

Long-term change and agricultural commercialisation in Ghanaian Cocoa

Kojo Amanor

Joseph K. Teye

Joseph A. Yaro



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Production trends
- Changes in land relations
- Changes in labour and family relations
- State policies and marketing
- Reflections on change and continuity



Introduction

- Ghana is one of the largest cocoa producing countries in the World, and the country also has a reputation for high quality cocoa beans on the international market.
- Having emerged as the world's largest producer of Cocoa in the early 20th century, Ghana witnessed a significant decline in cocoa production in the 1970s and 1980s when the cocoa industry nearly collapsed.
- The cocoa sector recovered again in the early 1990s after the country adopted structural adjustment programmes.
- With an average total annual output of about 800,000 metric tonnes, Ghana is currently the world's second highest producer of cocoa, after Ivory Coast (CRIG, 2017).



Introduction II

- Agricultural commercialisation is treated as a recent phenomenon often associated with economic liberalisation. In contrast with this the cocoa sector in Ghana provides a case study of a much longer period of commercialisation that can be traced back to developments to the eighteenth century.
- This enables agricultural commercialisation to be placed within much longer patterns of accumulation from before colonial rule, and within various contexts of market development and state interventions, and booms and busts.
- This review of historical literature on cocoa was to find data of evident changes within cocoa by looking for quantifiable data from different studies at particular point in time and comparing the differences.



The framing

- The commercialisation of cocoa is examined against the backdrop of the changing relationship between factors of production, including:
 - the availability of land, labour and capital, and the interactions of these factors with technology and markets,
 - but also how these impact upon the role of the household and family in production and in processes of social differentiation.



The framing II

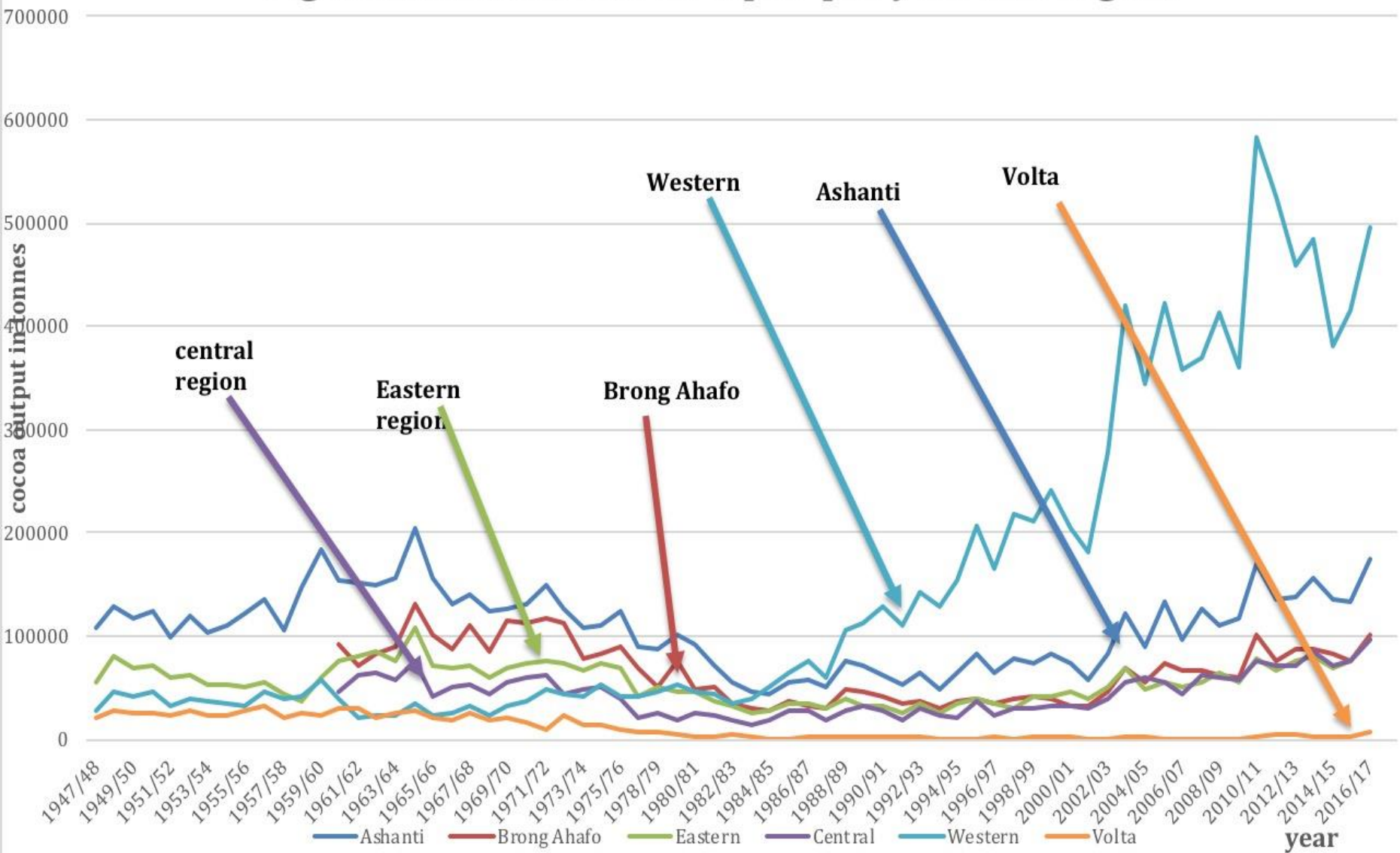
- Okali and Hill deal with how availability of land, labour, and capital shape the social institutions and lead to tensions within these institutions concerned with kinship and market relations in production.
- These processes of change associated with commercialisation operate within wider economic policy, global markets, state support and other local socio-economic changes



Figure 1: Annual Total cocoa output in Ghana in tonnes over a period of time (1900-2016)



Figure 2: Annual cocoa output per year and region



The origins of cocoa production in Ghana

- The development of cocoa production in Ghana is rooted in two processes:
 - Internal processes of agricultural accumulation in the Gold Coast (Ghana) and the emergence of a class of farmer traders, who initially accumulated capital within kola, oil palm and rubber in the early 19th century and moved into cocoa during the second half of the 19th century as prices for cocoa became more favourable in the face of deteriorating prices for oil palm and rubber.
 - Shifts in global production markets, as oil palm was transferred from West Africa to production on large estates in Southeast Asia against which West African producers could no longer compete, and as cocoa production was transferred from Central America to West Africa.



Local capital investments spurred the cocoa industry

- The cocoa industry of the Gold Coast developed independently of official policy interventions and largely on the initiatives of Ghanaian farmers and merchants.
- As a consequence, little was known of the nature of its development within the colonial administration and the serious collection of data on the industry only began in the 1930s.



Polly Hill 1963

- Hill identified farmers and traced the origins of their movements along the original cocoa frontier and the transfer of cocoa plantations and land from one generation to the next and subsequent investments of profits in new land.
- Hill argues that migrant cocoa farmers essentially constituted a class of agrarian capitalist investing in the purchase of land, and hiring of labour, and reinvesting their profits in expanding investments of land in new areas.
- Hill challenges the dominant assumptions of the period: “the myth of the sedentary peasant farmers who, though unfamiliar with the cash economy, nonetheless succeeded in the space of twenty years in transforming the economy of Ghana” (Hill 1963: 11).



Changing Land relations and cocoa commercialisation

- Access to land for cocoa
 - Purchase
 - Sharecropping
 - Leases
- Inheritance: Matrilineal and Patrilineal systems
- Commodification of land – changes in customary land practices
- Sharecropping as disguised land sales



Changing Land relations and cocoa commercialisation II

- Poor access to land by women leading to small farm sizes
- Increasingly families using wills to apportion land before death
- Land gifts to avoid problems upon death
- The use of interstate succession law for inheritance and reducing relevance of matrilineal systems
- Sharecropping among indigenes due to family heads and chiefs preferring migrants
- Sales of individual private land/cocoa farms not belonging to extended family



Labour and family relations of production

- Labour and family relations in cocoa production are intimately connected with land
- Access to land is embedded in reciprocal relations of production and reproduction as male youth and women provide labour for future inheritance of cocoa farms
- Thus it is important to understand lineage production within the context of intergenerational and gender relations.
- Migrant labour availability reduces with declining cocoa earnings and also with opening up of new frontiers in Cote D'Ivoire



Labour in cocoa farms

- The early forms of labour were based on money wages - annual labour contract- labourer was paid after harvest- provided with food or access to a farm to cultivated food
- This was later replaced by sharecrop contracts, in which the labourer received a third of the proceeds of an established cocoa farm for weeding, tending and harvesting the cocoa.
- Merchant farmers cultivated the larger farms but gave out small plots to lineage members, which assured them access to free family labour
- Land shortage experienced by youth in the Eastern Region resulted in local youth turning to labouring as a source of income



State policies and marketing

- Colonial buttressing of cocoa as major export crop – seeds, extension services and infrastructure
- Cocoa Research Institute of Ghana (CRIG) at Tafo
 - first created in 1938 as a Research Unit of the Gold Coast Department of Agriculture and mandated to carry out research on pests and diseases. In 1944, the unit was expanded to form the West Africa Cocoa Research Institute (WACRI), with a substation at Ibadan, Nigeria
- Nkrumah's organizational efforts – cocoa farmer unions and formal state support
- COCOBOD as marketing guarantee, Massive silos & Cocoa processing factory
- Free input supply and seedlings
- Strong role of the state in cocoa commercialisation before the 1980s



Neoliberal era and cocoa

- Rehabilitation of cocoa farms – replanting efforts with new hybrid varieties
- Infrastructural support to revamp cocoa economy
- Annual spraying of farms
- Free inputs – seedlings, fertilizers and chemicals as against subsidy withdrawal for food crops
- Liberalization of cocoa purchasing
- New actors in cocoa processing – state facilitation – politics of cocoa
- New export commercial crops: non-traditional exports



Reflections on change and continuity

- The commercialization of the cocoa sector involves a series of changes in labour, land, investments, technology and the social organization and reproduction of cocoa societies
- Cocoa commercialization shows how global and national imperatives merge with individual accumulation circuits to forge the commodification of land and labour providing incentives for socio-technological change
- Diversifying capital accumulation through the use of profits from cocoa to other sectors with concomitant ramifications for social mobility, social stratification and social change.



THANK YOU



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA