

**Saint Mary's University
International Development Studies**

**Peasantry and Political Power:
A Case Study of Peasant Cocoa Farmers in Ghana**

by

Togbiga Dzivenu

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in International Development Studies,
Saint Mary's University
September 1995**

Halifax,

Nova Scotia

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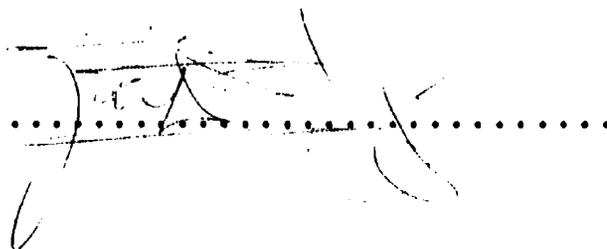
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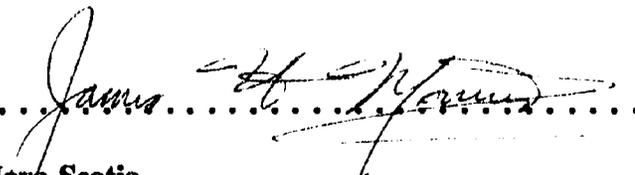
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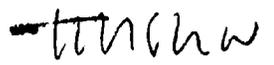
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Dedication

**To my mother, Danexoe Amedekanya, and the memory of my late father, Kwame
Honu Dzivenu**

**"It is at the end of the old
ropes, that the new ones
are woven"**

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Acknowledgement

My heartiest thanks go to my Professors James H. Morrisson and Henry Veltmeyer for ideas and support. I can never thank you enough! However, I am fully responsible for any flaws remaining in this thesis.

My journey in search of the "golden fleece" so far has not been easy. As a self-sponsored foreign student, I could not have come this far without the crucial support from friends too numerous to mention here. However, without ranking them, the following names deserve a special mention: Peter Duffy, Valerie Spencer, Sharon Bonds, Polly E. Hillis, Rev. Fr. Ed McSheffery, Dean Ted Marriot, Gordon Steadman, Regina Dambe, Ron Simpson, Keith Hotchkiss, Helen Vaughan Merrill, Don Smeltzer, Dennis and Linda Wood, Patrick Eweka and Faith Samkange. You are all stakeholders in whatever success I attain; for, you are friends indeed!

To my roommate, David Dzidzornu, I say thank you for being my sounding board and for your constructive criticisms: "Nuyie noa adu nu hafi adu dzea deka vava! Akpe nawo". I would also like to thank Francis Botchway for planting the idea for the thesis topic in my head. It is a reality after all! My special thanks also go to the following members of the library staff: Susan Cannon, Doug Vaisey, Sandra Hamm and Brenda Nicholson for putting up with my incessant "worries". Annette Wright and Claudine Herlihy, you deserve a special mention too for being so understanding, many thanks. All my other friends not mentioned here for practical reasons, you deserve no less: please do accept my heartfelt thanks for making my life in Canada worthwhile.

Finally, to you all, I owe a huge debt of gratitude, which mere words of thank you nor material tokens of appreciation could never adequately repay!

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Abstract

This thesis studies the cocoa hold-up organized by Ghana's peasant cocoa farmers in 1937-38. Analytically contextualized in the development theories of structuralism, concepts of comparative advantage and international division of labour, the thesis makes the following points: first, that cocoa production incorporated Ghana's economy into the international market economy in a dependent, mono-crop exporting peripheral position. Second, that the introduction and spread of this export-crop introduced profound socio-economic changes into Ghana's agrarian economy.

The changes include a monetized economy, shifts in traditional concepts and practices of land holding and use, a reorganized social structure. These changes altogether produced a new segment of rich and empowered farmers and western-educated elites, *nouveaux riches*. Together, these *nouveaux riches* led successful peasant/grassroot challenges against colonial economic and political policies. These socio-economic protests largely marked the early stages of modern trade unionism and peasant political activism in Ghana.

Finally, the thesis establishes that the main factors that led to the 1937-38 hold-up have still not been addressed by Ghana's modern-day governments. These factors are collectively expressed in the absence of an integrated technology-based cocoa industry and a rewarding cocoa producer prices. In part, this explains why Ghana's economy continues to be a mere appendage within the structure and control system of the world economy.

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Chapter One

I.0 Peasantry and Political Power in Ghana: A Case Study of Peasant Cocoa Farmers in Ghana

I.1 Background: The Notion of Peasantry

To understand the political power of the Ghanaian peasantry, this study focuses on Asante peasant¹ cocoa farmers. Central to this study is the transformation of peasant agricultural practice from its traditional status into its various current forms in present-day Ghana². This study is an attempt to investigate the development of political power among Asante³ cocoa peasants. The basis of the discussion is the sporadic use of socio-economic power by the Asante cocoa peasant farmers to achieve political and economic objectives. Specifically, the cocoa hold-up of 1937-38 in the then Gold Coast, spearheaded by Asante cocoa farmers, is used as the demonstrative case.

The unconventional manifestations of peasant political power typified in the

¹ In this study, the word "peasant" does not imply its rigid traditional connotations. "Peasants" and "farmers" could, therefore, be used interchangeably.

² The old Ghana empire, Ancient Ghana, flourished along the Niger river between 400 and 1240 AD. Although old and modern Ghana are far apart, both in time and space, some of the present-day Ghanaians are believed to be descendants of emigrants from old Ghana. However, this claim has not been explicitly substantiated.

From now on, the present-day Republic of Ghana will be referred to simply as Ghana throughout the entire work.

³ In this study, the name "Asante" is preferred to the anglicized one, "Ashanti".

Asante case engender a critical classification of peasants and the nature of their political influence in Ghana. Peasants and agricultural workers are generally categorised into two groups: the large scale commercial farmers and the small-scale peasant farmer. This categorization is not based only on the scale of operation and the mode of production; it also establishes their sources of power⁴. Implicit in such categorization are two types of power: social and economic. While economic power is derived from ownership of resources or means of production, social or peasant power is association-based (Migdal, 1974:20).

Peasant power is a potent force, but it is rarely used. This infrequent use has produced the erroneous impression of the passiveness and powerlessness of the peasantry⁵. Through the years and to varying degrees, peasants have been made to fit various typological constructs provided by myriads of definitions⁶ of the

⁴ "Power" as used here refers to both social and economic power.

⁵ Migdal argues that peasants' seemingly political passiveness arises from the fact that peasants generally have little time for other after-work activities (Migdal, 1974:21).

⁶ For a general summary of various definitions of the peasantry, see Clifford Geertz, "Studies in Peasant Life: Community and Society" in *Biennial Review of Anthropology*, 1961 ed. Bernard J. Siegel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962) pp. 5; George M. Forster, "Interpersonal Relations in Peasant Society," *Human Organization* 19 (Winter 1960-1961), 1975; Robert Redfield, "The Social Organization of Tradition," *The Far Eastern Quarterly* 15 (November 1955), pp. 13-14; William H. and Charlotte Viall Wiser, *Behind Mud Walls 1930-1960* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), pp. 154-155; Joel S. Migdal, *Peasants, Politics, and Revolution: Pressures toward Political and Social Change in the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974) Chapters I & II.

peasantry (Migdal, 1974:21-24). Such definitions have typified peasants as exploited small-scale agricultural producers who have been dominated economically, politically, and culturally by a sectoral superordinate power.

Although certain characteristics are common to the peasantry⁷, peasant practice varies from place to place and from one generation to another. Specific situations in each society decide the structural parameters of peasant life, as in the case of Asante peasant agricultural practices. In the Asante social group where the means of production are collectively owned, the nature of production takes different forms. As such, universal definitions⁸ of peasants or peasantry does not adequately account for the Asante situation.

I.2 Ghana as a colonial administrative unit

Present-day Ghana is a creation of colonial imperialism⁹ (see fig. 1). Today, it

⁷ One common feature of the peasantry is the "centrality of land and agriculture to peasant societies" (Migdal, 1974:24). See also William, H. and Charlotte Viall Wiser, *Behind Mud Walls 1930-1960* (1964) pp. 154-155; R. N. Henry, "Participation and Initiative of the Local People," in *Social Research and Problems of Rural Development in South-East Asia*, ed. Vu Quoc Thuc (UNESCO, 1963), pp. 199.

⁸ See footnote 6 above

⁹ Some of the leading studies on Ghana's colonial history include David Kimble, *A Political History of Ghana: the Rise of Gold Coast Nationalism 1850-1923* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963); Basil Davidson, *A History of West Africa 1000-1800* (Burnt Mill: Longman, 1981); Dennis Austin, *Politics in Ghana 146-1960* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964); A. McPhee, *The Economic Evolution of British West Africa* (London: University of London Press, 1966); David E. Apter, *Ghana in Transition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963); A. Adu-Boahen, "Africa

includes all the different constituent parts that were once under British administration. These were the original Gold Coast Colony¹⁰, Asante Protectorate, the Northern Territories Protectorate and the mandated territory of Trans-Volta German Togoland (see fig. 2).

However, all these constituent parts came under British rule at different times. For example, the original Gold Coast Colony, constituted in 1874, included the southern coastal areas¹¹. The Northern Territories Protectorate and Asante were both respectively incorporated into the Colony in 1896 and 1901. The mandated territory of Trans-Volta German Togoland was incorporated into the Gold

and the Colonial Challenge" and "Colonialism in Africa: its Impact and Significance" (Unesco, 1985), Vol. VII, pp. 1; 782-809; John D. Hargreaves, *Prelude to the Partition of West Africa* (London: Macmillan, 1963); F. Agbodeka, *Ghana in the Twentieth Century* (Accra: Ghana University Press, 1972); K. B. Dickson, *Historical Geography of Ghana* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); W. E. F. Ward, *A History of Ghana*, 3rd ed. (London: Allen & Unwin, 1966). See also R. B. Bening, "Administrative areas of the Gold Coast Colony, 1874-1899," *Universitas*, 3:3(1974), pp. 59-78. This study also provides an excellent account of the administrative history of the Colony before 1900.

¹⁰ The Gold Coast Colony was created in July 1847 by a charter of Queen Victoria. The boundaries of present-day Ghana were defined by an Order in Council of 1906 (Pugh and Perry, 1960:135).

¹¹ Sir Garnet Wolseley's despatch to the Gold Coast and his subsequent campaign against the Asante marked a decisive moment in the history and politics of the Gold Coast. The defeat of the Asante in the "Sargrenti" (a corruption of Sir Garnet Wolseley) War of 1873-74 initiated the incorporation of the Asante Kingdom into the Gold Coast Colony in 1901 (Ajayi et al. 1992:151; Hargreaves, 1963).

Coast in 1922. Thus, the Gold Coast Colony and its affiliated territories¹² formed the culturally pluralistic independent state of Ghana. In other words, the British administration predetermined the boundaries of modern Ghana (Lloyd, 1967).

Although relatively small¹³, Ghana is one of the leading African countries. It was the first black African country south of the Sahara to achieve independence¹⁴. Its former descriptive name, the Gold Coast, was changed to Ghana when it attained independence on 6 March 1957, in honour of the old Ghana empire¹⁵.

¹² It is noteworthy that the affiliated territorial states were not *tribes* as often implied by some writers. Lord Hailey, in his *Native Administration in the British Territories*, Part III, p. 215, made the following comment concerning the portion referred to as the 'Colony' in Ghana, that is, the present Western, Eastern and Central regions:

"Whatever may be the propriety of using the terms 'tribalised' and 'detrabalised' as applied to Africans elsewhere, they can have little significance in connection with the population of the Gold Coast Colony. As already explained, the different Akan and Fanti states were political rather than tribal units...." This statement is certainly true of the Asante Confederacy and its constituent states, and we suggest, true also of most of the other traditional states of Ghana. Cf. Rattray, *Tribes of the Ashanti Hinterland*, 1932, Preface, pp. xii-xiv, xix-xxi. See Ward, *A History of Ghana*, 1966, Chaps. II and III for an interesting discussion of the migration into present-day Ghana of the peoples presently occupying it. By s. II of the Chieftaincy Act, 1961 (Act 81), these states are now to be known as "traditional areas" and "shall no longer be known as States". See Bentsi-Enchill, K. *Ghana Land Law*. (1964:13); and Wilson, (1977:18-19).

¹³ At independence, the population of Ghana was 6.5 million. According to the 1991 census figures, the population now stands at around 15 million. A UN estimate puts the figure at 15,509,000.

¹⁴ Liberia is the oldest independent republic on the African continent: see Austen, 1987:215.

¹⁵ See footnote 2 above.

I.3 Ethnic and linguistic groupings

Ghana's population consists of several ethnic¹⁶ groups¹⁷. Owing to differences in culture, language, population density, depth of lineages and degree of specialization in social organization, there is no homogeneity among them. However, some of these ethnic groups were once conquered and assimilated into the stronger and better organized ones. In such cases, there are similarities in the language and culture of these groups. This is best evidenced within the Akan-speaking group (Lewis, 1965:19; Lloyd, 1967:27). Akan is the largest linguistic group in Ghana¹⁸ (see fig. 3). The principal Akan states include Asante, Akwamu, Akuapem, Brong

¹⁶ For studies on the different groups in Ghana, see R. S. Rattray, *Tribes of Ashanti Hinterland* (Oxford: 1969), *Ashanti*, Oxford: 1969); K. A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief* (London: 1968); M. Manonkian, *The Akan and Ga-Adangme Peoples of the Gold Coast* (London: Oxford University Press, 1950); T. J. Lewis, *Asante Before the British: The Prempean Years, 1875-1900* (Lawrence: The Regents Press of Kansas, 1978); M. J. Field, *The Social Organization of the Ga People* (London: The Crown Agents, 1940); L. E. Wilson, "Krobo People of Ghana to 1892", *A Political and Social History* (Athens: Ohio University of International Studies, 1992); Ansa K. Asamoah, *The Ewe of South-Eastern Ghana and Togo on the Eve of Colonialism* (Tema: Ghana Publishing Co., 1986).

¹⁷ The term "group" is used here in a generic aggregative sense to represent individuals "in more or less interdependent status and role relations" having "indigenous set of values or norms which regulates the behaviour of members at least in matters of concern" to the group. See R. T. Golembiewski, "The Development of the Genus 'Group' " in Smith, Peter B. ed. *Group Processes: Selected Readings* (Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1970), pp. 15-17.

As already noted, the social groups were not mere linguistic groupings, but independent political states: see Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:18; and also footnote 12 above.

¹⁸ Out of the several cultural and linguistic groups, six of them are identified and studied as major language groups. The main language groups are Akan, Ewe, Ga-Adangbe, Dagbani, Hausa and Nzima. Since stronger cultures usually dominate minor ones, one may say Akan is gradually absorbing its smaller "neighbours". Akan is now widely spoken in Ghana.

and Fante. Within these larger units, there are other subgroups like Nzima, Sefwi and Wassaw. There is a significant degree of cultural and linguistic integration within the Akan-speaking group.

As these subject states became integrated, they adopted the culture and linguistic practices of the conquering ethnic group. Among other things, they also paid tributes¹⁹ to the stronger ethnic group as manifestations of their allegiance. A classic example is the case of the Akan states. However, in cases where the assimilation process did not succeed, it generated traditional animosities. In spite of cultural and linguistic differentiation, the various ethnic groups may not be described as class oriented or class conscious²⁰ (Lewis, 1965:19).

A number of ethnic groups with differences in cultural and political practices live in different ecological zones. Such differences in the social organization mean that the groups also experience life under different social and political power structures. Some of the social groups are centralized along matrilineal and

¹⁹ Tributes are a form of taxation. Tributes may be paid in "cash" or in kind, or both. For example, tributary states may be asked to pay in so many ounces of gold or some specified quantity of ivory; or simply to supply resources for war against other states. See Webster and Boahen with Idowu, 1970; Douglas and Kaberry, 1969:93.

²⁰ Post-colonial emergent African countries, including Ghana, are now more stratified and differentiated than that of the pre-colonial social groups. For further details, see Bjorn Beckman, *Organising the Farmers: Cocoa Politics and National Development in Ghana* (Sweden: Uppsala Offset Centre AB, 1976).

patrilineal lines of descent, while others are 'acephalus' or uncentralized. Furthermore, these differences condition the types of economic activities carried out in the different ecological zones. The thesis will show how the nature of social organization in Asante impacts on its socio-economic activities.

Among the various groups discussed above, the Asante social group, as peasant cocoa farmers, is the main focus of the thesis. This discussion more or less contextualizes their place in Ghana. The nature and impact of settlement patterns on the occupation of the various groups is examined next.

1.4.0 Geographical context

There is the need to provide a general geographical background to emphasize the ecological differences in traditional settlement patterns and their impacts on crop production. This will explain why certain geographical areas are more favourable to the production of certain crops, especially, why cocoa grows in the forest zone. This will establish the difference between the coastal food crop peasants and the forest zone peasant cocoa farmers.

1.4.1 Settlement patterns

Topographically, Ghana may be conveniently divided into three major ecological regions: the coastal zone, the forest zone, and the northern savanna zone (see fig. 4). Each of these ecological zones is inhabited or shared by distinct ethnic

groups. However, due to population growth, movement and expansion, it is now often difficult to mark clear-cut boundaries.

Nowadays, it is rare to find a particular linguistic group entirely restricted to a specific ecological area. Different needs²¹ have altered peoples' affiliations with their ecological "homes". Settlement is no longer coterminous with linguistic boundaries. Surviving the changing economic conditions has become a major determining factor in the settlement patterns of Ghana's population. Nonetheless, the traditional homes or lineage links are never forgotten nor completely broken off.

The occupations of the population in a specific region are largely determined by the settlement patterns. Agriculture is the mainstay of the economy. The forest zone is the country's leading agricultural zone. More than 60% of the total population depends on farming as its basic means of livelihood (CIDA Country Report on Ghana, May 1990). Types of agriculture include crop farming, cattle farming, and fish farming. Both farming and fishing take place along the coast and riverine areas. However, in the north where the environment is more favourable, food production and cattle rearing are practised on a large scale.

Alternate forms of cultivation suitable to specific ecological conditions also

²¹ Sometimes, dry farmland and other economic disasters force people to emigrate to more fertile and productive areas.

exist. For example, in the forest zone where the soil is prone to rapid erosion, arboreal cultivation is adopted to protect the soil against heat and heavy rains. The existence of such conditions make the forest zone ideal for cocoa, rubber and oil palm cultivation (DeGregori, 1969:47).

I.4.2 The coastal zone

The coastal zone embraces the seaboard running from the Ghana-Togo border in the southeast to the border between Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire in the southwest (see fig. 4). Annual rainfall in the southeastern region is low, below 30 inches per annum. However, rainfall increases westwards averaging over 70 inches per annum in the southwestern corner. Rainfall in this area is well distributed throughout the year as in the forest zone.

Soil-type in the coastal zone is varied, due to the uneven pattern of rainfall distribution. There are ochrosols, tropical gray earth, acid vleisols and sodium vleisols. Ochrosols, a relatively well drained soil, is found in the southwestern region, while the tropical black earth or Akuse clay is located in the southeastern zone. Most of these soils are relatively unsuitable for agriculture except for the tropical black earth (Akuse clay) and the ochrosols. These provide the best soils for agriculture in the coastal zone (Lloyd, 1967:24).

Crops requiring little rain to grow thrive well in this area. These include the

ubiquitous cassava, beans, varieties of millet, pepper, rice, guinea corn or maize, onion and vegetables. Other products from the savanna are oil palm products, copra, and cotton (Lloyd, 1967:24; Pugh and Perry, 1960; CIDA Country Report on Ghana, May 1990). Inhabitants of the region are also conventional fishermen. Fishing is mostly done by men, but women play a major complementary role of marketing the catch.

Owing to abundant rainfall in the southwestern corner, the vegetation is evergreen with tropical evergreen forest. The area features forest giants like the silk cotton tree, the wawa tree or African whitewood and the African mahogany. Crops grown in this region include cocoa, yam, cocoyam, plantain, banana, coconut and forest products like timber (Lloyd, 1967:24).

I.4.3 The forest zone

The forest zone occupies about a third of the country. Rainfall is well distributed in the zone creating a short dry season and a rich agricultural land. It covers the southwestern coastal region and extends northwards to include Asante and Brong Ahafo regions. The predominant vegetation is evergreen with tropical semideciduous forest cover. As in the tropical evergreen forest, tall trees form a canopy at the top maintaining high relative humidity. The high relative humidity is ideal for growing cocoa, which is, naturally, almost exclusively grown in this area of the country. The zone is not only rich in agricultural lands, but also in forest

products and mineral wealth. It is the zone with the richest natural endowments in the country.

The soil here is largely formed of ancient pre-Cambrian rock. It contains little humus and is extremely vulnerable to leaching if exposed to the sun and heavy downpours. As a result, it cannot be subjected to the "intensive cultivation required for most food crops" (CIDA, Country Report on Ghana, May 1990). The area is, therefore, suitable for the cultivation of tree crops. Thus, cocoa, an arboricultural crop, finds a proper home here²² (see fig. 6).

Cocoa farming is the chief occupation of the inhabitants of the region although other minor cash crops are grown for export. With its higher rainfall distribution pattern and shorter dry season, "two harvests of maize each year are possible". Crops are also interplanted on the farm to increase the return per unit of land and labour (Lloyd, 1967:23). As such, most of the country's food requirements are produced in the forest zone. Other crops grown in the area are yam, plantain, cocoyam, and maize.

The dominant ethnic group occupying this zone is the Akan cultural and linguistic group (see fig. 5). In sub-units, this includes Akuapem, Akyem, Asante,

²² The Asante region is the heart of the cocoa belt in Ghana (Wallerstein, 1964:13). Cocoa, a tree crop, lasts for over forty years.

Brong, Kwahu, Sefwi, Wassaw and Nzima. The Ewe occupy the forest area close to the eastern fringe of the zone. Akan-speaking peasant farmers, who are also cocoa farmers, are the most politically active group in the country.

I.4.4 The northern savanna zone

As the name implies, the northern savanna is found in the northern zone (see fig. 2). Annual rainfall is low and falls within one season, followed by a long period of intense drought. The vegetation cover, which is mainly tall guinea grass with scattering low trees, reflects the harsh environment engendered by the low rainfall. Away from the fringe of the forest zone, the savanna gives way to open grassland. Trees found in this area include shea butter and various types of acacia.

The area is conducive to cattle rearing and the cultivation of yam and cereals. Although the short rainy season in the zone limits intensive agricultural possibilities, subsistence farming exists. However, this type of farming is gradually giving way to commercial farming. Also, due to deliberate colonial policy, modern development projects were not sited in the north. The policy effectively created conditions for the movement of labour from the north to the south where various government ventures like mining existed²³ (see fig. 4). However, most of the migrants went to the agricultural sector.

²³ For a fuller discussion, see Polly Hill, *The Migrant Cocoa-Farmers of Southern Ghana: A Study in rural capitalism*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1963.

Economic differences also exist among the different ecological zones. Such differences largely follow the pattern of rainfall distribution and the topography. In the heavy rainfall forest zone, crops like cocoa, coffee, and banana²⁴ grow. However, in the northern and southeastern savanna zones, with poorer rain, crops thrive with difficulty. Crops such as cassava, maize, rice, millet and sorghum grow in these areas. These are mainly food crops of limited commercial or export potential, although they are exchanged locally.

On the other hand, there are similarities among the groups. These include kinship and lineage descent, social organization, cultural and religious belief systems and relations with political structures: for example, services rendered to political leaders by way of farm labour and tributes (An-Na'im, 1991:90; Lloyd, 1967:26).

Thus, the ethnic composition of the country and the settlement pattern provide perspectives of the social and economic activities in which the people are engaged. The close juxtaposition of the ecologically different zones has emphasized division of labour, specialization, interdependency and trade exchange relations both between and within the groups. For example, certain crops are soil- and environment-specific. As a result, the types of crops produced in one ecological zone are often different from those produced in other zones in the country (see fig. 6a).

²⁴ **The forest region produces Ghana's major and minor cash crops: cocoa, coffee, plantain, banana, and other forest products like timber. It also supplies the bulk of the country's food requirements.**

That way, cocoa is restricted to the forest zone (see fig. 5).

Production of such restricted crops allows for monopoly and a high level of specialization as is the case of cocoa: it grows exclusively in the forest zone. Similarly, millet, yam, and cattle rearing are restricted to the savanna areas in the north and southeastern regions. Littoral dwellers concentrate on both fishing and agriculture. Thus, the differences in environmental conditions have instituted the basis for production and exchange relations, specialization in crop production and the notion of interdependency.²⁵

In Ghana's situation, interdependency in this context means development of exchange relations among the different ethnic groups. In other words, every ethnic group depends on the other for the satisfaction of some of its basic needs. The forest zone for instance, depends on the coastal zone for fish and salt. Similarly, the coastal zone depends on the forest zone for more food products to supplement its local food supply (Wilson, 1977:18).

1.5.0 The Thesis Statement

The thesis contends that the development of political power among Asante peasant cocoa farmers was attendant to economic power occasioned by cocoa production. The thesis argues also that the political ambience created by European

²⁵ See Wilson, 1977:18 & Chapter 2.

rule induced the development of peasant political power among Asante. Furthermore, the thesis asserts that colonial rule established the basis for the socio-economic and political transformation of Asante and Ghana.

Besides, the production of cocoa for the international market articulated Ghana's traditional economy to the world economy. In other words, Ghana's dependence on cocoa as its single export-crop arose mainly from economic policies based on the concept of international division of labour. But Ghana's agrarian institutional structures and that of the world market economy are different. Such differences in institutional structures produced unequal exchange relations between the producers at the periphery and buyers from the rich centre.

The study covers the period from the introduction of cocoa in 1879 to the cocoa hold-up in 1937-38. However, only a synopsis of events related to cocoa production and the transition from pre-capitalist to capitalist market economy is provided.

The thesis examines the factors that create and sustain power relations and group solidarity within descent groups. As the social organization of each society dictates the pattern of power relations within the social group, general characteristics of traditional societies is examined. However, a conspectus of the various concepts of society is not provided.

As regards the transition to a cash economy, the main focus of this work is on cocoa farmers within the Akan cultural and linguistic group. Cocoa farmers were one of the first groups of farmers to show political consciousness and action in Ghana through cocoa hold-ups. Lessons learnt from these hold-ups were of great value to political leaders during the struggle for independence. Thus, cocoa production brought about far reaching social changes, transformed the peasantry and made the peasant cocoa farmers agents of history in Ghana.

1.5.1 Delimitations

The thesis does not assess the advantages and disadvantages of colonial rule. The problem of domestic food production and distribution and the economic performance of the peasants are also beyond the scope of the work. Similarly, the study does not evaluate the effects of technology transfer on the peasants and on the rural community. In any case, there has hardly been any such technology transfer relevant to cocoa production.

As well, the study does not differentiate between gender roles in the peasant effort in cocoa production. This is simply because Ghanaian peasants in general, and those involved in cocoa production, consist of both sexes. What is significant in this study is peasant organization to pursue various objectives germane to their welfare as peasants. As such, the study does not consider specific gender contributions to the production process, especially in relation to the case under

study. Thus, any reference to peasants in this study is inclusive. Whatever is said refers to both male and female farmers, however unique each gender's contribution to the issues involved might be.

I.5.2 Theoretical framework

Chapter Two describes the analytical framework within which the study of the transformation of Asante cocoa farmers is analyzed. Their production relations and political empowerment is examined in the light of structuralist core-periphery arguments. These arguments provide a background to Ghana's dependency on a single export-crop, cocoa, and its incorporation into the world economy through same. The theoretical framework also provides a basis for explaining why cocoa production was developed to the exclusion of other crops.

I.6.0 Approach and scope

The thesis investigates the development of political awareness and political power among traditional Asante peasant cocoa farmers in Ghana. In doing so, the thesis surveys the nature and basis of traditional political power in Asante, how it is acquired and used, and its pattern of distribution. Specifically, the thesis explores the changes in sources of political authority and power relations and their effects within the centralized Asante social group. The understanding offered by these power relations provides grounds for analyzing the factors that influenced or hindered the politicization of the peasants.

Why was it easy to organize peasants who had, until 1938-39, only peripheral political interest? What triggered the political interest of these peasant farmers? The thesis looks for the defining moments and the factors responsible for their transition from a powerless group to an organized political force. The base-point for the discussion is the shift from subsistence²⁶ production to production for the international market.

1.6.1 Research methodology

The approach to the study is historical. It draws on both primary and secondary data. Such data provides the basis for the analysis of such issues as socio-economic and political developments in modern Ghana. These sources include books, journal articles and theses. It would have been of great value for the author to collect oral sources in Ghana for this thesis. However, this was not an option due to financial constraints.

Using published materials is advantageous in that the material is stable and readily available. The materials also discuss the subject as it developed up to specific periods in time. Published materials also expose their own strengths and

²⁶ The era of traditional African domestic economy must be distinguished from the legacy of colonial and post-colonial market economies. "African domestic economy" refers to subsistence or household mode of production. In this context, crops were not produced for a particular market, but colonial and post-colonial economies are open to specialized crop production for specific markets (Austen, 1987).

weaknesses. As Ebbinghaus (1964) observes, nothing is static, things are subject to "endless and incessant change". Therefore, published information can be repeatedly analyzed and reviewed any number of times in the light of new ideas and findings. Regarding investigative time, using published data is cheap and costs little or no money.

I.6.2 Limitations of the methodology

Although expert opinion can be a source of objective information, it can also be biased and fraught with errors. Such biases may result from the researcher's or author's beliefs, emotions, cultural background and prejudged positions on the issues investigated. Biases can create problems of variability and inconsistency. Interference by human error also affects the accuracy and objectivity of the research. One way I overcame these limitations is through cross-checking and referencing to other sources, wherever possible, to make my findings valid and conclusions generalizable.

I.6.3 Significance of the study

The study establishes the factors that empower peasants to become participatory citizens. Such factors should inform policy makers in identifying issues and in planning development projects to redirect peasant energies into building local capacities.

1.10 Chapter Summaries

The discussion is constructed in the form of four chapters. Chapter one provides a general geographical and ethnographical background to modern Ghana. It then outlines the research methodology and the theoretical framework for discussing the process of empowerment and politicization of the peasantry in the context of cocoa production.

Chapter two discusses the development theories and paradigms that provide the limits within which to analyze the economic transitions under discussion. These include structuralist theory, the concepts of international division of labour and comparative advantage. The chapter also examines the relational concepts of land-use and tenure among the Asante. These concepts and practices greatly facilitated the rapid adoption of cocoa production among them. Another factor that contributed to the spread of cocoa production is the nature of matrilineal descent among the Asante and other ethnic groups in the cocoa belt. The dynamics of this mode of social organization eased the transition of these groups from units organized for subsistence production to units organized for export production. These issues are also examined in this chapter.

Chapter three looks at the colonial era and the introduction of cocoa production in Ghana. The chapter explores how cocoa cultivation undermined traditional political power bases and transformed traditional interests in land-use.

Largely, the British expedition of 1873-74 propitiously set the stage for the change under discussion and cocoa was just a catalyst that sped up the transitional process. Other factors that facilitated and enhanced the development of political power among Asante peasants are identified. Finally, the chapter assesses the events that led to the 1937-38 cocoa hold-up and the subsequent empowerment of the peasant cocoa farmers.

Chapter four analyses the catalytic social, economic, and political effects of cocoa production on the country. In particular, it discusses the empowerment of the Asante peasants as an economic group with tremendous political clout and awareness. The chapter also analyses the factors that inhibited the total transformation of the traditional economic organization of Asante into a modern capitalism. The chapter concludes with an overview of the thesis main points and general observations on those points.

*** * * * ***

Chapter Two

II.0 Theoretical Framework

II.1 Introduction

The study of the transition of the peasantry from pre-capitalist to capitalist form of production and the impact of this transition on the empowerment of the peasants needs to be multi-dimensional. Issues involved include socio-economic and political phenomena, land-ownership and land-use in customary law, relations of peasant production and exchange. For convenience, such issues are divided into three categories. They are then discussed in relation to the nature of the social and economic organization as reflected in the relations of production, distribution and exchange. Although exchange relations in Ghana are similar to those in other ex-colonies, its pattern of socio-political organization, relations of production and distribution is, to some extent, unique in that they are historically and culturally specific.

For one thing, Ghana had never experienced the feudal mode of peasant-production so widespread in Latin America, Asia, Europe and other parts of Africa²⁷. The dominant pre-colonial mode of production in Ghana was

²⁷ **Production relations in Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa parallel the Latin American *dependistas* and the Indian experience: see R. D. Wolff, *The Economics of Colonialism* (New Haven: 1974), for Kenyan and East African experiences of settler production relations as opposed to peasant cashcropping in Ghana.**

characterized by relations of tribute payment. Moreover, European colonization took on distinct modalities in the various colonies. As a result, the transformation process and its impact in the different ex-colonies cannot be universally applied. In this context, the transformation of the peasantry in Ghana also assumes a somewhat distinctive form. The nature and impact of this transformation process in Ghana is the analytical focus of this study.

To understand and explain the transformation process, the study is placed within a specific framework of ideas advanced in the field of development. A number of such schools of development thought are relied upon. In this context, a somewhat eclectic approach is adopted, combining ideas from various schools of thought. This chapter discusses these theoretical views.

II.2 Core-Periphery Economies

It is noteworthy that the colonialists integrated Africa, Asia and Latin America into a Modern World System through the market economy by the late nineteenth century. These integrated ex-colonies represent the contemporary agrarian economies, which also form the largest segment of the Modern World System. While industrialized Europe formed the core or centre, the integrated agrarian economies constituted the periphery²⁸. Although some analysts describe

²⁸ The term "periphery" was first used in the early days of ECLA and later assigned to these agrarian economies by Wallerstein and others because they lay outside the industrial centre (Hopkins and Wallerstein, *World Systems Analysis*:

these peripheral economies as a "single model", there is a vast range of variations among them. Their histories, socio-economic and political structures differ greatly as did the impact of their transformation and articulation to the global economy (Gilpin, 1987:84; Roxborough, 1979:viii-x; Wilson, 1977:65).

The development of the core was the result of the industrial revolution²⁹. Through that process, the centre achieved internal efficiency and well-developed technological, economic, and institutional structures. The centre then required commodity imports and external markets to support its growing population, industries and the sale of its manufactured goods. As argued by the proponents of the dual economy³⁰, the integration of the non-industrialized economy into the industrialized one resulted in the creation of two economic structures. As implied

Theory and Methodology (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1982), pp. 45. Similarly, some analysts describe these peripheral economies "in terms of a single model" because they exhibit similar peripheral features such as underdevelopment, single crop exports, etc. (Gilpin, 1987:84; Roxborough (1979:vii'-xii).

²⁹ The core-periphery notion is central to the Marxist approach. The Marxist argument is that the industrial revolution in Europe, especially in Britain, is the result of the conversion of

one part of the globe into a chiefly agricultural field of production, for supplying the other part which remains a chiefly industrial field. This revolution hangs together with radical changes in agriculture... (Marx, *Capital*, 1:451 quoted in Wolff, 1974:1)

See Karl Marx, *Capital*, (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1959), for details; also R. D. Wolff, *The Economics of Colonialism* (New Haven: 1974), pp. 1-29.

³⁰ See Hunt, (1989) and Gilpin, (1988).

in the centre-periphery thesis, the two parallel economic structures are the industrialized centre and the non-industrialized periphery. Whereas the industrialized centre has well developed complex institutional structure, the non-industrialized periphery has simple institutional structures (Gilpin, 1987:84; Wilson, 1977:65).

However, the geographic locus of the centre and distribution of economic activities has not been confined to a specific region. Over the years, it has shifted from the Mediterranean to the North Atlantic and is now shifting to the Pacific. Emerging industrial powers in Asia and Latin America are also transforming the international division of labour, leadership and the nature of the international political economy. Thus, the geographic locus of the centre is continually changing. In contrast, apart from the dramatic changes in south-east Asia, the geographic locus of the periphery has remained significantly unchanged (Gilpin, 1987:80-85).

II.3.0 Structuralism

To provide direction to our analysis and to reduce the complexities of the conditions involved in our object of analysis, this thesis draws on two variants of structuralist³¹ thought. The two forms are the ideas advanced by Latin American Structuralism and the Marxist-oriented Modes of Production approach. Both of

³¹ Although the structuralists have not produced all the answers to the structural problems of the periphery, the tenets of their arguments aptly provide an analytical framework for this study.

these schools formulated concepts and ideas that are central to our analysis.

For the purpose of relating these schools of thought to the case of Ghana, additional ideas will be drawn from anthropological studies of kinship relations as well as studies in political economy. Furthermore, some concepts are also derived from classical and neoclassical liberal economists. These concepts include "the international division of labour," "comparative advantage," economic and social organization, relations of exchange and production. As well, customary relational concepts of land-use are applied in relation to cocoa production among the Asante.

II.3.1 Structuralist Thought

Structuralism is a comprehensive approach to development theory and policy. It rejects the classical model of development and advocates government intervention to promote inward-directed growth. Such an approach requires structural³² reforms of the institutions and fundamental relationships within and between the domestic and external economy. The Structuralist school was originally associated with Raul Prebisch. The central ideas of this school focus on the relationship between the nature of capital accumulation at the centre and the pattern of

³² "Structure" here refers to the internal "social institutions, distribution of property rights, the division of labour and location of economic activities, the organization of particular markets, and the norms of regimes governing economic affairs" (Gilpin and Gilpin, 1987:81). In other words, structure includes parts of an economic whole which, over a period of time appear relatively stable alongside others (Marchal, quoted in Hartwell, 1982:102).

underdevelopment at the periphery. This school also provided the framework for a thesis formulated by Raul Prebisch and Hans Singer which posits that trade between the centre (the North) and the periphery (the South) is so organized as not to provide mutual benefits. They argue that because of the capacity of the North to monopolize both agrarian and manufactured products, the basis of trade in the long run tends to deteriorate to the disadvantage of the South (Furtado, 1989:121-123; Gilpin, 1987:81; Todaro, 1994:79-84; Hartwell, 1982:102).

Structuralists argue that the "world economy is composed of a core or centre of highly industrialized countries and a large underdeveloped periphery" (Prebisch, 1959; Gilpin, 1987:275). In its various forms, structuralism deals with internal and external relations of production, unequal exchange relations and articulation of non-capitalist mode of production. The articulation process is centred on the production of raw materials, more efficient use of surplus production capacity and sound organization of market outlets for capital accumulation (Furtado, 1988:121; Chevalier, 1982:91; Meir, 1989:98; Gilpin, 1987:81).

Structuralist thought is influenced by specific features and conditions of the peripheral economies. Examples of such features and conditions include large oversupply of unskilled labour in the agricultural and service sectors of the economy

and surplus under-used resources³³. Structuralism also focuses on the transformation and incorporation of agriculture into the international market system and the periphery's need to overturn its undue dependence on unstable commodity exports (Hunt, 1989: 49-50; IDS Reader, 1994:6).

One structuralist argument is based on the restriction of transferred technology to the production of commodities and raw materials in the peripheral countries. It is asserted that the restriction hinders technological transformation of the periphery except in the production of commodities that are exported to the centre. Similarly, structuralists advocate the removal of the inflexible structures and immobile factors of production in the periphery. They contend that these structures and factors act as barriers to the transformation of the peripheral economies. Examples of these structures and factors include the mode of acquisition and dealings in land and production and exchange relations. Peasant producers in the peripheral economies have no control over any of these factors (Hunt, 1989: 49-50;

³³ **This argument is linked to the theory of comparative costs that assumes that subsistence producers in the periphery are unable to make full use of the labour, land and other resources available to them...because the absence of market outlets means there is no incentive to do so (Kennedy, 1988:20).**

Market in this context is considered a "vent" or "channel" through which surplus production capacity in the periphery and imported goods and services at the core could pass in and out. In this way it becomes worthwhile and possible for people in traditional societies to divert previously under-utilised labour and other resources into cash-crop production or employment in order to purchase goods unavailable in the indigenous economy (Kennedy, 1988:21). We shall return to this discussion later in this chapter.

IDS Reader, 1994:6).

Another barrier to the transformation of the peripheral economies, which structuralism exposes, is the absence of efficient reallocation of resources to increase exports or replace imports. For example, in Latin America, the *latifundios*³⁴ produce just enough for their well-being. In that case, there is no incentive "to be efficient or to maximize production", which they are capable of doing. The *minifundios*, on the other hand, cannot afford the technology to improve their output. As a result they provide only the barest for their subsistence (Lewis, 1980:193). Added to this is either the lack of incentives to encourage producers to enter new markets or to curtail their preference for imports. Indeed, the centre exacerbates the problem by creating and sustaining the increasing preference for imports. The net effect of all these is the creation of segmented factor markets, disequilibrium in, and the dependency of the peripheral economy on the centre. The result is a chronic problem of balance of payments in the colonies. In sum, structuralism explains and criticises the role of rigidities and inequalities in the demand and supply relations in international and indigenous trade relations (Meir, 1989:97-99; Hunt, 1989:121-123; Chevalier, 1982:90; Gilpin, 1987:274; Myrdal, 1971).

³⁴ *Latifundios* "are very large landholders [who] control a large proportion of the agricultural land". In contrast, *minifundios* "are the smallest [farmers who] eke out a living on meagre fractions of the occupied land" (Todaro, 1994:292).

The Latin American Structuralist school of thought, associated with Raul Prebisch, is an offshoot of the policies of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, (ECLA)³⁵. ECLA, on its part, has advocated inward-directed growth and state intervention to remove the "structural bottlenecks"³⁶ that hinder domestic economic growth. On its part, the Marxist-oriented Mode of Production School focuses on the general structure of production relations within a country. It also highlights the inevitable process of class formation and its accompanying social struggle, and the political dimensions of the struggle at the state level (Lewis, 1980:193; Hunt, 1989:122).

The ECLA perspective is concerned with external economic relations and modes of production. It emphasizes the need for structural reforms within the peripheral economies and supports government intervention in doing so. ECLA, therefore, lacks an emphasis on internal or domestic structural and production relations. Usually, the general structure of production relations within a country deals with two specific situations. The first one is concerned with the somewhat feudalistic relations of production between the periphery and the centre. The second one has to do with the process that affects both internal and external production

³⁵ For convenience, the Latin American school of thought is henceforth referred to as ECLA.

³⁶ Some of these domestic bottlenecks are the land-tenure system and the inelasticity of agricultural supply resulting in higher food prices, inflation, low agricultural output and less export earnings.

relations within the periphery. ECLA does not emphasize these, and one reason why its perspective cannot wholly apply to the Ghanaian experience is that Latin America has little or no peasant export-crops. For example, while cocoa and palm oil are peasant products in Ghana, they are plantation products in Brazil (Hunt, 1989:121-125; Chevalier, 1982:92; Myint, 1969:38; Lewis, 1980:193).

The hierarchical differentiation between the centre and the periphery came about through the inequitable international trade, which exploits the peripheral economies. The main factors that contribute to the imperfect exchange relations are the concepts of division of labour and comparative advantage (Chevalier, 1982:90). For one thing, the comparative advantage of the centre is its internal technological revolution, which forms the basis of its economic development. The difference between the centre and the periphery is the pattern of technological development. In the case of the centre, the technological revolution is internally generated, while that of the periphery is externally induced through demand (Hunt, 1989:124; Wilson, 1977:65).

The Structuralist paradigm provides a general framework for the analysis of agrarian change, production and exchange relations in the ex-colonies of Africa, Latin America and Asia. Although there are differences in the socio-economic and political effects in the three regions mentioned, the paradigm points to their similarities as well. Differences in social, economic and political experiences of the

regions are largely due to the differences in timing, intensity and mechanisms³⁷ of Western market expansion. For example, regarding differences in timing, the colonial period in Latin America "was virtually over before its counterpart in Africa had begun" (Carmack, Pool and Tordoff, 1988:11).

Other differences include the nature of the social, economic and political organization and the response of the indigenous cultures. Thus, the variations in the effects of market expansion among and within the regions are due to the different levels of economic and political penetration and interaction. These forces combine, in various degrees, with the different constellations of local factors to produce the observed differences (Carmack, Pool and Tordoff, 1988:3; 11).

According to the structuralists, the world economy works on two pivots: an industrialized centre and a non-industrialized periphery. The peripheral economy, which is central to our analysis, is characterized by surplus production capacity. In other words, there is large oversupply of unskilled labour, land and other resources in the peripheral economies resulting in inefficient allocation of these

³⁷ "Capitalism" was spread through different mechanisms of conquest, colonization and economic penetration. It was done through both conquest and the establishment of export economies in Latin America, colonialism in Africa and economic penetration and social restructuring in Asia. The timing and intensity of the various mechanisms largely account for the vast differences among the regions. As such, the similarities are due to similarities in the purposes of engagement and the pattern of deployment of resources. See Carmack, Pool and Tordoff, (1988) for details.

resources. The domestic economies are also non-competitive. These economies depend upon single export crops to, and import of manufactured goods from the centre. In addition, differences in institutional structures create inequitable exchange relations such that in both supply and demand cases, the peripheral economy is a price-taker.

Domestic land tenure is bottled up within traditional, legal and user-arrangements. These do not encourage freedom of access to land. The structuralist-recommended solution is for government to intervene to reform land tenure and its associated arrangements. Furthermore, they recommend that the government should seek better arrangements for its products on the international market. What the ECLA school fails to point out is what is beyond the centre-periphery dynamics that hinders growth in the periphery. For example, the bottlenecks in the peripheral economies that are barriers to economic growth. This is summed up in the Marxist mode of production approach. This approach focuses on explaining the domestic counterpart to the international market structure, such as the development of class systems, the issue of the ownership of the means of production and the consequent production relations that arise with it.

With reference to Ghana, this theoretical framework allows us to analyze the development and domestic impacts of cocoa production in Chapters three and four. The domestic impacts will be analyzed in terms of social and political relations in the

following ways. First, as an export commodity, cocoa production was encouraged by the colonial government. It put economic structures in place, which made it easy and logical for the independent Ghanaian state to continue relying on cocoa for its main export-earnings. In this way, the international division of labour and unequal exchange relations between the centre and periphery were established and entrenched.

Second, cocoa production, as in the Marxist view, altered domestic production relations. As a long-term economic asset, cocoa production engendered land acquisition and other land transactions. As a result, it overthrew the traditional land forms with its social or class structure. New landowners in the form of large-scale cocoa farmers emerged. These employed large numbers of cocoa hands. There are also the small-scale peasant cocoa farmers. Their scale of operation put them in a class different from the large-scale farmers, but not in the same class with other peasant food crop farmers.

Third, superintending all these relations, and intervening when necessary, is the Ghanaian state. The state deals at two levels: internationally in the core-periphery structure; and domestically, to mediate in land tenure and other transactions. Above all, the state operates in its own right as the middle purchaser of cocoa as a primary peasant product.

II.4 International Division of Labour

Central to classical trade theory is the concept of territorial division of labour and absolute advantage, efficiency and the subsequent increase in individual productivity. Explicit in this concept is the power of economic specialization. Its main argument, namely increased individual productivity, presumes the enlargement of consumption possibilities and increased national and global wealth. In other words, economic growth is "a function of division of labour" and development of both internal and external markets (Ellsworth, 1964:60-61 cited in Gilpin, 1988:173; 179).

To the classical theorists, economic growth depends on free trade and specialization in the production of commodities in which each nation has absolute advantage. However, pursuit of these "ideas" inevitably results in the transformation and articulation of indigenous agrarian economies to the industrialized economic systems. Experiences of production and exchange relations in Ghana, and other parts of Africa, provide examples of systems that were transformed and incorporated into the centre. Such examples exist elsewhere in Latin America and Asia as well. Not only has the concept shaped the modern interdependent world market economy, it has also created new agrarian structures in the affected indigenous agrarian economies (Gilpin, 1988:171-172; Hunt, 1989:10-11).

The concept of an "international division of labour" as used in this study simply refers to the specialization within the production process of a particular commodity (Lipsey et al., 1985:30).

As such, any individual involved in the production process contributes only a fraction of the total task and labour content of the particular commodity produced. For example, peasants produce cocoa beans in Ghana, but the processing into final cocoa products is done outside the country.

Arguably, the concept of division of labour is the foundation on which societies have been built using the differences in people's skills and diligence. Such differences are also found in the unequal geographic distribution of natural endowments. These differences in natural endowments in both humans and nations allow for their differential access to wealth and prosperity. Entrenched in this thought is the principle of interdependency for mutual benefits in economic development and increased productivity (Douglas and Kaberry, 1969:130; Skinner 1986:110).

The international division of labour is the basis for international economic specialization, export-oriented growth and inequitable terms of trade. Portuguese and Spanish conquests of Latin America in the sixteenth century proved that certain commodities could be more cheaply produced abroad. Consequently, more distant

labour-surplus agrarian economies were developed and articulated to the market system at the industrial centre. Such developments led to the "forced migration of Africans" to the New World and exploitation of Asian societies by European trading companies through monopolistic trade practices (Elschans, 1991:23; Frieden and Lake, 1987:35; 38).

Other effects of the international division of labour include the emphasis on cash crop production or raw materials in the conquered agrarian economies. It also revolutionized indigenous agriculture in response to the expanding market economy and accordingly monetized the affected agrarian economies. For example, the indigenous peasant was primarily a producer of both agrarian and non-agrarian goods. However, market expansion and consequent industrialization of agriculture transformed the peasant into a mere agrarian commodity producer. As was the case in Ghana and other agrarian economies, the peasants largely concentrated on producing the major cash crop³⁸. Thus, simple peasant production gradually gave way to industrialized and capitalized forms of production and exchange relations (Friedland et al., 1991:143).

The concept of international division of labour presumes more efficient utilization of resources, more especially in producing a particular product. Based

³⁸ The concentration on monocrop cultivation in Ghana will be further discussed in Chapter III

on this argument, the society that is most efficient at producing a particular product must be left alone to produce it. Altogether then, each society specializes in one or a number of products. The presumption is that overall, there would be fair exchange as societies trade at the international market. Accompanying the "division of labour" concept is the development of technology relevant to the product in which the particular society specializes.

This presumption ostensibly, but probably not factually, informed the colonial powers to encourage raw material production in the colonies. Ghana grew efficient in cocoa production and was hooked on it.

However, it is common knowledge that between raw material producers and industrial manufactures, there is no fair exchange on the international market. Besides, Ghana and other peripheral economies still depend on the industrialized world for cocoa (and other primary goods) production technology: mattock, cutlass, and agricultural inputs, etc. Thus, instead of becoming self-sufficient in its specialized economic sector, Ghana (and the periphery) grows more dependent. This creates difficulties at home where farmers make inadequate income from cocoa. