, provisions, and housewares, that can be found at the thronging Nima Market, the neighborhood is also host to a pluralistic population that encompasses various languages, cultural backgrounds, and geographic origins.

First, I examine the extensive history of Hausa people and language as they moved across West Africa over the last few centuries, sharing their language, culture, and Islamic practices. Using both archival accounts and interviews with early settlers' descendants, I construct a history of Hausa in Accra and the origins of the Nima community. Next, I consider the ways in which Hausa speaking people have been categorized in Accra as perpetually foreign and "Other" by their fellow Ghanaians despite deep histories in the region. I discuss the ways in which residents of Nima have thrived despite the resulting institutional neglect and how values of solidarity and accommodation become key in the community's survival. Finally, I demonstrate how these values appear in the linguistic structure of Nima Hausa itself. I argue that practices of inclusivity can be seen in the language's phonology, morphology, syntax, and pragmatic functions by

comparing the speech practices of Nima residents with accounts of Standard Hausa. I ultimately

conclude that Nima Hausa's linguistic features are not mere simplifications as contact language

frameworks might dictate, but rather serve as accessible adaptations that invite a wide

community of learners. This linguistic "on-ramp" serves as a parallel for Zongo life in general,

where value systems of solidarity and adaptability prevail in order to ensure the survival and

longevity of the community.

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Introduction

My linguistic anthropological research explores how residents of Nima, a Muslim immigrant community in Accra, Ghana, successfully preserve their language and way of life despite social ostracism and institutional neglect. Residents of Nima build a formidable defense against those who dismiss their ways of life through daily gestures of solidarity and inclusivity within their ever-growing and rapidly diversifying neighborhood. I argue that the local variety of Hausa language, which I refer to as "Nima Hausa" throughout, serves as a linguistic bridge to newcomers because it is continuously adapted to suit the diversity of people who use it. By weaving in features from other local languages and altering language structure to be more accessible, Nima Hausa thrives in the face of disregard and even disdain from others in the city.

In present-day Accra, a bustling urban center with over 2 million residents, Akan Twi and Ga predominate as languages spoken by the majority Christian population (Dakubu 2009:19). However, within Nima, Hausa prevails as a lingua franca amongst the community's majority Muslim immigrant population of approximately 80,000. Immigrant communities such as Nima are popularly referred to as *Zongos,* derived from the Hausa word for "traveler's camp" (Schildkrout 1978: 67). Zongos can be found across West Africa and are the result of centuries of trans-Saharan trade, often dominated by Muslim Hausa people from regions around present-day northern Nigeria and southern Niger (Adamu 1978). Where Hausa traders went, their religious and linguistic practices followed. Nowadays, approximately 63 million people use Hausa as a first or second language. In West African cities today, Islamic practice and Hausa language varieties persist, most readily apparent in these Zongo communities.

Muslim Hausa traveler settlements originated in Accra as voluntarily inhabited spaces in which traders could feel at home with fellow travelers from neighboring northern regions.

However, following mid-19th century British colonial occupation of regions comprising present-day Ghana, these areas were soon co-opted as forcibly segregated spaces by British colonials intent on controlling the settlement patterns and movements of northern Muslim immigrants (Adamu 1978:16; Williamson 2018:24). Williamson (2018:24) describes Zongos as spaces of "*colonial religious invention*" in which the nomenclature of *Zongo* "was cunningly retrofitted by the British as a ploy to culturally and spatially segregate Muslim-Northerners." However, following Ghanaian independence in 1957 and into the present, Zongo communities have outgrown this colonially imposed and exclusionary model. Within Nima, there exists a sense of inclusivity and belonging which allows immigrants, both Muslim and non-Muslim, the ability to become a part of the community without experiencing pressure to assimilate or erase their heritage.

A possible explanation for this sense of inclusion is the widespread practice of Islam and deeply held convictions of Islamic hospitality, even extended to non-Muslims. Siddiqui (2015:10) explains that "Islam holds hospitality as a virtue that lies at the very basis of the Islamic ethical system." Host and guest are said to exist in a triadic relationship which bring both closer to Allah. In addition to Islamic values, I argue that one of the major ways in which Nima achieves solidarity across difference is through daily interactions using Nima Hausa as the primary mode of communication. To the outside observer, Nima may appear to be an undesirable place to live. Skeptics who live in other parts of Accra describe it as crowded, loud, and disorganized. Many stereotypes exist about Nima, including reductionist perceptions of poverty, violence, and criminal activity. Residents of Nima, however, actively reject the way others paint them. For those who live there, Nima is a community of friendly neighbors who look out for each other and welcome all, regardless of religion, language, or cultural background (Owusu et

al. 2008:188). Presently, Accra's Zongos are becoming increasingly pluralistic as immigrants arrive from across Ghana and West Africa seeking opportunity in these rapidly urbanizing locales. Nima is the largest of Accra's Zongos and has become a site of incredible linguistic diversity. Yet while other languages, such as Akan Twi and Ga, are dominant ways of speaking outside Nima, Hausa has become the preferred target language within its boundaries (Dakubu 1997). Especially noteworthy is the fact that Hausa is spoken in Nima not only by those whose families arrived in Ghana many generations ago, but by new immigrants who do not have a family history of speaking Hausa in their places of origin.

In prevailing models of language shift based on the US experience, immigrant languages typically cede to dominant speech varieties within one or two generations (Portes and Hao 1998). However, Nima provides an alternative model: immigrants who settle in Zongos as well as Ghanaian-born Zongo residents take up speaking Hausa over other local Ghanaian languages. My research investigates this observed pattern and examines how Nima community members nurture the growth and adaptation of Hausa linguistic practice in conditions that current studies of language shift might dictate as adverse to such resiliency.

Relevant Literature and Original Contributions

As I began conceiving of this project, I found equally relevant theoretical positions in linguistic anthropology as well as spatial studies and human geography. While language is likely in the foreground of most ethnographic vignettes and theoretical contributions I offer in this dissertation, theory of space and place as well as human geography have contributed in essential ways to how I was able to understand the unifying colonial value systems that tie together static conceptions of language and space. In examining these different literatures together, I have

gained a more intimate understanding of just how fundamentally these ill-conceived colonial values have shaped modern notions of language, culture, and space. In the sections that follow, I invoke authors and thinkers who examine language and space instead as dynamic and fluid. Situating these bodies of scholarship in African studies had allowed me to examine the ways in which such colonially-derived ideas about language, space, and self still permeate popular imaginations and how residents of urban communities like Nima in present day Africa are undermining and reimagining these categories.

My understanding of these ideas has benefited from engaging with scholarship on African urbanism. Mabogunje (1994: 22-23) for one, examines the "urban problematique" in present day African cities which "revolves around the issue of who shapes the city, in what image, by what means and against what resistance." To gain a richer understanding of how these present processes emerged, I draw from historians of West African migration and trade who trace past power dynamics and the ways in which religious and linguistic practices came to the fore in emerging commercial centers centuries ago (Adamu 1978; Pellow 1991; Parker 2000). More recent literature examines present dynamics of how tensions of ownership and belonging are realized across colonial and "post"-colonial urban spaces (Owusu et al 2008; Agyei-Mensah and Owusu 2012; Williamson 2018). While these scholars have investigated West African Zongos from predominantly historical angles and large-scale survey, my research engages Zongo life presently from an ethnographic and linguistic perspective that sharpens the focus to ongoing daily practices that inform these histories and observed ideological and linguistic trends.

Recent linguistic anthropological scholarship has examined the ways in which ideas about and studies of language have been unequivocally shaped by Eurocentric ideologies, rendering dynamic linguistic practices static, ossified objects (Gal and Irvine 1995; Bauman and

Briggs 2000; Foley 2005; Makoni and Pennycook 2005; Irvine 2008; Davis 2017). Foley (2008:157) in particular articulates the dangers of purism ideology based on what he calls the "Herderian equation." German romantic philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder argued for "an essential correlation between the language of a community and their mind or spirit (German *Geist*)" (157). This ideology was part of a larger movement toward German nationalism during the 18th and 19th centuries, in which people who were culturally German and spoke German language sought to combine their separate kingdoms into a single nation-state. This movement in turn solidified the notion that a given language and culture must "belong" to a particular nation, establishing an isomorphic relationship where one cannot legitimately exist without the other two.

I use these decolonizing frames and critiques to inform my engagements with the ways in which alternative ideologies of language have shaped linguistic resiliency of Hausa in a setting outside of the Nigerian Hausa homeland. I also draw significantly from literatures of African multilingualism and language shift, which signal a distinct departure from patterns of language shift in other parts of the world, including the United States in which minoritized immigrant languages typically fall out of use (Portes and Hao 1998). Africanist sociolinguists complicate this idea by discussing alternative models of language shift and maintenance in African contexts (Bodomo et al 2009; Dakubu 2009; Igboanusi 2009). They consider the complexities and power relationships involved in language choice when speakers are faced with lingering colonial languages, lingua francas, and indigenous languages. Accra's Zongos present an ideal locale for such emerging theory about language shift in African settings because of their draw to new immigrants. The resulting pluralism from this increased urbanization and mobility provides worthwhile contexts for investigating linguistic practice and tactics for language maintenance.

Finally, I engage with literatures on space and place, which examine spaces not as products or things, but rather as socially produced phenomena (de Certeau 1984; Lefebvre 1991). Spaces can be transformed into places when they are imbued with meaning through sensorial experience, emotional and physical engagements, and memory (Altman and Low 1992; Basso and Feld 1996). I build on the ideas of these authors and investigate how linguistic practice in particular contributes to ideas about place-making as well as the reciprocal relationship place and language have in co-creating each other in Nima. Scholarship in human geography echoes these sentiments and explores how we know what we know about particular places through stories, stereotypes, and representations (Valentine 1999; Shurmer-Smith 2002). Human geography draws cross-disciplinarily on scholars such as Said (1978) and Anderson (1983), who have shaped my thinking about how European imaginaries and nation-building have fundamentally informed the ways in which places are represented and thus made real. My research seeks to investigate the ways in which these ideas about space, place, and representation are socially produced in Accra's Zongos as well as language's role in these formations.

Additional Theoretical Frameworks

In order to begin to address the question of why people learn Hausa in Accra and how such a vibrant speaker community has sustained itself for decades, we first need to explore the sociolinguistic and historical dynamics of the sites in which these people use language. First we can consider Mufwene's (2002) insights on the ways in which different types of colonization result in predictable linguistic vitality outcomes. He argues that the type of colonization that communities experience(d), bears on the likelihood of local language survival. He differentiates between settler colonies, in which settlers arrive with an intent to destroy existing communities

in order to take land and resources for themselves, and exploitation colonies, in which colonial invaders arrived, violently extracted resources, and enslaved human beings. Mufwene (2002:380) explains that, "In Africa and Asia, where language endangerment is less severe, Europeans developed exploitation colonies, in contrast with their settlement colonies in the Americas and Australia, where indigenous languages are the most endangered." He argues that in exploitative colonies, like places in Africa and Asia, European languages never entered the "vernacular" level as they did in places like North American and Australia. In other words, because long term habitation was never the goal, colonial languages were rarely imposed as a replacement for local languages and people continued to use their own languages in many exploitation colonies. In these cases, local lingua francas like Hausa served as a bridge between colonizers and local communities. As a result, many African communities impacted by colonialism are still extremely multilingual and users command colonially imposed languages, regional lingua francas, as well as their home languages.

Blommaert (2010) calls this plurilinguistic phenomena "super-diversity," which addresses migration and immigration from a globalization perspective. He explains that "new migrants typically settle in older immigrant neighborhoods, which thus develop into layered immigrant space." These spaces lend themselves to "extreme linguistic diversity" which he notes "generates complex multilingual repertoires in which often several (fragments of) 'migrant' languages and lingua francas are combined" (7). Blommaert (2010: 23) also introduces the concept of "truncated multilingualism" in which language users have "partially and unevenly developed resources" and incorporate bits of knowledge from their various linguistic repertoires. Yet in his attempts to break away from viewing languages as discrete and bounded, he seems to reify this very idea. In other words, how could we have pieces of something without a whole? Instead, I

argue that language use in Nima demonstrates that the pieces Blommaert identifies are not just pieces from other codes, they *are* the codes. And while surely globalization has sped up the frequency and quantity of exchange of linguistic practices, super-diversity appears to be crafted from a Euro-centric perspective in which multilingualism and polyglotism are novel or only now just emerging at these rates and scales.

In Dakubu's (1997:40) sociolinguistic survey research of Accra decades ago, she explains that, "One of the most difficult problems in multilingual dynamics concerns the discreteness of the languages in the system. When can we say that a language being used by one or more groups of people in different situations is or is not the same language?" She goes on to explain that even if we do have linguistic analyses that work to formalize boundaries around particular languages, it is in fact more a matter of "cumulative perceptions of difference (and their assignment to social differences)" that dictate salient boundaries for language users (41).

Di Carlo and Good provide a different perspective and note that, "Work on multilingualism in Africa indicates that the main concern is not merely about whether language and culture are closely linked, but rather the sheer variety of ways that they can be connected to each other" (256). Mufwene succeeds in relativizing and reframing many concepts easily taken for granted, including "indigenous," "multilingualism," and "colonialism." He is careful to dissect each of these and more and concludes that we should discuss these as local phenomena: "every evolution is local" (220). Mufwene argues that we should be thinking about generic phenomena as multiple: *multilingualisms* instead of multilingualism, for example. Di Carlo and Good run with this concept and examine the ways in which Mufwene's reframing of vitality instead of endangerment can lead us to not only "be aware of factors that cause speakers to stop using particular languages but also to have a clear understanding of what factors are known to

promote their continued use" (257). In other words, what makes people more inclined to keep using languages in situations that current theories of resiliency predict to be detrimental?

Mufwene's and Di Carlo and Good's arguments for vitality based on differing realms of use (i.e. colonial, lingua franca, vernacular) can help us reframe our own assumptions of linguistic resiliency as they relate to matters of scale. For Mufwene, "languages are endangered when their vernacular domains are encroached on by another language" (216). Di Carlo and Good's emphasis on language as practiced relationality that can lead to security through multiple affiliations provides a way forward for us to understand the ways in which linguistic practices function at multiple scales and through multiple levels of reciprocity and solidarity.

In the following chapters, I aim to demonstrate how Nima residents use shared sets of codes that are intermeshed in ways that users negotiate with ease. Users of language in this community do not dwell on the ways in which their varied codes intermix, but rather embrace the array of linguistic features from variable origin points as a fact of life and a shared community-wide repertoire. Therefore, I engage with language in Nima in terms of language ecology in which the "interrelationships between speakers and their languages as situated in their full (contemporary and historical) context" (Grenoble 2011:30).

Because Nima Hausa does constitute a contact language of sorts, it is important to address the fact that such languages, like pidgins, creoles, and mixed languages can result in negative ideologies about not only the language(s), but also about the speakers themselves. In fact Alleyne (1994:8) notes that mixed languages and creoles are among "the most stigmatized of the world's languages." More often than not, these languages are rendered "degenerative" and discussed in juxtaposition to "fully-fledged" European languages that serve as comparatively "normal" (DeGraff 2005: 565). Trouillot (2002:191) speaks to a possible reason for why such

languages are represented this way, explaining that many "cultural patterns and practices emerged against the expectations and wishes of plantation owners and their European patrons. They were not meant to exist." In fact, the existence of such languages serves instead as a testament to the resiliency of human beings in the face of incomprehensible horrors.

Still, many linguists treat creole and pidgin languages as an exceptional class of languages, fundamentally different from others with genetic pathways that are clearer to trace. However, DeGraff (2005) argues that it is harmful to overstate how "different" pidgins and creoles are from other languages because it largely serves to further marginalize people who use them. He calls this ideology "creole exceptionalism" and defines it as a "set of beliefs, widespread among both linguists and nonlinguists, that Creole languages form an exceptional class on phylogenetic and/or typological grounds. It also has nonlinguistic (e.g., sociological) implications, such as the claim that Creole languages are a 'handicap' for their speakers, which has undermined the role that Creoles should play in the education and socioeconomic development of monolingual Creolophones" (2005: 533).

While I remain hesitant to categorize Nima Hausa any more specifically than "contact language" at this point, I am aware that it has been and will continue to be deemed "not real" or unworthy of study due to the nature of its linguistic structure. Throughout the dissertation, I aim to demonstrate that what is typically categorized as "simplification" or even "degeneration" in particularly unsavory descriptions of contact languages, are actually creative linguistic accommodations that reflect the overall ethos of solidarity and community in Nima.

Methodology and Data Analysis

This dissertation is the result of a variety of interdisciplinary methods that span anthropology, linguistics, and human geography. During my time in Ghana, I engaged in archival research, informal audio recorded interviews, participant observation, transects, and language documentation. I spent a significant amount of time at Ghana's National Archives in Accra, sifting through hundred year old letters, hand written receipts, and colonial maps, intent on piecing together a textual history of Zongo communities in Accra. I was able to get a deeper sense for the experiences of early Muslim immigrants to Accra at the turn of the 19th century. Hundreds of letters were written and exchanged between local Zongo chiefs and colonial administrators, documenting the tensions and power struggles that made up much of 20th century in Ghana. In order to supplement these accounts, I arranged interviews with the descendants of those Zongo chiefs. Representatives from a variety of culture groups generously gave their time and shared their family histories with me. With their consent, I was able to record and transcribe their accounts, which made up much of my first chapter.

In addition to formal interviews, I spent much of my time engaging in participant observation and just existing with people as they went about their days. In 1995, Clifford Geertz introduced the notion of "deep hanging out" in anthropological fieldwork. The more time I spent with friends, colleagues, and acquaintances in Nima, the more true this sentiment felt. While I was indeed "doing fieldwork," I regularly felt as though I was just hanging out: getting to know my neighbors and learning about their day to day lives. As well as extensive participant observation at Nima Market, where I was able to witness the lively landscape of the Zongo's commercial hub, I also spent a lot of my time shadowing youth programming and outreach events run by local youth organizers. This took the form of participating in a women's professional development seminar series, learning how to code with a Zongo women's computer

programming initiative, and packaging hygiene products with community organizers to distribute to mothers and children in need across the city.

Another key method I used was transects, or participant walks through the city, with interlocutors (Chambers 1992). These physical engagements with the landscapes themselves helped me to track what ideas or narratives emerged at particular locations and how my transect partners engaged with people at different points during the journey. Sundberg (2014:39) argues that walking itself is a decolonizing act and that "attention to walking – the embodied and emplaced movements involved in producing worlds – may help to foster recognition of the multiplicity of knowledge systems." This practice of traversing the community I lived in with my neighbors and friends became an essential part of my research practice. It also became an important way for me to notice how and when dynamics changed from neighborhood to neighborhood. I began to notice things like who was speaking what languages where and how people along the route treated my transect companion depending upon which neighborhood we passed through. The information I gathered during participant observation and transects became the foundation of my second chapter, which discusses local language ideologies and the solidarity practices of Zongo lifeways.

Participant observation and transects were also essential to my language documentation process, which I began somewhat inadvertently. I had arrived in Nima with the objective of learning the local Hausa variety, but not meticulously documenting it. As I learned Nima Hausa, and subsequently unlearned the formal Standard Hausa I had learned in college, I took copious hand-written notes in little notebooks to help myself remember certain turns of phrase, verb forms, plural noun constructions, and the like. Over time, I began to realize just how different Nima Hausa was from the Hausa I had learned years ago at Michigan State University as an

undergraduate. This sparked the idea to create a working dictionary where I documented the words, grammar, and sayings I was learning in Nima Hausa and compared them to existing Ghanaian Hausa and Standard Hausa documentation (Newman 2000; Sadat 2016). This documentation process was key to my eventual conclusions about Nima Hausa's virtues as an emerging contact language that was especially accessible to learners like me.

Positioning The Researcher: Being White in Accra

West Africa is frequently portrayed as a non-racialized space, but people's daily interactions are heavily informed by racial politics and global White Supremacy (Mills 1998). Jemima Pierre's 2013 book *The Predicament of Blackness: Postcolonial Ghana and the Politics of Race*, identifies these truths in Ghana specifically and illuminates the ongoing legacy of valorizing and prioritizing whiteness even in predominantly Black spaces. Pierre's book was essential to my research preparation because it led me to confront the ways in which my whiteness was both a major reason why I was able to engage in these Black spaces at all and also a complicating factor in if and how I was able to ethically engage in anthropological research in an African space as a white American. Pierre (2013: 72) writes that "though the White population in Ghana is mostly transient, and White positionality is hardly rigid, Whiteness has retained its undisputed, if contested, power of position."

While I did what I could to mitigate these racialized power inequalities, there was no denying that a large part of my success during fieldwork was a direct result of my whiteness and status as an American. The access I had to certain people in power and places of prestige, like the US Embassy, afforded me a level of security and access to resources that most of my friends and

colleagues did not have. Engaging with these dynamics every day was a practice in discomfort and I continue to consider how my presence in a marginalized African community like Nima remains ethically complex and muddy. While I paid extremely careful attention to how I treated my Ghanaian friends and colleagues, compensating them for their time and energy in the ways they requested and sharing the resources I had at my disposal, the enduring asymmetry remains an important piece of the ethnographic puzzle that informs the interactions and observations described throughout this project.

Chapter Overview

In the first chapter, I draw from interviews, oral histories, and archival documents to present a history of Hausa people in Ghana over previous centuries. When Hausa speaking migrants arrived in Accra in larger numbers during the early 20th century, Hausa identity was quite fluid and not necessarily tied to descent or ancestry. While "being Hausa" often indexed one's affiliation to the Hausa homeland and ability to use the language, it almost always indicated one's close attachment to Islam. Based on oral histories and letters from the early 20th century, I demonstrate how Hausa leaders portrayed themselves as non-indigenous residents of Accra to British administrators. This "outsider" angle helped leaders of immigrant groups argue for exemptions from various colonial restrictions because of their non-native status.

However, when Ghana gained independence in 1957, nationalistic values emerged in full force and left the ancestors of immigrants from parts outside of Ghana, or the previous Gold Coast Colony, labeled as "Other." In the second chapter, I turn toward present-day Nima and discuss the ways in which Hausa speaking residents orient themselves as Ghanaian, not as foreigners like their ancestors had done. Because Nima is a place where many people speak

Hausa, it is imagined by non-Zongo residents as being "outside" of the Ghanaian national space. In Accra, Nima residents experience stigmatization and are often considered outsiders or foreigners in their own homes. Perhaps because of this association with foreignness, Nima and many Zongos like it suffer from institutional neglect and lack of representation. Nima's water supply, electrical grid, and sanitation infrastructures are unreliable, amplified by negligence from government institutions like banks and the national electric company. Hausa language, for instance, is not taught in Accra schools because it is not considered a Ghanaian language. While it is used informally quite ubiquitously, it is never the "official" language.

I also examine an ideological reversal within Nima, in which Zongo residents feel a sense of safety, solidarity, and responsibility to their neighbors, which allow them to support each other in adverse conditions perpetuated by the state. To do this, I share experiences from community organizers and youth activists who strive to re-imagine Nima's potential and role in Ghana's future. Along with this institutional neglect and resulting intense neighborhood solidarity, comes an unexpected benefit for Zongo residents. Hausa language has been relatively shielded from colonial values of language purism often ascribed to languages promoted to "official" or "national" status. Therefore, Nima Hausa thrives on its own terms, unfettered by national ideologies of "correct" language use. Especially facilitated by an absence of purism is the fact that Nima Hausa speakers are able to offer Hausa to newcomers and learners at an accessible and less daunting threshold.

In the third chapter, I address this linguistic accommodation and examine the ways in which Nima residents create their own variety of Hausa by combining grammatical structures and lexical forms from other languages within the community's linguistic ecology. Based on months of intensive participant observation and semi-structured interviews, as well as

comparative information from previous grammatical accounts of different Hausa varieties across

Nigeria and Ghana, I further argue that speakers of this emerging Hausa variety not only draw

influence from other local languages in Accra, but also do a considerable amount of linguistic

innovation themselves. Ultimately, this dissertation works toward Makoni and Pennycook's

(2005) notion of language "disinvention," which urges critical reexamination and deconstruction

of the colonial presupposition that languages are static, bounded, and isomorphically tied to one

people and one territory. In Nima, the local Hausa variety is one of fluidity and adaptability,

which changes in response to the array of people who use it and the hugely diverse language

ecology in which it thrives.

 The full project presented below reached a turning point after I read Makoni &

Pennycook's 2005 article "Disinventing and (Re)Constituting Languages." Their proposal that

most of what we know about language has been fundamentally framed by legacies of colonialism

encouraged me to reconsider how people were using language in Nima and what that would

entail from a framework of language disinvention and reconstitution. It was in the last paragraph

of their piece that I realized I was uniquely positioned to examine the exact questions they left

with the reader.

> "By looking at a wide range of contexts and modes of understanding language, we are arguing for the need to pose fundamental questions for linguists, sociolinguists and applied linguists: If a dominant understanding of language in many parts of the world is a result of the mapping of European colonial and neocolonial constructs onto diverse contexts, how might languages start to look if an alternative conception were mapped back onto the centre from the periphery? For example, what would English look like if we were to analyze it using metadiscursive regimes from languages such as Hausa, or if other local perspectives were adopted? What are the political consequences when notions about language in concepts such language in concepts such as language rights, mother tongues, and bilingual education are disinvented?" (2005: 152-153)

With this in mind, I aim to consider exactly how a "dominant understanding of language in many parts of the world is a result of the mapping of European colonial and neocolonial constructs onto diverse contexts." I have also worked to demonstrate "how might languages start to look if an alternative conception were mapped back onto the centre from the periphery." I have had the privilege to entertain these questions and others over the past eight years and eagerly share my findings in the pages to follow.

Chapter 1: What Does It Mean to Be Hausa in Ghana?

Who Counts as Ghanaian?

Since both achieved nationhood, Ghana and Nigeria have a storied history of xenophobia and deportation of each other's citizens. About 12 years after Ghana gained independence from Britain through Dr. Kwame Nkrumah's leadership, newly elected prime minister Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia began instituting strict immigration policies and limitations on the activities of Nigerians living in Ghana. Due to pressures from an economic crisis, Busia began requiring all "aliens" in Ghana to carry their permits at all times and banning them from engaging in trade (Olaniyi 2008:13). The final blow came in the form of the Aliens Compliance Order (also known as the Quit Order) on November 18th, 1969, which stated that undocumented immigrants had twelve days to leave the country in order to avoid forced deportation.

Olaniyi (2008:13) explains that, "the deportation order shows how immigrants were criminalised in the process of socio-economic crisis, nation-building and emerging proto-nationalism." He argues that xenophobia acted as a way for the newly formed Ghanaian government to assert its independence and reify its nationhood. By asserting who did and did not belong, Busia set a precedent for which "kinds" of people were legitimate Ghanaians and which were to be seen as falling outside the national imaginary. Adjepong (2009:235) explains that this legislation "made people come to regard themselves as either a national or an immigrant," a binary that had not before existed so rigidly. He goes on to say that pre-colonially, migration and movement across the African continent was "never regarded as international; nor were any travel documents required for those movements. The terms 'immigrant' and 'emigrant,' indeed, did not exist in pre-colonial African philosophy, and, thus, do not have their exact equivalence in most

African languages" (2009:37). In stark contrast to Nkrumah's pan-Africanist ideologies that "made people think of themselves as Africans," Busia's anti-immigrant ideology of "Ghanaians" first suddenly reshuffled the dynamics and hierarchies of people living in Ghana.

During newly imposed immigration restrictions, many undocumented immigrants sought refuge in Zongo communities, like Accra's Nima community and neighboring New Town (also often called Lagos Town due to its many Nigerian inhabitants). These Zongos remained relatively reliable places to disappear into the fray of activity and diversity of people, allowing undocumented immigrants and non-naturalized longtime residents of Ghana to avoid deportation and continue to conduct commercial business relatively covertly.

Peil (1974:372) explains that the xenophobic attitudes conveyed by the Busia regime were in fact not widely shared in many parts of Ghana. She notes that Nigerians who had been pressured to leave because of the compliance order spoke favorably of their time in Ghana and remembered their Ghanaian neighbors fondly. She even writes that "many immigrants, especially long-term residents, were able to use this tolerance and their similarity to Ghanaians to weather the storm. Providing they had acquired a good knowledge of one of the local languages, they merely passed as Ghanaians, changing into more Ghanaian clothing and/or moving to an area where they were unknown" (1974:372). Many foreign nationals were protected by their employers, business partners, and neighbors, often able to blend in with Ghanaian migrants and naturalized citizens living in Zongos.

These complicated attitudes toward immigrants endure to this day and even Ghanaian citizens with "foreign" ancestry face challenges to their legitimacy. Years ago, I was perusing the popular Ghanaian news portal Ghana Web, which regularly publishes online content regarding current events across the country. I recall coming across the headline that read "300 Year Stay In

Ghana Does Not Make You A Ghanaian," which went on to detail how the Ghana Immigration

Service (GIS) denied Kumasi resident Malam Shaibu a passport because he listed "Hausa" as his

native tribe. The GIS is said to have stated that "there is nothing called Hausa tribe in Ghana and

therefore anybody who has his/her ethnic origin outside Ghana is not a Ghanaian" (Zakari 2012).

Kumasi's Zongo chief reportedly addressed the passport office, demanding an explanation for

their denial despite the passport applicant's possession of a Ghanaian birth certificate and voter

ID. The Zongo chief expressed his concern as to the future categorization of Hausa descended

people in Ghana and whether or not their right to Ghanaian citizenship would be respected in the

future.

This anecdote is indicative of larger trends and dynamics across much of Ghana, in which

people who were born and raised in the country are seen as perpetually "foreign" or "Other,"

falling outside of an emerging idealized Ghanaian nationalism. Using political scientist Benedict

Anderson's (1983) frame of the "imagined community," we can examine the nation-state as a

socially constructed community in which people perceive themselves as part of a particular

group based on shared citizenship to the same place. For Ghanaians, what exactly engenders

belonging to their national imaginary and how do certain identities threaten this ideal

conceptualization?

The Zongo, which will become our primary locus of observation, is conveniently

downplayed as part of Ghana's national imaginary because people who live in these communities

display qualities and practices that have historically been seen as a threat to cultural

homogeneity, and therefore, the nation itself. Ghana's Zongo communities are known to be

demographically Muslim and Hausa-speaking, and many claim origins or heritage outside of

Ghana's present-day borders. A vast majority of Ghanaians identify as Christian and many speak

either one of the Akan languages, Ewe, or Ga, claiming indigenous status on the lands of the present-day nation-state.

I therefore argue in this chapter that the Zongo exists as a transposition of Hausaland, the Hausa homeland, which is currently bisected by the colonial borders of Niger and Nigeria. The ideologies of foreignness linger around people who claim Hausa origin or use the Hausa language primarily, who are still flagged as being outsiders in their own communities by those who live outside the Zongo. We can understand this further using Gal and Irvine's (2000:37) concept of fractal recursivity, which "involves the projection of an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, onto some other level." In other words, the binary of the Hausa-speaking, Muslim foreigner and the Akan speaking, Christian Ghanaian is further grafted on to spatial belonging. These associations dissuade the imagination from recognizing Hausa-speaking, Muslim people as citizens of Ghana because of their lengthy association with foreignness and antithetical traits to the "ideal" Ghanaian citizen.

Yet while this transposition of Hausaland onto Zongo communities promotes some harmful stereotypes about Hausa identity, it also in turn promotes the endurance of Hausa language. An unexpected outcome arises because of Hausa's erasure and exclusion from the Ghanaian national imaginary. Because speakers do not experience the ideals of purism tied to upholding nationalism, they are therefore more likely to freely use the language and shape it to fit their needs. This also helps explain why the Zongo, despite its connotations of Otherness, helps to foster Hausa language use. Use of Hausa goes largely unmonitored at institutional levels and because it is not frequently taught in schools or used to conduct legislative or judicial matters at the national level, rigid linguistic values and enforcement of standardization are less apparent. This in turn means that learners of the language also do not experience the level of pressure that

language purism exerts on speakers and learners because it invites and values, effort, imperfection and adaptation.

Language policy in Ghana has remained a matter of constant debate since 1957 when English was declared the official language following independence. Since then, local languages have been implemented as the primary mode of instruction, then shifted back to English, and back again. Yet because of its perception as "non-Ghanaian," Hausa language is rarely included in national language policy consideration and has not been included as a "local" language worthy of implementation in Ghanaian schools. In 2006, the National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP) was implemented to encourage a bilingual approach and encourage learning and literacy in both English and a local Ghanaian language (Leherr 2009).

However, only eleven options were included as local languages of choice: Asante (Ashanti) Twi, Akuapim (Akwapim) Twi, and Fante (Mfantse), Ewe, Ga, Dangme, Dagbane, Nzema, Dagaare, Gonja, and Kasem. Anyidoho (2018) points out that this limited selection of instructional languages "implies that many children are not receiving content knowledge and literacy in their first languages." A few outcomes emerge from this situation. First, Hausa language's exclusion permits speakers to use it without the parameters of institutional standards. Second, local Ghanaian languages become subjected to standardization and formalization in classrooms and educational materials. Third, many students are still not benefiting from this program since it only encompasses a fraction of the country's languages.

Untangling Colonial Categories

The enduring Otherness of Hausa identifiers in Ghana also helps us meditate on the relationship of culture and language to territory. In order to understand the complex relationship

between these three concepts, we can turn to Foley's (2008:157) discussion of German

nationalism, which championed linguistic and cultural purity in crafting a German nation. Foley

(2009:158) deems this ideological isomorphism between one language, one culture, and one

nation, the "Herderian equation" after German Romantic philosopher Herder, "who argued for an

essential correlation between the language of a community and their mind or spirit (German

Geist)." These rigid ideas taken up by German nationalists in the 18th and 19th centuries have

even deeper origins in the colonial project, which reduced variable linguistic and cultural

practices and relationships with the land into discrete objects that were assumed to coincide.

Irvine (2008:338) details the ways in which colonial powers fundamentally reorganized

African ways of life to accord with local European categories for the purposes of subjugation and

management through organization on their terms. She discusses how linguistic, spatial, and

cultural practices in African communities were interpreted through European colonial logics as

static, bounded, and coinciding entities. Makoni (2011) corroborates Irvine's argument and

explains that pre-colonially, ideas of isolated "languages" did not exist and were solidly a

colonial invention. Irvine (2008:337) further illustrates an ethnolinguistic conflation formed out

of these ideological assumptions, presupposing that "language was the index of ethnic

distinctiveness." To illustrate this, she uses the example of Igbo language, which colonial

linguists identified in a colony of freed, formerly enslaved, people in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

When linguists traveled to Nigeria to locate the Igbo "homeland" that they expected, they were

baffled that there was no territorial home and that the Igbo spoken there was unintelligible with

the Freetown variety. Irvine (2008:337) explains that Koelle, a missionary linguist writing in

1854, "assumed, evidently, that if these populations within Nigeria had no name to refer to their

whole 'nation,' there must nevertheless have been such a name in the past. They just lost it."

This assumption of ethnolinguistic unity as well as membership to a territorially distinct nation is made further implausible by recent findings that "Igbo" most likely just meant "upland" and related in no way to some previously unified group.

Quayson (2014) details this process amongst Ga communities in present day Accra in his longitudinal examination of Osu, a coastal Ga neighborhood in the city. He echoes Irvine's ideas about how African communities were subject to re-categorization that suited the internal logics of European colonizers. He draws on Mamdani's (2012) discussion of race and ethnicity to illuminate how Ga people became "ethnicized" in the colonial imaginary. In colonial Africa, non-native people were often labeled as "races," such as the Hausa communities in Accra, while native people were seen as "tribes" with indigenous origin. Quayson (2014:53) quotes Mamdani (2012.46-47) to say, "When the state officially distinguished non indigenous races from indigenous tribes, it paid heed to one single characteristic, origin, and totally disregarded subsequent developments, including, residence. By obscuring an entire history of migrations, the state portrayed the native as the product of geography rather than history."

In more recent literature about Hausa communities, the term Hausa is regularly subsumed within the category of "ethnicity," yet as we will see in the following pages, such a label is often retroactively imposed on historical re-imaginings. As noted above, ethnicity does not quite encompass the wide net of associations that make up Hausa identity. However, during many eras of colonial occupation in West Africa, the imposition and rigid enforcement of assumed ethnic groups based on Eurocentric categories of meaning on African communities was common practice. While this reductive boundedness was not only ill-fitting, but harmful to many groups, Hausa-speaking people attempted to use this ideology to their advantage during colonial occupation of modern day Nigeria and Ghana as we will see in the following pages. Irvine

(2008:336) argues that African linguistic practices became objects of the colonial agenda through processes of standardization and homogenization "in the interest of efficiency or of political unification." Despite these artificial constructions and impositions on local communities, she explains that these engineered categories ended up have lasting effects and resulted in vestigial ethnolinguistic "self-consciousness" among many present day communities.

In an effort to assert control over African populations, colonial powers first had to organize them into categories that for the colonizers were salient and accessible, but to the African people themselves were violently reductionist and often contrary to reality. Therefore, in the following historically chronological accounts, it remains important to watch for the tendency of authors to impose colonially fabricated categories such as ethnicity on African communities. With a critical eye toward the differences between self-identification and identification by others, we can begin to understand the ways in which the identifier "Hausa" has come to inhabit a panoply of meanings both historically and presently. I revisit this categorical wrinkle in chapter 2 to discuss the ways in which these associations have become intertwined with specific language ideologies of Hausa users in Nima, Accra.

Hausa Language: A Snapshot

Hausa language varieties are some of the most widely spoken on the African continent. Historically employed as a commercial lingua franca across West Africa, Hausa has handily adapted to dynamics of the present and plays a key role in rapidly urbanizing locations across the same regions where its trade routes stretched centuries before. In 2000, Newman attested to estimates in L1 speaker populations of 35 million, with an additional L2 speaker population of 15 million. Jaggar provides an updated estimate from 2014 with an approximation of 40 million

L1 speakers. A member of the Afro-Asiatic phylum, Hausa belongs to the Chadic family and within that, the West Chadic A group alongside the far less widely spoken languages Gwandara, Bole, Angas and others (Jagger 2014: 35). Hausa varieties have their roots in the Hausa homeland in northern Nigeria and southern Niger, but have far exceeded their original speaker base as we will see in the following pages. Hausa is not only widely spoken, but also widely studied, resulting in an immense wealth of historical and linguistic resources that provide a robust comparative basis for my own original research in Accra's Hausa speaking communities.

In hopes of identifying a sociohistorical perspective of what it means to use Hausa language, this chapter examines both past and present formulations of Hausa identity and its variable associations. From the early formation of the Hausa states to current use in Accra's Zongo communities, acceptance under the Hausa umbrella did not depend on ethnic origin or lineage, but more so on an association with Islam as well as an ability to speak the language. As Ochonu (2008:99) argues "The cosmopolitan nature of Islam in West Africa meant that *being* Hausa became more and more about Islamic piety and an ability to speak the language than about any originary affinity with *Kasar Hausa* or Hausa ethnic ancestry." Haour and Rossi (2015:4) similarly explain that, "This internal heterogeneity well attested through history, has led to descriptions of Hausaness as a phenomenon looser than ethnicity." Being and becoming Hausa then is a fluid, emergent process, not a static or essential quality. In hopes, of assessing how and why the language in its variable manifestations has acquired its present status as a lingua franca among diaspora communities in Accra, Ghana and across West Africa, I discuss the origin of the Hausa states and Fulani empire and the ideological legacies they left behind.

What Does it mean to "be" Hausa?

In order to understand where Hausa language and culture fits into the world of Nima, we can start with one of the oldest tales still told as the origin of Hausaland. The legend of Bayajidda details the travels of the legendary progenitor of the modern day Hausa states that make up Hausaland. Many versions of this tale exist, but *The Hausa Chronicle*, also known as *The Daura Chronicle* or the *Bayajidda Legend*, captures this oral history in written form (Haour and Rossi 2014:2). The most readily available version is a 1910 translation from Hausa *ajami* (Arabic script) into English by E.J. Arnett which was featured in the *Journal of the Royal African Society*. The myth details the arrival of Abu Yazidu (later renamed Bayajidda, meaning literally "He didn't understand [Hausa] before [coming]") who fled from Baghdad to the city of Daura, a small town which lies at the present-day northern border of Nigeria (Miles 1994: 45). Daura had incidentally been plagued by a snake living in the community's well. The townspeople were unable to use the well and were suffering from thirst. Bayajidda vowed to help and with a sword made by local blacksmiths, he cut off the snake's head.

After successfully restoring the well and slaking the community's thirst, he married the queen of Daura and together they had a son named Bawo. That son had seven children and each founded one of the *Hausa Bakwai*, or Hausa Seven, which are the original or "legitimate" Hausa states (Arnett 1910). These include Biram, Daura, Gobir, Kano, Katsina, Rano, and Zaria (Zazzau). The *Banza Bakwai*, or Bastard Seven, are considered the "illegitimate" neighboring non-Hausa states, originating from the children of Bayajidda's son with his mistress (Smith 1961). These include Zamfara, Kebbi, Yauri, Gwari, Nupe, Kororofa (Jukun), and Yoruba. The historicity of the Bayajidda legend is contested and Smith (1961:342) contends that the legend was clearly "a later construction." He explains that these mythic tales are "indications of a confused period of immigration, struggle and cultural change, the violence and duration of which

probably varied over time as well as place in accordance with differences of population structure" (342).

However, other scholars take it more seriously and as Lange (2012:38) argues, this legend is "probably the most important single source for Hausa history." Despite its mythic quality, Lange explains its merits as a reflection of historical migration patterns and formation of state societies (138). Additionally, the original *Hausa Chronicle* as well as others including the *Kano Chronicle*, provide extensive lists of previous rulers of various Hausa states reaching back more than a thousand years. While these now translated documents were most likely originally written down in the mid-1800s, they show an extensive shared knowledge and collective memory of a deeply rooted regional history. *The Kano Chronicle* lists Bagoda, son of Bawo, son of Bayajidda as the first ruler of Kano in 999 AD (Palmer 1908). It is worth noting that according to this tale, Bayajidda is the very first Hausa "stranger," an immigrant himself and the first in a long line of Hausa people identified as "foreigners" or "outsiders" to the places they would later call home. This association will be explored at length in the following pages, especially with how this identity as "Other" plays out in Nima, Accra.

Smith (1964:339) provides a rough sketch of what life might have been like for these early Hausa communities between the years of 1000AD-1500AD during what he calls the "Dark Ages of Hausaland." However, these communities were hundreds of years away from coalescing into the geographic and socio-political entity that these accounts retroactively name. In fact, most of the region at the beginning of the millennium was "sparsely populated bush" with a few village settlements (341). These communities included the aforementioned somewhat centralized chiefdoms of Daura and Kano, which became increasing mixtures of autochthonous people as well as immigrants from the Near East and North Africa. Smith characterizes the years prior to

1350 as ones of relative isolation for communities in the territory that eventually comprised

Hausaland, which allowed these emerging chiefdoms to slowly consolidate and centralize within

themselves. He explains that the empire of Mali and Mandingo (Mandinka) people were focused

on conquering neighboring groups to the north and west, avoiding these Hausa chiefdoms.

Similarly to the east, the Kanem empire was embroiled in its own internal conflicts and a few

hundred years later moved its center westward toward the Hausa chiefdoms to establish the

Bornu empire (p. 346). As Smith (1964:346) explains, "By the time their isolation was broken,

the *Hausa bakwai* had emerged as reasonably large and durable political aggregates."

It should be noted that the term "Hausa" has been applied to these emerging groups ex

post facto and as Orr (1908) explains, the term "Hausa" initially referred only to the language of

those who then identified as "Habe." Thus what are now commonly referred to as Hausa states

were historically Habe kingdoms, which were later centralized. These Habe kingdoms were

largely "pagan," practicing local religious traditions, but became slowly influenced by

neighboring Fulani who arrived from the west as early as 1452 (Smith 1964: 350). Fulani people

largely identified as Muslim and spoke varieties of Fula, a Niger Congo language of the Atlantic

group. During this time, lineage and clan were the primary modes of identification for Habe

people. Miles (1994:45) explains that clan organizations can be traced back to the legend of

Bayajidda which denote "seven separate Hausa nations or 'families,' distinguished by their

respective geographic origins." While these may have provided some point of origin for eventual

Hausa self-consciousness, descent and lineage became increasingly less important as populations

grew and such identifiers were replaced with indexes of common language, religion, and role in

long-distance trade. These modes of belonging and identifying also began to change with the

increasing influence of Islam (Salamone 2010:133). Greenberg (1947) argues that vestiges of

aboriginal clan organization among these groups could still be detected among "pagan" Hausa communities who experienced far less cultural and religious influence than their now Muslim Hausa neighbors.

1804 signals a shift in the history of these communities in northern Nigeria when Fulani leader Usman dan Fodio led a jihad against the local Hausa-speaking Habe populations. As Nwabara (1963:235) notes, dan Fodio "was convinced that the Muslim religion had fallen into utter degeneration as a result of moral depravity of the Hausa Emirs." Yet, dan Fodio did not begin with a full-scale immediate revolution, but "prepared the ground" with patient and persistent education of Fulani leaders and Hausa residents preaching the need for change and revitalization of stricter adherence to Islamic practice (234). As he gained more and more followers, his efforts succeeded in creating a widespread Fulani empire, the Sokoto Caliphate. Nwabara (1963:235) points out that this success was in part because many Hausa people from many of the Hausa states "joined in the war of liberation to demonstrate their utter dissatisfaction with the Hausa aristocratic administration."

However, this jihad is far more complicated than first meets the eye, because Fulani people had been slowly integrating themselves into the lives of Hausa people for centuries. As Nwabara (1963:232) explains, "By the 14th century, the Fulani chiefs, already versed in the art of 'stooping to conquer' had secured important administrative offices at Zaria and other states long before the Jihad." This notion of "stooping to conquer" helps explain why things remained on a grand scale unchanged following the jihad. As Orr (1908:281) observes of post-jihad Hausa states, "The whole machinery was adopted bag and baggage, lock, stock, and barrel, by Fulani rulers from the old Habe state. In short, the admirable system of government which we found in

Hausaland at the beginning of the present century was due not to the Fulanis, but was a legacy from the old Habe race."

In addition to adoption of the governmental structure, Fulani rulers also began using the Hausa language "to the entire exclusion of their own tongue" (Orr 1908: 282). As Osaji (1977:123) explains, "This success is not due to the internal features of the language such as phonology or grammar or vocabulary but rather to the interplay of social, political and military forces." While Osaji makes the case that ease of learning the language cannot be attributed to linguistic features of Hausa during this time, I later argue that current iterations of Ghanaian Hausa *are* indeed more acquisition-friendly. In Chapter 3, I discuss Nima Hausa in detail and illuminate both innovations and influences from neighboring languages, which result in altered lexical, morphological, phonological, and pragmatic patterns that promote acquisition.

Osaji observes the at first peculiar circumstance of a ruling class predominantly relying on the language of the conquered to conduct both daily life and governmental affairs. However, a few factors come together to explain the overall advantages of maintaining Hausa as the language of the Fulani empire. First, Fulani rulers realized the symbiotic potential for the Hausa language under their leadership. As the language spread, so too could their power over Hausa-speaking populations. Osaji (1977:123) explains that "the Fulani language could not have been successfully imposed on the numerically dominant Habe who were settled cultivators as well as renowned traders in a territory with a favorable geographical position for trade between the Rain Belt in the south and the Sahara in the north." Additionally, Hausa was already seen as "a subsidiary language of the Koran," which allowed for seamless practice of Islamic law by Fulani in a language already widely used to do so (123). Thus while Fulani people were becoming as Orr (1908) coins "Hausa-fied," they were ultimately still chiefs and rulers over the

Habe people. What unfolds is a complex picture of Fulani leadership, which widely embraced and employed the cultural and linguistic tenets of their subjects to their advantage.

The Fulani jihad effectively transformed once separate and autonomous Hausa-speaking Habe states into a "politico-linguistic unit" with centralized religious jurisdiction (Ochonu 2008: 98). The Sokoto Caliphate encompassed and surpassed the initial Habe states, but succeeded in unifying them into a relatively cohesive geographic area which came to be known as Hausaland soon after the jihad of 1804. As will be explored in the following sections, this unified whole was somewhat short-lived. Once British and French colonial governments began imposing indirect rule around 1906, the territory was bisected by these foreign powers, which created modern day divisions between Nigeria and Niger (Miles 1994: 92).

Following the jihad of 1804, however, Usman Dan Fodio divided ruling this increasingly vast empire between his brother Abdulahi and his son Bello. Ochonu (2008) credits Bello with the formalization of the term "Hausa" as the main terminological identifier of former decentralized Habe communities. This is evidenced in Bello's extensive personal history of his father and the jihad in his account *Infaku'l Maisuri*, originally written in Arabic and translated nearly one hundred years later by Arnett in 1922. This solidification also subsequently created an ideological link between the Hausa language and Islam as well as a number of other traits. As Ochonu (2008: 99) explains, "A plethora of cultural, attitudinal, and performative indicators sprung up to reinforce the linguistic and religious indicators of Hausa identity. It is this constellation of cultural, religious, economic, and political indices and significations that I call a Hausa-Caliphate imaginary." The particularly unique feature of this imaginary was its openness to assimilation and indexical fluidity. In Chapter 2, I explore the ways in which this "Hausa imaginary" translates to Accra and the variable associations which have both endured and

changed as speakers themselves relocate. Chapter 3 takes this comparison further and explores the flexibility and adaptability of the language itself, drawing parallels between both the fluidity and endurance of Hausa identity with Hausa language.

Haour and Rossi (2015:7) note that Hausa history "offers an example of a 'fluid' label for identification and self-identification, fitting well with current understandings of identity not as a static, fixed phenomenon but rather as a negotiated one." Ultimately, there were many ways and opportunities to belong to this large, heterogenous community, but Islamic religious practice, territory of origin in Hausaland, and use of Hausa language all became the most salient indicators of Hausa-ness. Shared worldviews under Islam, shared land in Hausaland, and shared linguistic practice all served to welcome people under the Hausa umbrella and allowed people to claim Hausa identity alongside cultural and linguistic ones. Adamu (1978:3) explains that people who lived in Hausaland were "accepted as Hausa," and that this did not impinge on "one's claim to membership of another ethnic group." Therefore, one can simultaneously inhabit different "ethnic" categories, while also enjoying the benefits of Hausa affiliation. Adamu offers the rationalization that "it would be almost impossible for one to dwell permanently in Hausaland and escape being imbued with Hausa cultural traits" (4). Therefore, even if one did not overtly claim exclusive Hausa identity, one would in a sense proliferate Hausa customs anyway.

While this category certainly seems available to a wide range of individuals, it appears as though there are upper limits to who might be accepted. For example, there is likely a racial limit to this inclusivity as white Europeans, such as British colonialists would find it difficult to claim Hausaness despite dwelling in the area or speaking the language. Because of Hausa's tight associations with Islam, we also might suspect that non-Muslims would be less likely to be identified as Hausa. While this may have been more true historically, we will see in the following

chapter that religious affiliation too becomes flexible and that many practitioners of Christianity live in Zongo communities and use Hausa language regularly.

Hausa on the Move

A critically important aspect of Habe life even before the Fulani jihad was mobility, including commercial trade and migration. As far back as the 14th century, Habe communities were experts at manufacturing mass quantities of goods to later sell at great distances to communities across the region. Adamu (1978) characterizes the territory of Hausaland prior to 1900 as the "workshop of West Africa," because of the immense output of textiles, leather goods, and metal products. While many communities in Hausaland were agriculturalists as well growing all manner of things including millet, corn, tobacco, yams, and more, they devoted their six month dry season to incredible outputs of manually mass produced items. Adamu explains that Habe industries were "geared to the export trade, in addition to production for home consumption," and included everything from weaving, dying, embroidery, farming, potmaking, blacksmithing, tanning, woodworking, and butchering (11).

During the 19th century following the Fulani jihad, the textile industry significantly expanded and Candotti (2014: 188-189) explains that it grew alongside "the spread of Islam and the rise of an urban culture mainly influenced by the beginning of a network linked to trans-Saharan trade and the establishment of Muslim merchants in Hausaland." She also argues that textiles were more than just a commodity and that production and trade of cloth helped in reifying identity as Hausa. Candotti explains that "in Hausaland, cloth had many functions; for centuries it was used for clothing, to transfer wealth, as a medium of exchange, as tribute, as an item in religious and burial rituals and as a symbol of differences in religious, economic,

political, ethnic, and social status" (187). This product had both immense symbolic as well as functional use and became a primary commodity in trade.

Such cloth appears in Bohannan's (1955) iconic work on modes of exchange among Tiv communities. In his work we catch a glimpse of the important and strategic role Hausa traders played in the lives of smaller non-Hausa groups who produced mostly small-scale agricultural products. Adamu (1978: 108) explains that, "The general avoidance by the Hausa traders of commodities which were produced locally for subsistence, and which therefore were ordinarily marketed by the local peoples, made the Hausa commercial efforts supplements to, rather than substitutes for, the efforts made by their hosts. The basis for commercial competition and rivalry between the migrant Hausa traders and the indigenous peoples was thus narrowed." Hausa traders then served as the peddlers of luxury items, such as cloth and leather, but also as middlemen to wider trade networks not easily reachable by less powerful communities. Bohannan (1955:68) explains that Tiv grain producers would "transport it to another market for sale either to another middleman or to the Hausa or Ibo lorry drivers who visit the larger markets to buy food for export to the over-populated areas of the Eastern Provinces or the new urban areas in Tivland."

While many Hausa migrants traveled outside of Hausaland for trade or employment opportunities elsewhere, Adamu (1978:15) is hesitant to label this a diaspora. As has been discussed above, Hausa-speaking people are characterized by their heterogeneous origins and "many of them took Hausa ethnicity only while away from their homes." This expands the previously noted idea that anyone dwelling in Hausaland could be considered Habe, because without geography to dictate such judgements, mobile traders could be indexed as Habe by the type and origin of the material goods they were selling. While only a small number actually

immigrated to other places permanently, many others traveled for purposes of *fatauci*, long distance trade as detailed above, and *yawon almajiranci*, or traveling Muslim students and preachers in search of work (15). In the following pages, I examine how many of these migrants ended up settling down outside of the Hausa homeland as well as the ways in which Hausa identity both endured and transformed in the tumultuous era of colonial rule in both Nigeria and Ghana.

The Colonial Project Comes to Hausaland

As has been previously noted by Irvine (2008), colonialism marked the imposition of identity categorizations that rarely coincided with the ways in which local people actually defined and aligned themselves. Additionally, the colonial era beginning toward the end of the 19th century signaled the bisecting of Hausa communities across the imposed border between current day Niger and Nigeria. Hausaland, once a relatively cohesive political entity under the Fulani empire, was divided between two very different regimes of French and British colonial rule. Miles (1994:91) describes Hausa people's experience of French rule as *mulkin zahi*, "a harsh, severe regime" versus experiences under British rule as *mulkin sauki*, "relatively light and unoppressive." While I think describing colonial occupation as "light and unoppressive" is not entirely commensurate with reality, I include this in hopes of demonstrating the ways in which different modes of colonization resulted in different later outcomes following independence for Nigeria and Niger.

At the end of the 19th century, Sir Frederick Lugard developed the British colonial policy of "indirect rule" and used the southern half of Hausaland as his pilot project. Miles characterizes this setup as the "optimal laboratory for their colonial experiment" and states that it remains a

"pristine" example of this type of colonial violence (92). Indirect rule meant that all current chiefs of the Hausa-Fulani emirates as well as their basic governmental structures remained intact, but under the auspices of the British colonial government. Their policies made attempts to adapt to local dynamics and gradually shift the systems of governance so as not to "upset Hausa society": a less overt, but equally insidious form of control (92). Contrarily, the French colonial government made it their goal to completely centralize rule over their piece of Hausaland, which meant that "a single structure, a single hierarchy, a single set of rules" were in place for the entirety of these diverse communities and populations (Miles 1994: 95). Unlike the British colonial modus operandi, the French colonial government demoted local chiefs and overtly stripped them of their autonomy and power.

However, these historical processes should not be understood as ones of passive acceptance on behalf of the local communities, but rather as a reshaping and renegotiating of themselves and their circumstances in face of a new powerful ruling class. Drawing on Irvine's earlier notion of ethnicity as constructed and negotiated in the face of colonial powers, Salamone (2010:54) similarly attests that "people reacted to the exigencies of the colonial situation through forming groups that protected their situations or that enabled them to seek a better position in the novel reality of colonial political, social, economic, and religious life." Therefore, while Hausa-speaking people had been heterogenous from the start, their consolidation under the Fulani empire was one step in the process of creating a more formalized Hausa "ethnicity." The "Hausa" category became an inclusive umbrella which allowed people of other cultural origins to identify themselves with a group that was interpretable to colonial logic systems. As a result, people living under British colonial rule in Nigeria and Ghana were often able to fare better,

relatively speaking, because of the relationship Hausa people had to the colonial governments which afforded them albeit limited power under indirect rule.

As previously mentioned, Habe were one of the dominant commercial presences in West Africa, resulting in Hausa as a widespread lingua franca across the region. As Adamu (1978:114) explains, people from Hausaland maintained networks and connections across West Africa long before the eras of colonialism, which they managed to not only sustain, but turn to their advantage during these colonial regimes. Lovejoy (1980) offers an example of such a situation and explains that kola nuts were a major commodity sold by itinerant Hausa-speaking traders in the 1800s. These nuts were in high demand across the region because they were used as gifts for special occasions, but also to alleviate hunger or thirst (2). However, the main motivating factor for trade was their high caffeine content, which would be released when chewed (4). Due to the increased strictness following the previously mentioned Fulani jihad, Lovejoy (1980:2) explains that "the spread of Islam had a particularly advantageous effect on the demand for kola. The nuts were the only readily available stimulant which Islam did not condemn; thus as more people in the savanna region of West Africa became Muslim, the trade in kola increased." This reinforced the simultaneous association with Hausa people as experts in trade and practitioners of Islam.

While the kola nut trade was dominated by the Asante before the early 19th century, British colonial powers caused the demise of their trade monopoly and empire following the British-Asante war from 1873-1874 (Lovejoy 1980: 19). Parker (2000:120) explains that the British colonial government "accelerated the realignment of interior trade away from the northern savannas and toward the coast." Since Britain maintained a stronghold at the Gold Coast Colony, surrounding present day Accra, it was in the interest of British colonial powers to direct trade away from Asante trade centers to the north, namely Salaga and Kumasi. When trade

moved toward the coast, Hausa-speaking traders followed, gaining momentum and regional power along the way. As Dretke (1968) observes, "'Wherever trade went, there was a Muslim trader'" (in Pellow 2008: 44). While relations between British colonialists and Asante communities were tense and adversarial, Hausa traders pivoted to these new routes, even benefiting from them. Asante traders previously posed competition and strict trade limitations that Hausa traders no longer had to contend with.

This was one of many instances in which Hausa-speaking people managed to turn an otherwise bleak scenario under the colonial government to their advantage, deriving some benefit while many of their neighbors met their downfall. Adamu (1978) explains that it was historically not uncommon for Hausa people in power to use the disadvantage of others to their own profit. Even before the colonial period, many Hausa communities "had profited from the political segmentation and weakness of the southern and western neighbors of Hausaland and dominated their commerce and politics" (165). Therefore, many Hausa applied a similar ideology when they migrated to Accra during the colonial period and found themselves to be typically favored by British powers ruling the Gold Coast at the time. In addition to moving with shifting commerce, many Hausa arrived in Accra to be employed in the Gold Coast Hausa Constabulary (GCHC), a British police enforcement initiative (Pellow 2008: 46).

In addition to being employed as police officers, Hausa-speaking people were favored for hire as soldiers for the British colonial forces. Because Hausa people had shown their loyalty in previous military conflicts in Cape Coast and Lagos, Adamu (1978: 165) explains that "when the colonial wars began, preference was shown for applicants claiming Hausa ethnicity." British colonialists assumed that those who could speak Hausa shared an isomorphic ethnic identity and selected for a category that was Eurocentrically salient, but in fact not locally applicable. In order

to further encourage the "loyalty and devotion" of those employed, the British colonial government ensured that Hausa-speakers enjoyed benefits and special privileges (Adamu 1987: 167). They were even gifted a mosque at Elmina, another coast city, and given the land to build a second mosque in Accra (168). These examples are in no way meant to romanticize or excuse the horrors of colonialism, but merely to complicate the narrative and point out the potential motivations individuals had in claiming Hausa ethnicity or speaking the Hausa language. In doing either, people were able to creatively play on the colonial assumption that the language was an index of ethnicity as Irvine (2008) argued.

Making the Zongo

Due to Hausa people's extensive history with trade and subsequent migration, pockets of Hausa speaking people cropped up in emerging urban centers across West Africa. These immigrant neighborhoods came to be known as Zongos (also occasionally spelled *zangos*), derived from the Hausa meaning "strangers' quarter" (Adamu 1978: 13). Adamu (1978:16) explains that Hausa people often settled near each other in hopes of creating "the same type of society as obtained in Hausaland." Thus countless Hausalands in miniature sprung up consisting "of people with hardly any blood relationship, and united only by two factors, their common desire to better themselves through their own professions and their membership of one cultural entity, the Hausa ethnic group" (16). Due to trade patterns discussed above, Accra, Ghana became one of the major destinations of these migrations. While many traveled for financial reasons including commercial opportunities, others left home to take jobs as colonial soldiers and police, but also as religious figures and teachers.

One such teacher was responsible for establishing one of Accra's first attested Zongos during the mid-19th century. Malam Idrissu Nenu, a Qur'anic teacher from Katsina, traveled to the city with his family and initially settled in Usshertown, home to many indigenous Ga (Pellow 1991: 55). Eventually he purchased land from the Ga leadership and established the first stranger community, which was named Zongon Malam for its founder. In a further testament to the Hausa narrative of industriousness, Malam Nenu set the tone for Hausa landowning, continuing to buy up land from the indigenous Ga chieftaincy and rent it out to newcomers, a practice and social relationship that still endures today (103). As Pellow (2008) notes, "As long-term residents in the southern Zongos, the Hausa have served as hosts to more recent migrants and northern traders" (Hill 1966; Peil 1979, as cited in Pellow 2008).

Today, there are eleven Zongos in Accra. Pellow (2008: 38) focuses her work in Sabon Zongo, a later iteration of Zongon Malam taken over by Nenu's son, but she also notes Accra Central, Nima, Newtown (Lagostown), Adabraka, Alhamdu, Abeka, Darkoma, Shukura, and Madina. Ever present in these communities are classically Hausa features such as prominently placed community mosques and Qur'anic schools, in addition to markets and walled housing compounds, evocative of Nigerian Hausa architecture (38-39). Pellow (2001) also explains that the rural/urban dichotomy is blurred in these spaces in which whispers of rural life, such as freely roaming livestock and unpaved dirt roads, fold into the urban cityscape of Accra. This is a feature particularly unique to Zongos and exists in juxtaposition to the rest of the city.

As a nod to the relative autonomy of these neighborhoods in Accra, each has its own chief and imam, leadership independent of the city itself (Pellow 2002: 38). The Zongos of Accra differ exceptionally from the rest of the city, which outside of these neighborhoods is predominantly Christian and Akan or Ga speaking. Pellow (2001: 59) explains that while Zongos

are highly influenced by Hausa practices, they are not truly Ghanaian or Hausa explicitly, but rather a "mixed cultural milieu. Through immigration, it has become home to members of many different ethnic groups, to Christians as well as Muslims, who have little money and are strangers to Accra."

Schildkrout (1978: 87) reports on similar phenomena in Kumasi, in which Zongos still remain from the Asante heyday, during which time Salaga Market was the focal point of the regional kola trade. She emphasizes the diversity of the Zongos, noting that, "To an outsider — an Asante, a southerner, or a European — the Zongo community often appears culturally unified, if not homogenous. On some levels this unity is real, and among second and third generation immigrants a common immigrant culture is emerging." She notes that these markers of unity are the use of the Hausa lingua franca, practice of Islam, and commercial occupations. However, underneath that conception of homogeneity from outsiders, the Zongos are really locales of diversity, home to a vast array of West African diaspora communities including those from "northern Ghana and neighboring West African countries, especially from northern parts of Togo, Republic of Benin, and Nigeria and from Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali" (Dakubu 1997: 67).

Within these spaces, Pellow (1991:56) explains that "Hausa are influential beyond their numbers. They provide the model for Muslim orthodoxy, for chiefly offices, for manner of dress; their language is the lingua franca for 'strangers.'" This is perhaps a testament to the lasting impact of the Fulani jihad which solidified Hausa people's roles as models of Islamic practice for others. After all, both historically in northern Nigeria and presently in Accra, Islam remains "a very powerful social landmark in the acculturating frontier" (Adamu 1978: 3). According to Adamu (1978: 9), Quranic education was nearly compulsory for Hausa children from Muslim

upbringings, which as a result imbued them with Islamic lifestyle values in addition to an education. This link to Quranic education was also one of "the organs through which migrant Hausa parents ensured that their children grew up as Hausa and not as cultural members of their mothers' communities" (10). In these new settings to which mostly Hausa men migrated, intermarriage with women of other culture groups was common. Yet for many Hausa parents, including those who married outside of the Hausa identifying category, it was important to ensure that their children maintained close ties to their Hausa origins. Use of the language, dress, and Quranic education were a few of these reminders of cultural origin.

During my time in Accra, I was able to speak with two local community leaders who descend from Kadir English, Accra's first Hausa chief. Salisu Maude, who currently serves as Zongo Youth Chief of Accra, and his brother Rabiu Maude, who currently serves as a Hausa sub-chief and creator of the Zongo Inspiration Team, are brothers and the great grandsons of Chief Kadir English. Both remain intently involved in supporting Zongo youth activism and program development for some of Accra's most vulnerable young people. During my meeting with Rabiu, he explained that Kadir English hailed from Kano, Nigeria and established one of the first Zongos in the city: Zongo Kadir located near Jamestown, a Ga community on Accra's coast. He explained that inland trading hubs like Boku (about 400 km due north of Accra's western coastline) and Salaga (about 500 km due north of eastern Accra's coastline) had the first Zongos in the country, but that they eventually moved south toward the coast because of trade and colonial occupation.

While kola trade was a major Hausa export, Salaga was a huge market that also sold and auctioned enslaved people. Originally, the Gold Coast was headquartered in the Central Region of Ghana, but eventually the British expanded south to the coast, which fostered rapid growth in

what is now Accra. Rabiu also mentioned that the opening of the port of Jamestown was largely responsible for making Accra the bustling metropolis that it is today, as trans-Saharan trade was largely rerouted to maritime trade. We also talked about how Hausa people and Hausa language laid the foundation for Zongo communities in Accra. He explained that people came in three waves: first scholars, then merchants, and finally, soldiers. The Royal West African Frontier Force, a British colonial military organization created by Frederick Lugard to defend and secure West African colonies, consisted predominantly of Hausa members. This association still endures and to this day, the Ghana military slogan is the Hausa phrase *kunlu shirye*, meaning "always prepared."

In my discussion with Salisu, Rabiu's brother and Zongo Youth Chief, I asked about why he thought that the Hausa language has been so resilient over the last few centuries in Accra. He explained that Islam is only half the story, as Wangaras, Fulanis, and Kanuris were already Muslim when they encountered Hausas. Instead, he suggested that it was the expansionist or dynastic mentality of Hausa people who were generous with their language, knowledge, and teachings. For Salisu, it was their inviting spirit that drew people to them, promoted trade relations, and helped spread the language. When I asked about why the Hausa language was maintained while other cultural aspects seem to be rapidly changing, Salisu explained that we cannot discount the influence of television and the internet. He explained that American culture is highly valued in Accra and that the "global village" really does reach and influence many youth here.

We also discussed the origin of the value systems of places like Nima. When I suggested Islamic values as a possible point of origin, Salisu agreed but added that even non-Muslims echo these values in today's Zongo communities. He noted that while religion provides a "sense of

belonging," the values of its practitioners radiate to other community members. He explained by quoting the Quran to say, "If you sleep on a full stomach and your neighbor sleeps hungry, it is your fault." Neighborliness and resource sharing are widely shared values in Zongo communities and while these ideals may originate with Islamic values, they remain inclusive of non-Muslims too. To this end, Salisu and Rabiu have worked together for over a decade to encourage Zongo youth to "see beyond tribe" and work toward a "collective interest" through youth programming and leadership. I revisit their work together in Chapter 2 along with the work of Nima's stellar youth organizers.

Perpetual Strangers? Hausas in Accra

Muslim Hausa traveler settlements originated in Accra as voluntarily inhabited spaces in which traders could feel at home with fellow travelers from neighboring northern regions. However, following the mid-19th century British colonial occupation of regions comprising present-day Ghana, these areas were soon co-opted as forcibly segregated spaces by British colonials intent on controlling the settlement patterns and movements of northern Muslim immigrants (Adamu 1978:16; Williamson 2018:24). Williamson (2018:24) describes Zongos as spaces of "*colonial religious invention*" in which the nomenclature of Zongo was "cunningly retrofitted by the British as a ploy to culturally and spatially segregate Muslim-Northerners." Quayson (2014) similarly explains that British colonial authorities worked to segregate Accra into groups that cohered with their internal logics of ethnicity and autochthony, or indigeneity. Regardless of what indigenous Ga or immigrant Hausa perspectives were on land tenure and spatial organization of culture groups, colonial administrators stoked and exploited "various

hierarchical relations" between people who had just arrived and people who had lived in Accra for centuries (Quayson 2014:8).

This can be understood through the lens of Li's (2002:366) discussion of "hierarchies of belonging." She discusses the ways in which competing Indonesian indigeneities arose following mass internal displacement due to regime upheaval. In these circumstances, those who once lived on the land they had indigenous claim to now found themselves displaced and labeled as unwelcome "migrants" by other indigenous groups asserting their own claims on ancestral land (367). Li explains that these ideologies are drawn from Malkki's (1992) "sedentarist metaphysic," which is "the value often placed on that which is native and in place, over that which moves about, or comes from outside" (as cited in Li 2002:361). This idea "valorizes" those who have managed to remain in their "proper" place and demonizes and pathologizes displaced people (362). She explains that these hierarchies of belonging lead to exclusionary practices, which come to be seen as naturalized.

Geschiere (2008; 2011) discusses belonging and exclusion on the African continent and draws on Li's ideas to entertain the emerging trend of viewing autochthony as the "flipside" to globalization (322). He argues that one of the major issues with viewing autochthony this way is its presentation as "self-evident" and a "natural" given (323). For Geschiere (2011:323), autochthony can both undermine and coincide with nationalism and citizenship, but in either case "autochthony always demands exclusion." In other words, autochthony demands an outside other in order to define itself. With respect to indigenous Ga communities in past and present day Accra, we can observe emerging notions of autochthony that form in opposition to more recent immigrants, like Hausa people and other affiliated Muslim groups. Another way to think about this is how cultural affiliation is described. In other words, someone can "become" Hausa and

take on such identifiers, but Akan and Ga identities cannot be taken up in the same way. Instead, those autochthonous identities, also often synonymously described as "Ghanaian," must be inherited. Hausa identities on the other hand are frequently portrayed as something adopted and therefore not as "authentically" Ghanaian as others who claim deeper ancestry.

As mentioned by Quayson (2014) and Parker (2000), colonial governments instantiated ideas of nativeness as salient identity categories, which asserted origin and claims of primogeniture as "legitimate" rights to land. Geschiere (2011:323) aptly comments that, "The search for an impossible purity in a world marked by migration and mixing triggers both constant concerns about one's own autochthony and an equally constant obsession to unmask the traitors residing in one's native land." Colonial divisions between "native" people and "strangers" played out in the physical spaces in which these communities lived, stoking the tensions between them in daily interactions and spatial practices of differentiation. Valentine (1999) discusses how geographic imaginaries allow us to construct the other in opposition to ourselves through a grounding in physical spaces, as Quayson (2014:40) argues here. We must imagine sameness between members of a group to constitute an "us" and differences between "us" and others to constitute a "them" (55). Hausa speakers and Muslim community members of Zongo communities in Accra frequently find themselves portrayed as the "them" in juxtaposition to those who can claim Ga, Akan, or other more saliently "Ghanaian" origin or ancestry.

However, these divisions between "native" people and "strangers" become complicated when we look back at archival materials and see self-identifications as "non-native" and "foreign" by Hausa people themselves as a way to assert some kind of autonomy. As I found in my archival research, Hausa people and other Zongo dwellers tried to differentiate themselves from indigenous groups like Ga and Ashanti communities. There was a particular dispute that

transpired over a series of epistolary exchanges regarding native ordinances that asserted control over indigenous groups, like the Ga chieftaincies. There are many letters from Hausa leaders requesting exemption from the native ordinances because they assert that they are not in fact "native" and are unfamiliar with Ga customs. There is a certain distaste for indigenous people, especially Ga people, that emerges in discourse between Muslim leadership and British colonial administrators.

A complicated hierarchy becomes apparent between British colonial administrators, Muslim immigrant leadership, and indigenous leadership. Zongo chiefs opted to assert as much power as they could within the parameters of the colonial occupation, which meant that they ensured they were not commensurate with the least powerful communities in the colony, in this case often indigenous Ga communities. This strategic assertion of independence from native status on the part of Muslim Zongo leadership complicates what we often consider a binary between colonizer and colonized. In my discussion about Zongo origins with Rabiu Maude, Accra Hausa sub-chief, he meditated on this complicated dynamic and noted that the relationship between Hausas and other northerners with Ashantis and Gas are often portrayed as adversarial. However, he explained that this antagonistic portrayal was seen through the colonial gaze and that sowing division between different colonized groups was a strategic goal to assert control over the colonies.

In a letter from Accra Hausa Chief Kadri English to the colonial Native Affairs Department on December 12, 1920, he addresses his concerns that the Ga chiefs have attempted to assert control over Hausa and Muslim affairs. Here, Kadri English appeals to the Native Affairs Department and emphasizes his people's non-native status:

*"We Hausas as your Honourable Sir knows well, are **non native** of the Gold Coast, neither are we under the jurisdiction of the Ga Mashe who is trying to interfere in Mohammedans question. We are under the rulings of the British Coast under your indefatigable control <only> we bow. Sir"*

*"Yet, we humbly beg you sir to kindly advice the doing nothing Ga Manche to stop interfering in Mohammedans palaver as he is no Mohammedan, **neither do we belong** to any of the "Stools" of the Manche."*

*"As you are aware, all **foreign nationalities** in this country have their respective heads. And unless the Ga Manche minds his own business, I fear the results of his interpoking will end[s] bad."*

*"Do Sir, instruct the Ga Manche to look [after] his people as we are **non native** of the Gold Coast."*

(1502 - Hausa Community in Accra 1912-1915, National Archives of Ghana)

While these historical assertions of sovereignty and autonomy may have been the consensus of some Zongo dwellers in the mid-20th century, others seemed more content to intermingle with other immigrants and indigenous people. This came to light in my 2019 interview with Nii Adultai Saka, a Ga chief in Nima's neighboring community of Maamobi, in which he paints a very different picture of what the early days were like when Hausa people came to meet his ancestors. On a Wednesday afternoon, I followed my friend Awal across the wooden plank bridge that connects Nima to Maamobi, a neighboring community that many consider an honorary part of Nima. The geographical dividing line is a tributary of the Odaw River which flows through Accra to Korle Lagoon on the coastline. The area is now referred to as *babban gorta* (the large gutter), which refers to its current state as a stagnant morass of black sludge choked with waste.

Awal had helped arrange this interview in order to help me learn about the community's past. We met Nii Adultai Saka at his storefront, a shaded open air provisions shop tucked in the

narrow concrete alleyways of Maamobi. As roosters crooned and pecked around us, he greeted us warmly and shared the Saka family's history in Nima. His great grandfather, the late Nii Saka of the Ga coastal neighborhood Osu, founded Maamobi initially as a refuge to hunt and farm. Adultai explained that as itinerant cattle herders and traders began to seek settlement inland, he welcomed them and shared his land with them at no cost. A bond was forged between the Sakas and the newcomers when the Alatas, a rival Ga clan, came to try and take Maamobi from the Saka family. The Mosis and Busangas who lived alongside Nii Saka came to his aid. When I asked why they would do this for him, Adultai explained that they were repaying a kindness. "When you came to a place and you met someone and he say 'Come and let us stay. He didn't collect anything from you! He said 'Come and let us stay,' won't you be happy? So later if you're there and something's happening to him, won't you go and help him? That's why they did it."

In describing this variety of newcomers, Adultai frequently referred to them as Hausas and clarified, "When we say Hausas: Mosi, Busanga, Fulani, they are all Hausas…When we say Hausas, it means this tribal northern part. If you say Mosi, it's Hausas. If you say Busanga, it's Hausas. If you say Kotokoli, it's Hausas." To my surprise, he even noted that the identifier "Hausa" is used as a general term for *languages* used by northerners as well. Over the centuries and into the present, the label "Hausa" continues to convey flexibility and inclusivity in a way that unifies different groups without the pressure to assimilate or erase one's origin.

Adultai was also careful to note the ways in which the value systems of indigenous Ga and immigrant Muslims were not so different as is often portrayed. He explained that Ga people pride themselves on understanding others and being gracious hosts, able to coexist with almost anyone. This kindness can come at personal cost however, and in Adultai's words, "People are

even insulting us: we take strangers and give them the room and go and sleep outside." This is a frequently cited criticism that Ga people I met often mentioned: their ancestors were maybe *too* inviting and gave away or sold off so much family land to outsiders that it left cramped living conditions for their descendants. Adultai drew a parallel between this cultural value of generosity with Islam's values of hosting and welcoming outsiders. In a way, Gas and newly arriving Muslim immigrants were an ideological match and were able to co-create many of these inland Zongos.

However this notion was not always shared by leadership of other neighboring communities. I talked about this dynamic with Chief Umar Usman, a descendent of the founder of Ruga, adjacent to Nima and Maamobi and one of the earliest Muslim settlements of Fulani cattle herders in Accra. He explained that Ashantis and Gas do not really "belong in to the Zongo community: "Those people, they are not among us." To him, the Zongo refers to the Moshi, Frafra, Busanga, Fulani, Zabarma, and Hausa: "That is Zongo." Akin to Adultai's testament, Chief Umar Usman explained that traditionally, Ga people prefer to share space and that they gave up the land willingly to everyone in Accra, preferring the beachside.

Ruga (meaning "ranch" in Hausa) was founded in 1892 by Fulani cattle herders looking for open land to graze their livestock: "At that time, no Nima, no Maamobi." Like his ancestors who were itinerant, he noted that people rarely assume they will come to stay in Zongo areas for long periods of time. "Our fathers don't know say the town will come and develop like this. *Kuma* everybody come to get something and go back. He's not coming to stay here. That's why our houses our everything is, eh, some way. 'Oh If I get money I will go back. If I get money I will go back. If I get.. Then you marry here before you say… A ha!" Here, the Chief comments on the often rushed, haphazard, and piecemeal architecture of many Zongo communities, first

created by people not intending to stay but accidentally creating lives there. He explains how his ancestors could not have possibly known what neighborhoods like Ruga, Maamobi, and Nima would become someday: urban epicenters of commerce drawing immigrants from across West Africa in vast numbers.

We can observe another shift in these historical ideologies of co-existence and inclusive settlement as we look to the present day. In a conversation with Mohammed, one of my linguistics colleagues at the University for Professional Studies, Accra, I began to realize that identifying as Hausa takes on an altered set of meanings based on the socio-political climate of the time and place. Mohammed served as one of the solicitors for the 2010 Ghana census and expressed that respondents frequently did not reveal affiliation with Hausa or other non-Ghanaian ancestry. The demographics in the census therefore are more reflective of people's lingering anxieties around being the targets of xenophobia. He explained that there is still a fear of ostracism and deportation left over from the exclusionary immigration policies of the 1960s and 1970s.

Many Hausa people and Zongo residents in general are still identified as non-Ghanaian even when they fulfill Ghanaian citizenship requirements as stated in the Ghana Nationality Act in May 1957. This legislation following independence established that citizenship was guaranteed if one or both of someone's parents or grandparents was born in Ghana (Kobo 2010: 74). Kobo (2010: 74) explains that it was widely assumed that the new law included second generation immigrants and those who were born in the Gold Coast Colony prior to independence as citizens. However, immediately following the passage of the Ghana Nationality Act, two prominent Muslim political leaders Uthman Larden and Amadu Babu were deported "on the grounds that they were foreigners whose continued residence threatened Ghana's national

security" (75). It therefore comes as no surprise then that many Zongo residents still opt to identify on the record with a tribe that falls under the Ghanaian national imaginary. Based on his census work, Mohammed identified three ways in which people identify as Hausa: 1) people with Hausa heritage who speak Hausa, 2) non-Hausa people who speak the language and identify with a different culture group, and 3) non-Hausa people who pretend they are Hausa. Yet as mentioned, many people who technically fall into these categories choose not to affiliate themselves on official records with Hausa or other non-Ghanaian origins.

Therefore, when people that Mohammed knew were Hausa or had roots from other northern tribes, they would claim identity as Dagomba (of Ghana's Northern Region) or Wa (of Ghana's Upper West Region) or some other known northern Ghanaian tribe, instead of Hausa or Zabarma (Niger) or Wangara (Mali). This presents a departure from the historical dynamics that Nii Saka and Chief Usman described and instead challenges us to reconsider the limits of the flexible Hausa identifier as they exist in Ghana.

As discussed previously, being Hausa was advantageous because the identity category was salient and legible to British colonial value systems. Colonial administrators who interfaced with Zongo chiefs frequently provided benefits and flexibility to trusted Hausa contacts, such as Hausa-speaking soldiers and police in the Gold Coast Colony. This census anecdote helps us consider how identifying as Hausa has changed over time. Before and during colonial occupation, people readily adopted the Hausa label, it was a legible, beneficial identity. However, in more recent eras, people have become more hesitant to identify with this label and will instead claim a nationally sanctioned northern Ghanaian identity instead. People fear being turned in by neighbors and deported like their ancestors were during the strict immigration laws mentioned at the start of this chapter.

Tombin Giwa **(The Elephant's Stomach)**

The Nima Zongo is one of the most populous and diverse communities in Accra today. The following pages serve as an introduction to the community, but the theme of shifting ideologies of Hausa culture and language within Nima itself will become the focus of Chapter 2. People in Accra playfully refer to the Nima Zongo as *"tombin giwa," meaning* "the elephant's stomach," because anything you can possibly imagine can be found inside. This Zongo is home to the Nima Market, a neighborhood open air market where vendors sell all kinds of goods from across the world: household appliances from Japan, plastic toys from China, spices from India, and used clothing and electronics from the United States. Large white hump-backed cows and small herds of goats cautiously cross the road and flock to the sidewalks, munching on spare tufts of browning grass, discarded vegetables, or the occasional plastic bag.

Men, women, and children fill in every open space, flowing like a river through an always congested path. Everyone fits as a critical moving piece in a delicately constructed machine, crafting an unspoken order, which to the uninitiated, seems like chaos. *Tro-tros* slowly trundle through the roads, looking for passengers to fill the vehicle so it can speed on to its next destination. Taxi drivers impatiently beep at pedestrians running to cross the street or at stopped trucks unloading boxes of bottled water and sacks of grain, and attempt to squeeze through impossibly small openings between moving and parked traffic. Mopeds whizz by in the spaces where taxis cannot fit and pass on both sides of the street, often ignoring the direction and flow of traffic.

Women in bright dresses and skirts balance gigantic silver and plastic bowls on their heads and pause to turn around when they hear the ubiquitous sibilant summoning call of an

interested customer. Most frequent are the women who sell bagged water, somehow impeccably chilled despite the oppressive heat. They place a knowing hand blindly into their stock and select a water bag from the pile, pulling it out to hand to their customer. They accept 50 pesewas in return and continue to move up and down the street, again and again, calling out "Pure Water!" Some women balance prepared foods in platters and boxes on their heads and take the containers down to fill orders on the spot. Some carry boiled eggs with a hot pepper sauce and others carry *bofrots* and other fried delicacies. Some even carry miniature restaurants in gigantic plastic bins, ready to fill orders for rice and stew, soups, and cooked meat and fish dishes. Also circulating around the market are men selling clothing, electronics, and household items like bathroom cleaner and insecticides.

On the sidewalks and spilling into the roads are seas of women sitting on plastic stools under recycled umbrellas, sporting old logos for phone companies or banks. They sell any matter of item, including gigantic bowls of cabbage, lettuce, tomatoes, rice, beans, and bags of ground red chili pepper used to make the famously spicy and deliciously fishy Jollof rice. The tallest buildings here are often the mosques or other unfinished cinder block buildings a few stories high with rusting rebar spiraling toward the sky. Most structures are one or two levels, filled with small store fronts and boutiques to further accommodate the teeming population of buyers and sellers swarming the streets. The Nima residential areas are often tucked just behind the store fronts on Nima Road (Al-Waleed bin Talal Highway) and extend out into tangles of dirt roads. To the uninitiated, these neighborhood streets look like an utter maze. One level multi-generational homes line the roads, mostly made of poured cement and corrugated metal roofing. Front doors are often tucked into alleyways, where strings of drying laundry flutter in the breeze and glistening suds from the wash meander down the street-side gutters. The

neighborhoods are relatively quiet compared to the market, save for the occasional bleating goat, crowing rooster, or morning greeting to a neighbor.

These descriptions of Nima Market are reflected by Hart's (1973) notion of the "informal sector," which characterizes individuals existing in systems with poor infrastructure and few salaried, full-time employment opportunities, who take it upon themselves to create economic opportunities of their own. In Nima, this certainly seems like an economic niche critical to the community's survival. Individuals are buying and selling from sunup to past sun-down every day of the week. This set of informal economic practices seems to fuel the Zongo and provides those who otherwise would have no income an entrepreneurial opportunity to support themselves and their kin.

Deborah Pellow (2002:2) describes Accra as a "cultural mosaic of ethnic groups and physical layouts," teeming with a wide array of religious affiliations, ethnic identities, socio-economic statuses, and linguistic practices. Because of the "curious melange of history and migration, of European colonization and post-colonial social and economic inequalities," urbanization has impacted different areas of the city in drastically divergent ways (15). There is no one easy way to characterize the city as a whole, due to the extreme differences one immediately observes from neighborhood to neighborhood. While most of Accra can be witnessed as rapidly urbanizing to some extent at the present moment, the processes and impacts themselves seem to be increasingly asymmetrical.

According to Pellow (2002:16), the population of the city increased from 17,895 in 1901 to 2,725,896 in 2000, thus transforming Accra from a landscape of scattered Ga fishing villages to an overflowing panoply of city-dwellers from across West Africa. However, this one hundred year population explosion impacted different parts of the city in vastly different ways and created

a city of extreme opposites. The Nima Zongo is one of these extremes, characterized by its low-income housing, enormous open air street market, and numerous neighborhood mosques. The Airport Residential suburbs illustrate the other end of the spectrum, a contrast in almost every way, characterized by its high rise luxury apartments, gigantic financial institutions, and upscale restaurants and hotels.

Zongos have become a patchwork of individuals seeking refuge as they start new lives in the capital city and hunt for affordable housing and a sense of community with people from similar places of origin. Nima is also frequently construed as a place where no one aims to stay for long. People often settle there with the intention of quickly making some money to move away, but then end up staying their whole lives. As Chief Usman noted in the previous section, this ideology has even impacted the architecture of Zongo communities, referencing Nima's haphazard housing style. Because people do not plan to stay, they build quickly and with cheap materials because it is simply too expensive and time-consuming otherwise and they assume they will be building their own house somewhere else soon.

Nima is a concrete labyrinth. Going into the neighborhoods from the roadside feels like ducking underground into a series of tunnels. The path network inside is almost reminiscent of a mammalian circulatory system, with main arteries paved in concrete offering entrances from the major highways. Often though, entrances into the residential areas are hidden from view and only people who live there really know where to enter. Most paths are reappropriated alleyways at the sides of buildings that open up into intricate networks of *lungu lungu*, meaning "corners corners," or tight concrete networks of gutters and small footpaths too small for motorbikes. However, there are some roads that seem too impossibly small for a motorcycle to navigate, until one trundles through, often in the dark with a single bright headlight beam cutting through the

night. To add to these narrow passageways, people often leave ongoing projects in the middle of pedestrian paths, intending to return the following day to finish. These sometimes take the form of missing cement gutter covers, removed to fix a pipe or throw something away, leaving gaping holes in the path.

These *lungu lungu* hold an incredible array of goods and services that make access to just about anything relatively convenient for people living in the area. Carpenters saw and hammer at their bespoke orders, building dressers and tables in the middle of these passageways. Shopkeepers tend to bubbling cast iron cauldrons of *tuwo zafi* and porridge cooking on open fires while others hand smoked fish wrapped in newspaper through small windows cut out of cement walls. Others display used soccer cleats, extension cords, toilet paper, bagged drinking water, and more in their doorways that open into these alleys. Chickens, goats, and the occasional cow wander freely around this maze, returning home to their familiar corrals at night. These tiny concrete pathways are alive with people: bustling to and from work balancing large loads on their heads, walking to school or *makaranta*, or slipping off their shoes to enter the mosque for prayer.

How does Nima as a place influence concepts of "foreignness"?

In hopes of getting to the root of why Nima is continually interpreted as somehow outside of the Ghanaian national imaginary, I turn to themes in human geography and spatial studies, which illuminate the ways in which places become alive to us and take on personas of their own based on stories, rumors, and ideologies about them. In considering how physical spaces are transposed onto the abstract, Shurmer-Smith (2002:128) argues that recent scholarship in cultural geography has begun examining geography as text. She argues that we not only read geographic

texts with reference to what we have experienced firsthand, but also those that we have only heard or read about. Thus our perceptions of space and place are tinged by who represents them and how. She explains that "places acquire personalities, reputations, stories as a consequence of the ways in which they are depicted and then react to the knowledge of their image" (131).

Similarly, Valentine (1999:47) explains that in recent decades geographers began to turn their attention toward "how knowledge is constructed through a geographical lens." She draws on Said's (1978) argument that "the Orient" as well as the "traditions of thought and imagery which give it a reality" are a result of a construction in the "European imagination" (as cited in Valentine 1999: 47). She also discusses contributions from Anderson (1983) who draws on similar themes of constructing spaces out of joint imagination and reproduction, which he calls "imagined communities" (as cited in Valentine 1999:48). These imaginaries allow us to construct the Other in opposition to ourselves, through a grounding in physical spaces. Massey (1992:55) argues that this can result in an 'introverted sense of place' when such dichotomies are later grafted onto concepts of "here" and "there" (as cited in Valentine 1999:48). These ideologies form social norms which reinforce beliefs about who belongs in a particular space and, as a result, who does not.

We can see these themes unfold with respect to Nima, as it is often seen as a "there" in the Ghanaian national imaginary of "here." I argue that this occurs because the Zongo as a place endures as a transposition of Hausaland, in which indicators of Otherness, such as use of Hausa language and practice of Islam, continue to reify Nima and other Zongos as foreign spaces within Ghana. To people who live in Nima, the experience is much truer to Lefebvre's (1991:89) account of space, which for him is not a product or a thing, but rather socially produced interrelationships. Basso and Feld (1996:11) take up these notions of place as socially produced,

but add further dimension by examining places as sensory experiences. The authors seek to establish how place is made out of engagements with space in ways that imbue them with meaning. Places are forged through being "known, imagined, yearned for, held, remembered, voiced, lived, contested, and struggled over." Altman and Low (1992:7) similarly characterize place as "repositories and contexts within which interpersonal, community, and cultural relationships occur" and argue that it is these things to which people become attached when they become attached to a place.

Kirkness and Tijé-Dra (2017:1-2) apply this idea of place attachment to what they call "urban tainted spaces," which refers to places with negative stereotypes that people feel an attachment towards. They explain that, "the fact that some people are capable of feeling place attachments to areas that are deemed to be threatening by anybody outside the neighbourhood is an important step towards the negation of the power of stigma." In other words, insider perspectives on place can differ dramatically from the stereotypes outsiders perpetuate about these geographies. Yet there is promise in reversing these stigmas because there are people who do feel such a fondness and attachment to these so-called "tainted" spaces. Nima very much so exists as a "tainted urban space," yet many people who live there experience deep attachment and investment in the community. This theme of insider/outsider perspectives will be explored at length in the subsequent chapter, but for now I will focus on the tangible repercussions of negative outsider perceptions.

One of the most striking facets of Nima as a place is that many people do not in fact want it to be a place at all. During my conversation with Mohammed, my linguistics colleague at the University of Professional Studies, Accra, we discussed the substantial forced relocation of many people who live in Nima. He explained that the government has been intent on bulldozing and

redeveloping the area because it is considered "prime real estate." Many people in Accra see Nima as an eyesore and want to relocate people to the outskirts of the city. Mohammed explained that Nima is one of the closest neighborhoods to the heads of state buildings including the Flagstaff House (Jubilee House). Its proximity is therefore seen as an embarrassment by many, not limited to people who live within Nima itself. This disdain for the physical location emerges as a disdain for the people who live there and call it home. It also recycles anti-immigrant rhetoric from Ghana's independence during which time "the government blamed immigrants for Ghana's economic and social problems, especially high unemployment and rising criminal activities" (Kobo 2010: 79). Negative stereotypes of filth, crime, overcrowding, and squalor become transposed onto Nima residents, who are also shown disregard and neglect through lack of basic public services.

Mohammed explained that the first step in this relocation plan was to give people land in Madina, a sprawling Zongo in the northern suburbs of Accra, so they would leave Nima permanently. Another step in the plan came in the form of the construction of Kanda Highway, which displaced countless residents by bulldozing their homes and bisecting Nima with a major city highway. Many Nima residents are killed or injured every year crossing Kanda Highway because it encroaches on their neighborhoods and intimate residential space. The front doors of homes and shops open right to the roadside and no barrier exists between them and this new major urban thoroughfare. The compound room I rented was located right off Kanda Highway and I was frequently warned by friends and colleagues to cross with caution because of the large numbers of pedestrian casualties. In addition to it being a safety hazard for Nima residents, Kanda Highway now divides Nima from Kanda Estate, a middle class neighborhood with safely walled single family homes, paved roads, and new commercial buildings.

There is an emerging history of displacement in these areas in which people are forced out of their homes in the name of development, yet continue to thrive despite the wishes of those in power. Mohammed explained that in many ways, Madina is just a second Nima, only a little better planned out and less densely packed. People still live in compound houses, walk to mosques on every corner, and patronize a huge central market, much like Nima, yet the overcrowding and lack of public services is somewhat improved. This displacement and relocation has not been entirely successful however, because Nima remains one of the most highly populated communities in Accra. This tenacity and creative survival in the face of dispossession is indicative of how many people in Nima see themselves. Many of my friends in Nima pride themselves on their toughness, creative problem solving, and perseverance. I revisit this self-identification in Chapter 2 and further examine how this perseverance despite the odds is possible through neighborhood solidarity.

Mohammed's sentiments were reinforced by both Rabiu and Salisu, who also brought this up in our discussions about Zongo communities in Accra. Rabiu and I talked about the ways in which Nima is a space that was intended to be transitory, but became more permanent over time. Rabiu too mentioned that the government seems to disregard Zongos like Nima because they hope to relocate them to places like Madina. He noted that "Nima gave birth to Madina" and explained that many people have been forcibly relocated to Madina over the years from Nima because it is "strategic real estate" in the city center with proximity to the offices of the heads of state and the airport. As Mohammed noted, many heads of state see it as an eyesore that is entirely too close to the Flagstaff House, where Ghana's president works and resides. However, Nima continues to be one of the most realistic options for newcomers to the city because it is relatively inexpensive. Rabiu added that if you are a newly arrived Muslim person, you are

welcomed to come sleep in the mosque for free and no one will bother you. Since many meals in Nima are communal too, people regularly invite others to join. Rabiu explained that this tendency correlates to the Islamic ideology "open your doors for strangers and visitors." Access into the city through Nima is made easier due to these overarching Islamic tenets.

Salisu explained that this governmental disdain for Zongos and hesitancy to provide public resources longterm to people living there was often intentional because it is frequently the first place newcomers arrive when they immigrate to Accra. As mentioned in previous sections, newcomers will learn Hausa and appear as though they have always been there, even if they are not officially documented Ghanaian citizens. However, as discussed at the beginning of the chapter, challenges to one's citizenship remain largely based on the ideologies of those in power and who belongs to the Ghanaian national imaginary varies based on that. Because Zongos host so many new arrivals, it has become nearly impossible to track who is coming and going, passing through, or staying long term. Salisu explained that Zongos like Nima are so overcrowded and under-resourced that government officials are hesitant to provide funding because it could potentially go to non-Ghanaians. However, as I have discussed, many Ghanaians by birthright or naturalization live in Zongos too, demonstrating an enduring stereotype of the perpetual Zongo or Hausa Other in these spaces.

Conclusions

In order to understand the ways in which Hausa language varieties and Hausa identifiers operate outside of Hausaland today, it behooves us to consider the complex processes that led to the emergence of "Hausa" as an available mode of identification. As Ochonu (2008) and others have argued, Hausa identity is a network of associations that is emergent, negotiated, and

constantly shifting. Through early notions of belonging as members of clans and lineages, to negotiations of identity and self during multiple conversions, colonialisms, and migrations, Hausa identity is one of fluidity, adaptation, and multiplicity. Being or becoming Hausa as we understand it today is the result of these historical processes which worked to coalesce and unify, but also to differentiate and divide.

While the categories of what it means to be Hausa have shifted and will continue to shift indefinitely, a variety of features intermingle and allow for common ground to be found in difference. In this chapter, I discussed the ways in which variable forms of being "Hausa" have emerged over the centuries and the web of associations that arose from migration, trade, and interaction with other people and ways of life. In the following chapter, I sharpen the focus to examine what these associations have come to mean for people living in Nima who use Hausa language or are identified under the Hausa umbrella in some way. Within the setting of Accra, these associations with Hausa people as foreign and "Other" come sharply into focus, even for people born and raised in Ghana. As I investigate these ideologies and more in Nima, I go on to reveal a curious erasure of Hausa presence all together.

Chapter 2: Indexing the Zongo: Hausa Language in Nima

Sociolinguistic Dynamics in Accra: An Introduction

As detailed in chapter one, Hausa was brought slowly to Ghana over hundreds of years and in variable iterations by traders, teachers, and travelers from Hausaland in northern Nigeria. In fact, almost everyone I talked to about my interest in the language advised me to pay a visit to Nigeria, where the "real" Hausa is spoken. While Hausa language was first brought more permanently to Ghana by Muslim immigrants toward the end of the nineteenth century, Hausa has become frequently utilized by a vast array of populations that have settled in Accra. It continues to serve as a lingua franca in the city's many Zongo neighborhoods. Hausa is one of many languages used in the city in addition to three Kwa languages including Twi, from the Ashanti region, Ewe, from the eastern border, and Ga, indigenous to Accra's coastline.

English continues to play an influential role and remains a testament to the enduring legacy of British colonial occupation. It continues to be used widely in schools, government, commerce, and city signage, but infrequently in informal conversation. Ghanaian Pidgin English on the other hand has become a lingua franca in its own right and serves as an intermediary for those who do not comfortably command more standardized forms of English or another local language. Accra is a city of immigrants, whether from other parts of the country or the continent, which makes for a pluralistic and ever-changing linguistic landscape.

Ghana and West Africa in general are well known as hubs of language diversity (Prah 2010). Due to this overwhelming variety, most individuals are multilingual, commanding registers of colonial languages, lingua francas, and indigenous varieties simultaneously. Accra is no exception, playing host to a panoply of languages with diverse origins. Although I can only

understand English, Hausa, and the occasional utterance in Twi or Ga, it is clear that Accra residents, especially those that I've spent time with in Nima, are constantly navigating this labyrinth of multilingualism. The true extent of this language contact is often brought into focus within microcosms of this diversity, such as the Nima market in which individuals from across the country and the continent interact linguistically on a daily basis.

However, this intense diversity can often be a double-edged sword. On the positive side, different languages can allow individuals to connect with familiar language communities and achieve membership status with a particular linguistic or ethnic group. Alternatively, these boundaries can produce harmful ideologies that label speakers of particular languages as having certain traits, which I discuss at length in the following chapter. As Gal and Irvine (1995:973) explain, "as part of everyday behavior, the use of a linguistic form can become a pointer to (index of) speakers' social identities, as well as of the typical activities of those speakers. But speakers (and hearers) often notice, rationalize, and justify such linguistic indices, thereby creating linguistic ideologies that purport to explain the source and meaning of linguistic differences." Therefore, depending on what language someone uses in Accra, they may run the risk of being tagged with assumptions about who they are as a person.

I have heard ubiquitous talk of such ideologies, especially with regard to Hausa. A few consistent themes seem to arise. *First* was the notion that Hausa is not a Ghanaian language and therefore should be studied in the Hausa homeland: modern day Nigeria. Almost everyone I talked to about coming to Nima to learn Hausa gave me a quizzical look. I eventually came to expect the inevitable question: Why aren't you in Nigeria. *Second* was the notion that learning Hausa was somehow intrinsically tied to a desire to convert to Islam. I was often asked if I was

Muslim. Did I plan to fast for Ramadan? Would I consider converting if I met a nice Muslim man?

During my stay in Nima, I began to wonder about the origin points of people's assumptions about the Nima Zongo and the Hausa language used there. How and why do people use Hausa language in Accra and why do both insiders and outsiders to Nima deny its Ghanaian merit even though it is used constantly in the Zongo communities. I wondered often what disconnects might occur between people not viewing local Hausa varieties as "the real thing," yet using it extensively in their everyday lives. While there are certainly dialectal differences between Nima Hausa and Nigerian Hausa varieties, I argue in this chapter that these differences are amplified by stereotypes of foreignness and the notion that the language exists "out of place."

As my fieldwork progressed, I began to realize how strong of an association exists between language and place in Ghana, especially with Hausa and its ideological non-Ghanaian origins. There exists an enduring link between diaspora Zongo communities that cognizes non-Ghanaian languages, like Hausa, as being less "real" versions of the standard because the language's widely recognized place of origin and the use of the language itself are disjointed. Yet I have never heard someone negatively speak about Twi in the ways Hausa is labeled, even though Twi has been transplanted from its Ashanti homeland further north and used in Accra, historically Ga speaking territory. In other words, the diaspora community of Hausa speakers, even though they themselves are Ghanaian people, born and raised, are still considered to be "Other".

Many folks in Nima are quick to justify their use of Twi, Ga, or Ewe language based on ethnic ties within Ghana. Sometimes when I would attempt to say hello to someone in Hausa, someone else at the market would pipe up to explain that the person I had addressed did not

indeed understand Hausa: "*Ba ta ji Hausa*" ("She doesn't hear Hausa"). Most people either understand Twi or Ga and, when asked, typically explained something along the lines of, "Of course I speak Ga, I am a Ga," or "My grandmother was an Akan, so we speak Twi." For as much Hausa as I hear every day in Nima, it is exceedingly rare that anyone attributes their use of Hausa to an ethnic Hausa tie. Its status as an outsider language is very clearly established by this tendency for people to advertise a Ghanaian ethnicity to pair with their chosen language, but Hausa rarely enjoys this association. Many people will say that they learned Hausa when they moved to Accra and that navigating the Zongos and markets is easier with knowledge of Hausa.

For immigrants to the city and even people born and raised in Accra's Zongos who are not themselves Hausa, the purpose of Hausa language is more practical or a marker of religious practice instead of an ethnic indicator. And yet, non-Hausa immigrants still use it all the time, even when friends and family in their company do not speak it. In other words, why use the lingua franca with friends or family when all involved can speak Twi, Ga, or Ewe and no evident commercial or religious purposes exist? Despite Hausa's status as a language of commerce and to connect those who otherwise don't share a language, why use it in familiar contexts when other modes of communication are available?

I will pose a few hypotheses, but the short answer for now emerges from Deborah Pellow's (2008:12) concept of *zongwanci* or zongo-ness. Pellow insists that this sense of community solidarity and mutual investment in each other "is a kind of northern ethos that derives from the intertwining of Islam and Hausaness, neither is it simply ethnic-based nor is it kin-based." While Pellow sets her stage in Sabon Zongo, one of the oldest Hausa settlements in Accra, I shift the focus to Nima, the largest and most diverse Zongo in the city today. I take Pellow's framework a step further to suggest a specific kind of zongo-ness that emerges in Nima,

which complicates the ways in which people have traditionally belonged in Zongo communities. This chapter examines what it means to "be" Hausa and use Hausa language in Nima specifically, why certain religious, cultural, and linguistic associations persist, and the ways in which these associations are realistically always in flux and sometimes contradictory.

Formulating the Hausa "Other"

So what assumptions or conclusions are made about people who use Nima Hausa? The answer is complicated because there are a series of conflicting interpretations based on one's status as a community insider or outsider. Using Gal and Irvine's framework, we can explore a few prevailing stereotypes or assumptions about Nima Hausa speakers and investigate their underpinnings. These associations often appear as diametric opposites based on the source of the opinion. Accra residents outside Nima frequently view Nima as a dangerous, intimidating place where only the most desperate newcomers go to seek refuge. Peoples' status as immigrants or generally "non-Ghanaian" is often implied. Yet insiders, many of whom are Ghanaian citizens, report a general sense of safety, community, and neighborliness. How and why do such opposite associations arise and how do they influence people's linguistic choices?

To understand these dynamics, I regularly return to a story shared with me by my friend Mustapha. Now in his early twenties, he lived most of his life in Accra's Zongos. He has called Nima home for many years and grew up speaking Hausa. His step father, Awal, who helped their mother raise Mustapha and his younger sister Tina since they were toddlers, also grew up speaking Hausa in Kumasi's Zongo communities. Awal passed the language on to his children and raised them in a home where Hausa was a primary language of communication. Mustapha and I frequently took walks around the city together and these always served as the perfect

platforms for sharing stories. As we made our way down Ring Road, Mustapha regaled me with the hijinks he and his friends would get into during their teenage years.

In this particular tale, he and some friends had shared a taxi to Kwame Nkrumah Interchange, affectionately known by most people in Accra as "Circle," an ode to its previous life as a congested roundabout that struggled to accommodate the tens of thousands of vehicles that passed through each day. A giant network of vendors at the Circle serves as a massive center of commerce in the city, which also houses a large *trotro* bus station that buzzes with activity at all hours. Mustapha explained that during their visit to Circle, his friends got into an altercation with the passenger of a different taxi who accused them of causing trouble and loitering. Mustapha had remained in the taxi to wait for his friends due to limited mobility because of a recent motorcycle injury, and the other taxi passenger claimed he was up to something suspicious.

When a policeman arrived on the scene, he began trying to arrest the group of friends without even asking for more information about what had transpired. When I incredulously asked why, Mustapha shrugged knowingly and said, "because he heard us speaking Hausa." The police officer had assumed that because they were using Hausa, they were likely from Nima and therefore up to no good. Nima residents are often deemed dangerous and combative and their language often serves as an index of these qualities. Police are known to avoid Nima at all costs out of a combination of fear and neglect of the people who live there, but are quick to police their behavior in other parts of the city.

The theme of Nima as a crime-ridden slum endures and use of Hausa language outside the Zongo can lead to real effects because of these ideologies. This is also not an uncommon occurrence for those considered "Nima boys," a stereotype applied to many teenagers and young men from the community. This archetype invokes a dangerous, untrustworthy character, typically

engaging in illicit or criminal behavior. So even when no evidence exists that any wrongdoing

has occurred, young men from Nima can be flagged as a threatening "Other" simply for the way

they dress, wear their hair, walk, or speak. Encounters like these reinforce ideologies that people

who live in Zongo communities do not belong in other spaces around the city and are inherently

unwelcome. While this is not the case everywhere, many Nima residents I spoke with have

stories like these where they have been singled out based on negative stereotypes.

The Insider/Outsider Binary: Processes of Differentiation in Accra

Hausa speakers in Accra are frequently identified as "outsiders" or "strangers," even

when they are Ghanaian citizens and have been for their entire lives. A harmful ideology

emerges that associates a language identified as non-Ghanaian with speakers of that language

who therefore do not belong in Ghana. What is it about Hausa language that indexes outsider

status and how did this association emerge? To this day, Hausa speakers are labeled as

immigrants in opposition to their indigenous Ga neighbors. Zongos themselves contributed to

emphasizing this differentiation as Hausa traders, hailing predominantly from northern Nigeria,

often settled near each other in hopes of creating communities of fellow Muslims (Adamu

1978:16).

However, Accra's colonial government capitalized on these clustering settlements and

reified them as bounded neighborhoods separate from indigenous communities. Williamson

(2018:24) explains that Zongos were places of "colonial religious invention" explicitly crafted

for segregation and suppression of Muslim immigrants coming from northern regions to Accra.

Nima, now Accra's largest and most diverse *Zongo*, was established by a Hausa speaking

Qur'anic teacher named Malam Futa in 1931. The land was first purchased by Malam Futa from

the Odoi Kwao Ga clan, as grazing land for his cattle (Dakubu 1997:45). However, Nima quickly became a thriving *Zongo* and haven for Accra's newest and most vulnerable immigrants. Yet Nima is still frequently indexed as migrants' quarters, even though countless people living there were born and raised in Nima. A key marker that flags people as "Other" is their use of Hausa language.

This dichotomy between insider and outsider can be better understood through what Irvine and Gal (2000) call "linguistic differentiation" in which people construct ideas about others based on associations held about the way others use language. They identify three processes by which such distinctions occur, including iconization, fractal recursivity, and erasure (37). While Irvine and Gal agree that these links are indexical (linguistic or cultural practices that "point to" qualities about someone), they broaden their scope to investigate how exactly these indexes are constructed.

Irvine and Gal (2000:37) describe iconization as the process by which features of a language become seen as "inherent" to the speakers that employ this register. Therefore, instead of just an indexical relationship, there becomes a perception of an iconic relationship "as if a linguistic feature somehow depicted or displayed a group's inherent nature or essence" (37). My earlier discussion of Mustapha's encounter at Circle and the stereotype of the "Nima boy" can be understood as iconization at work. He and his friends were seen as "inherently" suspicious, untrustworthy, and "Other" because of the language they were using and became iconic representations of the prejudices people have against Hausa language use. The iconization rationale becomes, "because Hausa language does not belong in Accra, neither do people who use it."

Irvine and Gal (2000:38) discuss another process of linguistic differentiation called fractal recursivity, which can help us understand how broader categories of distinction or opposition are grafted onto other instances of difference. This results in recurring dichotomization and contrast which can emerge as subcategorization or super-categorization, allowing fractal recursively to operate at multiple scales (38). In other words, certain instances of difference can be understood or categorized as facets of a larger or smaller feature of difference. Fractal recursivity presents us with a useful process to understand the tangled web of associations and stereotypes that exist about Hausa language and Nima residents in Accra. In the following pages, I examine a series of contrasts that emerge out of the fractally recursive logic of the "insider"/"outsider" binary, including opposite categories of "dangerous"/"safe" and "backward"/"modern." Ultimately, I work to demonstrate how fuzzy the boundaries of these categories are in practice and how people from Nima frequently push against these reductive stereotypes.

Following my detailed investigation of instances of diametric opposition and subsequent fractal recursivity in Accra, I conclude with the peculiarly ubiquitous processes of Hausa erasure that permeate Accra. Irvine and Gal (2000: 38) define erasure as a process that occurs when generalization or simplification works to obscure "facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme" and thus "go unnoticed or are explained away." The authors importantly point out that erasure does not necessarily mean that something is actually removed, but rather that it is not represented or recognized. In the following pages, I seek out and discuss specific instances of Hausa erasure in Accra and the implications for people who use it.

Fractal Recursivity and Erasure in Accra: Competing Narratives of Danger and Safety

Within the "insider"/"outsider" supercategory exists an enduring stereotype that Nima is inherently unsafe and dangerous compared to the rest of the city. For instance, one of Nima's unfortunate claims to fame around the world is its high rate of young people running internet scams. This often comes in the form of teens and young adults "catfishing" unsuspecting people in other countries through virtual romantic entanglements that typically result in requests for money. Cassiman (2018, 2019) has written extensively about the way young people in Nima engage in fraudulent behavior online for personal gain. While these practices certainly exist, these stories overrepresent a small percentage of Nima residents. Most residents work long days at Nima market selling foodstuffs, housewares, clothing, and electronics to make ends meet, yet are regularly treated as deceitful and untrustworthy due to narratives like these.

The result of stereotypes related to these practices presents significant barriers to people in Nima who work to make an honest living. My Nima friends and I have been navigating this terrain for years and frequently run into difficulties exchanging money through services like Western Union and MoneyGram. Consistently, our transactions are flagged as fraudulent. I recall a conversation with my friends Grace and Awal, whom I have known for years. We regularly pool our money to help send their kids to school and keep up with unexpected urgent costs.

Following the border restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I was forced to leave the country prematurely, but I insisted on continuing to send money in my absence. For months following my departure, every time I would try to send money overseas, I was relentlessly questioned by Western Union and MoneyGram representatives and Grace and Awal were regularly refused their money at Western Union kiosks in Nima. They recounted multiple instances where they went through their phone showing images of us together to convince the tellers that we actually knew each other and had spent the last six months living together as a

family. They would show our WhatsApp exchanges for evidence, present pictures and paperwork, and would still sometimes be denied.

One of the most regularly cited stereotypes about Nima is that it is a dangerous and undesirable place to live or visit. Pellow (2002:120) depicts Nima as being "composed of many ethnic groups, with no overall customary leader or structuring and thus no moral center. It is reputed as a haven for gamblers and criminals." Over time, narratives about Nima had accrued a series of moral stances that generalized it as an unsafe place worth avoiding. My Ghanaian colleagues frequently replied in shock when I explained that I was living and studying in Nima for my dissertation, citing it as an unsafe place rife with poverty and lacking in basic social services and sanitation.

To begin to understand how this occurs, we can turn to Sicoli's (2016:181) discussion of "moral geographies," which describes the concept of deeming places safe or dangerous based on past experience or narratives about particular places. He explains that these "moral geographies" emerge in Oaxaca, Mexico where speakers of Lachixío Zapotec consistently craft "moral stances" about places through jointly produced narratives and thus create a moral geography of values mapped onto the physical landscape. This is done partly through what he calls "ontological crossing," in which a question about place (where) is answered with a person reference (who) or event reference (how) and vice versa (2016:189). Therefore, location becomes intimately tied to moral assessment through narrative and results in a themed construction of contrast between the imagined moral village center and the amoral, morally ambiguous, or dangerous outside world (181).

By and large, many of these stances about Nima come from outsiders or people who have heard negative things said about it, but have never actually been there. This harkens back to my

mention in chapter one of Shurmer-Smith's (2002) sentiments regarding how we perceive a place being influenced by who represents that place and how. Similarly Valentine (1999) noted that our knowledge about other places is frequently constructed through a geographic lens, allowing us to construct a cultural or linguistic Other in physical or geographic opposition to ourselves. This elicits a binary of "us" who are "here" and "them" who are "there" (Massey 1992: 55). In my own experience living in Nima and coming and going to other parts of the city, taxi drivers were always hesitant to get too near to the neighborhood boundary and rarely preferred to venture inside.

One evening in early November of 2019, I attended a poetry reading with some friends sponsored by the gender rights advocacy group Curious Minds. I caught a taxi with my friend and colleague Mardiya, a longtime resident of Nima and then Events and Community Manager for Nima's local tech incubator ZongoVation Hub. We met a few other people from the Nima activism scene and gathered at a trendy outdoor cafe in Labone, a residential suburb of the major tourist-magnet Osu.

When the poetry reading concluded, a group of us huddled under the archway of the restaurant to order an Uber home to Nima. In our group of five, each one of us tried to book an Uber to take us the short ten minute drive through the Cantonments neighborhood to the Nima Roundabout. We kept getting confirmation of a ride and then a quick declination as soon as we tried to book with an address inside the Nima border. Finally, Mardiya exhaled, "They never want to drive though Nima at night. I'll try a different address." Instead, she punched in an address on Kanda Highway which serves as Nima's eastern border. The highway separates Nima from a wealthier residential neighborhood called Kanda Estate. Ghana's presidential home, The

Flagstaff House, is located there along with many other large gated single family homes. Immediately, we had a driver confirmed to pick us up.

Mardiya explained that it was almost impossible to get a taxi to drive through Nima at night and they had resorted to this tactic before, changing the address to neighboring Kanda in order to get a driver to go in that direction. This experience stayed with me because over the last few months of my stay in Nima, I had heard lots of talk about people's reluctance to enter the community. Yet watching driver after driver decline our ride requests with a Nima address was a reminder of just how negative the community's reputation was in the rest of the city.

Returning to Sicoli's (2016) concept of moral geographies, we can examine an inversion of the outsider stereotype of danger that occurs among residents in Nima. Such negative portraits of Nima differ dramatically from accounts of the people who live there. Owusu et al (2008:188) provide insights from Nima residents and businesspeople on the subject of danger and one respondent, Hajia, explains,

> "How many times have you heard of an armed robbery case in Nima? At times, we [traders] arrived in Nima from Lagos (Nigeria) around 2 am or 3 am but you find people always around. At any time, the boys are around. They may go to bed after they have finished with their [Moslem] prayers. So it is difficult to rob in Nima. The main gate to this compound [house] has never been locked in the night for the past ten years. Yet, no one comes here to steal!"

While petty crime and theft is common, violent crimes are exceedingly rare because someone else is likely to be around at all hours. Because of many factors, including late night and early morning prayer times as well as overcrowding and a vibrant social scene, it is rare to find a completely empty corner of Nima. People keep their shops open late into the night and friends hang out together at local outdoor restaurants and outside their homes into the wee hours of the morning. I rarely felt unsafe walking home along my typical route in the evenings because

neighbors and friends were stationed at their usual spots along my route, checking in and making conversation.

Within Nima, spatial moral discourse exists around being safe within the community: people are familiar, trustworthy, and watch out for each other. The narrative of unsafe geographies changes within Nima and friends warned me about going to locations like the busy commercial hub Circle as well as neighboring communities like Newtown and Carprise. This dynamic came into focus one afternoon when Mustapha and I were wandering around the labyrinthine outdoor markets at Circle. I usually carried my keys, money, and other important items in a cross-body purse that I slung over my shoulder to my back. As Mustapha and I were walking together, he noticed the placement of my purse and quickly advised that I carry it at my front. "This isn't Nima!" he said, acknowledging the aforementioned attitude of neighborliness and solidarity that many Nima residents enjoy.

It was in this moment that I wondered about a possible difference between known dangers and unknown dangers. In other words, this is not to say that Nima is never dangerous: people are still mugged and shops are still broken into. Yet for residents of Nima, these are known and anticipated risks that can be somewhat mitigated by extra diligence and community buy-in. However, massive risks, like kidnapping or murder, which do occur more frequently in other parts of the city, would be extremely difficult to execute in Nima. The community is so physically tightly packed that it is rare to find oneself truly alone. However, in areas with dispersed homes and dark highways, kidnapping or armed robbery are much more likely.

While people from Zongo communities are frequently associated with negative stereotypes, many of the realities within Nima's boundaries could not be more different. One afternoon, I was sitting in a *trotro* heading home from a few errands in Dzorwolo, a neighboring

community within the capital city. The bus rattled down the highway while the mate (bus conductor) called from the open window alerting potential passengers of their designation: "Nima! Nima! Nima!" A few passengers at the roadside waved and the driver swerved to the curb to collect them. A woman at the bus stop approached the bus's sliding door holding one baby in her arms and carrying another wrapped with care at her back. As she boarded the *trotro*, she handed the mate the infant she carried in her arms and bent deeply to ensure clearance for her other baby's head, which narrowly grazed the opening of the door frame.

Mates, as tough as they make themselves out to be, are frequently very tender with infant passengers. Often when a woman with a baby at her back enters, the mate will put his hand flat and hover over the baby's head to protect it from the doorframe. In this instance, the mate held on to the baby as the mother climbed inside and then carefully handed the baby back once she was seated. Mates are notoriously rough and tumble and almost always men, decked out with gold neck chains and rings and low-riding jeans. As their buses whizz down the highway, mates will frequently lean half of their bodies out the windows or stand with the door of the speeding bus wide open, calling the name of their destination to attract passengers. Many young men who work as mates and a lot of Nima guys in general like to appear tough and dress in ways that communicate that. The way they cut their hair and even the way they walk (a certain swagger where each step is heavy and the back leg seems to push the next step forward like a spring) is designed to exude toughness.

Similarly, many of my friends and colleagues in Nima describe Nima Hausa as a language of survival, indexing a sort of street-smart tenacity or scrappiness. Thus, many people from Nima invert the aforementioned stereotypes of danger and instead use facades of intimidation as a survival tactic, often employing Hausa to do so. Yet while speaking Hausa can

be an assertion of toughness or intimidation outside the Zongo, using it within Nima holds an entirely different connotation. Instead of asserting dominance and toughness, it often serves to achieve solidarity and neighborliness. Hausa, when used with fellow speakers or Nima residents, is perceived as friendly and indexical of in-group status and can even evoke a "cool" factor with younger speakers.

Minutes later on that same bus ride, the *trotro* made another stop to pick up a few more passengers waiting to board. Another woman boarded and slid into the empty seat next to the woman and her babies. Wordlessly, the woman reached out her arms to offer to hold one of the mother's babies. She proceeded to hold the baby, who sat happily in her lap, for the duration of their journey. Once she reached her stop, the mother retrieved the baby from the stranger's lap and said, "Na gode" (*thank you*) in Hausa with a gentle smile. This whole interaction was completely trivial to everyone else on board, but I was struck by the tenderness of the interactional minutia I had witnessed on this bus ride. This was another useful quotidian example of how Nima, despite its tough exterior, is a place of extreme warmth and hospitality. Strangers are not seen as strangers, but instead as neighbors.

While there is an overarching theme of trust in neighbors, there also exists a competing, but equally fervent, vigilance against being cheated or taken advantage of. There are two opposing dialogues that often surface in Nima when it comes to interacting with others. First, everyone should remain cautious and vigilant, because there is always someone trying to cheat you out of your hard earned money. However, secondly, it is nearly impossible to cheat anyone in Nima, because people are so keenly aware of dishonesty. There is a general assurance that justice will be served in ways potential grifters are often not willing to deal with, which frequently comes in the form of public shaming or vigilante justice.

My friend Awal first explained this dynamic to me and noted that, in Nima, being duped or taken advantage of is actually less common than one might expect. He reasoned that cheating someone out of money for instance was difficult because either the con artist would fear retaliation from others in the community or there was always someone else around to monitor the situation or overhear an exchange. Awal said that in Nima, people travel in groups, so if you attempt to pull the wool over one person's eyes, you will have to endure the wrath of all of their friends. During this exchange, Mustapha chimed in to say that when you start speaking Hausa in a place like Circle, notorious for pushy salespeople and vendors of fake or broken products, people know not to try anything with you. As mentioned, deploying Hausa outside of Zongo communities sends a message that you are likely from Nima and pretty tough, capable of recourse or delayed mob justice.

To speak to the other reason why it is difficult to target a single person, Nima is so densely packed with people that most of life occurs out in public whether you like it or not. Awal and Mustapha both explained that they regularly take different routes home to elude watchful eyes who might be tracking their movements. Even when I moved into my new compound room, we brought my suitcases from Awal and Grace's compound under the cover of night so as not to attract attention. People watch what you buy, where you buy it, who you talk to, and where you regularly pass. In a way, this benefits residents of Nima because people know to look out for you. Yet there is the occasional potential for danger if someone is watching who is ill-intentioned.

Due to the fact that I was one of maybe three other white people living in Nima at the time, I was noticed and approached by strangers pretty regularly. Because of this, community members and neighbors took extra care to educate me about my vulnerabilities and how to best ensure I was not taken advantage of. I remember sitting in the *trotro* one day as the mate

collected everyone's fare. I handed him a ten cedi note and waited for him to make the correct change from other passengers' smaller bills which he counted from a thick wad. A few minutes passed and he dropped a few *cedis* and *pesewas* into my open palm. Immediately, the man sitting in front of me turned around in his seat and quietly asked, "Does it reach?" He was checking to be sure that the mate had given me the correct change and wasn't trying to cheat me out of a few *cedis*. Mates are regularly given grief by passengers for the poor quality of the buses as well as the increasing transportation costs with no apparent upgrades to the vehicles.

This vigilance toward potential petty crime is common in Nima. When Awal first explained this tendency to me, he brought up a video that had circulated on social media around the Nima community. I watched on the small phone screen as two men on motorbikes were chased out of a Nima neighborhood, because one of them had run into a young boy with his motorcycle. The boy was injured and had to be taken to the hospital. Dozens of people nearby poured out of their houses and started beating up the motorcyclists, so quickly that they ran away and left their bikes behind. The neighbors took justice into their own hands and made sure that their neighborhood would be protected. Practices of community justice like this are so pivotal in Nima, because police are not trusted or called upon in cases like this. Nima residents are often left to their own devices to solve these kinds of neighborhood disputes and reliably rise to the occasion.

When I lived in Nima, I simultaneously felt very cared for and watched over, but I also always remained aware of my surroundings, as friends advised. Neighbors regularly saw me arrive home at my bus stop and would walk me to my front door with friendly conversation if it was getting dark. By and large, residents of Nima are kind, generous, and do what they must to get by, regularly expressing anxiety that a few bad seeds will spoil the bunch. Nima is indeed

riddled with theft and fraud, but it is also a place of immense trust. These values coexist simultaneously in sometimes confusing ways.

I regularly was warned to never leave my iPhone or other valuables unattended, even with someone I trusted. Yet frequently, neighbors who I barely knew would knock on our door to ask if they could leave their phones to charge in our apartment for the day. Access to reliable electricity is a frequent frustration for many residents of Nima and it was not uncommon for neighbors or acquaintances to leave their phones to charge in neighbors' homes if the power was out in their compound blocks. However, when the inevitable theft did occur, Nima Hausa speakers had a saying ready for that: "Ana kwace!" (*Snatching happens!*) This is often accompanied by the gentle indictment of the victim, "Ka yi lose guard!" (*You let your guard down*!) As previously mentioned, small theft and other commensurate crimes are known risks to living in a community like Nima. Yet if the criminal is known, others in the community will take action and confront the alleged thief.

Linguistic Evidence of Erasure

In addition to the erasure that occurs from the fractally recursive "insider"/"outsider" binary, we can turn to another way in which erasure of Hausa language and Zongo lifeways occurs in Accra (Gal and Irvine 2000). One of the most perplexing stereotypes about Hausa speakers in Accra is that there are none. One afternoon I was out for a walk with my friend Awal to see the new mosque being constructed in Kawo Kudi, across the highway from Kanda Estates. Just down the road was the Ghana Bureau of Languages, which I had been hoping to check out since I arrived. When we popped our heads inside to inquire about some literature about Hausa language in Accra, the curator gave us a confused look. "We have no Hausa books here. Hausa is

not a Ghanaian language," she replied decidedly. As Awal and I left to continue our walk, we chuckled to each other gesturing across the street to Nima, where a vibrant Hausa speaking community exists just next door. Clearly many populations of Hausa speakers live in Accra and Ghana more broadly, but many people are hesitant to make the association too readily or acknowledge an association at all. Hausa is not taught in schools and rarely used in official capacities, such as government or law. The language realistically exists in spaces deemed "informal" like Nima Market, at home, and among friends. We can examine the dismissal of Nima Hausa's existence by considering a few ways in which Hausa language hides in plain sight in Accra. Hausa words are regularly integrated into other languages deemed "Ghanaian," but such words are rarely acknowledged as originating from Hausa.

Wahala

Wahala, meaning "difficulty" or "troubles" in Hausa, is used frequently in Ghanaian English both inside and outside of Nima. Vodafone, a British multinational telecommunications company found all over Ghana, sends automated texts to users. I received this message during my fieldwork which states "No data? No Wahala." This message knowingly went out to people who do not speak Hausa and are assumed to have some command of English. The Vodafone sponsored Ghana Music Awards also posted an advertisement for their upcoming event to say "No Wahala

Dey," combining Hausa with Ghanaian Pidgin to say "There is no trouble." *Dey* is employed here to make a verb phrase, drawing from Ghanaian or Nigerian Pidgin for the verb "to be."
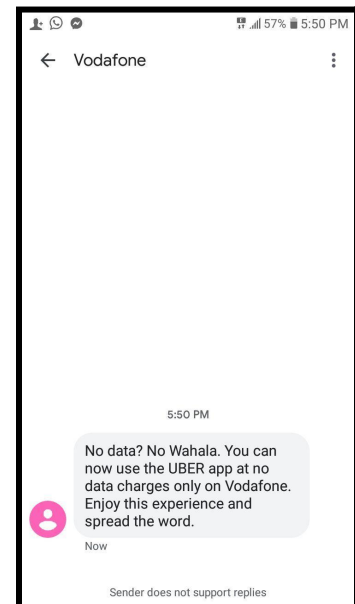
Instead of crediting Hausa, *wahala* is often referred to as "Nigerian slang." "No Wahala" as a

phrase employed worldwide in songs,

podcasts, and production houses. Jamaican

dancehall artist Demarco and

British/Nigerian artist Zion Foster perform

songs entitled "No Wahala." Podcasting team

Tune Day and Bawo produce a West African

diaspora podcast called "No Wahala" and the

Spanish media production team Jordi Perdigó

and Cristina Aldehuela named their

Ghana-based production house NoWahala.

However, each of these associations erase Hausa's lexical contribution and instead associate the

phrase with Ghana, Nigeria, or West Africa more broadly.

Borla

Borla is another word used

widely across Ghana to describe garbage

or trash, usually in large quantities.

Often labeled as Ghanaian "slang," this

word derives from Hausa. Borla Beach is

a popular destination in the city and

literally translates to "Trash Beach," named for the mountains of refuse that rise out of the sand.

The beach is also a popular launch point for Ga fishermen and a tourist destination, as it abuts

the Accra Arts Center and the Center for National Culture. Borla and garbage pollution in Accra

has become an omnipresent social issue, especially in Nima where residents do not benefit from

social services like easily accessible waste disposal and regular trash removal. During my

fieldwork, Stonebwoy, a popular Ghanaian

dancehall artist, headlined a fundraiser for the Zero

Borla Fashion and Music event. It was advertised

on billboards across the city and frequently on

television commercials. Borla has been wholesale

adopted into Ghanaian languages to such an extent

that its Hausa origins are rarely acknowledged and

have largely been erased.

Tuo Zaafi

Tuo zaafi (often called TZ) is a millet

flour dumpling originating in Northern Ghana.

Often served with the famously slimy *miyan*

kubewa (okra stew), this is Nima's signature

dish and is typically associated with Muslim

folks whose Hausa-speaking ancestors brought

tuo zaafi to Accra from Ghana's northern border long ago. What intrigued me about this dish is

that it is decidedly Ghanaian, but has a Hausa name. In Bill Odarty's *A Safari of African*

Cooking, he categorizes *tuo zaafi* with the other Ghanaian recipes even though it serves as a

reminder that Hausa speakers too are Ghanaian, a fact that is often erased or downplayed. *Tuo*
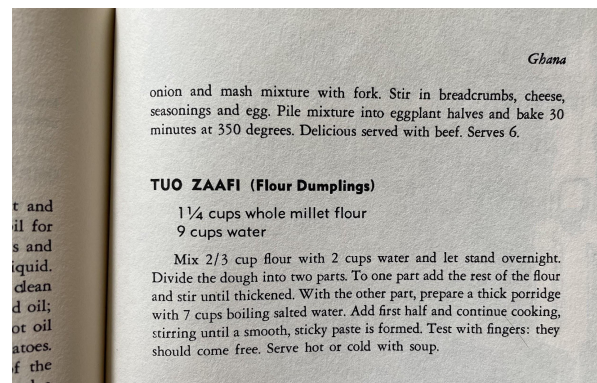
zaafi comes from the Hausa phrase *tuwon zafi*, meaning "paddled and hot," alluding to its preparation being paddled from a large cast iron pot as well as its lengthy cooling time.

Defying the Narrative: Nima as a Modern Space

Zongo communities in Accra are frequently described by outsiders as somehow exceptional to the rest of the city. Yet this exceptional regard is often tinged with a connotation of peculiarity or a veil of mystery. A representational thread that runs through many of these depictions is that Zongos are somehow preserved in time or not as "modern" as the rest of the Accra. Pellow (2002:2) depicts Sabon Zongo, a neighboring Zongo community in Accra, as a "village-in-the-city," due to the fact that many residents enjoy the virtues of small-town life in the big city.

For those living in Zongo communities, the virtues are many, including hearing familiar language, eating familiar food, and knowing and trusting your neighbors. Yet in Nima, connotations associated with "village" can also accrue reductive stereotypes. Many outsiders to Nima view features like livestock roaming freely, grazing on the grass at busy traffic roundabouts, and local chiefs presiding over their respective tribal communities as indications that Zongo residents are less modern and less educated. Zongos are often seen as an awkward fit amidst Accra's ultra chic erupting skyline of exclusive restaurants and high-rise apartment buildings.

These connotations of "backwardness" seem to stem from stereotypes around Hausa people in Nigeria itself. Because of their wide renown as devout Muslims, Hausa people in Nigeria are frequently viewed as trustworthy and welcoming. Yet these positive connotations belie assumptions of simplicity and draw on "country bumpkin" stereotypes. These qualities map

onto religious distributions in Nigeria and the ways in which Christian areas are seen as developed according to Western standards, while Muslim areas are seen as underdeveloped.

I often think back to Chimamanda Adichie's (2009) short story "A Private Experience," which addresses this very stereotype from the perspective of a well-to-do Igbo medical student who finds herself hiding out in a vacant storefront with a Hausa woman when a market riot becomes violent. Upon their first meeting, Adichie narrates the protagonist Chicka's inner thoughts, "Even without the woman's strong Hausa accent, Chika can tell she is a Northerner, from the narrowness of her face, the unfamiliar rise of her cheekbones; and that she is Muslim, because of the scarf."

Immediately, the Muslim Hausa character is rendered as a cultural and linguistic other in comparison to her Christian Igbo counterpart. In her exchanges with Chika, the Hausa woman communicates is stilted English, using phrasing like, "I am trader," "She is going safe place," and "Where you go school?" This serves as a foil to the effortless, collegiate English in which Adichie writes Chika's dialogue. The Hausa woman also offers Chika a bucket to use as a makeshift bathroom and Adichie's narrative implies that while this is unthinkable for Chika, it is routine for the Hausa woman. The characters share a series of vulnerable moments and Chika even kindly offers medical advice when the Hausa woman expresses discomfort when breastfeeding her baby.

The short story ultimately works to remind us that we share many things even with those who might seem strange to us at first blush. Yet it still strikes me that the Muslim Hausa character was the one chosen as the "stranger" archetype. We see all sorts of associations with Hausaness emerge throughout the story, such as a lack of access to Western education, a lack of knowledge of modern medicine, and the imperfect command of English.

These themes emerged during my aforementioned discussion with Hausa sub-chief and community organizer Rabiu Maude. He drew parallels between Muslim identity, lack of Western education, and assumptions about Zongo people's abilities to succeed in a globalizing Ghana. He explained that Islam came to West Africa well before Christianity and that most Hausas were animists before they converted to Islam. When Christianity was imposed in the south of Nigeria, Western education was brought with it. Meanwhile, northerners remained dedicated to Islam and opted not to send their children to Western schools for fear that they would be converted to Christianity.

As a result, many later generations of Muslim children only went to *makaranta* (Qu'ranic school). Yet commanding British colonial values, including practice of Christianity and knowledge of English, meant more direct access to lucrative opportunities for those who had been educated in Western-style schools. However, Rabiu mentioned that things are changing in Zongo communities because of local activism and policy change. At the current moment, new youth activism initiatives are cropping up every day, led by dedicated people who grew up in Zongo communities and who tirelessly work to provide their families, friends, and neighbors with access to basic human rights as well as opportunities to thrive.

Nima is often seen as "rich in culture," but poor in things like quality education, material wealth, and access to basic utilities. Yet the relationship between these stereotypes is complicated, because the standards against which these attributes are measured are colonial in origin. I puzzled through these tensions during a Fulbright talk I attended at the US Embassy in fall of 2019 by Dr. Agya Boakye-Boaten. Originally from Cape Coast himself, he returned as a Fulbright scholar from UNC Asheville to serve as a visiting professor at the University of Cape

Coast. In his presentation, he discussed the enduring and complicated nature of being a "colonial subject" that many African people continue to shoulder.

Engaging with the work of DuBois, Fanon, Rodney, and Nkrumah, he meditated on the genuine tensions between liberation and emancipation from colonial modes of being, while simultaneously feeling the need to engage with colonial value systems to achieve success and make change at higher levels. As I got to know the Zongo change-makers in Nima, I noted a similar tension. Balancing decolonial ideologies and methods for local activists presents a challenge in a world so overwhelmingly shaped by capitalism and colonialism.

Building a Zongo For Tomorrow: Youth Activism in Nima

In early November of 2019, I attended an orientation at the US Embassy in Accra sponsored by the Fulbright Program. Our programming for the day included a tour of the American Center, home to the EducationUSA Advising Center and the Martin Luther King Jr. Information Resource Center. Ghanaian students interested in pursuing higher education in the US frequent EdUSA information and advising sessions, as well as the computer lab and library, busily preparing college applications or studying for the GRE. During our tour of the facility, we were introduced to Auntie Rita, a warm, energetic woman with a wide, inviting smile. She asked where I was staying and what I was here to study. At my mention of Nima, Rita lit up and said, "I know some people you should meet."

It was from Rita where I first learned about the vibrant youth activism scene in Nima, full of well-educated and passionate young adults. Many had gone off to college, fulfilled their national service commitments, and returned to their community to ensure that Nima's youth would receive quality education, access to clean water and reliable electricity, and opportunities

to excel in Ghana's growing industries. The national service program was created in 1972, following a military coup that ousted the aforementioned Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia from office. In hopes of reinvigorating a flagging youth service program, the new regime, led by Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong, approached student representatives from University of Ghana, University of Cape Coast, and the Kwame Nkrumah Institute of Technology to "come forward with plans on how the youth intended to contribute their quota to the new Ghana we are trying to build" (Acheampong 1972: 143 as cited in Sikah 2000: 6).

Ghana's National Service Scheme, as it is called today, continues to engage Ghana's recent graduates from tertiary institutions. Among the program's core objectives are to encourage a national spirit and promote unity among Ghanaians, alleviate hunger, illiteracy, disease and unemployment, and develop desirable skills through practical training. Sikah (2000) explains the NSS in terms of the Ghanaian concept of *sankofa*, often depicted in Adinkra motifs as a bird craning its neck backward, tending to an egg with its beak. Originating from Akan Twi language, Sankofa was translated to me by friends as "go back and get it," which serves as a reassurance that in life, we often must go back for something forgotten or left behind in our lives.

Sikah (2000:2) considers this an apt allegory for the "challenge of mobilizing youth" to engage in community building. After going out into the world and receiving tertiary education, Ghana's young people are encouraged to give back to their communities. Depending on one's vocation, NSS fulfillment could entail teaching at a rural school in Northern Ghana, apprenticing at a law firm or hospital in Accra, or shadowing natural resource management and manufacturing at one of the booming companies in Tema. For many people who call Nima home, finishing their national service meant returning with a vision and practical experience to equip the young people in their community with the tools to thrive.

Rita explained that she facilitated a book club initiated by youth activists in Nima, a group of wickedly smart, passionate, and resourceful graduates who carried out social programming in Zongo communities across the city. They gathered each month and selected a book by an American author to read and discuss together. "You should join us next time!" Rita eagerly offered, handing me a glossy-covered reprint of Langston Hughes's 1930 book "Not Without Laughter." The following week, I arrived at the embassy and met Ijahra, Mardiya, Binta, Maryam, and many others leading initiatives across the city for quality education, gender equality, access to public services, and more.

Making Moves: Zongo Change-makers in Nima

Brothers and Hausa sub-chiefs of Accra, Salisu and Rabiu Maude, serve as mentors to many young people dedicated to making change in their Zongo communities. During a discussion about Zongo youth activism with Salisu, he explained to me that Zongo communities face countless issues that current chiefs have failed to address. He and Rabiu set out to make sure that the young bright millennials returning home from college could serve as the ones ready to demand better for their communities.

Almost a decade ago, when Salisu was named Sarkin Samari (Youth Chief) of Greater Accra, he and Rabiu began brainstorming how to give back to the communities they came from. This was the origin of the Zongo Inspiration Team, which they created in hopes of recruiting more participation from promising young community members. They worked to identify and mentor a small group of young adults from their community who they hoped would take up the organizing mantle to shape local policy and create community programming and outreach in Accra's Zongos. He mentioned that there was significant suspicion in the Zongo communities at

first: who would do something like this for free with no ulterior motive? Though he explained that with his family's long tradition of community service and longevity in the area, people started to change their minds and embrace the education programs they were creating.

My friend and colleague Ijahra was one of these bright young people that the brothers took under their wing years ago. I met Ijahra at the US Embassy book club in 2019 and later volunteered for his many outreach initiatives. When I was living in Nima, Ijahra was beginning his non-profit Ink Ghana and launching a series of community outreach campaigns to provide some of the community's most marginalized women with hygiene products. He worked with companies like Unilever Ghana to collect donations to distribute to community members in need. Ijahra welcomed me into these activism spaces and I was able to attend many of these resource gathering and distribution events.

As part of Ijahra's "Care 4 Kaya" campaign, we regularly met to stuff bags with small bottles of shampoo, sanitary pads, toothpaste, and toothbrushes, and handed them out at local community centers. *Kaya* or *kayaye* (meaning "female porter" in Hausa) refers to women who move to Accra in search of work from northern regions of Ghana and become porters, carrying extremely heavy loads of goods across Nima Market for little compensation. Because of the high cost of rent in Accra and the low pay they receive for their services, many of these women and their children are unhoused, do not always have access to basic necessities, and are vulnerable to violence and sexual assault. When Covid hit Ghana in March of 2020, Ijahra and his fellow youth leaders were on the front lines handing out masks, hand sanitizer, and hygiene products to neighbors in need. Ijahra is currently pioneering Ink Ghana's School Mentorship Program, which brings guest facilitators to under-resourced Zongo schools to provide workshops on depression, mental health, and stress management.

Initiative for Youth Development

Another powerhouse non-profit out of Nima is the Initiative for Youth Development (IYD), created by Executive Director Mahmoud Jajah. In their 2019 Year End Report, Jajah states that IYD seeks to, "to improve the lives of young people in Zongo communities across Ghana" through a series of outreach programs directed at children, teens, and young adults from Nima and surrounding Zongo communities. In 2018, the organization began the Zongo Youth Policy Dialogue, which served "as a platform to discuss the challenges and aspirations of young people across Zongo communities in the country." In line with Salisu and Rabiu's aforementioned goals, this provided young people with the platform and tools to create programming and policy that would serve them and their neighbors.

IYD also launched the Zongo Skills Project in July 2019 to "provide relevant skills training opportunities to 100,000 out-of-school youth in Zongo communities across Ghana." This served as a first push toward the Zongo Youth Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development that launched in 2020. Their launch document explains that "several governments over the decades have neglected the developmental needs of the Zongo people," continually promising investment only to gain votes and then never following through once the party's candidate enters office (3). Salisu and Rabiu together with Mahmoud Jajah of IYD initiated this Agenda as a local response to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals as a way to take matters into their own hands and sow the seeds of community prosperity themselves.

As part of this initiative, IYD created the Young Zongo Women Fellowship (YZWF), spearheaded by Associate Director Khadijatu Idrissu. This program was a 12-week intensive seminar series that brought in guest facilitators from across the country to facilitate workshops

with young women from neighboring Zongo communities. I met Khadija through my colleagues at the US Embassy book club and she graciously invited me to shadow the workshop sessions each Saturday at the Nima-Maamobi community library. The guest facilitators who visited us ran the gamut and included fashion designers, counseling psychologists, lawyers, and entrepreneurs. YZWF even hosted the Deputy Director of Communications for the President of Ghana, Fatimatu Abubakar, as well as actress and ambassador of the Youth Employment Agency, Bibi Bright.

Most of the guest speakers were accomplished Muslim women who had come from Zongo communities themselves and were committed to forging a path for younger generations of Muslim women to follow. The young women who attended the workshops were all accomplished in their own right and many were medical doctors, lawyers, and entrepreneurs, and many others hoped to go on to graduate school. In the group I regularly sat with, we had between us a psychiatric nurse, a children's book author, a law student, a medical doctor, and an entrepreneur who started a menstrual education and sustainable pad production non-profit. Each week, a new speaker came to talk on their topic of choice to ultimately build a well-rounded series of seminars on entrepreneurship, leadership, business, environmental sustainability, gender studies, and more.

As a part of the 2030 Agenda, IYD partnered with their sister organization ZongoVation Hub, which provides free coding and UX design courses to young people and also serves as a local tech incubator for aspiring tech entrepreneurs. I met Mardiya, who then served as the Events and Community Manager, through the US Embassy book club and later found out that many of her students at ZongoVation were friends I had made shadowing the Young Zongo Women Fellowship program. She helped build ZongoVation from the ground up and explained

that her goal was to make computer programming and coding accessible to Zongo youth,

especially young women and girls. Mardiya's work at ZongoVation Hub was largely inspired by

her national service placement in the north of Ghana, where the kids she taught had no learning

materials and had to walk four miles to get to school each day. She explained that a large portion

of the stipend she was given as a part of the national service program ultimately went to buying

books and teaching materials for her students.

People like Mahmoud, Khadija, and Mardiya, are experts at channeling and fostering

community and belonging. From programs like the YZWF to ZongoVation, women especially

are encouraged toward sisterhood and strength in unity. I have witnessed the confidence that

comes with people taking young women's aspirations seriously and investing in programming to

support them. This is an important aspect of my work that I'm grateful to have witnessed: the

way community is built through inclusion, openness, and dedication despite extreme odds.

Women in these programs know that wider audiences and observers might pass quick

judgements about them. Even their own families often expect them to become wives, then

mothers, running the household and putting their own dreams on the back burner.

Many of the students in the class I shadowed were young mothers who would leave their

kids with family for a few hours so they could seriously invest in these coding courses. Others

still were freshly out of high school or college in search of further skill sets to rocket them to

professional careers in tech or graduate programs abroad. Big things are happening in Accra's

Zongo communities, especially among young people. Success Book Club, an organization

started in Nima seven years ago, is still going strong and its founder just finished his first year of

graduate school in the United States. Just this summer, an application call went out for Zongo

Shark Tank, a business reality spinoff of the American entrepreneurial hit series. Despite the

widespread stereotypes, Nima is making a name for itself in Accra and youth activists are determined to leave their mark for generations to come.

Zongo Solidarity: Unity in Otherness

The Nima Susu: Microcredit and Community Banking

I have previously noted how the Hausa identifier is often one that engenders a sense of solidarity in Nima in the face of stigmatization elsewhere throughout the city. Much of this solidarity emerges out of necessity: the community's most vulnerable people rely on each other to get by. Much of this manifests as a justified lack of trust in larger institutions, such as law enforcement and banks. Many residents of Nima have ample evidence as to why these such institutions are not to be trusted and likely have little investment in them or their communities. Earlier in 2019 before my arrival in Accra, President Akufo-Addo closed a number of banks in the city with people's money saved inside. When my friend Grace attempted to retrieve her savings from one of the closed banks, she said she was dismissed and simply never received the funds from the bank.

Financial institutions in Nima are frequently treated with suspicion and people often take savings methods into their own hands. Awal and Grace participated in a community *susu*, or group savings plan in which a designated group contributes a predetermined amount of money daily. One person receives the entirety of the group's contributions once per week until everyone in the *susu* group has gotten a payout. This practice in micro-credit ensures that money lending comes with a personal touch and community buy-in. If someone does not pay their weekly share, but has taken their *susu* cut already, they will be tracked down or excluded from future *susus*.

Grace was the designated banker of her market *susu* group, extremely trustworthy and very good at money management and calculation. I participated in her market susu and contributed four cedis to the group pot every day. Our *susu* group consisted of twenty one women from the market and Awal (who frequently participated in any market activities with his wife). Every day, Grace would collect the four cedis from each person in the *susu* and give the seven hundred cedi payout to one member every week for five months. Nima's ideologies of distrust in institutions and trust in individuals comes to the fore in practices like the *susu*.

People in Nima feel as though their fellow human being is more trustworthy than an impersonal institution that might not blink an eye at closing a bank branch and disappearing with everyone's money. The *susu* crystallizes the ways in which Nima functions intentionally outside the bounds of institutions set up to regulate and dictate people's ways of living. Grace also explained to me that she was in a goods collection *susu* exchange. When someone is unable to afford a bag of rice or a container of sugar, they can contribute incrementally to the goods exchange and eventually, the group will provide them with their needed provisions.

Short Circuits: Electricity and Creative Problem-Solving in Nima

Another important way people in Nima work outside the bounds of institutions is access to electricity. The Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) supplies Accra with electricity, but instances of "lights out" are extremely regular. This phenomenon, often called *dumsor* in Accra, is derived from the Twi "dum sɔ" meaning "off and on." With the population boom in Accra over the last few decades, demand for electricity often overwhelms supply. The city's most vulnerable neighborhoods, like Nima, are often the ones who bear the brunt of this electrical unreliability. The phenomenon is so widespread throughout Ghana that former president John Mahama even

earned the jocular nickname "*dumsorhene*," a triple portmanteau of Twi words "dum," "sɔ," and "ɔhene" meaning "king of lights out" (Appah and Ansah 2020: 53). Longtime residents of Accra regularly use humor like this to confront the ubiquitous impediments and inconveniences that come with infrastructure struggling to serve everyone. Especially in Nima, overloaded power grids, blown transformers, and downed electric poles are commonplace due to massive demand for electricity and lack of infrastructure to serve the community. When outages would last hours or days, I would often hear folks joking outside my window in the darkness with knowing comments like, "*Ba light?! Ah, Nima kɛ̀ nan*" meaning "No light?! *That's* Nima!"

Yet this good-natured attitude belies a deeper disenfranchisement and disillusionment with large companies like ECG, which are notorious for overcharging and under-providing for their customers. In Nima especially, people are often forced to break the law to get access to electricity. Many people have their rooms connected illegally to poles already overburdened by the morass of cables tapping electricity. However the other option is having no power at all. Grace explained just how dire some people's situations are and described the impossible circumstance of her elderly neighbor across the way. She explained that he had not had power in over 3 years, because ECG cut his power due to an overdue balance. She remarked indignantly that he is still unable to pay the balance and that now he just sits in his hot dark room all day. Grace explained that when she had disposable income in the future, she planned to pay his balance for him.

Gaining access to an electricity meter in the first place presents its own challenges. In order to legally connect to an electrical pole, one must first obtain a meter from ECG. Electricity meters are property of the government and are given out based on a lengthy waiting list. If someone need a new meter, it can take months to get one. Yet people in Accra simply do not

have the luxury to wait and will often bribe ECG employees to let them jump the line and get a meter that was promised to someone else. The alternative to owning one's own meter is connecting to the landlord's line. However, most landlords will overcharge all of their tenants in hopes of earning a little extra money, making utility payments unsustainably high for most tenants. Even when someone owns their own electrical meter, ECG is known to overcharge. Yet people in Nima resort to creative workarounds, including installing switches on their meters which turn off the meter's reading ability while keeping the electricity itself on.

Power company employees will occasionally come around certain neighborhoods to check the validity of people's connections. To ensure the connection is legitimate, agents will temporarily remove the meter without telling the resident and test to see if power is still running to the compound. If they find an illegal connection, they will confiscate the meter with no notice. Neighbors will text or call each other if they see an ECG agent in the neighborhood to warn each other to switch their meters on to read. Many people have their meters covered by locked boxes, ensuring that someone cannot walk off with their meter. Neighbors will also strategically connect to different city lines, so if one city line is out, they can all gather at whoever's home is connected to a working line. As with many things in Accra, if you can afford to pay someone to install these workarounds or live in a wealthier neighborhood with less overcrowding, instances of *dumsor* are far less frequent and dire.

Why Hausa Endures: Language Domains and Vitality

Despite these processes of ideological Othering and erasure that Nima Hausa speakers experience, one might still be curious as to how these linguistic practices are upheld with such

vitality. For a possible explanation, we can consider all the ways in which Hausa language in Nima is continuously employed for purposes of solidarity, connection, and survival.

Davis (2017) approaches these questions from an indigenous survivance perspective, which reorients inquiry from victimhood and loss to agency and endurance. Borrowing from Vizenor (1999), she explains it as a "portmanteau of 'survival' and 'resistance', survivance emphasizes moving beyond narratives of Indigenous tragedy and dominance" (Davis 2017:48). In this chapter, I have aimed to engage with this orientation inquiry and engage Davis's question "What socio-cultural, historical, and political factors have facilitated language maintenance and use?"

In line with Davis, Grenoble (2011:31) too insists that a singular focus on the language itself does not provide adequate explanation for how linguistic practices are maintained. Rather, examining social, political, and economic factors becomes necessary to provide sufficient answers rooted in often messy and complicated past and present entanglements. She notes of language endangerment discourse that "it is wrongheaded to see the languages themselves as disappearing; rather, the domains of language use and the more complex language ecologies in which language use is situated are themselves changing, which in turn is linked to language shift."

Perley (2012:142) reinforces this assertion with his discussion of Maliseet, a language spoken by citizens of the Maliseet Nation in what is currently known as New Brunswick, Canada. As a speaker himself, Perley attests that creation of new domains is key in both combatting reductive narratives of "dying" languages and promoting what he calls "emergent vitalities." Perley explains that "emergent vitalities" are new and often unexpected domains of use for languages whose domains have been depleted. For Maliseet, this includes voiceovers on a

Canadian television program as well as recordings of children's books being read aloud. Perley (142) emphasizes that new social contexts and reasons to use the language are key in promoting its use. He also makes clear that "the creation of new domains for the Maliseet language comes from the skills and creativity of the members of the community." In other words, there would be no Maliseet language or social contexts in which to use it without the speakers themselves.

So how do these concepts translate to language resiliency patterns on the African continent? Di Carlo and Good (2017:256) explain that, "Work on multilingualism in Africa indicates that the main concern is not merely about whether language and culture are closely linked, but rather the sheer variety of ways that they can be connected to each other." Mufwene (2017:220) succeeds in relativizing and reframing many concepts easily taken for granted, including "indigenous," "multilingualism," and "colonialism." He is careful to dissect each of these and more and concludes that we should discuss these as local phenomena: "every evolution is local."

Mufwene (2017) argues that we should be thinking about generic phenomena as multiple: *multilingualisms* instead of multilingualism, for example. Di Carlo and Good (2017: 257) run with this concept and examine the ways in which Mufwene's reframing of vitality instead of endangerment can lead us to not only "be aware of factors that cause speakers to stop using particular languages but also to have a clear understanding of what factors are known to promote their continued use." In other words, what makes people more inclined to keep using languages in situations that current theories of resiliency predict to be detrimental?

Mufwene's and Di Carlo and Good's arguments for vitality based on differing realms of use (i.e. colonial, lingua franca, vernacular) can help us reframe our own assumptions of linguistic resiliency as they relate to matters of scale. For Mufwene, "languages are endangered

when their vernacular domains are encroached on by another language" (216). Di Carlo and Good's emphasis on language as practiced relationality that can lead to security through multiple affiliations provides a way forward for us to understand the ways in which linguistic practices function at multiple scales and through multiple levels of reciprocity and solidarity.

Nima's social domains and community-wide ideologies have become integral for the vitality of Nima Hausa linguistic practice. These include the home, the mosque, the market, and, as I argue, spaces of youth activism. At both the Young Zongo Women Fellowship sessions and ZongoVation classes, each session would begin in English, almost as a way to signal that an official or formal presentation was about to take place. Yet any time we were invited to discuss or work in small groups, the conversation immediately changed to Hausa. Students would politely code-switch if they knew someone in the class was not comfortably proficient at Hausa.

I recall one day I had a conversation with my friend Ayisha at ZongoVation Hub about her language preferences. I had noticed that whenever she was there, the class almost always code-switched into Twi when addressing the larger class. Whenever Ayisha is not there or I attend the afternoon class, the code-switching is almost always in Hausa. I finally asked her about it and she said, "Actually I'm a Ga!" Both of her parents speak Ga, but her mom speaks Hausa. She explained that when she was growing up, her mom didn't teach her Hausa. Now Ayisha can only understand the language when it is spoken to her, but it is difficult for her to respond. She prefers Twi, which almost everyone in the class understands, or Ga which she uses at home or with other people in the class who understand it. Language choice in the context of the YZWF meeting space and the ZongoVation Hub classroom is acutely responsive to who is present during a given interaction and serves as a kindness and acknowledgement of one's presence and preferences.

Linguistically speaking, these programs and classrooms are places in which Hausa language, as well as frequent code-switching in Ghanaian English and Akan Twi, are ubiquitous. These youth spaces promote a variety of Hausa language that is flexible and responsive to community dynamics and the local language ecology. These instances help shed light on how a minoritized language like Hausa has been able to thrive in this particular community, instead of fade away as many global immigrant languages tend to do. By weaving Hausa together with other locally used linguistic codes as well as using the language frequently in spaces of community activism and youth programming, Nima residents ensure that Hausa remains flexible, responsive, and active in multiple domains of life.

Conclusions

So, what does it mean to "be" Hausa in Nima? As demonstrated at length in the pages above, the answer is complicated and at times contradictory. In formulating the Hausa Other, outsiders to Nima and other Zongos in Accra craft imaginaries about the people who live there based on historically reinforced associations. While Nima Hausa speakers in Accra are indeed the target of rampant stereotyping and discrimination, they also wear their identities as Nima residents as a badge of honor and in-group solidarity. As a result, instead of deterring people from using the language, Nima Hausa's community-wide attitudes of inclusivity and strength in difference promote use of the language.

Hausa language and Zongo living come with some heavy associations, that include outsider status, indexes of danger, and associations with underdevelopment. Yet in their daily use of Hausa and dedication to strengthening community ties, residents of Nima push back against these associations with enduring neighborliness and grass-roots organizing. For people who live

in Nima, solidarity is paramount to survival and practices like using Hausa together promise a future they can all have a stake in. The final chapter explores what it is about local Hausa varieties linguistically that helps ensure its survival as a stable mode of communication and social relationship building into Nima's future.

Chapter 3: Why Learn Nima Hausa?: Language Blending and Accessibility

Kin Yi Kokari **(You Have Tried): A Nima Hausa Language Philosophy**

A little over five years ago, I spent my first summer in Nima. I traveled there with the intention of beginning my research on Hausa language use in Accra, equipped with what I assumed would be very applicable years of university language classes under my belt. However, with time, I realized just how different the Nima Hausa variety was from the standardized form of Hausa I had learned during my undergraduate coursework at Michigan State University. Each of my professors had been on Fulbright teaching fellowships to the US and came from different parts of northern Nigeria. The Hausa they taught me was that of the Hausa homeland and the same language I found in my dictionaries and textbooks. Yet I found it quite different from the language I heard people using in Nima back in the summer of 2017. When I used the Hausa I had learned from my professors and textbooks with residents of Nima, they would comment on how formal or antiquated I sounded and how they never used certain presumably common words I remembered from my language classes in college. Over the next few summers and my subsequent doctoral research in 2019, I embarked on the unexpected journey of re-learning a language I thought I already knew quite well.

The more I got to know people in the Nima community, the more I heard discourse around the local Hausa language variety itself. Many people called it a "pidgin," "broken language," or noted its informal register, even calling it a far cry from the "real" Hausa people spoke in Nigeria. Nonetheless, I worked to learn this local variety and was frequently met with surprise and encouragement from my friends and neighbors.

One afternoon, I was on my way to the *aure* of a friend of a friend in the neighboring New Town neighborhood. This Muslim wedding celebration focuses on the *amariya*, or new bride, and involves all of the women in her life dancing and eating together all afternoon and evening. Since the celebration was in New Town, I flagged down a share-taxi from the bus stop near my compound. I squeezed into the taxi, which already had three passengers, and heard them speaking to each other in Hausa. I politely greeted them, saying "san da rana!" (good afternoon!) The man sitting next to me turned his head and exclaimed, "Allahu akbar!" (Allah is the greatest!) He asked what I was doing in Nima and why I knew Hausa. We chatted as the taxi trundled down Nima Road and he explained that he was surprised to hear me speaking this way. "Kin yi kokari!" he said, which became an encouraging expression I heard ubiquitously around Nima over the next few years: "You are really trying!" In conversations with people in the neighborhood, I heard this sentiment again and again, expressing support of my efforts to use the language: "Kin yi kokari!"

Once we passed the market, the man sitting next to me signaled to the driver that his stop was approaching. He got out and stood chatting with the driver for a moment. Before I knew it, he had paid for my taxi fare. He smiled and waved, shaking his head again in surprise, saying "Allahu akbar," as we pulled away. I vividly remember this day because it cemented a constellation of values that I had heard expressed around learning Hausa in Nima. The effort one puts in to use Nima Hausa is seen as an act of community and solidarity. In the following pages, I examine how this inviting and non-purist attitude toward Hausa language, combined with its learner-friendly linguistic affordances, make Nima Hausa a sustainable and thriving language practice in Accra, despite the fact that its speakers often experience marginalization.

As a learner of Nima Hausa myself for the duration of my time in Accra and beyond, I often wondered what makes Nima Hausa so "learner friendly." In other words, what about the language, linguistically speaking, makes it accessible to learners with no prior exposure to the language. I have previously discussed the social and economic reasons why folks opt for Hausa, but this line of reasoning feels incomplete without examining the language's features themselves. This curiosity emerged as I began organizing the entries I had made in my notebook during my first summer in Nima. I regularly fought the impulse to check the words and expressions I had written down against the dictionaries I had brought with me. In hoping to confirm that I had heard and recorded a word "correctly, I realized slowly that many of the things I was learning in Nima were not in fact recorded in the pages of my dictionaries.

Once I returned home from my doctoral fieldwork in 2020, I created my own sort of dictionary in which I collected the terms and grammatical forms I had learned in Nima in order to compare to Standard Hausa records at a grander scale. What I found was a significant amount of differences of Standard Hausa that appeared to lend themselves to being more accessible to new learners through a variety of tactics. These included syntactic blending and phonological convergence with Twi and Ghanaian English, consolidation of certain morphology forms, and lexical paraphrasis using motivated compound phrases. Each of these processes of linguistic divergence from documented Standard Hausa had resulted in more "learnable" features, including less variety of input for new learners, forms more familiar to the languages that learners already commanded, and lexical items grounded in common experience or concretely observable phenomena. I began to understand Nima Hausa as a register that provides learners with the tools for interpretation needed to engage meaningfully with a new code.

In addition to these accessible linguistic adjustments, I found that there was a wealth of words in Nima Hausa that are not documented in Standard Hausa to my knowledge. Of the same ilk were words that appear to have cognates in Standard Hausa but whose semantic meaning had changed. While this may seem to be a contradiction by making the language less accessible by creating new words and meanings, I rather examine this process as part of a complex system of adaptations that draws on the affordances and resources of other languages in this community. I argue that this process instead works to achieve a sense of common ground for new and seasoned users alike.

Through this examination of adaptive features, I pose learning a mixed language as additive and creative, not subtractive or limiting as it is often portrayed in contact language literature. Blommaert (2010: 23) for instance introduces the concept of "truncated multilingualism" in which language users have "partially and unevenly developed resources" and incorporate bits of knowledge from their various linguistic repertoires. However, instead of learning languages "piecemeal" and "incompletely," I argue that language learning is more like a creative practice in resourcing a variety of features from one's available linguistic inputs and experiences. In the previous chapter, we looked at the socio-political dynamics that led to Nima Hausa's popularity in Accra. Now we can consider how these dynamics have shaped the language itself and why the existing linguistic patterns might have emerged in the ways that they did. Finally, we can examine what exactly about these features might make them so accessible and attractive to new learners in the first place.

Nima Hausa's Vitality in Accra

Recall Mufwene's (2002) insights from the previous chapter on language vitality, in which he explains that languages become threatened when their vernacular domains are impinged upon. He goes on to explain that different types of colonization result in predictable linguistic vitality outcomes. In exploitation colonies, like places in Africa and Asia, European languages did not enter the "vernacular" level like they did in settlement colonies, in places like North America and Australia. Because long-term occupation was never the objective, the imposition of colonial languages to replace local languages was rare. Instead local lingua francas like Hausa served as an intermediary form of communication for colonizers and local communities.

If we apply Mufwene's predictions to Accra, we can see the result in which a vast array of local languages and speakers survived colonial occupation and still thrive in the city's language ecosystem. Because of the consistent influx of newcomers, Nima Hausa continues to change and adopt new features as well as influences from other languages in the community to create an emergent mixed code. As a result, I argue that Nima Hausa is accessible and relatively "learnable" to those with no prior knowledge because speakers draw on familiar patterns that can be found in other local languages. Additionally, Nima Hausa speakers use patterns commonly found in other contact language situations, such as a smaller phoneme inventory and marginal morphological gender, which provide a relatively less intimidating amount of new input for learners.

Contact languages are often described in terms of what they lack in comparison to their contributing languages. However, once we sidestep this tendency and instead focus on what contact languages *do* have, our analysis can reveal unexpected virtues. By examining Nima Hausa as a linguistic bridge or an invitation to be in community with others, we can understand

features previously described by creolists as "simplifications," instead as efforts toward accessibility and inclusion. Features like these can make a language easier to learn and more robust in the face of language endangerment because of how available and inviting it is to new learners.

With this undergirding philosophy in mind, I examine a variety of features unique to Nima Hausa and analyze them through two lenses: accessibility and solidarity. To understand how linguistic features contribute to Hausa language vitality in Nima and Accra more generally, I examine features in a number of categories. First I discuss polylanguaging in syntax and consider the semantic robustness of Hausa pronouns in utterances with English verbs. Next I consider phonological convergence in which phonemes from Standard Hausa become influenced and reshaped for learnability based on engagements with other local languages. I also examine morphological changes in characteristics of Nima Hausa and note how a shifting paradigm in gender marking reduces the volume and variation of linguistic input for learners. Finally, I shift toward a discussion of pragmatics and the lexicon, noting how shared discourse markers, common phrases, and a unique vocabulary enhance a sense of solidarity for Nima Hausa users.

Decoding Nima Hausa: Loanwords, Code-Switching, or Polylanguaging

I argue that a major reason why Nima Hausa is attractive to new learners is its accessibility and relationship to other languages in Accra's linguistic ecology. On the one hand, we can observe a significant amount of what could be identified as code-switching and code-mixing. Yet, I remain hesitant to call what Nima Hausa users do as code-switching because mixture and adaptation are features of the Nima Hausa language variety itself. Woolard (2004) defines code-switching as "an individual's use of two or more language varieties in the same

speech event or exchange." Auer (1998) sees these switches as contrastively meaningful and interpretable by conversation participants to various effects. Code-switching and mixing also does "social work" and can index identity, establish social relationships, and be the focal point of ideologies and stereotypes about language users. Ahearn (2017) differentiates code-mixing from switching and describes it as "shifting that occurs mid-sentence or even mid-word" and has a greater degree of language blending. While Nima Hausa shares many features with these described practices, even the words code-switching and code-mixing presuppose languages as separate bounded entities, as Makoni and Pennycook (2005) and Irvine (2008) have previously critiqued. While differentiating codes can be useful for analysis, I encourage conceptualizing Nima Hausa as a confluence of many different ways of speaking that remain fluid, unbounded, and elusive to categorize all while remaining responsive to various audiences, identities, and social purposes.

In fact, those who use Nima Hausa do not often categorize the "non-Hausa" words they use as belonging to other languages. Rather, a vast array of words that can be traced back to Twi, Ga, Dagbani, Arabic, and more are just considered part of Nima Hausa. In Standard Hausa for example, *makullī* is used for "key," but in Nima Hausa, most people use *shafi* instead, originally from Dagbani (Sadat 2016:97). The ubiquitous and delicious fried cheese sold at Nima Market, called *wagashī* in Nima Hausa, comes from Beninese Fulani who made cheese with their cattle and is derived from the Dendi word *wagasi*.

How do we know when a word has become so fully immersed in a language that it is no longer considered a code-switch or even a loan? We see many of these occur in Nima Hausa that are clear loans from English. Yet they appear in dictionaries and grammars as Hausified lexemes. A key example of this is the word *robà* meaning a plastic/rubber material or eraser, which

appears as a Hausa word in Newman and Newman's (1977) dictionary. It is even listed with its correct grammatical plural *robobi*, which shows us just how seamlessly an English loan from "rubber" takes on Hausa phonology and morphology. Nima Hausa further reinterprets this loan and demonstrates a shift toward Twi phonology with the /ɔ/ phoneme in place of the Standard Hausa /o/ to form *rɔba*, a possible influence from Twi (Sadat 2016:111). Nima Hausa also employs a much more specific semantic category for this lexical entry and speakers use it almost exclusively to refer to plastic bags.

Similarly, the Standard Hausa word *gōtằ* is derived from the English loan for "gutter," following a similar phonological change to the above example. We also see it change shape in Nima Hausa and take on the Twi /ɔ/ phoneme to make *gɔta*. This too takes on new semantic meaning in Nima and instead of a simple street gutter, this refers to a location in the neighborhood. *Gɔta* refers to a bus stop along Nima Road, named for the massive gutter that runs through the neighborhood. Only a few decades ago, it flowed as a river, but is now mostly filled with refuse from surrounding neighborhoods, transforming it into a black sludge. The large cement bridge that runs the length of the *gɔta* has also become a hangout spot for many young men in Nima, who people-watch, chat, and smoke at all hours of the day and night. Many vendors set up their kiosks along the cement bridge, selling banana and pineapple as well as shoes and clothing.

Finally, the Standard Hausa word "titi" is derived from the English loan for "street" and we can see a reduction of the initial consonant cluster /st/ to /t/ and subsequent reduplication of the stem. This also follows Hausa's preference for open syllables. However, speakers of Nima Hausa return the loan a little more closely to the English phonology, adding back in the "st" consonant cluster word initially to form "stiti." While the previous two examples demonstrate

influence from Twi phonology on originally English loans, this example demonstrates a return to English phonological patterns, possibly due to extended contact with Ghanaian English varieties in Nima. This is all to say that perhaps these distinctions are not problems to solve, but rather social realities of language use in places like Nima in which multilingualism and polyglotism is the norm. Language does not fit comfortably into separate pieces that accord with specific "languages" in the colonial sense, but rather form a sort of fluid sea of options for users to select from.

Polylanguaging: A New Framework

While Nima Hausa eludes precise definition within frameworks of code-switching and code-mixing, I have continued to puzzle over exactly how to describe this phenomenon without falling into what Jorgensen et al. (2011) call the "monolingualism norm." The authors define this as the assertion that, "Persons who command two (or more) languages should at any given time use one and only one language, and they should use each of their languages in a way that does not in principle differ from the way in which monolinguals use that same language" (33). This smacks of the very same language purism previously mentioned and reinforces the ideals that separate languages are real entities that should not be mixed. They propose an alternative called the polylanguaging norm in which, "Language users employ whatever linguistic features are at their disposal to achieve their communicative aims as best they can, regardless of how well they know the involved languages; this entails that the language users may know - and use - the fact that some of the features are perceived by some speakers as not belonging together" (Jorgensen et al 2011: 34).

Dwelling on which words belong in which languages as I am tempted to do by labeling things "Hausa" and "English," is a symptom of the "monolingualism norm." Yet from a polylanguaging perspective, we would not need to separate utterances into loan-words or occurrences of code-switching, but rather acknowledge that speakers draw from a variety of repertoires. I discuss this polylanguaging practice in Nima and its undergirding ideologies of accessibility and solidarity throughout the remainder of the chapter. We can see two illustrative examples of how each is deployed by two different speakers toward different ends.

Residents of Nima comfortably engage in a variety of codes to invite in and make accessible their language to others. The following demonstrative quote comes from a talk show on the Zongo TV station called Zee Pep and Zongo Connect created by and for Zongo residents. They stream live on YouTube and address current issues in the Zongo communities of Accra. The first excerpt comes from the Zee Pep talk show, which is hosted by Mardiya Suleman Cheiba, whose work with ZongoVation I discussed in the previous chapter. Mardiya was born and raised in Nima and so are many of the guests she hosts on the show. Their language use on the show provides myriad examples of the ways in which Nima Hausa is used in conversation on a variety of topics. I employ examples from various episodes in the following chapter to demonstrate language phenomena employed by Nima Hausa speakers.

Welcoming viewers back from a commercial break, Mardiya begins to introduce the episode's topic on marriage and family. Before diving into the conversation, she provides a meta-commentary on the ways in which language is used on the Zee Pep talk show.

Mardiya:

Welcome back from that quick commercial break. It's still the Zee Pep Talk Show, where I say we talk about issues that bother us. Eh, also *ina son Turanci, ban ya yi Hausa na raw, ban sa Turanci cikin bai ya sa akwai mini ga fara. Muna da view* **Western-***nda suma Turanci*

suke ji. Ya sa kammata muna **mix** *language-na saboda sumo su samu su ji mu yi muke fadi yado ya yi musu amfani.*

(**Translation:** Welcome back from that quick commercial break. It's still the Zee Pep Talk Show, where I say we talk about issues that bother us. Also I like English, I won't use Hausa raw (only), I didn't put English in it. I have to start. Pardon me. We have Western viewers who speak English. It's necessary that we mix our language because they should be able to hear what we are saying and spreading it will benefit them.)

(Suleman Cheiba 2020)

Here Mardiya explains that she intends to mix more English words into the discussion that will make the program more accessible to Western viewers. Mardiya self-consciously notes Nima Hausa's accommodating qualities and presents this value of accessibility on air. In this excerpt, we can see that including influences from another language is not in fact a threat as many purism ideologies would argue. Instead, we see inclusion of linguistic features from other codes as a way to invite listeners in.

In an excerpt from Zongo Connect, we can see an example of the Nima value of effort to speak Nima Hausa signaling solidarity at play. The host, Zulaihatiya Abubakar, uses Hausa in order to reach viewers and encourages her guest Khadija Iddrissu to do the same. Khadija, whose work I discussed previously with the Initiative for Youth Development, appeared on Zongo Connect to discuss the topic of education for Zongo girls. At the start of the interview, Zulaihatiya welcomes Khadija and viewers to the show, explaining their topic for the day.

Zulaihatiya:

Muna nema mu sani iyayen zongo shi nte **school** *yayi kode…muna nema mu sani* **role in the education** *ntake* **play** *cikin* **life** *yaria n mace* **most especially because** *mun ka duba cikin zongo, cikin zongo nemu, akwai matan da yawanda ba su samu dama* **school** *ba. Yanzu da muna kokari de baria na su je school. Muna nema mun sani amfani da ke cikin, she ya sa* **bossu**-*na Khadija. Ta tanye ni mun* **digest** *kin* **topic** *nan.* **My boss**, *san da zuwa.*

(**Translation:** We are seeking to know from zongo parents who go to school or…we are seeking to know the role education plays in the life of young girls and women, most especially because we see in the zongo, what is found in the zongo, there are many women who do not have the chance to go to school. Now we are trying to allow them to go to school. We are seeking to know the benefits within that and why from my boss Khadija. She will help me and we will digest your topic here. My boss, greetings at your arrival.)

In response, Khadija notes that her Hausa fluency might not meet Zulaihatiya's expectations.

Khadija:

Zhulaiha. Sannu kadai, **but my Hausa is not really good so I would mix it with…**

(Translation: Greetings, but my Hausa is not really good so I would mix it with…)

Zulaihatiya: Don't worry, it's Zongo TV dey.

Khadija: Oh okay.

Zulaihatiya: Mun ya zo, muna zo sister muna turanci gaskiya

(**Translation:** We have come, we're coming, sister, we're speaking English, it's true)

Khadija continues the interview almost exclusively in English with Zulaihatiya replying

and asking questions in Nima Hausa and English. However, once it comes time to address the

viewing audience directly, Khadija makes the effort to use more of her Hausa repertoire to get

the attention of Zongo community members. Even though she previously expressed that her

command of Hausa might not meet expectations, she understands the importance of

communicating with viewers in a language that will be the most likely to reach them.

Zulaihatiya: So I want you to look straight into my camera and tell my viewers out there how important education is. Our parents, to the girl child who is watching you, who is growing up, to our parents out there who have decided that, "No *yaria-na ba ta je* **school.** *Ina*

son ta zama gida ta ko yi aiki. Na kai shi nje matan aure kode ban son ta ko yi aiki. Na yi matan aure. Ba ta ta ta je ta zama kun yi aiki. Ki je ki duba cikin kewane, ki gai da musu!

(**Translation:** "No my daughter, she won't go to school. I want her to be in the house or to work. I will take her to go be a married woman or I don't want her to work. I will make her a married woman." She's not going to be around for you to work. [To Khadija] Go and look around. Greet them!

Khadija: It's humble appeal to *iyanen, mata da maza,* **um sisters** *suke cikin zongo naimu aya ba su ta mara musu baya de suna son su je* **school** *sun samu* **education,** *su,* **though** *i ka bari mace ta ya ta je* **school** *ta yi ta duba kainta, ta kuma ta duba um iyayenta da* **community** *ma ya yi* **benefit from** *ita, ita ita je* **school,** *mun masayinta cikin* **community. She will be part of the voice in the community that will be able to make decisions and impacting the life of not only her immediate family but the entire community as a whole.**

(**Translation:** It's a humble appeal to parents, women and men, um sisters who live in our zongo, give them support, they want to go to school and find education, they, though, when you allow a woman to go to school, she will look out for herself, she also, she will look out um for her parents and the whole community will benefit from her, her her going to school, we as a whole in the community.)

Host: *To Hajiya Khadija, mun gode,* **bossu-**na, na gode sosai. Yau na koyo abubuwan da yawa.*

(**Translation:** So, Hajiya Khadija, we thank you, my boss, I thank you so much. Today, I learned many things.)

(Abubakar and Idrissu 2020)

In both examples from the Zee Pep and Zongo Connect talk shows, we see ideologies of community building through inclusive language use at play. For the speakers featured above, there is an existing awareness of the effect that linguistic accommodation and effort have in the sustainability of life in the Nima Zongo community.

Syntax in Nima Hausa Polylanguaging

Now that we have seen a few examples of polylanguaging in practice, I want to examine how and potentially why different language features interact and influence each other. First, I

demonstrate this using syntactic patterns in Nima Hausa sentence creation. Nima Hausa has emerged as a way of using language that employs features from a series of neighboring languages in Accra. While Hausa varieties form the basis of this code, Akan Twi, Ghanaian English, and others contribute as well.

To understand the ways in which these language features interact, we can first turn to syntactic patterns, particularly in utterances with a pronoun and verb. In Nima Hausa utterances, pronouns are typically uttered in Hausa, while verbs are included in English. A common conversation marker in Nima Hausa is "Ka ji" (masculine 2nd person singular) or "Kin ji?" (feminine 2nd person singular) which means "Did you hear?" An American English speaker might recognize this marker as the sentence-final phrase, "You know?" When employed, this discourse marker can employ the verb form in English and surface as "ka understand" or "kin understand?" instead of "Ka/kin ji?" However, I never heard the utterance pattern reversed, with an English pronoun and a Hausa verb, which would be something like, "You ji?"

When I first began to notice this pattern, I wondered to what extent linguistic features themselves might encourage speakers to do this. A possible explanation is the way that semantic load is distributed in Hausa grammar. A sizable amount of information is packed into Hausa pronouns, which arguably makes them more integral to maintain the intended meaning of the utterance. Verbs, on the other hand, are required to carry less of the semantic burden and are more flexibly translated into English. To understand why pronouns are preserved in Nima Hausa, we can turn to Newman's (2000:564) identification of what he calls the "preverbal pronoun-aspect-complex," or the PAC. Included within the PAC are a weak subject pronoun (wsp) and a tense/aspect/mood marker (TAM). This means that Hausa pronouns provide a considerable amount of information inside a tiny lexical package, including gender, number,

tense, and aspect. Bickel and Nichols (2007:189) explain that Hausa employs "cumulative exponence" which is demonstrated by "isolating (free) formatives cumulating person agreement and tense/aspect/mood values."

In the table below, we can see a series of paradigms which demonstrate the variety of semantic meaning packaged inside these pronouns. Take the pronoun *kā* as an example. *Kā* indicates that the pronoun is second person, singular, and masculine. It also indicates that the action performed has been completed, unburdening the verb *ji* of that semantic responsibility. For a Nima Hausa speaker, preserving the Hausa pronoun in a given utterance and swapping in an English verb makes maintaining someone's intended meaning somewhat easier than the reverse. English second person pronouns only distinguish between person, requiring the other semantic dimensions of gender, number, and aspect to be included elsewhere in the utterance.

What I find especially interesting with the English verb in Nima Hausa utterances is the fact that it is not modified to agree with the Hausa pronoun's aspect. Essentially, Nima Hausa speakers treat the English verb as though it were a Hausa verb, leaving it unaffected by aspect and tense. Drawing on the aforementioned example, the utterance "Ka understand" pairs a completive aspect "have done" with the neutral citation form of the English verb "understand." Instead of altering the verb to the somewhat comparative English present perfect tense "have/has understood," Nima Hausa speakers maintain the default citation form "understand."

In a live broadcast of the Zee Pep talk show from August 29, 2020, Mardiya, the host, demonstrates this tendency to use a Hausa pronoun and English verb with the first person singular future aspect *za mu*. She announces the episode's topic which will highlight the complexities of navigating pressures from family to get married. At the top of the show, she says the following:

Mardiya

To abin da za mu discuss yau ke nan pressure from society and friends to get married.

(**Translation:** So the thing we will discuss today is pressure from society and friends to get married.)

The Hausa pronoun preserves the semantic information for first person, plural, and future aspect, which leaves the English verb "discuss" unencumbered with additional semantic responsibilities. The three tables below demonstrate paradigms for pronouns expressing completive aspect, continuous aspect, and future aspect.

Completive Aspect	Singular	Translation	Plural	Translation
1st Person	nā ji	I have heard	mun ji	We have heard
2nd Person	kā ji	You (m.) have heard	kun ji	You have heard
	kin ji	You (f.) have heard		
3rd Person	yā ji	He has heard	sun ji	They have heard
	tā ji	She has heard		
	an ji	One has heard		

 (Kraft and Kirk-Greene 1973)

Continuative Aspect	Singular	Translation	Plural	Translation
1st Person	inà aik̀ì	I am working	munà aikì	We are working
2nd Person	kanằ aikì	You (m.) are working	kunằ aikì	You are working
	kinằ aikì	You (f.) are working		
3rd Person (m/f/n)	yanằ aikì	He is working	sunằ aikì	They are working
	tanằ aik̄ì	She is working		
	anằ aikì	One is working		

(Kraft and Kirk-Greene 1973)

Future Aspect	Singular	Translation	Plural	Translation
1st Person	zân zō	I will come	zā mù zō	We will come
2nd Person (m/f)	zā kà zō	You (m.) will come	zā kù zō	You will come
	zā kì zō	You (f.) will come		
3rd Person (m/f/n)	zâi zō	He will come	zā sù zō	They will come
	zā tà zō	She will come		
	zā à zō	One will come		

(Kraft and Kirk-Greene 1973)

Examining these syntactic patterns can help us begin to parse exactly how and why Nima Hausa draws on particular grammatical constructions from other language patterns in the local language ecology. Based on Bickel and Nichols' (2007:189) concept of "cumulative exponence," we can begin to understand why speakers might favor pronoun constructions from Standard Hausa forms because of its densely packed semantic information. This also supports the notion that simplification is far from the only process that occurs in language contact. Source languages may also contribute their complexities in cases like this one, where Hausa's pronouns are so semantically and grammatically rich that their utility endures.

Phonological Convergence

Nima Hausa's phonological inventory is heavily influenced by the languages in the community's language ecology. First, we can see evidence of this influence in Nima Hausa's consonants. Speakers of Standard Hausa employ a variety of glottalized consonants, including implosives and ejectives. While still widely used in some Nigerian varieties, these sounds have largely changed in Ghanaian Hausa varieties, including Nima Hausa. Instead of preserving these glottalized consonants, Nima Hausa speakers use their non-glottalized counterparts. Glottalized

consonants, including implosives /ɓ/ and /ɗ/ as well as ejective /ƙ/ and /s'/, become

non-glottalized plosives /b/, /d/, and /k/ as well as fricative /s/subsumed under their

non-glottalized counterparts. In the following examples, the /s'/ phoneme is represented by the

diagraph *ts* to accord with Hausa orthography (Newman 2000: 393).

While non-glottalized consonants do exist in Standard Hausa forms, we might ask what

motivates speakers of Nima Hausa to exclusively use them in place of previously glottalized

consonants. I argue that this is evidence of linguistic accessibility, a feature of Nima Hausa

which makes it more learnable and more inviting to speakers of neighboring languages. Akan

Twi and Ghanaian English do not use implosives and ejectives, instead only utilizing their

non-glottalized consonantal counterparts.

Each of these changes differs at one node of differentiation: the manner of articulation.

Therefore, Nima Hausa users maintain the sound's place of articulation and voicing quality, but

shift the manner of articulation. The chart below isolates the phonemes that have undergone

change from a cross-linguistically more rare sound to a sound shared by other local languages,

including Akan Twi and Ghanaian English.

Phoneme Change	Standard Hausa	Akan Twi	Ghanaian English	Nima Hausa
Bilabial Implosive —> Bilabial Plosive	ɓ	b	b	b
Alveolar Implosive —> Alveolar Plosive	ɗ	d	d	d
Velar Ejective —> Velar Plosive	ƙ	k	k	k
Alveolar Ejective —> Alveolar Fricative	ts	s	s	s

Sadat (2016) also confirms these phonological observations in other present-day Ghanaian Hausa varieties, first noting the absence of implosive and ejective phonemes /ɓ/, /ɗ/, /ƙ/, and /ʔ/ as well as the absence of the voiceless ejective alveolar affricate /ts/. A review of Newman's (2000:392) phonological inventory confirms the existence of these phonemes in more standardized varieties in Nigeria. Each of these are absorbed into their non-glottalized counterparts /b/, /d/, /k/, and /s/ while /ʔ/ is omitted completely. Based on my own data collection, the chart below demonstrates examples I learned specifically in Nima Hausa, including sound changes word initially, word internally, and across different word classes.

Standard Hausa	Nima Hausa	English Translation
ɓarawo	barawo	(n.) thief
ɓata	bata	(v.) to spoil
ɓera	bera	(n.) rat
taɓa	taba	(v.) to touch
ɗanye	danye	(n.)/(adj.) fresh, raw, unripe
ɗiya	diya	(n.) daughter (gender neutral in Nima Hausa)
ƙaguwa	kaguwa	(n.) crab
ƙashi	kasha	(n.) bone
niƙa	nika	(v.) to grind
tsakanin	sakanin	(prep.) between
tsakuwa	sakuwa	(n.) gravel
tsaro	saro	(n.) defense
matsa	masa	(v.) to move closer

In addition to phoneme categories merging, there is also evidence for emerging categories in Nima Hausa phonemes, including the addition of the consonant /p/ and vowels /ɔ/ and /ɛ/. We

can see evidence of a word initial /p/ in Nima Hausa in the pronunciation of "pashi," meaning "to burst." This is a cognate with the Standard Hausa verb "fashè" also meaning "to burst." This substitution is not entirely surprising because many Standard Hausa speakers will substitute /f/ in place of /p/ when speaking English. At a 2018 linguistics conference in Accra, I recall hearing a presenter from Nigeria discussing Hausa sign language and frequently referring to the position of the "falm" instead of "palm." We also see this in English loanwords that have been Hausified like "famfo" derived from "pump" and "têf" derived from "tape."

I also observed the addition of two vowels in Nima Hausa language: /ɔ/ and /ɛ/. Sadat (2016) argues that Ghanaian Hausa varieties adopted these vowels from Akan languages. Dolphyne (1988:7) confirms this in her phonological survey of vowels in Akan languages as well. Sadat (2016:111) demonstrates a few examples of changes in pronunciation. We can also see two layers of influence with the word "roba" below, which is a loanword from Ghanaian English meaning "rubber" which also undergoes phonological change influenced by Akan.

(1) to —> tɔ   (2) roba —> rɔba
    "okay"   "plastic bag"

(3) dare —> dɛre   (4) rage —> rɛge
    "night"   "reduce"

I also observed the Standard Hausa phoneme /a/ and diphthong /ai/ become /e/ in Nima Hausa as shown in the table below.

Standard Hausa	Nima Hausa	English Translation
rairaiyi	rereyɛ	(n.) sand
sai an jima	se an jima	(phrase) see you later
yayyafi	yeyefi	(v.) to drizzle (as in rain)

Historically speaking, Dakubu (1997:133) identifies these phonological features in Ghanaian Hausa varieties in addition to a tendency toward affrication of velar consonants. Dakubu notes that these features were also identified in Ursula Feyer's 1947 analysis of a Hausa text from Bonifatius Foli, an Ewe person from Togo who likely spoke Hausa as a second language. While Feyer argues that these features come from Foli's background as an Ewe speaker, Dakubu remains unsure of their origin point due to their widespread use in parts of Ghana as well. She explains that while she initially analyzed this as a feature transfer from Akan languages in Ghana, affrication only came into those languages during the 19th century.

Dakubu (1997:134) explains that, "Given the large numbers of slaves acquired by Akan-speaking communities in the course of that century, many of whom either came from an area where Hausa was the major second language or were part of a Hausaphone caravan between the times of capture and sale, one wonders whether the influence could not as well have been in the other direction." This supports the idea that language change and influence are not simply unidirectional or a transfer or imposition from more powerful to less powerful groups. Dakubu here offers us a glimpse into how enslaved people likely had massive influence on those who enslaved them.

Additionally, Sadat (2016) observes that velar stop consonants /k/ and /g/, which are sometimes lightly palatalized in Standard Hausa, become affricates when they precede the front high vowel /i/. Newman (2000:416) confirms that this pattern of palatalization does occur in Standard Hausa, but that this regular change is often neglected because "the palatalization of velars, unlike the palatalization of alveolars, is not reflected in orthography or standard linguistic transcription." He gives the example of the /k/ phoneme preceding high front /i/ in "kīfī"

meaning "fish," which undergoes a change in some dialects to a palatalized /ky/. What Dakubu (1997:133) and later Sadat (2016:118) point out is how many dialects that spread further West, including those used in parts of Togo and Ghana, undergo an even more extreme shift from palatalization of those velars to affrication as shown below:

(5) kifi —> tʃifi   (6) gida —> dʒida

(7) aiki —> aitʃi   (8) girma —> dʒirma

An important difference between Ghanaian Hausa and Nima Hausa is that velar palatalization and affrication is not the norm for many speakers of Hausa in Nima. While I expected the absence of implosives and ejectives in Nima Hausa due to possible convergence with Twi and Ghanaian English, I was surprised that Nima Hausa does not usually employ the affricates discussed above, since both Twi and Ghanaian English use them. At first, I was unsure what could explain this difference, but found a possible answer from Dakubu (1997:138) who explains that the folks who use Hausa in Nima and Accra New Town are "not for the most part long-distance traders, neither are they preponderantly soldiers and police." Further, she notes that, "the very first settlers in many of the new suburbs, such as Nima and Kanda, had been Hausa and Hausa-speaking Fulani," who arrived closer to the 1930s. This was decades to centuries later than other speakers of Hausa, who arrived as enslaved people, militia, or traders.

In other words, the palatalization seems to come from people who learned Hausa as a second language and brought it to other parts of Ghana and Togo with phonological alterations from Nigerian varieties. Dakubu here suggests that the Hausa brought to Nima, New Town, and Kanda, where I spent the majority of my time researching, was from first language speakers of

Hausa, whose language was ultimately not shaped by the variety of historical mechanisms that transpired over decades to influence those velar consonants in other varieties of Ghanaian Hausa. In these cases, we see an instance of phonological maintenance instead of shift based on variable historic migration and settlement patterns.

We can see consistent evidence of this across a number of Zee Pep Talk Show episodes in which the velar consonants mentioned do not undergo affrication. In a September 2020 interview with Ijahra, a local activist and entrepreneur, host Mardiya and regular correspondent Bintah discuss the hotly contested topic of living with one's in-laws. Mardiya first turns to Ijahra to get his perspective as a man on the issues of cohabiting with in-laws. He immediately meditates on the complexities of the relationships and dynamics at play, commenting on how often the new wife doesn't always get a say and how due to the communal nature of compound housing structures, privacy and lack of ability to make one's own decisions can create problems. He frequently mentions "gida," the family house, and pronounces the velar as a stop, not an affricate.

Ijahra:

Kin zo kaman, kin zo **gida-n** aure-oo, kuma **gida**, you share it with miji-nki, **gida-nku** ke nan

(**Translation:** It's like, you come, you come to the house of your marriage-oo, the house too, you share it with your husband. It's your house!)

In another interview, we see more evidence for the maintenance of the velar stop consonant preceding a high front vowel in an exchange between Mardiya and her guest Adiza on another episode of the Zee Pep Talk Show from August 2020. They joke about whether or not to accept a man's offer of marriage if all he promises is a single room without amenities like a

kitchen and a bathroom. Mardiya asks, "Will you settle for *wani* single room?" inserting the

Hausa word for "some." Both guests laugh and we see Adiza look up, jocularly skeptical,

"Single room?" They both laugh and continue to chat, Mardiya qualifying to say if he is "mutum

kirki," a nice guy, would she accept a single room? Here, she too pronounces the velar as a stop

and not an affricate.

In examining the data all together, I argue that the sound patterns that exist in Nima

Hausa lend themselves to being more accessible to new learners, especially if those learners have

familiarity with Twi or English. Because of processes of phonological convergence, in which

phoneme categories become subsumed by others and the addition of Twi and English sounds,

learners have both less variety of input, including decreased need to learn more phonologically

rare forms like implosives and ejectives, and more familiar cues found in languages they already

command.

Morphological De-Gendering

Accounts of pidgin and creole languages often cite the morphology of those languages as

analytic, as opposed to synthetic (Velupillai 2015: 325). In other words, contact languages tend

to rely more heavily on isolating forms that do not affect the word structure, as opposed to

synthetic forms which use agglutination or affixation to achieve similar meaning. There is a

certain iconicity to isolating morphosyntax that guides a learner to attach unique meaning to each

free morpheme, as opposed to trying to parse an affix and deduce its meaning from an

agglutinated form. Nima Hausa does not exhibit evidence of isolating morphosyntax and in fact

maintains much of its fusional patterning. However, it is important to remember that we are

glimpsing Nima Hausa during a specific point in time in which language change is in flux. So

while this variety's morphosyntactic features are not isolating, its fusional features have undergone significant consolidation in the form of nominal gender reduction.

According to Newman (2000), Standard Hausa and many of its dialects employ a binary gender system for masculine and feminine nouns. He describes the gender system as an "essential, fully functioning part of the grammatical system" in most dialects of the language. Yet, in dialects used in Nigerian states Zaria and Bauchi, he explains that "grammatical gender has been lost to a great extent, being preserved inconsistently and in only some parts of like grammar, e.g., the pronouns" (2000: 200). And finally, he specifically mentions Hausa dialects in Ghana and others that fall outside of Hausaland proper in which the "loss of gender has progressed even further" (2000: 200).

The specifics of this de-gendering in Ghanaian Hausa were first addressed by Sadat (2016:121), who observes that in this variety, such "distinctions are totally absent" and instead speakers opt solely for a neutral marking that matches the masculine markings in forms closest to Standard Hause. He points out that the presence of grammatical gender in Hausa is in fact a "conspicuous difference" because neighboring Ghanaian languages do not mark for gender. Instead, Bodomo and Marfo (2006) discuss a noun class system in Akan languages and dialects that groups nouns by their patterned morphology in singular and plural affixes. I examine this de-gendering process by investigating grammatical elements that respond to gendered nouns in Standard Hausa, but are absent in both Ghanaian Hausa and Nima Hausa. We see evidence of this in the Nima Hausa copula, or stabilizer, as well as possessive pronoun suffixes, including free and bound clitic forms. However, the effects of this morphological convergence in Nima Hausa only impact certain aspects of the grammar and gender is still maintained in certain words and pronouns, which I examine last.

The Copula/Stabilizer

First, Newman (2000:545) identifies this copular particle in Standard Hausa as a "stabilizer" (noted below as STAB) which emerges as *nē* for masculine singular as well as all plural nouns, and *cē* for feminine singular nouns. He notes that it serves a few different functions, including to create nonverbal sentences, serve as a focus particle, and for reinforcement or emphasis.

(9) dōkī̀   nē   (10) àkuyā̀ cē   (11) awākī   nề
    horse   STAB.MASC   goat STAB.FEM   goat.PL STAB.PL
    "It's a horse"   "It's a goat"   "They're goats"

Sadat (2016:121) reports that Ghanaian Hausa employs *nē* exclusively for all cases that Newman identifies, testifying to the lack of noun gender in this variety. Therefore, the *ce* associated with feminine nouns in Standard Hausa is absent. In the following example, we see the *ce* ending morph into *ne* for a bird, a noun that would be feminine in Standard Hausa.

(12) tsútǹsù cè   (13) súǹsù né
    bird   STAB.FEM   —>   bird   STAB
    "It's a bird"   "It's a bird"

The following chart demonstrates Nima Hausa's shared tendency to exclusively use "ne" forms for all nouns due to the lack of grammatical gender in copula construction.

Copula			
Standard Hausa	**Nima Hausa**	**Pronoun Type**	**English Translation**

ne	ne	3rd Person Singular Masculine Copula/Stabilizer	is
ce	ne	3rd Person Singular Feminine Copula/Stabilizer	is
ne	ne	3rd Person Plural Gender Neutral Copula/Stabilizer	are

Nima Hausa follows Sadat's observations, omitting *ce* from its inventory and using only *ne* for copula constructions. Even with referents that would be feminine in varieties closer to Standard Hausa, *ne* is employed exclusively.

The Linker Clitic

Further consequences of noun de-gendering can be found in the ubiquitous linker clitic found in Standard Hausa as *-n/-r̃* and only as *-n* in Ghanaian Hausa and Nima Hausa. Genitive constructions, pre-nominal adjective/noun constructions, and derived genitive prepositions employ the linker clitic. However, Newman (2000:300) also explains that there exist "free linkers" in the genitive form from which the clitics are derived. In all three forms of Hausa explored here, the possessed precedes the possessor. Below are a few examples from Newman (2000:300-302), who demonstrates the feminine free linker *ta* and the masculine counterpart *na*, as well as their cliticized versions feminine bound linker *-r̃* and masculine bound linker *-n*. It should be noted that the free linkers are far less common in Ghanaian Hausa and Nima Hausa, reserved mostly for expressing ordinal numbers, as shown below with *na ukù* for "third," while *ta* is omitted completely.

Genitival Linker

Standard Hausa	Nima Hausa	Pronoun Type	English Translation
-n	-n	Masculine Genitival Linker	of
-r̃	-n	Feminine Genitival Linker	of

14) kibiyằ ta mahàr̃bī
 bow of hunter
 The hunter's bow

(Newman 2000:300)

15) yārằ na ukù
 boy of three
 The third boy

(Newman 2000:301)

16) màta-r̃ Bellò
 wife-of Bello
 Bello's wife

(Newman 2000:302)

17) gwaggò-n-mu
 aunt-of-1PL
 our aunt

(Newman 2000:302)

In addition to genitive constructions, pre-nominal adjective/noun constructions in Standard Hausa employ gendered linkers as well. Below we see the adjective for "white" "fari" feminized to "fara" and take the feminine -r̃ linker to modify "mōtằ" meaning "car." Meanwhile, the adjective "mākēkề" meaning "huge" takes the masculine -n linker to modify "dūtsề" meaning "stone."

18) farar̃ mōtằ
 white-of car
 White house

(Newman 2000:311)

19) mākēkền dūtsề
 huge-of stone
 huge stone

(Newman 2000:30)

Finally, as mentioned above, the linker is also employed to derive prepositions from nouns in Standard Hausa. Below we see "wurī" meaning "place" become "wurin" meaning "at the place" and "bằkī" meaning mouth become "bằkin" meaning "at the side of.

20)   Sunà   wuri-n   aikì̀   21) Nā gan shì   à bà̀ki-n hanyā
        3PL.PROG at.place-of work   1SG.COMPL. see 3SG at side-of
road
        They are at work.   I saw him on the side of the road.
*wurin is derived from wurī (place)   *bà̀kin is derived from bà̀kī
(mouth)

(Newman 2000:471)   (Newman 2000:470)

In learning Nima Hausa, I observed a complete absence of the -r̃ clitic. Whenever I would

try to use it in conversation, my interlocutors would more often than not interpret it as a mistake.

In Nima Hausa, all genitival linkers become degendered and the -*n* clitic form is the only one

used. In the following examples, *gida*, which would be masculine in Standard Hausa, for

"house," maintains its -*n* clitic, while *riga*, which would be feminine in Standard Hausa, for shirt,

replaces the -r̃ clitic for -*n*.

Standard Hausa   *Nima Hausa*

(22) gida-n-ta   —>   (23) gida-n-ta
house.M-GEN.M-3.FSG   house-GEN-3.FSG
her house   her house

(24) riga-r-ta   (25) riga-n-ta
     shirt.F-GEN.F-3.FSG   —>   shirt-GEN-3.FSG
     her shirt   her shirt

Dakubu (1977) as well as Sadat (2016) observe this same replacement n of -r̃ in Ghanaian

Hausa and note an exclusive shift to the -n linker instead. Sadat demonstrates the following:

(26) yàríyá-r-ta   (27) yariya-n-ta
     daughter-of-3FS   —>   daughter-of-3FS
     her daughter   her daughter

We can observe this phenomenon ubiquitously in examples from the aforementioned Zee Pep Talk Show about societal pressures around marriage in the Zongo community. As previously noted, Mardiya begins the show by saying, "Topic-n yau" meaning "today's topic." We see the linker clitic's flexibility here as it attaches to a Ghanaian English word to create a possessive form in this dependent marked scenario. As the conversation evolves, Mardiya discusses the ways in which the sheer frequency of marriages in the community puts pressure on unmarried women. She cites "abuyoyi-n-ki" meaning "your friends" as evidence, to say that the pressure mounts when everyone you know is getting married.

(28) abuyoyi-n-ki
　　　friends-POSS-2.S.
　　　your friends

"Abuya" is the singular Nima Hausa term for female friend. We see here that the masculine -n clitic is applied instead of the feminine -r̃ clitic. Standard Hausa users would instead employ the word "abokiya," a feminized form with ending "-ya" derived from the masculine noun form "aboki."

Possessive Pronoun Suffix

Standard Hausa distinguishes between masculine and feminine self referents in first person singular possessive constructions: *-na* for male speakers and *-ta* for female speakers. However Nima Hausa users instead opt only for *-na* to accommodate any gendered speaker. Gender differentiation still exists in much of Nima Hausa's pronoun inventory, which I discuss in the following section.

Possessive Pronoun Affixes

Standard Hausa	Nima Hausa	Pronoun Type	English Translation
-na	-na	1st Person Singular Masculine Possessive	my
-ta	-na	1st Person Singular Feminine Possessive	my

Where is morphological gender preserved?

Gender remains present in plenty of forms in both the grammar and lexicon in Nima Hausa, most obviously demonstrated in certain pronoun forms. The chart below provides an outline of some extant gendered pronouns in Nima Hausa with Standard Hausa forms for reference. Because Hausa pronouns are bound up with tense/aspect markers, there exists a far longer list of gendered pronoun forms that do not lie within the scope of this project. However, it is worth noting that the gendered system extends throughout many of the tense aspect pronoun constructions. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, Newman (2000:564) makes the case for what he calls the "preverbal pronoun-aspect-complex (PAC)," in which tense/aspect/mood are made up of a weak subject pronoun (wsp) and a tense/aspect/mood marker (TAM). Here we will only look at non-tense/aspect pronouns to quickly demonstrate the maintenance of aspects of the gender system.

Maintained Gender Distinctions in Pronouns			
Standard Hausa	**Nima Hausa**	**Pronoun Type**	**English Translation**
kai	**ka**	2nd Person Singular Masculine Subject	you
ke	**ki**	2nd Person Singular Feminine Subject	you
shi	shi	3rd Person Singular Masculine Subject	he
ita	**(i)ta**	3rd Person Singular Feminine Subject	she
-ka	-ka	2nd Person Singular Masculine Possessive	your

-ki	-ki	2nd Person Singular Feminine Possessive	your
-sa/-shi	**-shi**	3rd Person Singular Masculine Possessive	his
-ta	-ta	3rd Person Singular Feminine Possessive	her

While we still see gender distinctions in the above pronouns, some do undergo minor changes (shown in bold). This demonstrates a possible snapshot of change occurring in which forms maintain gender, but are altered to mirror existing forms and thus provide speakers with fewer variations to remember. This accords with my overall observations of accessibility because learners need only remember one form instead of multiple variations of similar grammatical functions. The Standard Hausa second person singular masculine and feminine subject pronouns *kai* and *ke* become *ka* and *ki,* keeping with Nima Hausa's tendency to create mirrors of existing forms (in this case to match the third person possessive suffix forms).

Additionally, we see a minor truncation in the third person singular feminine subject pronoun, which optionally drops the first vowel to match the possessive pronoun form *-ta*. Finally, while both *-sa* and *-shi* are grammatically acceptable 3rd person masculine singular possessive pronouns in Standard Hausa, Nima Hausa speakers opt exclusively for *-shi*. This is an echo of the direct object pronoun form of the third singular masculine form (Newman 2000; Sadat 2016). Therefore, while we don't see de-gendering across the board, we do see evidence of forms merging to reduce the cognitive load of learning multiple variations for comparable semantic meaning.

While we can see gender maintained in certain words and phrases in Nima Hausa, this is purely semantic and does not interact grammatically. For instance, Standard Hausa words like *yaro* (boy) and *yarinya* (girl) as well as *sarauta* (male leader) and *sarauniya* (female leader) have a semantically and grammatically gendered distinction. Nima Hausa speakers have created

certain words to indicate a female subject like *abuya* (female friend) *and gwoleliya* (female expert), to distinguish from aboki (male friend) and *gwole* (male expert). However, these are only semantically gendered and thus all take the *ne* copula, first person possessive *-na,* and the genitive clitic *-n*. Finally, while adjectives in Nima Hausa do not match their nouns for gender like they do in Standard forms, some gendering has remained frozen in certain frequently used phrases. A key example is *wata rana* (someday), which employs the feminine form of *wani* (some) to modify the feminine noun *rana* (day).

Lexical Paraphrasis in Nima Hausa

While learning Nima Hausa, I frequently noted instances of lexical paraphrasis, a sort of rephrasing in order to achieve greater clarity. I argue that these paraphrases enable learners to access a more concrete or readily accessible meaning from a word or phrase when its component parts are spelled out more explicitly. A possible reason for this is due to the iconic quality of compound words in Nima Hausa. Haiman (1980: 515) refers to this as "motivated iconicity" in which the "structure of the language directly reflects some aspect of the structure of reality." In other words, if there is a composite meaning from two words put together, a learner may have an easier time deducing its meaning by seeing that there is a meaning to pair to each lexical item. If they know one of the two words, they may be able to deduce the other from the conversational content or situational circumstances.

Another benefit of using lexical paraphrasis in many Nima Hausa instances is that it exposes a new learner to a ubiquitous grammatical feature that we discussed earlier, the linker clitic. In many instances shown in the chart below, lexical paraphrasis constructions employ a possessive or genitival element to link the two words together. In other words, speakers have

access and exposure to a greater variety of lexical and grammatical clues when using a

paraphrase than when using a single semantically opaque lexical item. If there are multiple

options for words to express an idea, the more iconically parsable option (the paraphrase or

analytic version) is often the one adopted into Nima Hausa.

Lexical Paraphrasis in Nima Hausa			
Standard Hausa Word	**English Translation**	**Nima Hausa Paraphrase**	**English Translation**
tabarau	eyeglasses	madubi-n ido	glass of the eye
kwaɗayi/handama	greed	ja ido	red eye
nono	breastmilk	ruwa-n mama	water of the breast
shaƙe/maƙure	to choke someone	mashe wuya	to press the neck
rēshē	branches	jijiyan itace	vein of the tree
sâiwa	roots	anjin itace	intestine of the tree
gwàr̃dwadō	accordingly	a hanyan shi	on the road to
mākò̀/sati	week	(kwana) bakwai	seven (sleeps)

A few themes emerge in the above list, including reference to a more concrete concept or

reference to an experientially salient idea. Both of these tactics make learning Nima Hausa a

more accessible experience because of the added context imbued in the paraphrase. For instance

Nima Hausa's term for "greed" is *ja ido*, which literally means "red eye." A widely shared

Ghanaian descriptor for someone greedy or selfish is that they have a "red eye." Nima Hausa

speakers combined this Ghanaian concept using words that also occur in Standard Hausa to

create a phrase unique to Nima Hausa. This provides the learner with a culturally salient concept

that they may already be familiar with. It also provides a composite meaning with two frequently

used concrete concepts.

We can also see the utility of shared experiential concepts in Nima Hausa's term *bakwai* or *kwana bakwai* for the concept "week." *Bakwai* on its own means "seven," as in the seven days of the week. In Standard Hausa, *kwana* means "to spend the night doing something," but is slightly differently interpreted in Nima Hausa to mean "sleep" or "to sleep." Like the other paraphrases, this provides more information about the concept itself than an arbitrarily meaningful single lexical item. An additional point of interest is how *bakwai* has not only taken on the meaning of "week," but also lost some of its semantic attachment to its original meaning "seven." In Nima and Accra more broadly, even when folks use Twi, Ga, or Hausa, they often use English number words. Even if people do not command English particularly well, they will often still opt for English numbers, especially in places like Nima Market to ask about a quantity or give a price for an item.

Negation as Lexical Paraphrasis

Another way that Nima Hausa users engage with lexical paraphrasis includes using a negative to express opposites instead of using a different lexical item entirely. This tactic lends itself to learnability because it employs a negation of an existing form instead of introducing an entirely new word. For example, when I was learning new words in Nima Hausa, I would often ask friends about opposites as I had learned to do in my linguistic fieldwork classes. "How do you say early?" I recall asking. "Saure," my friend replied. "And what about late?" he paused and thought for a second. With a shrug he said, "Ba saure," meaning "not early." As a learner, these negations came more easily to me than creating an entirely new lexical entry. I came across many of these work-arounds, including a negated phrase or full sentence employed to describe a concept. The opposite of "kiba" meaning "fat," was taught to me as "Ba ta da jiki," literally

meaning "She doesn't have a body." Similarly "na jin dadi," meaning "I enjoyed it" or "I feel happy," could be negated to express sadness, "Ban jin dadi," meaning "I did not enjoy it" or "I did not feel happy."

29) saure   30) ba saure
    early/fast   NEG early
    early   late

31) kiba   32) ba ta da jiki
    fat   NEG 3F.Sing.COMPL and body
    fat   thin

33) na jin dadi   34) ban jin dadi
    1.Sing.COMPL feel sweetness   NEG.1.Sing.COMPL feel sweetness
    I enjoyed it/I felt happy   I did not enjoy it/I felt sad

Discourse Markers and Interjections

In addition to phonological, morphological, and lexical influence from other local languages, Nima Hausa also includes many pragmatic influences. Many of these can be observed in the form of discourse markers and interjections derived from Twi.

Discourse Markers and Interjections	
paa	emphatic positive marker ("very")
koraa	emphatic negative marker ("at all")
tswe	indicates exasperation ("hey!")
saa	disbelief or surprise ("really?")
yoo	affirmative response ("alright")
oo	respect/politeness marker

These discourse markers and interjections are woven seamlessly into languages other than Twi, most notably Ghanaian English and Nima Hausa. Thus while these linguistic pieces originate from Twi varieties, they are so easily integrated into other languages in existing ecology as well. It reinforces aforementioned notions of languages as dynamic practices, not as fixed codes. Nima Hausa remains flexible and responsive to those who use it and echoes speakers' pluralistic repertoires. These markers act as contextualization cues for learners of Nima Hausa as well (Gumperz 1982:131). If a learner already commands Twi, hearing these reaction cues sprinkled into Hausa speech might help pave the way for more seamless understanding.

So how exactly do these pieces fit? First we can take a deeper dive into how some of these markers are used in Twi and then examine how they transfer to Nima Hausa. Most noteworthy is the fact that these markers follow the same linguistic patterns in Twi as they do in Nima Hausa and Ghanaian English, maintaining their syntactic positioning and role in the utterance. An especially demonstrative example of this comes in the form of *paa* and *koraa*, which establish positive and negative emphasis respectively. Dolphyne (1996:33) provides an example of its use in Twi with the following sentences:

35) ɛyɛ fɛ paa   36) wei nyɛ fɛ koraa

It is very beautiful   It is not nice at all

Both typically appear sentence-finally and *koraa* is always preceded by a negative. The negation *nyɛ* provides a licensing context for the negative polarity item (NPI) *koraa*. In other words, *nyɛ* needs to come first in the utterance in order for *koraa* to make sense. If we equate this to the English utterance, the NPI "at all" requires its licenser "not" to come first in order for the

sentence to be interpretable by an interlocutor. Consider how strange the utterance "It is nice at all" might sound without the preceding licensing context.

We see this same pattern upheld in Nima Hausa and Ghanaian English as demonstrated by the following examples. The syntactic position is maintained and both languages provide their own NPIs to license *koraa*. In this case *ban* licenses *koraa* for Nima Hausa and *not* licenses *koraa* for Ghanaian English.

37) na   ji-n dadi   paa   (38) ban ji-n dadi koraa
    1S.COMPL feel- sweetness very   NEG.1S.COMPL feel- sweetness at.all
    I enjoyed it very much   I didn't enjoy it at all

(39) She did well paa   (40) She did not do well koraa

We can turn again to the Zee Pep talk show for examples of these discourse markers in conversation. The following examples also demonstrate the extent to which Nima Hausa users engage in the aforementioned polylanguaging practice, including elements from three linguistic repertoires. In her introduction of the show's guests, Mardiya uses *paa* to emphasize that her guest, Adiza in fact deserves to host her own show. In the following example, we can also see the aforementioned pattern of a Hausa pronoun with an English verb.

Mardiya:

Kin deserve show nan *paa*.

(Translation: You *really* deserve your own show.)

Later in the discussion, the topic of marrying for money comes up. The group concurs that matters become unnecessarily complicated when one marries for money or is pushed to do so by their family. Hamdiya explains that this is not a good scenario to find oneself in.

Hamdiya:

Bai da best *koraa*.

(Translation: It's not the best *at all.*)

As mentioned above, we can see that *koraa* is used here because it is licensed by *bai*, the negative form of the third person masculine singular completive pronoun. We also see the Hausa pronoun paired with English verb formulation again.

Yoo similarly makes its way into Nima Hausa and Ghanaian English phrasing and is commonly used as an affirmative response (Dolphyne 1996:6). We can see a parallelism in the following phrases in which *yoo* fits into each language's structure and achieves a similar meaning. *Yoo* can also stand alone as a shorter affirmative reply.

Twi

(40) yoo   mate
     alright 1S.hear

Nima Hausa

(41) yoo   na   ji
     alright 1S.COMPL hear

Ghanaian English

(42) yoo I hear
     alright I hear

Another feature that Dolphyne (1996) identifies is "oo," frequently added to the end of greetings as a sign of respect. In a sample dialogue, she gives the example, "ɔpanyin, maakyẽ oo" meaning, "Good morning, elder." She notes that, "Quite often 'oo' is added to the normal greeting as a sign of respect, especially if the person is some distance away from the speaker"

(1996: 11). This feature too is available for integration into Ghanaian English and Nima Hausa, which both make frequent use of it as a politeness marker. In addition to Dolphyne's observed use, the "oo" phrase ending appears to extend past greetings and into other realms, to communicate emphasis.

Shared Common Phrases

The most frequently used languages in Nima, namely Twi, Ghanaian English, and Nima Hausa also share a wealth of sayings or phrases that echo each other and likely contribute to ease of language learning. These appear in the form of calques which are literally translated expressions integrated into other languages. It is unclear to me which languages could be the origin point of which phrases, but the difficulty in deducing such an answer further supports the long-time intertwining of these linguistic practices that we see in Accra.

Shared Common Phrases			
Nima Hausa	**Twi**	**Ghanaian English**	**Meaning**
yi hankuri	mepaa kyɛw	please	politeness phrase
ina zuwa	me ba	I'm coming	leave-taking phrase
kadan kadan	kakra kakra	small small	"just a little"
ka/kin ji	wai	you get me?	affirmation check
na ji	me ti	I hear	"okay"
mu wuce / mu te	yɛn kɔ	away!	"let's go!"

In addition to these similar turns of phrase, semantic crossovers endure. One particularly noteworthy example is in the semantic extensions of the Nima Hausa verb *ji*, which can mean a variety of sensory verbs such as "feel," "smell," "hear," "understand" or "sense." I specifically

noticed the capaciousness of this verb when friends would ask if I could hear particular smells or tastes. When food was burning or when a meal was especially spicy, friends would ask if I could hear or feel the burning food or the hot spice.

The Hausa verb *ji* was brought into people's English and Twi with similarly broad semantic meanings. In Twi, people use the verb *ti*, which covers a similar broad range of sensing emotions. Sicoli (2016: 189) aptly calls this practice of swapping ontological categories in conversational turns "ontological crossing." He identifies this practice in relation to Zapotec speakers drawing equivalencies between people, places, and events: for instance responding to a "who" or "how" question with a "where" response. I draw on Sicoli's observation here to help parse this observed "synesthetic ontological crossing" of sorts in which a given human experience of "taste" or "smell" for instance may be interpreted or described as something "felt" or "heard."

Lexical Innovations and Non-Shared Vocabulary: Signaling Nima Insider Status

Vocabulary plays a particular role in demonstrating Zongo legitimacy and marking insider status in Nima. There is a significant amount of linguistic innovation that works to create Nima Hausa as a dialect specific to this area of the city and marks individuals heard using these terms as being from Nima in particular. Reduction of a language's lexicon is a frequently cited feature of contact languages. Velupillai (2015:31) notes that pidgins, for one, "are typically described as having a lexicon that first of all is mainly derived from one input language, and secondly that is smaller than that of the source language." Contact languages are largely still seen as being derivative of a source language, but also as "having incorporated other, or additional meanings in various lexical items, so that what sounds like a word from the lexifier may, in fact,

have new or additional semantic and symbolic connotations." Wolfram (2002: 776) also

identifies this lexical reduction trope in endangered language discourse and instead emphasizes

the importance in recognizing the wealth of lexical innovation in contact scenarios. He argues

that "we cannot rule out the role of creativity and innovation as an adaptive strategy in a dying

language."

Nima Hausa exists as a language in flux, with influences from a variety of other

languages as well as innovations from its users. Baker (1994:65) similarly pushes back against

generalizations that paint contact languages as lacking and argues that these definitions imply a

failure on the part of learners to acquire the colonial language perfectly. This not only assumes

that this was the explicit aim of learners, but it also denies learners their creative agency. As

Baker (1994:66) notes, contact languages are "successful solutions to problems of human

intercommunication rather than unhappy consequences of botched language learning or failed

language maintenance." Based on Wolfram's and Baker's insights, I highlight the immense

contribution of Nima Hausa users and learners to a growing innovative lexicon. While some

words are entirely new creations, many undergo semantic shifts as Velupillai suggests of creoles

above. While this is by no means an exhaustive list, I have compiled a variety of examples of

Nima Hausa vocabulary that is not shared with Standard Hausa forms.

Non-Shared Vocabulary in Nima Hausa			
Nima Hausa	**English Translation**	**Standard Hausa**	**English Translation**
abuya	female friend	abokyia	female friend
adere	rain	ruwan sama	rain (water of the sky)
akwadu	banana	ayaba	banana
ankwara	water container	-	-

anta	kidney	ƙōdà̀	kidney
dasa	butcher	mahàucī	butcher
duwasu	concrete	kankare	concrete
goji	tree	itace	tree/wood
guli	pellet-shaped excrement from sheep/goats	-	-
gwole/gwoleliya	expert (m/f)	gwani	expert
kai kawowa	to hustle (literally "to take-bring"	-	-
kakado	ginger	citta mai yatsu	ginger (from a root)
karda	to break (body part)	karyà̀	to break (something that snaps; i.e. leg, stick)
kayayo (pl. kayaye) *possibly derived from Standard Hausa *kaya* meaning "baggage"	porter	ɗàn dakō	porter
kosa	tough/hard/strong	kosese	masculine/tough
kotoku	bag	jàkā	bag
kwakuma	cowhide	ƙirgì̀/fā̀tà̀	untanned/tanned cowhide
kwolekwole	to rinse	ɗauràyē	to rinse (clothes, hair, dishes)
makwasanta	neighbor	maƙwàbcī	neighbor
masu	to suffocate	shāƙè̀	to suffocate
mokoki	funeral	jànā'izà̀	funeral
nyami	bitterness/fermented (also can mean "body pains" when used with "Jikina ya yi nyami")	ɗā̀cī	bitterness
rugme	nausea	tāshìn zūcìyā	nausea (rising of the heart)
susu	contributing to a pool where each person takes the total amount in turn	adashi	contributing to a pool where each person takes the total amount in turn

tanye	to help	taimake	to help
tere	to cover	rufe	to cover
tesfi	skin discoloration	-	-
twali/tuware	to cough	tari	to cough
zani	to beat up	dàkā/bùgā	to beat (a person/animal)
zuku	failure	kāsằwā/gazằwā	failure

While I previously demonstrated the Nima Hausa tendency toward lexical paraphrasis by creating motivated compounds, the above chart shows a few examples of motivated compounds originating in Standard Hausa instead. These include *ruwan sama* ("water of the sky") for "rain," *citta mai yatsu* ("from a root") for "ginger," and *tāshìn zūcìyā* ("rising of the heart") for "nausea." Nima Hausa has created arbitrary lexemes for these concepts which do not obviously show motivated iconicity. This reversal of the previously elaborated pattern in Nima Hausa demonstrates a few important qualities about both Standard Hausa and Nima Hausa. First, it shows that Standard Hausa speakers already had the capability and willingness to create motivated compounds, so it was an existing feature of the language that Nima Hausa speakers could later draw on. Second, the existence of newly created words that are *not* motivated compounds, but could be based on Standard Hausa's example, provides further evidence that Nima Hausa is not merely a simplified version of Standard Hausa, but rather a space in which variable forms of language creation are welcomed and tested out. Therefore, contact languages do not only draw complexities from their contributing languages, but also create complexity and arbitrariness on their own.

Conclusions: Shaping Accessible Language

The linguistic features discussed in this chapter provide a glimpse into how residents of Nima use language, reshaping it in ways that are more accessible to a variety of users. While patterns of simplification are frequently cited as results of language contact, speakers of Nima Hausa reframe "simplification" as accessibility and even demonstrate significant linguistic innovation. In fact, simplification and innovation aren't necessarily mutually exclusive in these examples, because speakers find creative ways to make Nima Hausa more accessible to learners through processes like lexical paraphrasis.

By incorporating features from other languages and omitting features that are not shared with Twi, Ghanaian English, and other local languages, learners are equipped with a sort of linguistic on-ramp which promotes successful learning of the local Hausa variety. In fact, if these simplifications and innovations did not occur, perhaps this variety might not have endured so heartily in the ways that it has. If attitudes of strict purism reigned, features of Nima Hausa that differed dramatically from Standard Hausa might not have reached the same level of frequency and consistency that they currently have. Therefore, ideologies of flexibility and adaptation have allowed for this Hausa language variety to be maintained despite having a marginalized speaker population. Even more significant is the fact that Nima Hausa has become a desirable target language for many residents in Nima and Zongos across Accra.

I argue that the practice of language as fluid, adaptable, and accommodating allows speakers of Hausa language in Accra to sustain it beyond predictions and expectations of what usually occurs with immigrant languages. There exists a shared value system in Nima which views language as both a marker of solidarity and a practice in community which should be made available to prospective learners. Within this ideology, learners are able to experiment, make mistakes, and use resources from other languages to aid in their language acquisition

process. As a result, the language itself has changed and demonstrates significant influences from a variety of languages in Nima's language ecology. People who use Nima Hausa are willing to adapt it to suit a diversity of speakers and do not engage in the kinds of language policing we see in other parts of the world. Without this prescribed linguistic rigidity, exclusion, and uniformity derived from ideals of language purity, Nima residents embrace language as an invitation to collaborate, change, and grow in community with others.

Conclusions

My dissertation has aimed to combine theory in linguistic anthropology, human geography and spatial studies, as well as African studies to consider Zongo life in Accra, Ghana. I have considered how colonial value systems have fundamentally shaped the way that we understand concepts like "language" and "place" and how residents of urban neighborhoods in Accra are re-imagining these categories as fluid entanglements. I have also considered the very material outcomes of these re-imagined categories, namely the thriving Nima Hausa language variety, which community members utilize as gestures of solidarity and a reinforcement of neighborhood wide values of linguistic and cultural accommodation and adaptability.

My guiding question throughout this dissertation has focused on how Hausa language has continued to change, grow, and thrive in Accra over the last century despite colonial occupation, modern state-sanctioned neglect, and enduring marginalization of the people who use the language. I posit that it is because of Zongo residents' decolonial ideologies of language and place as well as cooperation and solidarity born of institutional neglect that Hausa language practice and Muslim Zongo lifeways endure.

More broadly, I propose that engagement with Accra's Zongo communities promises to shed light on both the histories and emerging present of cities not just across West Africa, but also in places across the world grappling with the realities of past and present colonial violence. Because these settlements are the widespread result of complex international histories of migration, trade, and colonialism, it behooves us to pay attention to their dynamics and ask how they can inform our understanding of how communities across the globe creatively engage with realities derived from similarly oppressive mechanisms. This project has considered the ways in which linguistic practice serves as a gesture of solidarity and an invitation to community for

immigrants to current African cities. Based on my understanding of life in Nima, I propose that these practices result in the resiliency of targeted lifeways and survivance of marginalized people and the languages they use.

In the first chapter, I traced the historical threads through early Hausa origins to present-day Zongo communities in Ghana. Through archival research and interviews with the descendants of the community's founders, I was able to glimpse the origins of what it meant to "be" Hausa in Accra when it was still the Gold Coast Colony. In order to maintain a semblance of autonomy, Zongo chiefs adamantly denied their indigenous status, taking pains to differentiate themselves from Akan and Gã people as "strangers" to Accra. We also saw that Hausa identity, both historically and presently, is ever-changing and capacious, allowing a variety of people to inhabit this identifier for a variety of reasons.

In 1957, Hausa identity experienced yet another shift as the Gold Coast Colony became independent Ghana. A coalescing national imaginary and subsequent anti-immigrant rhetoric ensured the deportation of people who had called Ghana home their entire lives. Many people living in Zongos were targeted simply because their ancestors' origins fell outside of Ghana's current borders. Within the setting of Accra, these anti-immigrant sentiments perpetuated associations of Hausa speakers or Zongo residents as foreign, "Other," and fundamentally outside of the Ghanaian imaginary. In the second chapter, I investigated ideologies emergent from these Othering practices, including fractally recursive insider/outsider binaries which result in convenient erasure of much messier lived realities. Because of this ideological erasure, Nima residents experience material repercussions, including lack of access to basic public services like water, electricity, and quality education.

Because of this absence of the state, which takes the form of policing behavior and language, but also neglect of people's basic needs, solidarity unexpectedly blossoms from these circumstances. As people increasingly distrust institutions, they turn toward each other for sustainable lives. For people who live in Nima, solidarity is paramount to survival and practices, like using Nima Hausa as an invitation to community, promise a future they can all have a stake in. From this, I extend Pellow's framework of "zongwanci" and propose that a specific kind of "zongo-ness" occurs in Nima. Instead of belonging because of one's descent from the Hausa homeland, people can find community simply by being a part of Nima life. While I examined what it means to "be" Hausa in the first chapter, I move to examine what it means to "do" Hausa in the second chapter. By this I mean the very active and intentional gestures of community, like using Nima Hausa, that achieve a sense of solidarity across immense lines of difference and adversity. I also elaborate on youth activism in Nima and consider the difficulties of juggling decolonizing praxis in community organizing while at the same time enduring the structures of capitalism and legacies of colonialism that dictate most people's day-to-day lives in Nima.

Finally, I turned to the Nima Hausa language itself to consider what it is about the linguistic structures themselves that might lend themselves to being more accessible to a diversity of learners. During my own learning process, I continuously noted the ease with which I could drop in an English verb or a Twi interjection when a sufficient Hausa replacement did not come to mind and how there was rarely a breakdown in communication with my interlocutors. This fluid linguistic practice combines features of Ghanaian English and Akan Twi, like phonology, morphology, and syntax, while also independently creating new words and sayings unique to Nima itself. I conclude that far from the reductive rhetoric often still applied to contact languages, Nima Hausa demonstrates that what have been called "missing" features, reductions

in linguistic scope, or simplifications, are more realistically interpreted as accessible adaptations that speakers offer as a way to invite communication cross-linguistically.

I set out to understand how people use language and engage with each other when language purity is not a dominant concept. What I found in Nima was that without the idea of language purity, languages and the people who speak them are more likely to thrive. As I have demonstrated, while Hausa is heavily marginalized in Accra, the Nima Hausa speaker population is flourishing. During my research, I had the privilege of learning Nima Hausa from my friends and neighbors and realized that they were using a form of Hausa language that both borrowed linguistic features from languages brought by their immigrant neighbors as well as innovated independently Nima-specific language features. In other words, the Nima Hausa language in Accra is sustained because the people who use it are willing to adapt it to suit a diversity of speakers.

Instead of the rigidity, exclusion, and uniformity that language purity prescribes, Hausa speakers embrace language as an invitation to collaborate, change, and grow in community with others. In a world where we are often instructed to fear and exclude those who are not like us, we can instead consider language's potential to build bridges instead of barriers in our own classrooms, workplaces, and communities. Being a part of the Nima community has encouraged me to meditate on the ways in which trust and sustainability are formed in community with others, especially when institutions continuously disappoint or neglect us. As I have shown over the course of this dissertation, Nima residents demonstrated that what really sustains us is a willingness to accommodate and learn from each other.

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