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Walking through postcolonial archives in Tamale, Northern Ghana

Abstract This article asks what the practice of walking might reveal about archival research in postcolonial contexts. Through an exploration of walking in its many iterations in the city of Tamale, Northern Ghana – including seeking directions to state archives, talking with others while walking towards archives, and observing the exchange of archival data within communities as citizens walk – I explore the relationship between Tamale’s colonial, state, indigenous and community-led archival spheres. As a sensory, relational, and embodied practice, walking affords unique insights into different experiences of and relationships to archives. Walks towards state archives (with deeply entrenched colonial legacies) reveal sensorial histories of colonial power enacted through space for Tamale’s Dagbamba and Hausa residents, while also highlighting the foreign research networks who continue to draw upon this archival material. At the same time, documents within state archives – including maps and files – provide new possibilities for ‘virtual walks’ through the colonial city, revealing insights into the positioning of both state and indigenous archives as they relate to the colonial production of space. Ethnographic reflections on walks to indigenous areas of the city in search of postcolonial archives afford insights into other archival spaces, that are firmly situated within sites of resistance to colonial urban planning schemes. Walking lends new insights into the ways that archives are accessed and circulated outside of the state, as archival cassette recordings were made by Dagbamba recordists as they walked through indigenous neighborhoods during the postcolonial period. Subsequently, these recordings have been digitized, and are now circulated between community members via mobile phones as they walk through their neighborhoods each day. Walking thus provides a framework for thinking across archival spaces in postcolonial contexts, encouraging dialogue between these seemingly unrelated archival spheres and communities.

Key Words community archives; postcolonial archives; sound archives; walking; African history; Ghana

Introduction

In this article, I reflect on a series of walks taken in the city of Tamale, Northern Ghana in search of postcolonial archives. Throughout, I pause to examine diverse aspects of walking, including seeking directions to archives, talking with residents while walking towards archives, and observing the ways in which walking informs indigenous circulation of postcolonial archival material in the city. To date, ‘walking as method’ has largely been the domain of ethnographers, who walk with informants or explore informants’ walks through photo or video documentation, in order to “access elements of understanding that might otherwise be unsayable” (O’Neill 2018, p. 92; O’Reilly 2018). In this article, I explore both the ethnographic practice of walking as it elicits new perspectives on archival experience in the city, while also drawing on diverse archival materials – including maps, newspaper articles, photographs, and documents – to put ethnographic findings in dialogue with colonial and postcolonial policies and protests that continue to shape archival space and access. In combination, ethnographic and archival ‘walks’ through Tamale reveal processes of spatial segregation as well as indigenous resistance to colonial and postcolonial urban planning schemes, that influence where different state and community archives are situated, and how different research communities access and experience them. Walking thus illuminates the multiple pathways indigenous and outside researchers take when seeking postcolonial archival data, while also establishing dialogue across and between indigenous and state archival practices, processes, and materials. From a methodological standpoint, walking offers new ways to tell stories about what was found, and how it was found, offering reflexive accounts into locating diverse archival spaces and working with diverse archival sources (Dever 2014, p. 286).

Regional context, positionality, and methodological underpinnings

Tamale is the capital city of Ghana’s Northern Region, inhabited by majority Dagbamba and Hausa people who speak multiple languages, including Dagbani, Hausa, English, and Twi. Tamale is situated within Ghana’s only majority Muslim region and also one of the country’s most economically disadvantaged areas. Northern Ghana has an extended history of colonialism, including an early German presence in the region, and subsequently experienced through British rule, which spanned from the 1890s until 1957. Northern Ghana also grapples with a residual political and economic power imbalance in relation to Ghana’s South, a phenomenon with roots in colonial rule as well. With Tamale’s complex relationship to British colonialism in mind, my positionality is significant in the subsequent explorations of archival experience in Tamale. I am a white Canadian woman, and I first visited Tamale in 2013 as part of an ethnographic Master’s research project exploring music and tourism in

the country. As the bulk of my Master's research was conducted in Accra, Ghana's growing southern capital, I decided to travel to Tamale see what music and tourism was like in the North. When I mentioned my plans to a Northern Ghanaian friend I had met while learning to dance Salsa in Accra, he graciously directed me to stay with his acquaintance, who lived in an indigenous neighborhood near the center of Tamale. When I arrived in Tamale for the first time, this "friend of a friend" welcomed me into their family compound in Salamba, a central neighborhood inhabited by majority Muslim Dagbamba families.

Though my time in Tamale in 2013 focused on research in the Youth Home – observing cultural performances and traditional music and dance lessons given to foreign tourists – I developed an interest in the city's postcolonial cinema and film music culture through conversations with those living in Salamba, an interest that later developed into an ethnomusicological doctoral research project concerning postcolonial cinema and film music culture in Tamale. While ethnomusicologists usually draw on ethnographic methods to conduct their research, the historical nature of this project necessitated a mixed-method approach, blending archival with ethnographic methods in order to better understand lived experiences of film and film music in Tamale from the 1950s to present day. As such, I planned to visit Ghana multiple times, with some trips focusing on ethnographic methods (ranging from interviews with former cinema owners to participant observation, including time spent on film sets and in music studios observing film music production within Tamale's Dagbani language film industry), and others focused on archival research. Within Ghana, I visited a diverse range of archives including state archives in Accra, Kumasi, and Tamale (where I engaged with colonial and postcolonial documents concerning cinema), sound libraries including the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation Gramophone Library and the Nketia Sound Archive both based in Accra, and personal photo, music, and film collections in Tamale, often situated in people's homes or in the backs of market shops. Outside Ghana, I also visited relevant archives in Europe, including relevant photo archives at the Basel Mission in Switzerland, newspaper archives at the British Library, and map archives at the National Library of Scotland. This mixed-method approach afforded insights into archival experience and engagement from a variety of perspectives and in a variety of built environments, ranging from colonial archives to personal collections in people's homes.

Over time, I came to realize that an ethnographic approach, through which I both spoke with individuals about their cinematic experiences and explored experiences of film music in everyday life, related to and often intersected with the photographs, sound recordings, and files found in the diverse archives mentioned above. I began to engage critically with the new perspectives gained through an interdisciplinary, mixed ethnographic and archival approach to postcolonial history in Tamale. This approach was not only useful for my doctoral work,

but encouraged reflections on my own conceptions of what archival research meant and what archival space looked like in a postcolonial city. How might ethnographic explorations of Tamale's various archives enrich my understanding of postcolonial archival experience, including regional and other archives in the city? In turn, how might insights gleaned from documents in both regional and community archives inform my ethnographic experiences of postcolonial archival space in Tamale?

In my initial doctoral research plan, my first trip back to Tamale in 2015 would focus on "archival research". By this, I meant spending extensive time in the Northern regional branch of Ghana's state archive (the Public Records and Archives Administration Department or PRAAD), seeking out information about Tamale as a late colonial and early postcolonial city, especially with regards to urban planning and the building of cinema halls. I had learned about Tamale's PRAAD office through Canadian and British historians who I met during graduate studies, who had previously conducted research in these archives, and recommended the archives for my project. When I arrived in Tamale in 2015, I did not know exactly where Tamale's PRAAD archive was. It was not registered in Google Maps, and I could not find it in guidebooks. As I was staying in the same house of the family I had stayed with in Salamba in 2013, I asked family members and neighbors if they could direct me to the archive. However, each person I spoke with in Salamba had never heard of Tamale's PRAAD office. Without advice from friends or neighbors, I reached out to an American historian who had initially suggested the PRAAD regional archive to me, and they provided me with directions. Salamba residents' inability to provide directions to PRAAD, and foreign historians' knowledge of these archival pathways, is significant; as I explore in more depth below, the kinds of archival directions provided by foreign and indigenous communities reveal different archival networks and pathways that have developed through colonial and postcolonial policies and practices of segregation and resistance.

With directions to PRAAD in hand, I asked one of the family members I was staying with in Salamba to accompany me, and together we travelled down a long and windy road towards PRAAD. Along the road, Tamale's dense urban landscape of buildings and houses gave way to a more spaced out and green, leafy environment. Eventually, we met a block of buildings surrounded by tall cement walls, topped with barbed wire. The buildings were clearly linked to ministerial and governmental roles and departments, and the gate – guarded with security personnel – gave way to a long path that led into the archive. My friend who had accompanied me to the archive was reticent to enter, and instead left me to my research, while he returned back to Salamba. I was warmly welcomed that day by government staff who led me to a room with two desks and a search book, where

I could look to request relevant archival items. On the walls surrounding the desk were rules of conduct – written in English – on sheets of paper.

My days spent at the PRAAD office were quiet, and I was often alone in the study room, except for the occasional visit from another researcher. While some researchers from the nearby University for Development Studies surely use these archival offices from time to time, the only researchers I met had been from institutions outside of Ghana's Northern Region, including scholars from southern Ghanaian universities, as well as researchers from universities in the United States and Europe, hinting at the kinds of research networks that are drawn into PRAAD's archival space to the exclusion of others. The absence of Dagbamba visitors within the archives (including my friend's reticence to walk into the archives) encouraged me to reconsider the networks of access that shaped this archival space. As Belinda Battley (2019, p. 7) writes, residents might find "the cultural baggage of a Western archival institution too foreign or frightening to approach at all, or too far outside their usual community places that they don't imagine anything relating to them could be there". Indeed, PRAAD archives housed both colonial and postcolonial materials produced largely by foreign businesses and government bodies – including British administration during the colonial period, and subsequently by largely Southern Ghanaian administration in the postcolonial period – majority written in English language rather than Dagbani or Hausa languages. While the materials within PRAAD were produced largely by foreign people informed by colonial and postcolonial frameworks, these documents are not divorced from indigenous experiences in postcolonial Tamale. PRAAD documents reveal processes of colonial control enacted onto resident communities as well as forms of indigenous resistance that shape lived experiences in Tamale to date. As both Ann Stoler (2002) and Alistair Tough (2012) suggest, reading 'with' the grain of colonial and postcolonial documents can yield significant insights into lived and embodied experiences of colonial power and indigenous resistance, that are enacted through space. As I explore below, in combination with ethnographic observations during walks towards these archives, the documents within PRAAD also lend insights into possible reasons for reticence amongst Dagbamba and Hausa communities when walking towards or within this archival space.

In what follows, I explore the relationships between state and community archival spaces and practices in Tamale. In doing so, I consider the value of thinking across multiple, interrelated archival worlds as they developed in postcolonial environments. Walking provides a useful frame to facilitate and think through this dialogue. I present several different ways of walking through the city, based on a mixture of archival and ethnographic findings, that together speak to diverse archival materialities, manifestations, and networks in

Tamale. These diverse networks and manifestations reveal the different ways in which postcolonial history is written and circulated both within and outside of Tamale today.

Walking and talking: oral histories of archival space

Following my 2015 research trip to Tamale, I returned again in 2016 for an extended research trip. During this trip, I began to visit the University for Development Studies library, where I had found a quiet space to read and write. Over time, I got to know the university library assistant, Fuseini Abdulai Braimah; we became friends, and he began to drop me off in Salamba on his way home each day. On our drives back to town, Fuseini would tell stories of his life in postcolonial Tamale, from Ghana's Independence to J.J. Rawlings' coups. One day when dropping me off in Salamba in the summer of 2016, Fuseini told me that he wanted to take me on a walk of Tamale that weekend. We met that Saturday afternoon at the post office in town, and Fuseini began to chart a path east of the city center. This was a path I had been many times before – the windy road towards the PRAAD regional archive. On our way, we stopped at Tamale's Youth Center (where I had conducted research on music and tourism in 2013). I had never realized until Fuseini pointed it out that the sign outside the center's restaurant read "Gymcana Drinking Spot and Catering Services". Fuseini explained that the word *gymkhana* was an Indian term for a place of assembly or a gentlemen's club, adopted by British colonial administration in India and subsequently used throughout British colonies to denote colonial social clubs. I had brought my camera with me, and as we paused, I stopped to take a photograph of the sign. As Alison Hicks and Annemaree Lloyd (2018, p. 229) suggest, photographs "help to evoke and communicate complex meaning as well as to mediate between linguistic, temporal, and spatial constraints". The sign pictured below in Figure 1 hints at the earlier purposes for this building – a social club for British colonial administration living in early-mid twentieth century Tamale. That the new use for this building maintains its former name yields insights into the layered elements of colonial experience lived and felt by Dagbamba people as they walk through present day Tamale:

[Fig 1: Gymcana Drinking Spot on Watherston Road in Tamale, taken by author in September 2016]

As we walked further down the windy stretch of road towards the archive, Fuseini pointed out the leafy, green trees that shaded the road. He explained that the trees were planted during the colonial period to provide shade for British colonial officials as they returned "home" at the end of the day. As we continued down the road, Fuseini pointed out old large houses I had not noticed despite so many trips taken to the archive in 2015. Perhaps I never noticed them because they were situated far back from the road, and were spaced out from one

another, disguised in foliage. Fuseini explained that these houses used to be where the families of British colonial administration lived. The houses were altogether different from my experience of domestic architecture in Salamba. Not only were the houses spaced out from one another and shaded by trees, but they were also built in bungalow style, clearly meant to house one monogamous, nuclear family. Both the materiality and shape of these bungalows differ from houses in Salamba, where traditional homes are a collection of round (and more recently rectangular) mud-brick rooms with thatched (and now aluminium) roofs, organised in a circle facing inwards towards a communal inward compound, an architectural decision made to meet the needs of a polygynous, extended-family model common in the city (Pellow 2011, p. 137). The below photographs lend insights into the spatial elements of this colonial building (Figure 2) in contrast to the lived spatial realities of those living in central Tamale today (Figure 3), where the collections of tightly packed doors that line pathways lead into shared family communal spaces:

[Fig 2: Colonial bungalow behind trees on Watherston Road in Tamale, taken by author in September 2016]

[Fig 3: Walking in Salamba, Tamale, taken by author in January 2020]

Fuseini and I walked until we reached the current residence of the Northern Region Member of Parliament, a large gated building just beside the regional offices where PRAAD is located. Fuseini explained that as a child, his class would walk down this road to meet the MP's residence on Independence day, beginning in 1957. He remembered that he and his classmates feared the walk, as this was the former residence of the Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories, and as such, the gates were lined with cement statues of lions, built in the colonial period. The children thought these statues were real and were afraid they might be attacked. Their reaction is not coincidental, as lions had been used as symbols of strength, both within monarchies and in colonial projects of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see Aldrich 2005, p. 25; Herwitz 2012, p. 94). Fuseini's memories speak to his lived experiences of this area of town as intimately linked to colonial presence. This walk thus reflects what Moses Ochonu (2015, p. 289-297) terms "sensory history," an approach that engages an "unseen constellation of energies and sensory forces". In this case, walking helps to make tangible spatial elements of colonial presence and control.

My walk towards the archives with Fuseini revealed embodied memories of colonial rule recalled as we walked towards archival space. The ways in which colonial rule influences postcolonial space is not unique to Tamale. As Andreas Eckhert (2017, p. 211) writes: “space is an important and contested area of colonial and post-colonial daily life. Power structures are inscribed in space, and space reflects social organization and defines the people in it”. For example, in the context of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, cultural geographer Sarah Smiley (2013, p. 217-218) writes that colonial segregation between African, British, and South Asian communities there are reflected in the present day movements of African, expatriate, and South Asian communities, as was evidenced in mental maps drawn by all three groups in her research. While efforts were made by the Tanzania’s postcolonial government to undo colonial racial segregation by introducing policies to integrate segregated neighborhoods during the postcolonial era, patterns of colonial life in Dar es Salaam continue to reflect the way that informants perceive and use their cities on a day to day basis, including where they live, work, and socialize. Smiley (2013, p. 241) writes that “the realities of everyday life and the actual spaces of this life are affected by the lingering nature of colonialism”.

If an individual like Fuseini held such vivid memories of colonial presence on this road, what might that say about contemporary movements towards and away from the PRAAD archive for Dagbamba and Hausa people living in Tamale today? How might we conceive of the pathways that subsequent generations move through in Tamale based on their parents’ and grandparents’ embodied movements through Tamale’s colonial past? My walk with Fuseini afforded a new frame for understanding experiences of archival access that are both sensorial and spatially informed and intimately tied to personal memory. The walk itself was different from oral history practices, triggering stories through visual prompts including signs, buildings, foliage and statues that helped to make sense of archival experience as they relate to Tamale’s lived environment. Though hierarchies of knowledge productions persist in ranking “objective” knowledge over affective and sensual knowledge (Malcomson 2014, p. 225), the ways in which people move, based on intergenerational memories, yield significant insights relevant to understanding archival access and engagement.

A virtual walk through Watherston Road: perspectives from the National Library of Scotland

Returning to the United Kingdom following fieldwork in 2016, I took a trip to the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh, who curiously hold the largest collection of historical maps of Tamale. I was led into their maps room, and was provided with multiple maps of Tamale ranging from the 1930s to the 1960s. Recalling my walk with Fuseini, I paid close attention to the windy road he had led me down, as it was depicted

in colonial maps. In doing so, an exploration of a colonial map afforded a new, 'virtual' way of walking in Tamale, illuminating additional perspectives on the intersections of space and archival experience in postcolonial Tamale. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the 1932 map of Tamale revealed important insights into the spatialization of the area where Tamale's PRAAD office currently resides (Gold Coast Survey Department 1932). On the map, the road linking town to the archive is called Watherston Road – in reference to Lieutenant-Colonel Watherston, a British man who was the first Chief Commissioner of the Northern Territories (CCNT) of what was then the Gold Coast. The area surrounding the road is referred to as "Residential Area," an area surrounded by "European Cemeteries". Marked out as well are the Gymkhana Club and adjacent Tennis Court, as well as a Rest House. Following Watherston Road towards where the current regional archive stands, it is listed on the map as "C.C.N.T.'s Residences, Offices, and Court". The "African Club" and the "African Hospital" were situated far away from this "Residential Area," in the center of town. This map clearly situates the archive – as it now stands – within a colonial geopolitics that actively separated "European" space from "African" space within the city.

In his doctoral thesis concerning Tamale's colonial history, Sebastiaan Soeters (2012, p. 91) writes of the stretch of road leading to the CCNT residence as the area where the colonial British "political apparatus" was situated, a road punctuated with the police office and the court, and lined with bungalows of colonial administration – those homes Fuseini pointed out to me. In fact, Martin Staniland's 1975 text *The Lions of Dagbon* devotes an entire chapter to the continual debates between colonial administration in the South and North of the Gold Coast regarding the nature of rule in Tamale (i.e. direct or indirect rule); the chapter is titled "The Battle of Watherston Road," firmly situating the road leading to PRAAD archives within Tamale's colonial politics. Soeters (2012, p. 116) notes that the CCNT residence – for which Fuseini recalled fearing the lions at its gates – was "the largest residence in Tamale," and is now the residence of Northern Ghana's Member of Parliament. Concerning the MP's residence being the former CCNT residence, Soeters (2012, p. 112) writes: "how these symbols of power relate to one another spatially is more than a simple metaphor. Their location is rather the result of those relationships. Tamale's constellation of authority had a spatial dynamic". With the PRAAD archives adjacent to the former CCNT residence – a space where British colonial rule was enacted in Tamale – in mind, how might these segregated spatial dynamics relate to archival access in Tamale today, considering that majority foreign researchers frequent the PRAAD regional archives?

The history of Tamale's regional archives yields further insights into its relationship to colonial rule in the city. The office is one of several regional branches of Ghana's national archives (renamed PRAAD in 1997). The national archives were established in 1940 and were "largely a collection of colonial records, including

materials from the Department of Native Affairs” (Franks and Bernier 2018, p. 142-143). Iddirisu Abdulai (2000, p. 449) explains that between 1950 and 1954, the archivist for the Gold Coast surveyed district records at each headquarters in the Gold Coast colony, Ashanti region, and Northern territories, leading to the establishment of the National Archives of Ghana office in Kumasi in 1959. The office of the National Archives in Kumasi was situated “on the premises of the Government Agent’s office” and when Tamale’s regional branch was subsequently opened in 1960, it was similarly housed “on the premises of the regional administration...within the compound of the regional coordinating council” (Abdulai 2000, pp. 449-450) or as K.D. Patterson (1976, p. 185) writes: “in the regional office complex at the end of Watherston Road”. Maps coupled with historical perspectives concerning Tamale’s Watherston Road afforded additional insights, enriching the memories that arose through my walk with Fuseini. Knowing the relationship between PRAAD archives and processes of colonial segregation in Tamale, I began to wonder if these spatial processes shaped the ways in which subsequent Dagbamba generations engaged with archives in the city. If the first “port of call” for the majority of historians not from Tamale included the “long windy road” out of town – with its tree-lined streets, large spaced-out houses, and previous European tennis court and cemeteries – what roads and pathways did my neighbors in Salamba take when engaging with Tamale’s postcolonial past?

Walking through Tamale’s Cassette Archives on Nyohini Road

In 2016, I began to seek out audio recordings and pictures from Tamale’s postcolonial period. I believed that Dagbamba audio recordings or photographs, combined with documents from PRAAD and ethnographic research in Tamale, might enrich my understanding of film and musical culture in postcolonial Tamale. Friends and neighbors in Salamba directed me to a television shop owned by a man named Otis, located near one of the main banks on Nyohini road, just south-east of Tamale’s central market. Behind a wall of televisions, Otis’ shop houses hundreds of audio recordings made in Tamale between 1970 and 2000. Like several others in Tamale, Otis purchased cassette recording technologies in the 1970s, and recorded daily activities, events, and performances in Tamale throughout the postcolonial period.

During visits to Otis’ shop between 2016 and 2020, he detailed his personal history of recording speeches, musical performances, and events in Tamale on cassette. As Peter Manuel (1993) suggests of music in 1980s North India, the advent of cassette technology transformed the global popular music industry from a monopoly of multinational music manufacturers to a wealth of local cassette producers, fundamentally changing the kinds of music available for sale in the market. Otis’ collections retain reflections on major events such as

Independence in 1957 or the Queen's visit in 1961 from a Northern Ghanaian perspective. The collections offer glimpses into the cultural lives of urban communities of the 1970s and 1980s, ranging from pan-African movements to coups of the 1980s, expressed in Dagbani and Hausa languages.

Cassette recorders were revolutionary in their affordability and transportability, so that individuals *within* a given community could record what was happening around them, outside of the guise of research institutions, national broadcasting corporations, or governments. The transportability of cassette recorders is significant to the discussion of walking, as recordists in Tamale typically recorded material based on what they encountered during daily walks. As Abdul-Kadir Alidu, another Dagbamba cassette recordist explained to me, he would jump into lorries where music or events were taking place in Tamale, or he would stop if passing by a performance on the street, to “just get inside the performance...and they would play and I would record it, and I would come home and would put it in my machine and reformat it” (Interview with Abdul-Kadir Alidu on October 25, 2016). The ability to weave into and out of urban pathways within Tamale's city center in order to record elements of performance is significant to understandings of archival space as well as the materiality of archival source. Given that PRAAD's regional archives were written largely by colonial administrator who actively segregated themselves from Dagbamba and Hausa people, the recordings in Otis' archive reveal archival material reflecting a different kind of movement through Dagbamba and Hausa neighborhoods that are not as readily available in PRAAD documents.

As Dagbamba cassette collectors maintain their archives in their homes and in the backs of shops in the central market, these archives represent a different kind of postcolonial archival space in the city that is well-known to Dagbamba and Hausa residents and lesser known to foreign researchers. In her work on decolonizing methodologies, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2012, p. 58) writes of Western research in terms of distance: individuals can be distanced from the physical spaces inhabited by the communities they research, in the same way that those in positions of colonial/imperial power separated themselves from those “they governed”, an insight that speaks to the absence of foreign researchers on Nyohini road and Salamba. As I explain below, newspaper articles and oral history testimonies embedded within regional archival files reveal the spatial politics of Nyohini road, providing additional insights into why indigenous communities walk through the center of town and not Watherston Road.

In the late colonial period, Ward D (the most central part of the city, directly south of Tamale's central market) was a contested area. While British colonial officers were intent to repurpose Ward D for foreign-owned shops, they received continual pressure and written protest from Dagbamba chiefs and elders about the

demolition of Ward D, making the actual building of the new commercial area impossible during the colonial period (Tamale Ward D New Layout 1946-1954. NRG8/1/240). For example, in a colonial file housed in the PRAAD office in Tamale, dated February 1947, Dagbamba inhabitants of Ward D wrote:

We, the undersigned elders residing on Ward D in Tamale humbly beg to forward our grievances to you... Last Monday... you informed us that most of our houses in Ward D would soon be demolished; and our plots would be given to aliens to build stores... our houses in Ward D were built by our forefathers, before the Whiteman came... these buildings are sacred and too dear to be demolished...as it is [the] Government [that] is driving us away from our forefathers' soil and giving it to aliens to build stores. This is unpleasant to us. And we hope that the District Commissioner would recognize it (Tamale Ward D New Layout 1946-1954. NRG8/1/240).

The above document, drawn from regional archival materials, reveals early indigenous protest to colonial urban planning schemes in the center of Tamale, significant when considering the location of Tamale's community archives today. This resistance continued throughout the late colonial period, as whenever colonial urban planners sought to clear the area, residents resisted. For example, in 1949, local inhabitants further appealed for meetings with the government over their attempts to "drive us and our poor families from our houses and give the land to various firms" (Tamale Ward D New Layout 1946-1954. NRG8/1/240). Resistance continued during the Independence period: when the Convention People's Party (CPP) government took power in 1957, the new government overlooked residential resistance to relocation and slum clearance in Ward D, and during the early 1960s, the area was cleared for new commercial plots (Soeters 2012, p. 152). The CPP relocated families displaced by the clearing of Ward D to Ward I –south-east of the central market – where the government began to build residential housing and roadside shops. For example, in the June 6th, 1962 *Ghanaian Times* newspaper feature titled "A Ghanaian Times Focus on Tamale", Tamale's infrastructural development is highlighted throughout the newspaper issue as evidence of the CPP's successful leadership in its first five years. To do so, the author juxtaposes "old Tamale" and "new Tamale" in a series of images with accompanying text. A photograph of the construction of Ward I is included, with the image caption reading:

Like the wild fire that has set ablaze every part of the country, the key-note of the Northern Regional capital of Tamale is DEVELOPMENT. Everywhere one goes, one sees happiness.

This picture tells its own story more than one can narrate. Myriad of blocks, scores of new flats. These flats are being erected for 3,000 inhabitants who will quit the congested Ward D for this new site to be known as Ward I (Adu 1962, p. 5).

Otis' cassette shop is situated in Ward I on Nyohini road; unlike the current area where PRAAD is located, his archive is spatially linked to residents' resistance to colonial and postcolonial presence and control over land. The path I took to reach Otis' shop – through areas of town historically contested by indigenous communities – was informed by my neighbors in Salamba, who as I show below, chart their own pathways as they walk to and from the central market in search of Tamale's postcolonial history. That Dagbamba residents were able to provide directions to Otis' archive and were familiar with this archive themselves underscores the importance of colonial spatial segregation policies and indigenous resistance to those policies in the shaping of archival spaces, processes, and ultimately forms of archival access in the city today.

Watching others walk: digitized archives in Salamba

I returned to Tamale in 2017 and again in mid-2019 to early 2020 for research and to lecture at the University for Development Studies. During this time, I noticed that Tamale's Dagbamba youth were actively engaging with postcolonial cassette archives themselves:

Fieldnote from January 2020: Today, I was sitting in my friend, Suraiya's room. For several months I've joined her in the evenings to watch telenovelas and chat, a reprieve from my days spent lecturing at the university. Suraiya's eight-year-old brother, Ahmad, walked into the room today, holding his small Nokia phone. He was listening to something that was familiar to me – it is part of Otis' collection, a 1960s recording of the Yendi-based musician Albela. I asked him where he got this recording from. He told me that he goes to the market often to get these recordings, that men there transfer the recordings to his phone via Bluetooth.

I found this moment particularly striking: an eight year old boy in Salamba was seeking out archival material of the postcolonial period, material that he could easily access via Bluetooth on his Nokia phone. Walking to the city center, he engages with materials from Tamale's postcolonial past, listening to audio files that yield insights into both colonial and postcolonial struggles in his own language, told by Dagbamba musicians, recorded by Dagbamba recordists, and archived and recirculated by archivists and gatekeepers who work to maintain such

histories for subsequent generations. As a foreign researcher, I was offered glimpses into one of Tamale's normative archival practices. Ahmad's ease in accessing this material, and my relative difficulty, reflect different pathways and engagements with archives in Tamale, informed by histories of power enacted through space, but also through different modes of access. Between Ahmad and I (a white Canadian foreign researcher), what histories were we weaving through our archival movements?

