

COLONIALISM AND SOCIAL REORIENTATION: AN EXAMINATION OF COLONIAL
GHANA, 1874-1957

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Abstract

In the late 19th century after the Berlin Conference of 1844, colonisation of the African continent began officially. Ghana became a colony of the British in 1874 after the incorporation of the Dutch Gold Coast on April 6, 1872, and the defeat of the Asante in the 'Sagrenti War' of 1874. After defeating the Asante, Britain took immediate suzerainty over the coastal states and their immediate hinterlands, establishing the Gold Coast Colony. The colonisation of modern Ghana came with social modifications and alterations in the social fabric of the people. The paper examines the social changes that colonialisation brought to Ghana, focusing on the period of Ghana as a coloniality. The paper adopted a qualitative approach to historical studies in examining the investigated issue. It relied on primary and secondary sources to highlight Ghana's social changes during colonisation. Specifically, the paper used archival materials, documents, books and scholarly articles to demonstrate the social changes Ghana witnessed as a colonial enclave of Imperial Britain from 1874 to 1957. It further demonstrates that colonisation has significantly transformed traditional social structures through changes in marriage systems, the imposition of foreign cultural values, labour exploitation, migration pattern changes, and shifts in education and governance. These reorientations are attributed to the nature and effect of the ordinances enacted.

Keywords: Ghana, Colonialism, British, Indirect Rule, Social Change

Résumé

Vers la fin du XIX siècle, après la conférence de Berlin 1844, la colonisation de l'Afrique est officiellement mise en place. Le Ghana est devenu une colonie Britannique en 1874 après l'incorporation du Dutch Gold Coast le 6 Avril 1872 et la défaite des Ashantis dans la guerre de Sagrenti. Après avoir vaincu les Ashantis, la Grande Bretagne a pris domination immédiate des états côtiers et leurs arrière-pays immédiats, établissant la colonie du Gold Coast. La colonisation de l'actuel Ghana a entraîné des modifications sociales et des altérations du tissu social du peuple. L'article analyse les changements sociaux que la colonisation a apportés au Ghana en se concentrant sur la période où le Ghana a été colonisé. L'étude a adopté une approche qualitative aux études historiques en analysant la situation en question. Elle s'appuie sur des sources primaire et secondaire pour soulever les changements sociaux lors de la période coloniale. Précisément, l'article emploie des matériels d'archives, des documents, des livres et des articles scientifiques pour démontrer les changements sociaux que le Ghana a subi en tant qu'enclave coloniale de la Grande-Bretagne impériale de 1874 à 1957. Il montre d'ailleurs que la colonisation a largement transformé les structures sociales traditionnelles à travers des changements dans les systèmes de mariage, l'imposition de valeurs culturelles étrangères, l'exploitation du travail, les changements dans les schèmes

migratoires et l'évolution dans le système d'éducation et de gouvernance. Ces orientations sont attribuées à la nature et les effets des ordonnances promulguées.

Mots clés : Ghana, Colonialisme, Britannique, Système administrative indirecte, Changement social

1. Introduction

This paper provides a historical account of the social changes witnessed in Ghana during colonisation from 1874 to 1957. Ghana is the first country in the Sahelian region on the African continent to have attained political independence. The first encounter of the country with Europeans began in 1471 when Pedro d'Escobar and Johannes de Santarem sailed onto the shores of Elmina, and in 1482, Don Diego d'Azambuja established the St. Jargo de Mina as their first castle and warehouse on the shores of the Guinea Coast (Bosman, 1707). The former Gold Coast Colony, now Ghana, was the homeland of over thirty-four states in 1629, with powerful kingdoms such as Denkyira, Wassa, Adansi, and then the emerging empire of Akwamu. The inhabitants of the Gold Coast Colony traded goods with the Europeans for over a century until around the late 16th and early 17th centuries, when trade transitioned from material goods to human cargo. The country saw a tremendous influx of traders from Europe and Western Sudan. Between 1650-1700, the British shipped more than 358,000 slaves, and from 1700-1800, they shipped more than 2.4 million slaves using the shores of Cape Coast as a transitory route. Also, between 1519-1650, the Portuguese sent about 704,000 enslaved Africans using the shores of Gold Coast. Here, the former Gold Coast Colony accounted for about 7% of all enslaved Africans that embarked on the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade route between 1500-1700, representing about 102,000 slaves. The share volume of enslaved Africans from the Gold Coast increased to more than 14% – about 873,000 enslaved people – between 1700 and 1800 of the

total slave volume of the African continent (McCaa, 1997).

With the abolishment of slavery and the slave trade, the predominant European merchants of Britain on the shores of Ghana began to meddle and influence local politics. Notable instances include the wars between the Asante and Fante in 1807 and 1824 that saw the beheading of Charles McCarthy; the Fomena Treaty of 1831 between the British and the Asante where panyarring was made illegal and punishable; and the requirement for *Asantehene* to deposit 600 ounces of gold and send two royal princes as surety of peace under the guidance of the Governor. The treaty also mandated the opening of trade routes to all traders, and the renunciation of the right to homage and tribute over Assin and Denkyira with their former vassals. Furthermore, a magistrate court was established, with Maclean as a judicial adjudicator to adjudicate matters of the indigenes and model their customary laws after the British law. And finally, the Bond of 1844 was signed by eight (8) traditional rulers of the Fante and Assin (Fage, 1969; Boahen, & Tidy, 1980).

The paper explored the social changes that ensued in colonialism during the imposition of British rule from 1874 to 1957, when the country attained political independence, using a historical qualitative method. However, the approach adopted is an analytic and thematic approach where different periods speak to each other under each theme. The Gold Coast Colony saw many changes ranging from socio-economic and political facets. The population census of 1911 pegged the statistics at 1,503,386, with 2,006 Europeans. The paper focused on the laws and policies of the Colonial Administration

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that brought about changes in the social aspects of the people.

The paper further challenges Eurocentric narratives as it contributes to decolonising historical narratives by providing an African perspective on colonialism's impact on Ghanaian society. It also provides an intersectional analysis by examining how colonialism affected various social groups, highlighting the nuanced nature of colonialism's social impacts. The paper's findings on colonial legacy also integrate historical, sociological and cultural studies perspectives as they inform strategies for contemporary development, promoting contextualised solutions addressing persistent socioeconomic and cultural challenges.

The present research paper is organised into four sections: Section one focuses on the background to the study. Section two presents the research methodology. Section three offers a discussion and analysis of historical information to understand better the context of the issue, and section four concludes and provides the implications and limitations of the study.

2. Method

The research relied on primary and secondary sources with most primary sources being archival. The methodological approach is one of chronology and themes. The paper used a multidimensional research philosophy by combining positivist and pragmatist research philosophies. The positivist research philosophy asserts that historical facts must be understood objectively by detaching oneself from personal values and biases and working independently, while the pragmatist research philosophy advocates for the facts. The choice of multidimensional research philosophy is determined by the research problem, the verifiable historical facts that are considered the most essential, and the freedom offered to the researcher as the decision-maker of the methods, techniques,

and procedures that best fit the aims and questions of the research (Žukauskas, Vveinhardt, & Andriukaitiene, 2018).

Additionally, the paper used the multidisciplinary approach to better appreciate the social changes experienced under colonialism. This approach uses both the positivist paradigm and the critical postmodernism paradigm. The positivist paradigm is focused on unearthing truth and presenting it empirically, although it does not encourage subjectivity in interpreting social realities. The critical postmodernism paradigm asserts that social reality is historically constituted and is produced and reproduced by people. This paradigm questions the status quo and focuses on the differences and constraints in contemporary society to bring about changes through positivist and interpretive paradigms (Vorster, 1984; Van Merriënboer, & De Bruin, 2014).

3. Discussion

In 1821, the British, especially its merchants, perceived the coastal area of Ghana as its colony; therefore, it took measures to ensure and protect its interests, establishing the office of Governor with John Hope Smith as its first Governor. The internal strife faced by the British was largely orchestrated by its competitors of European descent, the Dutch and the indigenes' intolerance of the assumption that their lands were part of colonial England. The Akans, largely the Asante, Denkyira, Fante and other Guan kings, challenged the authority of Britain over their internal matters as subjects. When Governor-General McLean fined *Denkyirahene* Kojo Tsibu £200 for human sacrifice in 1834, the King refused to pay and protested to the Secretary of the colonial state; *Nzemahene* Kweku Ackah openly rebelled against Governor McLean in 1835, risking a military attack on his state. *Assinhene* Tsibo, angered by the continued interference in his affairs, spoke with *Asantehene*

about moving his province across the river Pra to his former homeland (Addo-Fening, 2013).

In the Eastern Region, between 1857-61, a series of Ofori Panin stool occupants defied the British government. Atta Panin (1835-1859) ignored a subpoena to go to Accra to be tried for murder. With this defiance, J. Bannerman said British authority was largely unrecognised in that part of the country. In 1860, Panin's brother and successor, Atta Obuom (1859-87), defied a British government order to end the war with neighbouring Akyem Kotoku and ordered that Major Cochrane had no jurisdiction over him to declare him as his subject (British Foreign & Commonwealth Office 1860). He advised that he had no authority to order his dismissal nor accept his judgment. The following year, Major Cochrane withdrew Abuakwa from British protection (British Foreign & Commonwealth Office 1857, 1858, 1859, 1860).

At Cape Coast, King Aggrey defied the ruling of the Chief Justice, which declared his court unlawful and insisted on his right to hold court and dispense justice by tradition and without reference to British norms and usage, arguing that Cape Coast is not a territory of Britain reminding him that the Cape Coast court predates the Cape Coast Castle which was obtained from his ancestors at an annual rent by the Swedes and the British (Casely-Hayford, 1992). In December 1866, he wrote to the Governor:

The time has come for me to record a solemn protest against the perpetual annoyances and insults that you persistently continue to practice on me in my capacity as legally constituted King of Cape Coast . . . However much you wish to have me and my people under martial law, you will never have that pleasureit is impossible for me to endure your tyranny, annoyances, and abuses any longer nor will I be subject to the dissention that you are daily endeavouring to create amongst my chiefs and elders (Boahen, 2004, p. 47).

The southern territories of the gold coast became a colony of Britain on July 24, 1874, under Governor James Marshall, following the exchange of forts between the Dutch and the British in 1871. However, after the defeat of the Anlo in 1873, it was forced to acknowledge the right of the British to occupy its territories in a peace treaty on March 22, 1874, with the station of 100 policemen to garrison Fort Princedale as well as the erection of a magisterial and revenue station (Colonial Office, 1874). The whole country did not automatically become a colony of Imperial Britain, but rather the coastal areas and their immediate hinterlands of Asante as these areas housed the forts and castles of the European merchants. The indigenes of the coast, particularly the Fante, fought and resisted such an imposition and forged ahead to constitute the Fante Confederation, which subsequently had its leaders labelled conspirators and many imprisoned.

3.1 Disruption of Traditional Governance Structures & Authority

The British proclaimed that its powers over the southern coastal areas included rulings on appeals to native tribunal judges, oversight and regulation of prisons, and government rulings on disputes arising between different chiefs and rulers (Sarbah, 1968). With the declaration of coastal areas and immediate hinterlands as colonies in 1874, the British began signing treaties of friendship and protection to strip off the powers of the traditional rulers, marking the genesis of the social changes experienced during colonialism. Ghana became a colony of the Imperial United Kingdom because the British economy had begun declining in the 1860s, prompting Britain to see the Gold Coast as a potentially rich territory. Even before the Scramble for Africa in 1884/85 at the Berlin Conference, Britain had already stepped up its educational development and economic projects to enhance its interest. Consequently, Gold Coast was chosen by the British during the conference (Aissat & Djafari, 2011).

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On September 12, 1874, the rights and authority of Imperial Britain included the maintenance of public peace, the safety of residents and protection of property, law enactments and adjudication of criminal and civil matters, determining the appeals from the traditional rulers to the British courts, maintaining a police force presence, supervising and regulating the courts of traditional rulers and the final court of appeal of cases involving traditional rulers and their subjects (The National Archive—Kew 1865-1883). Thus, in 1876, a supreme court was established and vested with all the Crown's civil and criminal authority in the Gold Coast (Kimble, 1968).

As all the southern states of Ghana came under British rule, the British formed the military unit; thus, it established the Army Service Corps Detachment in 1874 (The National Archives—Kew WO 12/10455 1874). The Detachment was to enforce the laws made and ensure stability for colonial rule. The British next action after the armed forces formed was to map the country into various districts and administrative zones to enforce its laws. On June 26, 1876, the Public Land Ordinance sought to entitle the British government to access lands on the Gold Coast (Colonial Office 96/35 1900). In April 1879, the colonial office began mapping Accra to Mansue, and between December 1883 to January 1884, the mapping of the country captured areas of the northern parts of the colony (The National Archives—Kew 1879/1881/1884; Lahouel, 2011). The Public Lands Ordinance of 1876 allowed them to acquire land from time to time from traditional rulers.

On March 31, 1876, the Supreme Court was established, which had the final authority on issues related to administration and justice (Supreme Court Ordinance 1876), but the ordinance came into operation on April 4, 1877. The Supreme Court had a membership of five, including the Chief Justice of the Gold Coast Colony. The Supreme Court had jurisdiction over all civil and criminal matters. This

ordinance meant the absolute usurpation of the final authority of kings and chiefs on civil and criminal matters related to their citizens. With the establishment of the Supreme Court, Gold Coast began to practice the Common Law, which is premised on the doctrine of equity and the general application of how legal matters are resolved in England (Supreme Court Ordinance 1876, 45-47). The Court could also probate and wield powers in matrimonial matters and divorce. The Supreme Court Ordinance also saw the establishment of offices of District Commissioners, who were ex-officio members of the Supreme Court and had the power to summon and become the Judge of the district, expecting all matters to be settled before it rather than by traditional rulers.

The Native Jurisdiction Ordinance of 1883 changed the social fabric of traditional leadership in Ghana as traditional rulers' powers as custodians of the lands and the representatives of their people were limited in scope. Section 29 of the Ordinance gave the authority and power to suspend chiefs having abused powers given to them and appeals made to the Court of the Resident Commissioner instead of the Paramount Chief. Paramount chiefs and divisional chiefs were given the same powers. No mechanism was provided to enforce the district court's order. The courts had no governing structure, and their decisions were not admissible as final in the English courts (Allott, 1957).

The Native Jurisdiction Ordinance further created issues of legitimate authority over a case within the lands where both the Paramount Chief and Divisional Chiefs had the same jurisdiction over cases. In the case of Denkyira, there was the creation of courts at Jukwaa and Dunkwa-on-Ofin, creating issues for the Denkyirahene and his divisional chiefs, who resided in Dunkwa (PRAAD ADM/11/1/860 1924). The law caused unrest and misunderstanding, leading to its repeal and the introduction of a new ordinance focused on applying to all native courts and setting fees and

finer levels (ADMI 1/2/14). The ordinance did not include the population of coastal or undeclared areas, but included the population of areas south of Asante. Chiefs enforcing native court decisions were liable to punishment. And following the 1907 Court Opinion decision, in 1910, the Ordinance covered all aboriginal courts in the Gold Coast Colony, providing appeal-structured courts from the Indigenous Court to the District Court, and finally to the Supreme Court. District court decisions are now properly enforced (Allott, 1957).

On September 16 1887, the British Parliament passed the British Settlements Act, which enabled the British Crown to provide for these areas. The Act intended to claim areas deemed to have no civilised government as a possession of the British Monarchy (UK Public General Acts 1887). As the passage of the Settlement Act came into effect, the colonial offices enacted 'The Land Registration Ordinance of 1891', which established a system of land registration requiring all landowners to register their land with the colonial government, which would issue them with a certificate as a way of promoting land ownership and investment. However, it also led to the dispossession of many communities of their lands. The Ordinance vested lands in the Colonial Office, but it was resisted and subsequently modified as the Lands Bill of 1897. This was also resisted, causing delays in the ordinance. It further enacted The Railway Ordinance of 1898, which legitimised the compulsory acquisition of lands for colonial administration (Griffith, 1887).

With the declaration of the immediate coastal areas as a colony after the departure of the Dutch from the shores of the former Gold Coast Colony, Britain began to expand their political dominance into other areas and kingdoms through the signing of 'dubious' treaties. These treaties were signed mostly with the traditional rulers who were illiterates and side-lining the intelligentsia of the period. In 1887, the British signed a treaty with

Sefwi, where Omanhene Kweku Inguan was forbidden to engage in the slave trade and human sacrifices. In 1895, there was a treaty between Adansi and Britain where the Adansehene with his sub-rulers were assured that they would

...not be prevented from levying customary revenue appertaining to them according to the land and customs of their country, nor in the administration thereof; and Her Majesty's Government will respect the habit and customs of the country, but will not permit human sacrifice; and slave dealing, whenever discovered, will be punished according to Gold Coast laws (Sarbah, 1968, p. 112).

Nonetheless, the entire nation of modern Ghana became completely colonised after 1902 when the Asante Territories and Northern Territories were incorporated through force and a peace treaty, respectively. The Asante was declared a British colony through conquest in 1901 after the arrest and deportation of *Asantehene*, Prempeh I and his sub-chiefs and the quail of the Yaa Asantewaa War of 1900-1 (Armitage & Montarano, 1901; Manning, 2021). The Crown Lands Ordinance of 1902 gave the colonial government control over all vacant lands. The government could sell or lease the land to individuals and businesses, but residents had no say. The law resulted in stripping many communities of their ancestral lands, causing social and economic havoc. The Basel Missionary Trading Company, founded on the Gold Coast in 1854, was confiscated with Gold Coast residents paying for the indemnities as it was considered the beneficiary of the Basel Missions network of schools and missions. Gold Coasters paid £305,000 as indemnity. Governor Hugh Clifford claimed their presence posed a threat to the security and stability of the colony. This position was challenged by Nana Aduka of Mankessim, who opined that it was unjust "to saddle this country with the responsibility for the liability which was incurred by reason of their position as an outpost of the Empire" (Sarbah, 1968, p. 112).

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Between 1890 and 1925, there were more than one hundred attempts at destoolment of paramount chiefs in the Colony, specifically in Gwira (the chief of Tumentu in 1903), Begoro, Kwahu, and Akyem Abuakwa. In Akyem Abuakwa, for instance, due to the implementation of this ordinance, there were revolts in 1915-18 and the near disposition of Ofori Atta in 1932 (ADM/1/1/1332; ADM/1/1/738 1919; 58CO96/663 1926; Sarbah, 1968). With time, the colonial administrators passed the Forest Bills (1907-11), suspected as another modality being adopted to alienate Stool Land; hence it was resisted. The Forest Bill is traceable to the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance of 1883 which empowered chiefs to pass bylaws for forest preservation.

But with the boom of mineral exploitation, the colonial administration saw a lack of interest in ensuring the protection of the forests; hence, by 1906, legislation to regulate the cutting down of commercial tropical trees was enacted and implemented with the passage of the Timber Protection Ordinance, 1907 which sought to prevent the cutting of saplings and eventually resulted in the establishment of forest reserves (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2020). In 1910, the country became fully governed by British laws as the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance was squashed and declared illegal by the Supreme Court, thus seizing all Aboriginal Judicial Tribunals (Sarbah 1968, 112). The Forest Ordinance of 1927 gave the colonial government control over all forest reserves, prohibiting the local people from using the forest for their livelihoods, such as hunting and gathering, leading to the displacement of many forest-dependent communities and contributing to environmental degradation (Boahen, 1986; Owusu-Ansah, 2004).

The Indirect Rule System introduced by Governor Clifford (1913-1919) further disrupted traditional rulers' authority in the Gold Coast governance. The system was developed to govern the natives through the local authorities and traditional rulers. Colonial officials appointed local chiefs and traditional rulers

as intermediaries between the locales and the colonial administrators. Chiefs under this system were given a degree of autonomy and were responsible for implementing the colonial rules and policies in their communities. This policy of localising the colony's administration created tensions between traditional rulers and the local populace, who were often excluded from the decision-making processes. The British placed the acephalous Konkomba clans under the jurisdiction of the Dagomba, resulting in the Konkomba attacking Jagbel, a village of Dagomba (Salim, 1976; Talton, 2003).

Between 1914-17, Gold Coast (Ghana) recorded many riots and disturbances in places like Great Ningo, Bongo, and Gonja. The colony raised a standing police force of three thousand from traditional rulers through conscriptions and abolished the existence of Asafo groups in the various traditional states. Traditional rulers supplied carriers and recruited especially from Anlo Ewe, Mamprusi, and Dagomba (Boyle, 1968). However, before the implementation of the Indirect Rule under the Native Jurisdiction Ordinance, which sought to undermine the powers and authority of traditional rulers, the colonials did not attempt to interfere in the matters of the Asafo as its role received no recognition from the colonialists (Li, 1995).

3.2 Marriage and Familial Changes

The colonial administration enacted a marriage ordinance modelled after the St. Helena Act. This ordinance was enacted in 1884, becoming the overriding marriage law. Ghanaians were forbidden to practice polygamy due to the challenges of inheritance and marriage. The promulgation of this law followed a request by the Gold Coast Germans for a marriage certificate from the Lieutenant Governor's CC Captain, even though no local legislation existed on marriage (Zabel, 1979). This request led to the consultation of acting Chief Justice, T.W. Jackson and Sir David Chalmers, who

argued the need for marriage legislation as sufficient misgivings existed on the legitimacy of many marriages in the colony. Hence in May 1882, Governor, Sir Samuel Rowe introduced a draft bill in the Legislative Council. The ordinance postulated that marriage, to be valid, ought to follow Christian Rituals with designated ministers assigned to perform specific ceremonial rites as Registrars (Rowe to Colonial Office 1882).

With the regulation of marriages according to the rites of Christianity, the role of the colonial state as the authority was established even in the manner in which marriage was formed and what constituted family now. The proposed ordinance went through a series of amendments, and in June 1885, there was an order from the Colonial Secretary for the States to effect the law immediately. The ordinance stipulated the compulsory certification by the registrar and an optional publication of the banns. The Roman Catholic Church locally advocated for the reduction of the age of females from 18 years to 17 years as early marriage was the norm and to help check concubinage. However, the Gold Coast Executive Council pegged the age to 21 years for consent, a view shared by the Protestants, the Methodists (Colonial Office, 1879; Harris, 2001).

Although the passage of the law conflicted with the customary law on marriage, as marriage was between families and needed parental approval, its implementation was gradual since it conflicted with the custom that allowed marriage with a deceased wife's sister. The colonial administration implemented an open-door policy of implementation concerning the ordinance of marriage with a leading Wesleyan minister, pinpointing that the practice was following traditions and not repugnant to Biblical teachings, and it was already permissible in many colonies of the British. The Marriage Ordinance criminalises anything not monogamous once one person is married under this law, with the punishment being five years maximum imprisonment. However, a

person who married under this law and contracted another marriage specifically under customary laws faced an imprisonment term of not more than two years.

3.3 Imposition of Foreign Cultural Values, Labour Exploitation and Migration Patterns

The institutions of numerous ordinances between 1874 and 1957 greatly altered colonial Ghana's social institutions and relationships. The colonial government passed an ordinance to regulate the sales of spirits on December 31, 1875. The sale of spirits included whiskey, rum, gin, akpeteshie and other distilled liquors and needed the Governor's consent to sell it. Those who failed to acquire a license were found guilty and faced fines ranging from five to fifty pounds (Griffith, 1887). Stores licensed to sell spirits fell under the supervision of the Constabulary Force, and any member of the force was mandated to enforce the ordinance. The ordinance covered the protected territories.

In 1877, the colonial administration established the prison systems in Ghana and established the first prison at Saltpond on May 22, 1877, to punish those they perceived as rebels and threats to colonial governance. It subsequently established various prisons at Court House, Accra, Winneba, Elmina, Sekondi, Akropong, and Akuse. The government also sought to regulate the relationships between employers and employees under contracts. This was to give credence to the formalisation of agreements. Therefore, on March 17, 1878, the government passed Ordinance No. 16 to regulate the Relations between Employers and Employed under Contracts (Griffith 1887, vii). It also regulated the possession of ammunition and arms beginning July 23 1877, under the Gold Coast Customs Ordinance 1876. The regulation of ammunition and arms saw the rapid decline of arms possessions by the various states and reduced the rate of conflicts among ethnicities. Arms were to be owned by the colonial government to resource the army and navy to ensure security (Munitions of War Exportations No 14 1877, 401).

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In 1885, the colonial government-built prisons aimed to treat those mentally sick and passed the rule that encouraged the emergence of hard labour for prisoners (Griffith, 1887).

The colonialists transformed the Asafo groupings into 'Public Works Departments' and served as task forces. Initially, there was resistance, especially against public works; thus, in 1883, the *Public Labour Ordinance* was passed, where payments compensated recruited labour. Later, in 1894, chiefs were permitted to call upon their subjects for a six-day labour in each quarter, and in 1895, the *Compulsory Labour Ordinance* was enacted to give chiefs the jurisdiction to recruit for the colonial government. Recruits under the 1895 Compulsory Labour Ordinance sometimes served as militia on behalf of the colonialists in their wars against rebellious Gold Coasters, and this caused serious riots.

The appointment of Sir Hugh Clifford as Governor (1912-1919) began the constitutional reforms, which further led to extensive social changes. Under the Governorship of Sir Hugh Clifford, Ghana saw the establishment of a select committee in 1913 to supervise, consider and approve colonial budgets. The committee comprised four members: W. H. Grey, J. D. McKay, T. Hutton Mills, and Konor E. Mate Kole (Priestley, 1973). In 1916 alone, the colonial government passed twenty-nine ordinances including: The Registration of Medical Practitioners and Dentists (Amendment) Ordinance, 1916, which provided for the cataloguing of practitioners holding British Colonial qualifications in the Colony; The Immigration of Labourers Restriction Ordinance, 1916, which gave the colonial government the power to direct the immigration of indentured foreign workers to the colony who were neither of West African origin nor of European descent; and the Deportation of Suspects Ordinance, 1916, which gave the governor the power to expel from the colony any person suspected of aiding or communicating with the

enemy (Annual Report of the Colonies, 1918, p. 31).

With the end of WWII, the colonial administration policy saw a dramatic improvement. The Select Committee was very instrumental in the development agenda of the Colony, and it lasted until 1950 when the ministerial system was instituted. The Committee became an integral part of the colonial administration as it was responsible for the allocation and management of the public finances. On September 20, 1916, the colonial administration introduced the Legislative Council, consisting of the Governor, nine unofficial and twelve official members of European and African descents to represent all interests (Annual Report of the Colonies, Gold Coast 1918). The Legislative Council had three Europeans from the unofficial side representing commerce, banking, and mining, alongside three traditional rulers, and three African-educated elite nominees. Members who served in the Legislative Council included J. E. Casely-Hayford (1916-1930); Abuakwahehene Nana Ofori Atta (1916-43); Omanhene of Assin Attandanso, Nana Darko Tsibo IX (1932-50); Arko Korsah of Elmina, later Chief Justice (1929-40); and J. D. McKay, European (1913-36) (Legislative Council 1913, 1; Sessional Paper IV 1930-1931; Gold Coast Legislative Council 1930, 395; Gold Coast Legislative Assembly 1951, 3; Kimble, 1968).

Between 1916-17, the Legislative Council unanimously voted for a contribution of £200,000 to the Imperial Government, ten scouting aeroplanes with two from Asante presented to the Imperial Government in WWI. In 1915-16, the Legislative Council with the Colonial Administration accrued £ 3,292,119 with customs valued at £1,960,015 due to heavy importation of goods, increased duties, and export duty on cocoa. The revenues accrued between 1912 and 1916 stood at £7,156,238. The Clifford Administration executed many social projects in 1916 using contracted loans of £2,930,685 that further

deepened the social changes in Colonial Gold Coast, and these included railways of Sekondi-Kumasi, Accra-Akwapim, and Tarkwa-Prestea-Breomassie, Accra Harbour Works, Sekondi Harbour Works, Accra Water Works, and Sekondi Water Works (Gold Coast Legislative Council, 1930).

Also, the colonial administration instituted municipal bodies and town councils in Accra, Cape Coast, and Sekondi. Each council had a membership of eight with half each nominated by the Governor and elected by the taxpayers. Between 1912 and 1916, Accra, Cape Coast, and Sekondi Councils accrued revenues of £56,279, £20, 529 and £25,703, respectively. These councils were charged with overseeing sanitation situations, public works, providing social services, and decentralising administrative and judicial functions of the parts of the colony. These councils were the foundation of the emergence of civil service in Ghana, and they served as avenues for attaining employment opportunities for the natives (Gold Coast Legislative Council 1916).

Several ports established in the Colony employed many natives, thus creating a new social class such as doctors, nurses, pharmacists, teachers and clerks. These port areas were Accra, Sekondi, Half Assini, Cape Coast, Apam, Axim, Ada, Winneba, and Quittah. These ports were essential to the colonial regime in generating revenues to meet public expenditures and projects of a developmental nature. These ports exported £5,772,189 in 1916 (Gold Coast Legislative Council 1916, 23). The operation of the various mining areas in the Asante and Gold Coast Colony further contributed to the existence of a different social class. Ghana had more than fifteen mining companies operating in the country and employing hundreds of people aside from contributing to the revenue generation of the state as in 1915-16, these mining companies generated £ 3,349,384 (Gold Coast Legislative Council 1916, 25).

The health sector of the inhabitants of the Gold Coast also experienced social change as Western medicine was introduced. The colonial government introduced Western medicine to Ghana in the late 19th century. European doctors and nurses were brought in to establish hospitals and clinics and to train local health workers. This led to the decline of traditional medicine and the loss of traditional knowledge. The colonial administration expanded access to health services in Ghana, particularly in urban areas, as it established hospitals, clinics, and dispensaries and provided vaccinations and other preventive measures, yet access to health services was limited in rural areas, and many people still relied on traditional healers (Akyeampong & Fisch, 2012).

There was the introduction of health measures such as sanitation and hygiene campaigns, and the control of infectious diseases. These measures helped to improve the population's health and reduce mortality rates, yet they were often implemented without the involvement of the local communities and sometimes led to resistance. The colonial government established medical research institutions like the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research. These institutions researched tropical diseases and helped to develop new treatments and vaccines while using African subjects for medical experiments without their informed consent (Gyekye, 1996; Dodo, 2006).

Before 1947, coastal politicians had little influence over rural Ghanaian movements, for the British policy excluded educated professionals and politicians from active political participation. Indirect rule separated urban politicians from traditional local leaders. Britain established the Joint Provincial Council (JPC) limiting the representatives of that body to traditional rulers. Sir Hugh Clifford describes the colonial attitude towards Ghanaian professionals trained in the West as

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[a] self-selected and self-appointed congregation of educated gentlemen ... whose eyes are fixed not upon African native history or tradition or policy, not upon their own tribal obligations and their duties to their natural rulers which immemorial custom imposed upon them, but upon political theories evolved by Europeans (Hodgkin, 196, p.26).

3.4 Indigenous Education and Knowledge Systems

Education was largely in the hands of Christian missions, and the colonial government was reluctant to invest resources in the population and had no intention of actively engaging in educational development; it became crucial as education became the political focal point of the colonial government. The colonial administration focused largely on master-servant relationships and encouraged apprenticeship. In the Master and Servant Ordinance, 1877, a person aged 9 to 16 years may be an apprentice to any trade and employment and could be made as a domestic servant of not more than five years, especially orphans (Master and Servant Ordinance 1877).

The educational policy was not aimed at the needs of the natives nor a response to the wants of the indigenes but to indoctrinate the people through mind control. The financing of education was locally generated from the revenues. This perspective resulted in the ordinances of 1882 and 1887. The colonisers perceived Africans as people who were incapable of self-governance and backwards, hence the need to bring them civilisation and progress (Aissat & Djafari, 2011). The Education Ordinance of 1882 initiated the establishment of and support for schools in colonial Ghana. Its purpose was to prepare the local population for its new role in colonial governance – the establishment of new schools, rules for building technical schools, certifying teachers and setting salaries, and a General Board for Education. The main goal was to overcome staffing shortages in the expansive colonial administration and commercial

activities. These educated people worked as clerks and technicians for the native councils.

The abundance of literate Gold Coasters was seen as a threat to their colonial policy; hence, education was aimed at manning the lowest ranks in the colonial administration and staffing the private firms of the Europeans. The presence of many educated Ghanaians was thought dangerous as the colonialists' perceived education would create contempt against the unlettered traditional rulers and would seek their places in the traditional societies. Therefore, education was seen as a means to supervise educational activities (Brown, 1975, p. 42). Education, therefore, was implemented using the missionaries' stratagem, which emphasised school administrative organisation and management. Young natives were isolated from the African past and taught European values to produce a group of 'allies.' Education focused on literary importance and optional subjects such as History, Geography, and Literature, with none of the subjects learned focused on Africa-related issues (Bartel, 1949).

Students were taught the British constitution, literature, geography, and the history of the British Empire, with the understanding that Africa had no history, was primitive, and barbaric, and the curriculum had no specialised instruction on technical subjects. Speaking English was considered an educational achievement on the Gold Coast, so local languages were banned in colonial-era schools, except in the Basel mission schools. English-speaking and English-savvy people were seen as scholars, and locals abandoned their local names and started adopting English names, which created doubts and low self-confidence among young people who still clung to their local names (Bartel, 1949).

Boarding schools were encouraged as a modus operandi to alienate the youth from the African culture, as the African culture was viewed as pagan.

Single-sex schools of boarding systems were instituted to subjugate the African culture and replace it with the 'civilised' European culture. In this relation, morality and discipline were critical in the religious teaching of the Ghanaian child in the boarding systems. The Education Ordinance of 1887 made the missionary the chief school administrator, replacing the local board of education established by the Education Ordinance 1882. The General Board of Education was also responsible for inspecting schools and issuing certificates to teachers and had the power to make regulations and rules regarding subsidies. The ordinance established schools for all schoolchildren, regardless of religion or race, and removed the requirement to open new schools. The grant was awarded to a school with an average enrolment of 20 students and implemented a curriculum that ensures standardisation (Graham, 2013).

Six shillings were given to a student who passed reading, writing, and arithmetic, but two shillings were reduced for each subject failed. Schools were allowed to add other subjects, such as drawing and physical education. In 1888, 2,774 men and 716 women were enrolled in public primary and secondary schools. Between 1888 and 1890, however, the enrolment increased to 3,070 and 782 for males and females. By 1916, there were fourteen schools under the direct supervision of the colonial regime and two hundred and fifty-nine primary schools were run by the missionaries. Education was not compulsory, and student enrolment was at 22,456 with an average daily attendance of 17,611 (Gold Coast Legislative Council, 1916; Graham, 1971).

By the 20th century, the educational sector of Gold Coast began to see transformations under Governor Sir John P. Rodger (1902-10) due to the improvement of the economy. Under his governorship, a committee was empanelled and established the Accra Teacher Training College and Accra Technical School in 1909. Teachers sat for

examination for the teacher's Colonial Department of Education certification. Government school teachers were pegged on a salary scale of £36 – 210, and teaching did not offer opportunities for progress, security, and status. Teaching served as a futuristic preparation for clerical positions (Sederberg, 1971).

The Accra Technical School was primarily intended to train craftsmen for the Gold Coast's most important services: transport and telecommunications, public works, and the Electricity Commission. The main goal was the practical training of students in techniques and crafts. However, in 1919, the Accra Technical School was moved to Takoradi. The courses included metal and woodworking. Initially, the school offered theoretical classes in classrooms, but in 1912, students began participating in the hands-on work of workshops. First in the railroad, then in the public works sector. Students were required to complete a three-year degree to qualify for engineering and trade. Thus, the first products of the Accra Technical School were submitted for examination in May 1912. Of the 28 candidates, 18 were metalworkers, and 10 were woodworkers. After obtaining the qualification, the graduates were mainly employed by government agencies such as public works, water supply, and railways (Sederberg, 1971).

When Gordon Guggisberg (1919-27) became the Governor, he was more concerned with the interests of the Gold Coast as he lived most of his adult life in the Gold Coast as a surveyor. As Governor, he expanded the railway and created a deep-water harbour at Takoradi, superseding the surf-boats usage at the time. He commissioned the construction of Korle-Bu Hospital and Achimota College, the first tertiary educational institution in Gold Coast (Bourret, 1960). Governor Guggisberg saw education as the only way to transform the Gold Coast, arguing that education is a right and that the right to education would translate into bigger

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revenues, agriculture, better transportation and trade systems (Wraith, 1967).

To achieve the goals set by his administration, he embarked on a ten-year development plan, the first and only colonial development plan before independence. In his tenure as governor on his ten-year development plan, £2,263,825 was expended on harbours, £5,620,900 on railways, £1, 223,147 on motorable roads, £1,511,770 on public buildings, and £465,182 on town improvements. In all, the period of Governor Guggisberg saw public expenditure on developmental projects at £12,403,521 (Legislative Council 1920-21/1926-27; old Coast Bluebooks 1929-30/ 1938-39).

Ghana saw the emergence of nationalist education and the decolonisation of education. The nationalist movement in Ghana led to the emergence of nationalist education, emphasising the importance of African culture and history. This education was promoted by nationalist leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah, who established the Institute of African Studies at the University of Ghana and expanded access to education for females (Bening, 1952).

4. Conclusion

After several years of trading with Europeans as counterparts of commerce and trade, the British introduced colonial rule on July 24, 1874, without consultation with the indigenes. Colonisation began with the designated areas with European forts and castles and the final departure of the Dutch from the Gold Coast. Colonisation gradually became acceptable by the coastal states, especially as they felt the British could protect them from the ferociousness of the Asante. Colonialism brought numerous significant changes to the social fabric of the Ghanaian community, particularly in the governance and structure of authority and power, education, social relations and acculturation of values; as a result of colonisation, new social class strata emerged, which diverted from those entrenched in the pre-colonial era.

The paper critically examined the profound social changes in Ghana during British colonisation from 1874 to 1956, following the decisive Berlin Conference of 1844. It asserts how Ghana, previously known as the Gold Coast, became a British colony after the Asante's defeat in 1874, marking a significant turning point in the region's history. Utilising a robust qualitative historical approach, the analysis draws from primary and secondary sources, including archival materials, to highlight the transformative effects of colonial rule on Ghanaian society. The introduction establishes the context by detailing Ghana's initial interactions with Europeans and the alarming shift from trading goods to engaging in the brutal Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. It emphasised the influence of European merchants on local politics and landmark events, such as the Asante-Fante wars and the treaties that destabilised traditional governance and customs. As the study unfolded, it revealed that colonial ordinances brought about significant and extensive modifications and an imposition on traditional social structures, especially social classes, marriage, education, and governance. This paper boldly challenges Eurocentric narratives by presenting an indispensable African perspective, illustrating the complex effects of colonialism on various social groups. By emphasising these significant social changes, the paper contributes to the urgent need to decolonise historical narratives. It provides a nuanced understanding of colonialism's impact on Ghana, firmly situating the discussion within the broader themes of social transformation throughout this crucial period in the nation's history.

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