

# “AFIE NI AFIE” (HOME IS HOME)<sup>1</sup>: REVISITING REVERSE TRANS-ATLANTIC JOURNEYS TO GHANA AND THE PARADOX OF RETURN

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## ABSTRACT

This article traces different waves of reverse migrations to the Gold Coast, now Ghana, which began in the early nineteenth century. The article explores external motivations for pursuing these journeys and factors internal to Ghanaian history that facilitated reverse migrations. Both contributed to the contradictions of return and the paradox of freedom or the illusion that their physical presence in Ghana would fulfil their fantasy. Part of the article chronicles the stories of individuals, family groups, and the transatlantic communities they created: Brazilian-Africans (Tabom), Caribbean Africans and American-Africans. The article focuses on themes of slavery, emancipation, abolition, reverse migrations and Pan-African activities in Ghana. This article maintains that literature on reverse migrations should extend beyond the narrow focus of the New World back to Africa. I assert that there are other reverse migratory paths from West Africa to Brazil (after liberated Brazilian-Africans settled in Africa in the early 1800s) and between Nigeria and Ghana that have been overlooked by scholars in their study of reverse migrations to Ghana and West Africa in general. In the end, this article shows similarities in reverse migrations and shared cultural kinship as members of the returnee communities in Lagos-Nigeria (the Aguda) and Accra-Ghana (the Tabom) crisscrossed the West African Atlantic and created various identities.

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## INTRODUCTION

Reverse migrations to Africa began in the seventeenth century when millions of enslaved Africans were transported across the Atlantic through the middle passage.<sup>2</sup> The Africans revolted during their long voyages and sought different avenues to return to the various communities from where they were captured. Although the slaves left behind their families and loved ones after their involuntary journeys, Africa never left them. Indeed, the concept of return did not emerge overnight. The slaves continued to retain their memory of a home in Africa while in the Americas. The combination of their horrific experiences crossing the Atlantic, the degrees of plantation exploitations, and a deep yearning to be free, in particular, drove waves of voyagers across dangerous Atlantic waters back to a home in Africa characterized as the “bosom of the fatherland.”<sup>3</sup>

The journeys of hope and the various preparations, alliances, and collaborations between African slaves from their time of capture and the onset of their emancipation epitomize the birth of Pan-Africanism. Indeed, although this notion of common kinship to Africa and shared struggle united the dispersed enslaved populations in the New World, it was disrupted somehow. This sense of unity and fantasy about a home elsewhere in Africa collided with the reality of rejection, the paradox of freedom and challenges associated with reverse migrations. Over time, the illusion of return—the realization that re-settlement in Africa was not going to be as easy as expected—re-defined their sense of home and their kinship ties with Africans. This article seeks to move the discourse on reverse diaspora migrations from the periphery to the forefront of Ghanaian and Atlantic historiography. The goal is not only to trace the origins of reverse migrations in Ghana but to show the distinct ways in which Brazilian-Africans/the Tabom, American-Africans and the Caribbean returnees identify with Ghana in the twenty-first century.<sup>4</sup>

As this article looks beyond existing paradigm, I argue that limited scholarship about the ways in which the social history of Ghana shaped aspects of reverse migrations has complicated narratives of Ghana. This includes contestations about how to acquire Ghanaian citizenship and identity politics.

In most cases, a voyage to Africa provides a forum for returnees to display their dual-identity and to make claims to a single form of citizenship or dual-citizenship. Kim D. Butler reminds us that by responding to the call to return “home” Diasporan blacks sought to “articulate their rightful share as citizens of nations they helped to create [during the anti-colonial movements].”<sup>5</sup> According to Butler, “a century ago, radical black activists dissatisfied with the hand they were dealt bore witness to common ills suffered by Africans on the continent and abroad. Today, transnational alliances hold the potential of improving the lives of African peoples and their descendants. There are many fronts to forge such relationships.”<sup>6</sup>

The forging of relationships that Butler notes, especially at the height of Pan-Africanism in the nineteenth century, calls attention to the challenges freed slaves and their offspring encountered. Particularly significant are the obstacles that those born outside Ghana face while showcasing their Diasporan identity and negotiating their distant blood ties to Ghana via their ancestors’ experiences with the middle passage. In drawing parallels between the different levels of Pan-African consciousness, this article asserts that cross-cultural interactions and mutual exchanges between returnees and Ghanaians, mirror other challenges liberated Africans and their descendants were confronted with in Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Angola and other locations.<sup>7</sup> The lived experiences of both emancipated Africans in Brazil and the offspring of liberated Africans from the United States (US) and the Caribbean, especially the historical experience of slavery, have contributed to the ways both groups respond to their transatlantic

past and to Ghanaians. In the case of Ghana, the identities of the Brazilians were influenced by the fact that most of their offspring were born in Ghana, their varying perceptions and diverse memory of their ancestors' experience with slavery, particularly the gradual assimilation into Ghanaian societies that began in the late nineteenth century. As will be discussed later, the returnees' descendants had different levels of experiences.

Aside from the appeal of Pan-Africanism, people of African descent are drawn to Ghana because of its historical ties to the middle passage.<sup>8</sup> Most Diasporans have visited Ghana because it has many more slave forts, dungeons, and castles along its Atlantic coastline than other areas in West Africa.<sup>9</sup> Ghana's record in post-independence democratic political transitions, especially in terms of its capacity to successfully address post-election disputes through judicial processes rather than violent uprisings, has elevated Ghana's image and justified its portrayal as an exemplary nation of peace.<sup>10</sup> This view of Ghana as politically stable reinforced other positive factors that drew Diasporans to Ghana prior to the demise of British rule on March 6, 1957. Besides, the inflows and outflows of people of African ancestry seeking to reconnect to their heritage in Ghana seemed never-ending. For most returnees, their temporal or permanent interactions with Ghana validate a part of their African identity—hence their determination to acquire dual citizenship despite past disappointments.

This article is divided into two sections: the first section traces the different forms of reverse migrations from the New World to Ghana and the motivations for these travels and settlements. This section also shows the reasons why it is difficult to quantify the total number of freed slaves who participated in the creation of reverse Diaspora migrations and Diaspora communities in Ghana. The second section provides two examples of reverse migrations within West Africa—the case of the Aguda in Nigeria and the Tabom in Ghana—and discusses the

ways in which emancipated Africans and their offspring traveled back and forth between these two locations. It ends with a brief discussion about contradictions of freedom and complexity of return.

### **TRACING THE ORIGINS OF REVERSE MIGRATIONS TO GHANA: REVERSE MIGRATIONS FROM THE PRE-COLONIAL ERA**

The Brazilian-African presence which began at the height of abolition in Brazil in the early 1800s is the only one that occurred during the pre-colonial era. Manumission, the 1835 slave revolts in Bahia, Brazil and the demise of slavery in Brazil in 1888 all contributed to the reverse migrations.<sup>11</sup> The arrival of the liberated Africans, however, coincided with colonial ventures in Accra. The intersection between these two historical developments shaped the story of freedom and the contradictions of return as the freed slaves were subjected to British colonial ordinances.<sup>12</sup> There were two major migration patterns: those directly from Brazil to Accra and the others from Brazil to various locations in West Africa, particularly to Lagos and later to Accra.<sup>13</sup> According to colonial documents deposited at the Public Records and Archives Administration (PRAAD), the first groups of emancipated slaves from Brazil were in Accra in the early 1820s. One of these documents relates that, “The late Aruna was one of the Brazilians who migrated to the Gold Coast in or about 1826.”<sup>14</sup> This document does not show whether they stopped in Nigeria, but the descendants of Aruna (one of the freed slave settlers) claim that their grand-dad stayed in Lagos briefly before relocating to Accra.<sup>15</sup>

Another archival collections at PRAAD confirms that, “It appears that as far back as the thirties [1830s] a ship load of Africans were landed from Brazil and after they were land [sic] the Gã chiefs gave them land to build on the town Accra and also bush land to cultivate.”<sup>16</sup> This archival record does not say who these people are, but another document at PRAAD describes

the arrival of another group of freed slaves a decade later. The reference notes that, “Sometime in the year 1836, Brazilians landed here [Accra], they came in one cargo ship; there were seven elders among them namely Mama Sokoto and others...that land was granted to them...the land remained the property of the Brazilian community.”<sup>17</sup> The gifts of land the Gã chiefs gave, or were granted to the freed slaves as pointed out in the last two quotes, shaped their history and identity in Accra overtime. Besides, the three documents above show that the earliest recorded settlement in Accra was in 1826 and continued the decade after. The Brazilian-African reverse migrations to Ghana continued after the end of slavery in 1888, but there is no evidence that shows these migrations continued from the early 1900s.

During this time, the then Gold Coast was divided into two halves: the Southern and the Northern Protectorate.<sup>18</sup> The Southern Protectorate, as the name implies, was about half-way from the middle of the country to the coast, while the latter includes the upper part from the Ashante Empire. At the height of colonial rule in Ghana in the early 1900s, both the Southern and Northern Protectorate came under British rule after the British finally defeated the Ashanti Empire in the Yaa Asantewaa War, or the British-Ashanti War of 1901.<sup>19</sup> This important development shaped reverse migrations.

Literature about the Caribbean presence in Ghana is scanty. The Caribbean/West Indies reverse migration story is understudied and the archives are not forthcoming about their presence. However, the few works available provide significant overview of the Caribbean expatriates in Ghana.<sup>20</sup>

## **REVERSE MIGRATIONS IN THE COLONIAL ERA**

British colonial conquest in Ghana after the defeat of the Ashante Empire was an important turning point in the history of Ghana. This development led to numerous changes, not only in the political dynamics of the colony, it also gave the British the opportunity to introduce different degrees of colonial ordinances, including the Public Land Ordinances of 1876.<sup>21</sup> Correspondence between British colonial officials housed at the British National Archives in Kew, explains the urgency for these new laws to raise revenue for the colonist. Other laws required expertise and specialized skills to implement these reforms as part of larger colonial ventures. Emancipated Africans in the Caribbean/West Indians served these important colonial needs.

The African Caribbean returnees who consisted of professionals such as engineers, postal clerks, and medical doctors, lawyers among others were transported to assist with British colonial projects.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, the liberated Africans from the West Indies did not relocate under the same conditions as the Brazilian-Africans who joined dangerous voyages to Ghana. For instance, slavery ended in Jamaica by the mid-1840s which allowed a number of freed slaves to acquire different professional skills when it became part of the Crown Colony a decade later.

In fact, the collaborations between British colonial officials and the professionals from Jamaica and other areas in the Caribbean were not the only arrangements that facilitated the creation of the first Caribbean returnee community in Ghana in the early 1990s. A group of their populations was drawn to Ghana by Basel Missionaries and other religious groups, to propagate Christianity.<sup>23</sup> Although slavery did not end until 1888, most of the returnees from Brazil, who arrived in the Gold Coast colony, did so after they gained their freedom from the early 1820s.

## **REVERSE MIGRATIONS IN THE POST-COLONIAL ERA**

The third set of reverse migrations by American-Africans is different in terms of the historical conditions in Ghana at the time and the period it occurred. It happened after the end of British colonial rule on March 6, 1957. Former Ghanaian president Nkrumah's role in fostering ties between African nationalist leaders and civil rights activists to end both colonization and segregation in American Jim Crow South opened up a new chapter,<sup>24</sup> placing Ghana on the pedestal of Pan-Africanism and transatlantic politics.<sup>25</sup> American-Africans' story of reverse migration is different from the first migrations, which were shaped by emancipation of slaves in Brazil; and the second, which was motivated by the needs of British colonial rulers and the Basel Mission in Ghana to boost colonial projects and to spread Christianity. In addition, it is different from the Brazilian-African story, particularly in the sense that it consisted mainly of the offspring of liberated slaves in the US.

In general, the American-African story is also part of or an extension of the larger history of reverse migrations from North America to Liberia and Sierra-Leone which was partly funded by the American Colonization Society from the post-Reconstruction periods in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup> What set those who relocated to Ghana apart during Nkrumah's tenure at the Civil Rights Movements in the 1950s and the 1960s and those who moved to Ghana in the post-Nkrumah eras from 1970s is that the former were mainly invited by Nkrumah but the latter explored Ghana on their own. Overall, the various waves of reverse migrations to Ghana share similar broader themes entrenched in the history of slavery, revolts, emancipation, identity formation and notions of citizenship. For contemporary reverse migrations from the 1990s, most of these returnees travelled to Ghana virtually because of their memory of ancestral ties and shared cultural connections to Africa.<sup>27</sup>



As noted earlier, politically, the history of American-Africans' reverse migrations to Ghana was colored largely by Pan-African rhetoric at the peak of anti-colonial resistance and the Civil Rights Movements that gained enormous momentum in the American Jim Crow South in the 1950s and the 1960s. During this time, the returnees rejected notions of American democracy because American versions of democracy at this time operated side by side with racism and segregation from the early 1900s. Therefore, American blacks sought various sanctuaries in race-free societies outside America.<sup>28</sup> While a number of black Americans relocated to European cities such as Paris, France, others focused on Africa.<sup>29</sup> If the onset of British colonial rule in Ghana favored the expertise of the returnees from the Caribbean, the demise of British rule on the other hand benefited American-African intellectuals, activists, and radicals who supported post-independence reforms in Ghana.<sup>30</sup> According to Gaines, "Ghana was a haven for a range of activists working at the intersection of anti-colonial, civil rights, leftist, and pacifist movements."<sup>31</sup> Gaines also asserts that the "interwoven and anti-colonial routes of passage influenced the political formation of pan-African nationalist leaders and intellectuals, including Kwame Nkrumah (the first prime minister and president of Ghana) who ruled from 1957-1966, George Padmore, and St. Clair Drake" to collaborate and sustain the Pan-African ideology across the Ghanaian and American sides of the Atlantic.

### **REVERSE MIGRATIONS FROM THE 1990S**

In the 1950s in Ghana, under Nkrumah's rule, Pan-African consciousness and post-independence reforms remained the dominant historical forces shaping the first incoming waves of American-African migration until Nkrumah was overthrown in a 1966 military coup.<sup>32</sup> During the 1990s, cultural and economic factors, including the prominent heritage tourism industry, attracted the

second waves of migration to Ghana, both permanent and temporary settlers. According to American-African returnees in Ghana, these sites of memories along the Central Region coastline have dual purposes: to connect with spirits of their ancestors in the now sacred spaces where they once experienced horrors of the middle passage; to perform symbolic rites—rituals of return. During one of these performances the returnees established the “Door of Return”—(a permanent mark on the opposite side of the “Door of No Return”) to show that the descendants of slaves are back to the horrific sites where their ancestors were forced unto slave ships to the New World.<sup>33</sup>

The aforementioned influences, Pan-African consciousness and the sociopolitical climate in the American Jim Crow South, did in fact influence American-African migrations to Ghana in the early 1960s. The American-Africans who settled in Ghana invested heavily in the tourism industry, operating car rentals, travel agencies, and tour services, and working in hotel and motel management, to name a few.<sup>34</sup> Entrepreneurism among the returnees transformed places of horror to profitable tourism destinations and heritage sites. Whereas beginning the late 1950s it was politically conscious Pan-Africanism around the African Diaspora—that attracted the expatriated populations to Nkrumah’s Ghana, a new but related force, *Economic Pan-Africanism*, was now what attracted most of the continuing migrations into Ghana, in spite of the aforementioned nationalist spirit.

There are other similarities between the American-African and Brazilian-African story; for instance, in terms of the hospitality shown to the Brazilian-Africans, including the gift of the Brazilian Land, when they landed in Accra in the 1830s and were welcomed by the Gã King Tackie Komeh I. The land transformed their history in three main ways: first, it contained the freed slaves, because of what the land required, within a relatively small area, which enabled

them to sustain their Brazilian identity in the areas of language and religion, as well as in terms of other cultural aspects<sup>35</sup>; second, most of the freed slaves became first-time landowners with the allocation of the Brazilian Land, and desire among migrants to make this story their own attracted more settlers from other areas along the Bight of Benin; third, and above all, this vast area of land allowed returnees to continue practicing their skills and contributing to development in pre-colonial Accra.<sup>36</sup>

Over a century later, Ghanaian leaders and government institutions developed an incentive strategy to draw Diasporans into the country, adapted from the story of former Gã King Komeh I and his gift to the returnees. Diasporan Africans have responded well to incentives to return to Africa to perform or display their Pan-African consciousness and their “dual” identities in tandem and support new reforms. Not all the returnees are Pan-Africanist, some are in Ghana based on the promise of being initiated as *nkonsohene* /*nkosohe*maa (development chiefs), and others, as investors and entrepreneurs, are attracted by the tax-breaks or other incentives of dual-citizenship.<sup>37</sup> These and other incentives created paths for reconnecting with an imagined African heritage.

### **UNCERTAINTIES ABOUT THEIR POPULATION: WHY THEY ARE UNCOUNTABLE**

The archives at PRAAD, the major archival repository in Ghana, contain no estimates or information pertaining to the size of Brazilian migrants during the pre-colonial era—not from the period the slaves gained manumission, or when they succeeded in revolts in Bahia, Brazil, or after the demise of slavery in 1888.<sup>38</sup> It is likely that the archival documents contain no population statistics because of the spontaneous nature of their resettlements as they arrived individually or in groups. Part of the reason is due to the fact that many more slaves were taken

from their homes in Nigeria than in Ghana, and therefore the focus of most archives has been on the former.<sup>39</sup> Information in archives at *Arquivo Publico da Bahia*, Bahia, Brazil which includes police and immigration records, is also silent or not sufficient to show the population that settled in Ghana. There are ample records at the British National Archives in Kew even if these data mainly show reverse travels (for commerce) back and forth to Brazil and Nigeria before slavery was abolished in Brazil. These reports also reveal correspondence by the British Consulate officials in Nigeria and the British Crown regarding the future of the freed slaves.<sup>40</sup> One such letter from Benjamin Campbell to Claredon states that, “My protection of those Africans who having purchased their emancipation from slavery in Brazil have settled in Lagos...as it armed me with the authority to interfere on behalf of 230 of these self-emancipated Africans lately brought to Lagos from Rio Janeiro and Bahia in the Portuguese vessel *Linda Flor*.”<sup>41</sup>

Although the letter from Campbell states that there were about 230 returnees, it is difficult to find consistency with the records. There is ongoing debate about the population of these returnees. It is believed that about 700 of the liberated Africans left Brazil for various destinations in West Africa, but these records do not tell us how many made it to Ghana. Information about their descendants’ travels and population size at different periods is difficult to find in the archives. Stories about their arrival and information drawn from interviews with members of the community indicate that possibly a little more than 300 freed slaves landed in Accra between the 1820s and the late 1800s.<sup>42</sup> The Tabom leaders believe there were about 1 million Ghanaians of Brazilian ancestry by the end of the twentieth century.<sup>43</sup> A recent census in Ghana did not resolve this matter because, instead of classifying Tabom as descendants of Brazilians, it identified them as Ghanaians from different ethnic groups.

Statistics about the returnees from the Caribbean and the United States, like those about returnees from Brazil, are non-existent. These limitations continue to blur efforts to trace their population. For data in the post-independence period, part of the problem is that The Immigration and Naturalization Services in Ghana do not group American travelers to Ghana on basis of their race. It is therefore challenging to know how many Americans of African ancestry arrive in Ghana each day.<sup>44</sup> However, some studies claim that about 60-90 expatriates supported Nkrumah's post-independence reforms from the 1950s.<sup>45</sup> There is no data on those who are part of the second waves (1970-1980), but it is estimated that about 3,000 to 4,000 American-Africans were in Ghana by the end of 2012.<sup>46</sup> Lack of statistics at the Immigration office in Accra does not end with the American-African story of the 1950s. Caribbean returnees are grouped on the basis of their individual countries, but even with this approach there is no substantial or holistic data on the population currently in the country.

In general, the Tabom people outnumber other returnees in Ghana. As mentioned earlier, their ancestors were the first group of returnees to settle in Ghana.<sup>47</sup> The liberated Brazilian-Africans and their offspring (mostly born in Ghana) had a longer period of time to develop their history. Part of this history includes their long-history of marriage union with Ghanaians. Returnees from the Caribbean and the US do not have this kind of history. This stark difference from other returnee groups, in particular, shaped the ways in which the Tabom developed linguistically and enabled the Tabom to assimilate into and make an impact on Ghanaian cultures.<sup>48</sup>

## **REVERSE MIGRATIONS FROM LAGOS TO ACCRA: AGUDA-TABOM CONNECTIONS**

It would be misleading to limit the study of reverse migrations or the creation of reverse returnee Diaspora communities to early ones that emerged after slaves left various plantations in the New World to Africa in the early 1800s without showcasing internal reverse migrations between two or more settlement communities. In the case of this study, the various cross-cultural interactions and exchanges that took place between the Aguda and the Tabom in cyclical forms is used to explain flaws and limitations in current literature. There are numerous stories that fall under this category in the case of the travel routes between Lagos and Accra. However, the life stories of two emancipated Brazilian-Africans, a man referred to as Ferku and a woman called Madam Okpedu is covered briefly to show the fluidity and complexity of reverse migrations.

The records at PRAAD show that Ferku was one of the liberated Brazilians who left Brazil for Lagos in the mid-1800s to locate a home. It is believed that he later traveled by sea to Accra in the late 1800s and married a woman called Yawah. I describe this as “stop-over” journeys.<sup>49</sup> According to this story, “Her parents hailed from Brazil. Her father’s name being Aruna and mother’s name was Fatuma. Ferku engaged and married her according to Brazil customs.”<sup>50</sup> During their 20 years of marriage Ferku traveled back and forth to Lagos to continue his trading activities, and to visit other family members he left behind. However, there is no evidence that Yawah, who was born in Accra to two freed slaves, ever visited Lagos either before or after their marriage. The love story between the two and Ferku’s nomadic lifestyle took a drastic turn when Ferku decided to resettle in Lagos in his old age around the 1920s. To avoid friction between them, Ferku decided to seek help from Yawah’s parents and also compensate

Yawah with a gift of land which Ferku received as part of the gifts of land Gã King Komeh that gave to the early Brazilian settlers. According to this love story,

“Ferku was old before he married Yawah, and when [he] was about to leave for Lagos, he told Plaintiff’s mother [Fatuma] that he may not likely return back again to Accra as he is old and the only thing he can do for his wife the Plaintiff as a gift was the land now in dispute [on] the portion of land he has sold same to one Kwartei Asanti to defray his expenses to Lagos.”<sup>51</sup>

The piece of land Yawah inherited from her husband became entangled in broader land disputes between members of the Brazilian community in Accra.<sup>52</sup> There is no evidence that Ferku returned to Accra after he left Accra somewhere in the 1920s. The multiple reverse travels were a common practice among the returnee communities.

The complex Atlantic travels and identities that emerged in Accra in the case of Ferku and Yawah, who were both born to Brazilian slaves, are exceptions. Other stories transcended the Aguda-Tabom dichotomy, or did not emerge between people of Brazilian descent. In some cases, the freed slaves’ journey from Brazil crossed paths with numerous ethnic groups in West Africa during the process of assimilation. For instance, the story about Madam Okpedu, who most likely migrated from Brazil to Nigeria and later to Accra in search of a home and various forms of opportunities, shaped the history of the Peregrino-Brimah family lineage. This did not occur by accident. Okpedu, one of the founding mothers of the Brazilian family tree in Accra, was married to Chief Ibrahim Brimah, a devout Yoruba Muslim, philanthropist, entrepreneur, and community leader in the early 1900s. During his stay in colonial Accra, Brimah, like other Yoruba and non-Yoruba Muslims, migrated to Accra to spread his faith and to trade. He established Muslim Mohammedans community and other important towns as Tudu, a town near

Accra. His other accomplishments include the creation of a central business district known as Cow lane, which was an important location for selling cows, other animals, and kola in Central Accra.

The narratives in the archives are not clear about Okpedu's origin or how her parents were sent to Brazil. However, there is ample evidence that establishes her Brazilian-African heritage. Okpedu is not only a household name among the Peregrino-Brimah family; her name also appears in numerous colonial administrative papers, including Supreme Court documents and land tenure records at PRAAD. These archival collections and ongoing court disputes between Okpedu's descendants over land tenure and the distribution of their properties validate her Brazilian ancestry. They also reveal her life as a slave as well as her ties to other Brazilians in Accra. On the other hand, correspondence between Gã *manɔtɛmɛi* (chiefs) and British colonial officials refer to the significance of Chief Brimah in the organization and creation of Mohammedans and Islamic communities in Accra. For instance, file number ADM 11/1/1505 labeled "Hausa Community-Accra" contain reports about Gã King Tackie Tawiah's (reigned from 1862-1902) endorsement of Brimah as the leader of the Mohammedan community. This document, in particular, shows that the Aguda were not the only migrant groups that contributed to the Tabom-Brazilian identity formation—the Yorubas, like Chief Brimah, also made an impact.

A dark part of Okpedu's marriage union with Brimah has emerged in the twenty-first century. A body of archival documents at the Supreme Court, Accra shows evidence of recent conflicts over Chief Brimah's land and other assets. The ongoing dispute says a lot about the entangled dissonance of memory, conflicting identity formation, and issues of citizenship in the Brazilian-Tabom story. The major court dispute between the Peregrino and Chief Brimah's



children from another marriage in the twenty-first century, which occurred over six decades after the demise of Okpedu (somewhere in the 1940s), has opened new wounds about their past. The two groups are seriously arguing over her origins. On the one hand, the Peregrinos, who trace their lineage to Okpedu, are insisting that she was a freed Brazilian slave in Accra before she married Chief Brimah. Brimah's descendants, however, claim that Okpedu was still a slave when she was involved in the polygamous relation with Brimah, so she and her offspring do not deserve any of Brimah's possessions. The point is that slaves were not entitled or qualified to hold any assets until they were free.<sup>53</sup> There is evidence that some of the freed slaves from the New World were re-enslaved in various locations after they returned to Africa;<sup>54</sup> however, this particular case fails to establish how Madam Okpedu, a freed slave from Brazil, later became a slave in Accra.

There are other ways of tracing the Aguda-Tabom ties. As some of the collections at Kew demonstrate, in general, stop-over settlements in Lagos planted seeds that sprouted into multiple migrations elsewhere in West Africa. Emancipated Africans in Lagos who embarked on additional travels to Accra in the early nineteenth century left an indelible mark that served as a bridge and a path for exploring, creating, and sustaining Tabom communities in British Accra. Furthermore, the Aguda returnees who crisscrossed the Atlantic were active players and agents in the creation of Tabom communities in Accra. They did not only relocate to Accra to be part of what became known as the *Tabon Quarters* but they carried their religions, cultures, and skills along with them.<sup>55</sup> In doing so, these fluid transatlantic travels and exchanges set the stage for descendants of the Peregrinos in Ghana to trace their ancestral ties to their relatives at the Brazilian Olosun Mosque on Bamgbose Street in Lagos that was established in 1858 by their

ancestors (see Figure 1). Additionally, the Lagos-Accra connection route facilitated reverse slavery practices that were engineered by the returnees.



Figure 1: Brazilian Olusun Mosque (Picture taken by Kwame Essien)

### **WHEN THE PAST IS/NOT THE PRESENT: CONTRADICTIONS OF FREEDOM AND ILLUSION OF RETURN**

There are limited archival documents on the three major returnee communities covered in this study, but there are somewhat more collections available for research on the Brazilian-African narrative. Most of the Brazilian story is buried deeply within correspondence between the

British Crown, British colonial officials and Gã *maɲtsemɛi* (kings and chiefs of Accra). To begin, it is important to restate that there is fairly adequate data for examining the Brazilian-Africans' story mainly because they were the first to arrive at the dawn of the nineteenth century—during the early stages of British colonial rule in Ghana. Fleeing Brazil, the place of servitude, to a place they called home in Ghana came at a price: they escaped from slavery into colonialism in Accra. These two conflicting historical developments have broadened conversation about tensions between abolition and colonialism, particularly the paradox of freedom and how it informs our understanding of the degrees of challenges the freed slaves encountered and their striking resemblance to the challenges encountered while under colonial rule in Ghana.

In terms of the ways in which the liberated Africans confronted colonialism, the documents at PRAAD reveal that Brazilian Chief João Antonio Nelson was among those who were arrested for resisting Colonial Labor Ordinance (CLO) of 1897. Nelson arrived in Accra in 1829 with his parents at the age of three years.<sup>56</sup> Clearly, the returnees from Brazil were not a major threat to colonial projects, but there were other concerns about their presence in Accra. In fact, the British perceived the freed Brazilian-Africans as trouble-makers after Nelson's arrest. Other developments reinforced this suspicion. For instance, at the height of abolition, the British together with other Europeans who competed for colonial space and economic advantage were critical and distrustful of the emancipated Brazilian-African returnees in Accra because of their involvement in slavery during abolition in Ghana. The personal diary of Danish Governor Carstensen sheds light on this suspicion when he relates that, "Dutch Accra has for a long time been the residence for several slave trade agents, especially, immigrant Brazilian negroes who have correspondence in Popo."<sup>57</sup>

European settlers, including Danish Governor Edward Carstensen, raised an alarm about the Brazilian-African returnees who were involved in slavery activities in Accra after their freedom.<sup>58</sup> Governor Carstensen's concerns were legitimate in the sense that ample evidence, including stories by returnees' offspring, affirms how they endured horrors of slavery in Brazil yet also participated in the slave trade in the late 1800s after their settlement in Ghana. The returnees' involvement in slavery after they joined reverse migrations to Africa is another paradox of freedom and return, part of which is discussed at the end of the article.

Returnees from the US in general see Ghana as a place with much promise that could meet their cultural, social, political and economic needs.<sup>59</sup> According to James T. Campbell, "African Americans were much less inclined to think of themselves as saviors of the 'Dark Continent.' Rather, Africa was expected to save them."<sup>60</sup> Others are highly disappointed and frustrated because of the long processes for achieving dual citizenship or The Right of Abode<sup>61</sup> (see Figure 2).

NO. RA 0044147



**GHANA IMMIGRATION SERVICE**

**THE IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS, 2001**

**FORM II**

**APPLICATION FOR RIGHT OF ABODE**  
(Regulation 13, L.I. 1691)

1.	Name in full Mr/Mrs/Miss	
2.	Previous names (if any)	
3.	Date and Place of Birth	
4.	Nationality:	
5.	Passport/Travel Certificate No	Place & Date of Issue
6.	Address (in full) in Ghana	Tel. No
	(a) Postal (office/Business)	
	(b) Residential (Street & H/No)	Tel. No
7.	Address (overseas)	
8.	Name & Address of Spouse/sponsor (relationship)	
9.	Profession	10. Occupation
11.	Source of Income/Business:	
	(a) Net Income per annum	
12.	How long Resident in Ghana:	
	(a) Date of issue of last Residence Permit	
	(b) Date of Expiry of last Residence Permit	
13.	Date of first Residence Permit in Ghana	
14.	Name of Character referees in Ghana (where applicable)	
	1. (a) Address (Postal)	

Figure 2: Application for the Right of Abode

Complicated immigration laws have made the situation even worse. For instance, The *Citizenship Act of 2000* under the Ghanaian constitution which gives the Minister of Interior the right to modify or waive any of the requirements for naturalization has not been enforced yet. In fact, Section (e) of *The Citizenship Act of 2000* requires that all applicants must be able to speak a Ghanaian language: this is a major challenge to the returnees partly because this cannot be achieved overnight. It is not clear how many returnees have been able to achieve this goal and how long it took them. Some of the returnees have objected to these stringent reforms because they claim that their ancestors lost their African citizenship involuntarily therefore their offspring do not need any legal procedures to reinstate what was theirs in the first place.<sup>62</sup>

There are other hurdles to cross. According to Janet Butler, the former president of African American Association in Ghana, their interactions with Ghanaians are sometimes marred by discriminatory and racial comments by the local people.<sup>63</sup> The late Benjamin Harrison Robinson Jr., (Nana Ababio II) a returnee and a former fire fighter in New York who joined the third waves of reverse migrations to Ghana in the early 1990s says it more eloquently: “I was an African when I was captured, I was converted from an African to an American so much that when I returned home my brothers, sisters, and family [Ghanaians] call me a stranger, *Obroni*.”<sup>64</sup> This feeling of rejection resonates widely in other stories of reverse migration in Ghana and elsewhere. *ABABIO*, a twenty-first century anthology by returnees from the US and the Caribbean provides an overview of their fascinating and insightful experiences with reverse migrations.<sup>65</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This article traces reverse migrations from the New World to Ghana. It pays particular attention to layers of transatlantic travels after freed slaves left Brazil for West Africa to locate a home. Besides the broader migratory routes from the Americas, this article reveals other forms of reverse migrations within West Africa as the freed slaves crisscrossed various Atlantic pathways back and forth from Lagos to Accra in cyclical patterns has been understudied.<sup>66</sup> Their goal was to explore other options elsewhere (outside the first locations they settled after leaving Brazil) and to negotiate different terms of return and their identities.

The unending reverse migrations between multiple geographic locations is a fascinating Atlantic Diaspora story, but it has been obscured by the existing single-dimensional paradigm and literature that places these multiple levels of reverse migrations on the margins. These understudied non-linear trajectory migratory paths across the Atlantic are yet to be given the academic attention they deserve. In addressing these limitations, this article highlights the alternative ways of broadening the scope of reverse migration studies. Part of this understudied non-linear trajectory includes the journeys by the Aguda who traveled back and forth from Nigeria to Brazil (after the liberated slaves settled in Nigeria) to trade and to visit family members during the early stages of their freedom in the 1800s. New reverse migrations include the story of descendants like the Tabom who have traveled to Bahia and other areas in Brazil to visit the old homes of their ancestors.

These crossings and crisscrossing based on memory share a number of things in common with two Ghanaian Akan cultural symbols: *nkyinkyim* and *sankofa*. *Nkyinkyim* means twisting or the notion of constant movements across multiple infinite locations, while *sankofa* which means “going back for something you left behind” to reconnect a missing ancestral linkage. Whereas

the middle passage and the need for free labor created involuntary migrations from Africa to the New World, oppressive conditions in the Americas necessitated revolts which ultimately led to emancipation, especially after abolition in the nineteenth century. Freed slaves from Brazil were the first group of settlers who began reverse migrations to Ghana in the 1820s. On the African side, Ghana in particular, European conquest—British colonial rule and the propagation of the Christian gospel—opened up doors for skilled freed slaves from the Caribbean to join other voyages to Ghana in the late 1800s. The demise of British rule on March 6, 1957, on the other hand, created an avenue for the new leaders of Ghana to invite American-Africans to assist with reforms during the period of self-rule from 1957.

The various historical developments in Ghana in the pre-colonial eras did not only facilitate reverse migrations at different time periods but shaped assimilation processes as well. In fact, they defined and redefined how freed slaves and their offspring negotiated their New World identities and contested terms of citizenship from one time period to the other. The Brazilian-Tabom experience in Ghana has numerous advantages over both the Caribbean/West Indian and American-African story. For instance, the freed Brazilians arrived before other returnees; as a result, they had more time to assimilate into local cultures, especially as they used the head-start given to them by Gã King Komeh I—their “Brazilian land”—to continue applying their skills in agrarian communities and building and expanding their own communities as the *Tabon Quarters*.<sup>67</sup> The Tabom inherited properties as land that other returnees do not have. Most of their descendants were born and raised in Ghana, which makes an incalculable difference in terms of the politics of dual identity and what it means to negotiate what it means to be an African. Why does the Ghanaian government require returnees to apply for dual citizenship and the Right of Abode Acts? The answer, insofar as it applies to exchanges between



Ghanaians and returnees, lies in the rigmarole or the complicated dance entrenched in the discourse about the Brazilian-Africans, the Caribbean-Africans, and the American-Africans. Especially important is how returnees' identifiers—how they are identified and labeled by Ghanaians—diminishes their daring story of return.

There are several factors that set reverse migrations and reverse Diasporan communities in Ghana apart. Unlike the Caribbean and American-African returnees, the Tabom do not need to be bothered by these laws or acts (dual citizenship and the Right of Abode Acts), nor do they have to sign any application forms, respond to roll calls, or accept invitations for dual citizenship. Simply put, most of their descendants were born and raised in Ghana, and that makes a significant difference when it comes to debating the politics of dual identity. Besides, claims of “racial” biases that define and redefine returnees' daily interactions with Ghanaians and their institutions linger.<sup>68</sup> The Tabom do not deal with this headache. It is obvious that a return home to Africa does not guarantee warm acceptance by Ghanaians. Returnees' shared ancestral history does not necessarily mean that Africans on the continent agree with the returnees in matters relating to the significance of reverse migrations. Indeed, “Afie ni afie,” an Akan expression that expresses the idea that home is home, as the title of this article conveys, does not mean that all Ghanaians or the social history of Ghana accommodated the needs of the emancipated Africans and their offspring in or after the early 1800s. This aspect of the untold story of reverse migrations and the paradox of return or the disappointments associated with their travels back has not gained sufficient coverage in reverse migration studies. This transatlantic traffic is ongoing.

## BIOGRAPHY

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> “Afie ni afie” is an Akan Ghanaian word that means home is home—in the contest of this article, it emphasizes how the notion of home is deeply entrenched in the psyche of emancipated Africans and their offspring.

<sup>2</sup> See Slave Voyages Database. <http://slavevoyages.org/tast/database/search.faces>www.voyage.

<sup>3</sup> Lisa A. Lindsay, “‘To Return to the Bosom of their Fatherland’: Brazilian Immigrants in Nineteenth-Century Lagos,” *Slavery and Abolition*, Vol. 15, No. 1, April 194, 42.

<sup>4</sup> Ella Keren, “In the Chains of the Past: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in Ghanaian Historiography” in Toyin Falola and Matt Childs (Eds.), *The Changing Worlds of Atlantic Africa: Essays in Honor of Robin Law*, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2009, 268.

<sup>5</sup> Kim D. Butler, “Clio and the Griot: the African Diaspora in the Discipline of History,” in Tejumola Olaniyan and James H. Sweet, *The African Diaspora and the Disciplines*, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2010, 23.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 41.

<sup>7</sup> See the following literature: Solimar Otero, *Afro-Cuban Diasporas in the Atlantic World*, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2010; Kenneth C. Barnes, *Journey of Hope: the Back-to-Africa movement in Arkansas in the late 1800s*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004; Nemata Amelia Blyden, *West Indians in West Africa, 1808-1880: The African Diaspora in Reverse*, Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2000; Clifford C. Campbell, “Full Circle: The Caribbean Presence in the Making of Ghana, 1843-1966”, Ph. D. Dissertation: The University of Ghana, Legon, 2012; and Roquinaldo Ferreira’s, *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Atlantic World*, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

<sup>8</sup> Edmond Abaka, *House of Slaves and “Door of No Return”: Gold Coast/Ghana Slave Forts, Castles & Dungeons and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2012, 40.

<sup>9</sup> De Corse, Christopher R. *An Archaeology of Elmina: Africans and Europeans on the Gold Coast, 1400-1900*, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001 and compare this with the avalanche of statistics and diagrams in Edmund Abaka, *House of Slaves and “Door of No Return”: Gold Coast/Ghana Slave Forts, Castles & Dungeons and the Atlantic Slave Trade*, Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2012.

<sup>10</sup> “Ghana Supreme Court upholds John Mahama’s win,” <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-23878458>.

<sup>11</sup> João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprisings of 1835 in Bahia*, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1993, 38-47.

<sup>12</sup> CVA 40/56, Madam Sarah Clegg v. Emmanuel Drissu Cobblah, November 21, 1956.

<sup>13</sup> Muneer Akolade (Brazilian Quarters-Lagos), interview with Kwame Essien, July 3, 2009, 1.

<sup>14</sup> CVA 45/49, 16 July 1947, 9.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> PRAAD-Accra, CVA 12/52, Peter Quarshie Fiscian v, Nii Azumah III, 13 March 1953, 42.

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<sup>17</sup> CVA 12/52, Peter Quarshie Fiscian and Mary Fiscian v. Nii Azumah III, March 13, 1953, 42.

<sup>18</sup> "Colony or Protectorate?" *The Gold Coast Echo*, March 13, 1889, 3.

<sup>19</sup> Although the British had enormous influence on the Southern Protectorate which included coastal Accra, Ghana was not a British colony until the British defeated the Asante people who were part of the Northern Protectorate (not under British control) in one of the most violent wars in the then Gold Coast. The victory gave the British total control of both the Southern and Northern Protectorate. Albert Adu Boahen and Emmanuel Akyeampong *Yaa Asantewaa and the Asante-British War of 1900-1901*, Sub-Saharan Pub & Traders, 2003. See also Walton W. Claridge, *A History of the Gold Coast and Ashanti: From the Earliest times to the Twentieth Century*, NY: Barnes and Noble Inc., 1915, 173-184.

<sup>20</sup> Jeffrey P. Green, "Caribbean Influences in the Gold Coast Administration in the 1900s," *Ghana Studies Bulletin* No. 2, December 1984; Ray Jenkins, "'West Indian' and 'Brazilian' Influences in the Gold Coast-Ghana, 1807-1914: A Review and Reappraisal of Continuities in the post-Abolition links between West Africa and the Caribbean and Brazil," paper presented to the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Society for Caribbean Studies, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, U.K., 12-14 July 1988; and Clifford C. Campbell, "Full Circle: The Caribbean Presence in the Making of Ghana, 1843-1966", Ph. D Dissertation: The University of Ghana, Legon, 2012.

<sup>21</sup> CO 97/2, Gold Coast Certified Copies Ordinances 1865 to 1883, April 19, 1876, 1. See also Naaborko Sackeyfio, "The Stool owns the City: Ga Chieftancy and the Politics of Land in Colonial Accra," Ph. D Dissertation: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2008.

<sup>22</sup> Clifford C. Campbell, "Full Circle: The Caribbean Presence in the Making of Ghana, 1843-1966" (Ph. D Dissertation: The University of Ghana, Legon, 2012).

<sup>23</sup> Peter Haenger, *Slaves and Slave Holders on the Gold Coast: Towards and Understanding of Social Bondage in West Africa*, Switzerland: P. Schiettwien Publishing, 2000, 71-98.

<sup>24</sup> James Meriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935-1961*, Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002, 30-51.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Weisbord, *Ebony Kinship: Africa, Africans, and Afro-Americans*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press Inc., 1973, ix.

<sup>26</sup> American Colonization Society Papers, Reel 147, vol. 293. No's. 1-200. See also and Emma J. Lapsansky-Werner and Margaret Hope Bacon (Eds), *Back to Africa: Benjamin Coates and the Colonization Movement in America, 1848-1880*, State College, PA: Penn State University Press, 2005 and Wilson Jeremiah Moses, *Liberian Dreams Back-to-Africa Narratives from the 1850s*, State College, PA: Penn State University Press, 1998.

<sup>27</sup> Ibrahim Sundiata, *Brothers and Strangers: Black Zion, Black Slavery, 1914-1940*, NC, Durham: Duke University Press, 2003; Claude A. Clegg III, *The Price of Liberty: African Americans and the Making of Liberia*, Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004. See also James T. Campbell, *Middle Passages: African America Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005*, NY: Penguin Press, 2006; and Kevin K. Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era*, Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

<sup>28</sup> Editorial, "There is no Racism in Ghana," *Daily Graphic*, August 18, 1962, 1.

<sup>29</sup> Darlene Clark Hine et al, (Eds.) *Black Europe and the African Diaspora*, Il: University of Illinois Press, 2009. See chapter on France.

<sup>30</sup> Kwame Essien, "African Americans in Ghana and Their Contributions to 'Nation Building': 1985 through 2004," in Alusine Jalloh and Toyin Falola (Eds.), *The United States and West Africa: Interactions and Relations*, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008, 147-152.

<sup>31</sup> Kevin K. Gaines, *American Africans in Ghana: Black Expatriates and the Civil Rights Era*, Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 2006, 6.

<sup>32</sup> Col. A. A. Afrifa with a preface by K.A. Busia an introduction by Tibor Suzamuel, *The Ghana Coup of 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1966*, UK: Frank Cass and Comp., Ltd., 1967, 31-42; Peter T. Omari, *Kwame Nkrumah: The Anatomy of an African Dictatorship*, NY: African Publishing Corporation, 1972, 154-159. See also Kofi Buenor Hadjor, *Nkrumah and Ghana: The Dilemma of Post-colonial Power*, London & NY: Kegan Paul International, 1988; David Rooney, *Kwame Nkrumah: Vision and Tragedy*, Accra, Ghana: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2007 and Ahmad Rahman, *The Regime Change of Kwame Nkrumah: Epic Heroism in Africa and the Diaspora*, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

<sup>33</sup> Daniel J. Wideman, "The Door of No Return?: A Journey through the Legacy of the African Slave Forts an Excerpt, *Callaloo* 21, 1998: 1: 3-8; Brempong Osei-Tutu, B., 2002. The African American Factor in the Commodification of Ghana's Slave Castles. *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, New Series 6: 115-133; Obiagele Lake, "Toward a Pan-African Identity: Diaspora African Repatriates in Ghana", *Anthropological*

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<sup>34</sup> See Kwame Essien, "African Americans in Ghana and Their Contributions to 'Nation Building:' 1985 through 2004." In Alusine Jalloh and Toyin Falola (Eds.), *The United States and West Africa: Interactions and Relations*, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2008: 161-167.

<sup>35</sup> Samuel Boadi-Siaw, "The Afro-Brazilian Returnees in Ghana" in Kwesi Kwaa Prah (Ed.), *Back to Africa Vol. 1: Afro-Brazilian Returnees and their Communities*, Cape Town, South Africa: CASAS Book Series, 2009, 149-153.

<sup>36</sup> Kwame Essien "A abertura da casa Brasil: A History of the *Tabom* People, Part 1" in Kwesi Kwaa Prah *Back to Africa Vol. 1: Afro-Brazilian Returnees and their Communities*, Cape Town, South Africa: CASAS Book Series, 2009, 183-184.

<sup>37</sup> George Bob-Milliar, "Chieftaincy, Diaspora, and Development: The Institution of *Nkosuohene* in Ghana," *African Affairs* 108, 2009: 541-558. See also Susan Benson, "Connecting with the Past, Building the Future: African Americans and Chieftaincy in Southern Ghana," *Ghana Studies* 6, 2003: 109-133.

<sup>38</sup> João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprisings of 1835 in Bahia*, Baltimore, Md.: John Hopkins University Press, 1993 and Mieko Nishida, *Slavery and Identity: Ethnicity, Gender and Race in Salvador, Brazil, 1808-1888*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003.

<sup>39</sup> See Slave Voyages Database. <http://slavevoyages.org/tast/database/search.faces> [www.voyage](http://www.voyage) [www.voyage](http://www.voyage).

<sup>40</sup> Lisa A. Lindsay, "'To return to the bosom of their fatherland': Brazilian immigrants in nineteenth century Lagos," *Slavery & Abolition*, 15: 1, 1994, 22- 50. See also Pierre Verger, *Trade Relation between the Bight of Benin and Biafra from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century*, Ibadan, Nigeria: Ibadan University Press, 1976.

<sup>41</sup> FO 84/920, Letter from Campbell to Lord Cleroden, May 4, 1854.

<sup>42</sup> Elder George Nii Aruna Nelson, interview with Kwame Essien, August 6, 2008.

<sup>43</sup> Nii Azumah V (current Brazilian-Tabom chief), interview by Kwame Essien, January 10, 2009.

<sup>44</sup> Immigration official at the Immigration and Naturalization Service Headquarters, Accra, interview by Kwame Essien July 15, 2011.

<sup>45</sup> See Kwame Essien, "African Americans in Ghana: Successes and Challenges, 1985 through 2005," MA Thesis, Center for African Studies, University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign, 2000, 30; <http://books.google.com> and <http://www.worldcat.org>.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> There is no single method for providing statistics about the three returnee groups. However, based on the interviews conducted so far, I conclude that the population of the Tabom is about 1.2 million; while the total number of American-Africans is approximately 3,000 and that of the Caribbean population to be about 1,000.

<sup>48</sup> Marriage relations between the *Tabom* and the Gã people for instance gained currency in the early 1900s after the demise of the Brazilian-Africans. On the other hand, marriages between American-African's and Ghanaians and the Caribbean's and Ghanaians have not added substantial value to the identity of returnees as well as the processes of assimilation. Those in this union often keep their distinct identity intact.

<sup>49</sup> Kwame Essien, "The African Diaspora in Reverse: the *Tabom* People in Ghana, 1820s-2009," Ph. D Dissertation: The University of Texas, Austin, 2010, 111.

<sup>50</sup> RG 15/1/56, Yawah per J.M. Ayreequaye v. J.E. Maslino, August 5, 1930, 37.

<sup>51</sup> RG 15/1/56, Yawah per J.M. Ayreequaye v. J.E. Maslino, August 5, 1930, 38.

<sup>52</sup> S.K.B. Asante, *Property Law and Social goals in Ghana, 1844-1966*, (Accra, Ghana: Ghana Universities Press, 1975, 113; 151-154. See also Kwame Essien, "The African Diaspora in Reverse: the *Tabom* People in Ghana, 1820s-2009," Ph. D Dissertation: The University of Texas, Austin, 2010, 193, 207. See Kwame

<sup>53</sup> Peter Haenger, *Slaves and Slave Holders on the Gold Coast: Towards and Understanding of Social Bondage in West Africa*, Switzerland: P. Schiettwien Publishing, 2000, 136-175. See also Trevor R. Gertz, *Slavery and Reform in West Africa: Toward Emancipation in Nineteenth-Century Senegal and the Gold Coast*, Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004, 111-136.

<sup>54</sup> Robin Law, *Francisco de Souza in West Africa, 1820-1849* in Jose C. Curto and Paul Lovejoy (eds.), *Enslaving Connections: Changing Cultures of Africa and Brazil During the Era of Slavery*, NY: Humanity Books, 2004, 189.

<sup>55</sup> Samuel Boadi Siaw, "The Afro-Brazilian Returnees in Ghana," in by Kwesi Kwaa Prah (Ed.), *Back to Africa Vol. 1: Afro-Brazilian Returnees and their Communities*, Cape Town, South Africa: CASAS Book Series, 2009, 154.

<sup>56</sup> Marcos Aurelio Schaumloeffel, *Tabom: The Afro-Brazilian Community in Ghana*, Bridgetown, Barbados: Publishing House Lulu.com, 2008, 42-43.

<sup>57</sup> Governor Carsensten's Diary (1842-1850), Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon January, 1965, 19.



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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Black Americans' perceptions of Africa have evolved since the nineteenth century. James T. Campbell's *Middle Passages: African America Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005*, 2006 which chronicles over two centuries of black American's interactions with Africa shows the ways in which some Black American missionaries, including Bishop McNeil Turner and William Sheppard became a voice for perpetuating racist notions that Africans were uncivilized and therefore needed Western civilization (155). Turner in particular held that "slavery be reinstated in Africa so that African Americans could hold Africans in bondage" (xvi). Although Sheppard also perpetuated myths that Africans were savages and heathens, he later exposed European's violence and exploitations of Africans (182). See James T. Campbell, *Middle Passages: African America Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005*, NY: Penguin Press, 2006.

<sup>60</sup> James T. Campbell, *Middle Passages: African America Journeys to Africa, 1787-2005*, 2006, xviii.

<sup>61</sup> The concept of right of abode under Immigration Law is that person having the right of abode" shall be free to live and to come and go into and from the country without let or hindrance"

Section 17(1) of the Immigration Act 2000, Act 573 provides that subject to this section the Minister may on an application and with the approval of the president grant the status of right of abode to any of the following persons.

A.) A Ghanaian by birth, adoption, registration or naturalization within the meaning of the citizenship Act who by reason of this acquisition of foreign nationality has lost his Ghanaian citizenship and

B.) A person of African descent in the Diaspora

2) A Ghanaian citizen to whom paragraph: a) of subsection (1) applies shall produce to the Minister such document and other evidence that the Minister may require testifying to the loss of his Ghanaian citizenship by reason of having acquired another citizenship

3) A person of African descent in the Diaspora to be considered for the status of right of abode if he satisfies the Minister that he

A.) Is of good character as attested to by two Ghanaian who are notaries public, lawyers, senior public officers or other class of person approved of by the Ministers.

B) Has not been convicted of any criminal offence and been sentenced to imprisonment for a term of twelve (12) months or more

C) Is of independent means

D) Is in the opinion of the Minister capable of making a substantial contribution to the development of Ghana and

E) Has attained the age of eighteen (18) years.

A Ghanaian national who by the acquisition of another nationality cannot hold a Ghanaian nationality because of the Laws governing

The acquired nationality and who wishes to be granted right of abode shall not be required to produce documentary evidence of financial standing.

The applicant for right of abode shall submit the application in person for the purpose of verification the applicant must have resided in the country

A.) Throughout the period of twenty four (24) months immediately proceeding the date of application.

B) During the seven (7) years immediately proceeding the period twenty four (24) months referred to the paragraph

(a) for a period amounting in the aggregate to not less than five years

#### ADVANTAGES TO BE DERIVED ON THE GRANT OF INDEFINITE RESIDENCE STATUS AND RIGHT OF ABODE STATUS

Section 18 (1) provides that:

A person with indefinite residence status or person with right of abode status is

a) Entitled to remain indefinite in Ghana.

b) Entitled to enter Ghana without a Visa.

c) Entitled to work in Ghana either a self-employed or as an employee with a work permit.

d) Subject to the laws of Ghana.

Notwithstanding the benefits that holders of indefinite residence status and right of abode will enjoy as stated supra, their dependants are exempted and this is specially stated in section 18 subsection (2) the Immigration Act, 2000, Act 573. It states:

Africans in Diaspora: Other details about the Right of Abode.

(a) Applicant should attain a ten year period of stay before applying.

(b) Letter of sponsorship from Company of Ghanaian associate.

(c) Completed application form.

(d) Attestation in writing from two Ghanaians of repute.

(e) Evidence of financial standing

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(f) Evidence of contribution to Ghanaian economic development in terms of monetary value of shares, bank statement, audited accounts, provision of employment to Ghanaian etc.

(g) Police report from country of origin and medical report from Ghana

(3) CONSEQUENCES OF RIGHT OF ABODE

(i). A person who is granted right of abode status is;

( a). Entitled to remain indefinitely in Ghana .

( b). Entitled to enter Ghana without a visa

( c). Entitled to work in Ghana either as a self-employed or as an employee without work permit.

( d). Subject to the laws of Ghana .

(ii). A non-Ghanaian child or other non-Ghanaian dependants of a person who is granted right of abode, is eligible for a dependency permit. See information by the Ghana Immigration Services:

[http://www.ghanaimmigration.org/HYPER%20right\\_abode.htm](http://www.ghanaimmigration.org/HYPER%20right_abode.htm)

<sup>62</sup> Seestah Imahkus, *Returning Home Ain't Easy but it sure is a Blessing*, Cape Coast, Ghana: One Africa Tours and Specialty Ltd., 1999, 275.

<sup>63</sup> Janet Butler, Interview by Kwame Essien, 12 June 2004, 1.

<sup>64</sup> Stephen Buckley, "U.S., African Blacks Differ on Turning Slave Dungeons into Tourist Attractions," *The Washington Post*, April, 1995, A1-2.

<sup>65</sup> Seestah Imahkus Njinga, *ABABIO: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Anthology of African Diaspora Returnees to Ghana*, Cape Coast, Ghana: One Africa Tours and Specialty Ltd., 2009.

<sup>66</sup> These are not the only forms of reverse migrations that have been placed on the margins of reverse migration studies. There are multiple reverse migrations I characterize as 'Z-paths' across the Atlantic geography. 'Z-paths' basically refers to involuntary and unending voluntary migrations from Africa to the New World, back to Africa, and later to the New World by liberated Africans and their offspring in search of a home elsewhere. The different trajectories of travels were based on memory and yearning for a homeland, hope, and curiosity about a known and unknown home elsewhere.

<sup>67</sup> Parker, John. *Making the Town: Ga State and Society in Early Colonial Accra*, Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000, 99.

<sup>68</sup> Jemima Pierre, *The Predicament of Blackness: Postcolonial Ghana and the Politics of Race*, Il: University of Chicago Press, 2013.