Following my encounter with Ahmad, I noticed that as people walked in Salamba, they listen to the sounds emanating from others' phones, either from those sitting and relaxing or working to weave smocks on the ground or socializing on benches throughout Salamba's pathways, or from those who play music from their phones while walking by. When someone likes a file, they stop and ask the other person to transfer the sound file to their phone via Bluetooth. As is evidenced in Figure 3 above, most residents in Tamale walk through the close-knit pathways of Salamba while holding their phones. As it is incredibly difficult to drive through these narrow pathways, most people walk, and as it is culturally expected to greet those you pass, walkers must engage with the sounds in their environment while walking. This context encourages the exchange of digital sound files between individuals of varying ages, including the many postcolonial cassette tapes that have been recently digitized. While those who exchange files may listen to their newly acquired material at a later time, the sonic nature of archival material and the sonic nature of walking in Dagbamba and Hausa neighborhoods in Tamale presents another way of conceiving archival encounter through walking, revealing indigenous perspectives on archival access and circulation.

When considering walking as methodology, the recorded nature of these postcolonial cassette archives reflects a different kind of engagement with the lived environment as they permeate through the city, moving from one phone to another via Bluetooth and more recently via WhatsApp. Similar processes were found in Noel Lobley's (2012, pp. 186-187) sound repatriation research in South Africa's Eastern Cape, where he engaged with different ways of repatriating sound archive material to the regions where recordings were initially made. Upon Lobley consulting a resident on how to circulate the materials, he was told to "play those recordings in this yard and people will come," and for which Lobley subsequently played recordings in people's homes and yards, in taxis and in schools and through local DJs, as well as by walking around with recordings playing through streets and in markets. Lobley's learned approach to archiving reflects a similar experience to my own when encountering the movements of Otis' archives into Salamba. It was not only individuals who walked to and from Otis' archive in Tamale – cassette archives moved through Dagbamba and Hausa residents as they walked

through their neighborhoods each day. In this way, community members keep postcolonial records alive through walking.

Reflecting on those walking and sharing sound files in Salamba, I began to “think through” the recent digitization of cassette recordings, similar to the way that Dever (2014, 291) “thinks through paper”. The recent digitization of cassette recordings reveals different instantiations of oral history, with their own properties and capacities that condition experiences of being-in-the-archive. This transition echoes Dever’s (2014, p. 285) reflections on debates regarding the process of translation of paper source into digital code, working to consider these transitions as reflecting alternative forms of material instantiation, with their own specific properties and capacities. Walking affords insights into the role that cassette digitization plays in contemporary archival experience in Salamba, as these files present new mobile iterations of “being-in-the-archive”. Akin to community archives elsewhere, the defining characteristic of Tamale’s digitized postcolonial cassette archive(s) “is not its physical location, inside or outside of formal repositories, but rather the active and ongoing involvement of members of the source community in documenting and making accessible their history *on their own terms*” (Stevens, Flinn and Shepherd 2010, p. 60, original emphasis). In similar terms, Adrian Cunningham (2017, p. 55) describes the archive as “a cultural, intellectual, and psychological ecosystem with no fixed boundaries”. Walking through Tamale’s central neighborhoods, the area buzzes with sonic histories made and played by residents, many of whose ancestors actively contested colonial urban planning schemes in the early twentieth century. Listening to the sounds permeating from their phones as they walk through their neighborhoods underscores the unboundedness of archival practice in the circulation of Tamale’s postcolonial history.

Conclusion

This article uses walking as a frame through which to explore multiple postcolonial archival spaces in the city of Tamale, Northern Ghana, examining the interrelated spatial and experiential elements of these seemingly distinct archival spheres. I engage with walking in myriad ways, including seeking direction for postcolonial archives, walking with Dagbamba residents towards regional archives and reflecting on colonial segregation of space, and exploring the ways that community archives circulate through walking in Tamale’s central neighborhoods today. Walking presents a way of engaging with state-run and community-run archives in dialogue, exploring the ways in which spatial, sensorial, and empirical evidences can afford deeper understandings between the ways in which seemingly disparate archives develop and relate to one another. Walking in its varying iterations allows for encounters with both normative archives as well as community archives (in this context, cassette archives and

their digital iterations) in Tamale's central market and in Tamale's Dagbamba and Hausa neighborhoods. In walking, I encountered the varied manifestations of archives in the city, showing how colonial and postcolonial segregation of space in the city informs and shapes the networks of people who access regional and cassette archives in Tamale today. These networks, informed by colonial spatial politics in the city, are significant in understanding the often siloed nature of historical research in Tamale between data stored on Watherston Road, and postcolonial community archives circulating in Tamale's central neighborhoods. Walking makes clear these divisions, and encourages dialogue between archival spheres through a mixed-archival and ethnographic understanding of archival space in the city.

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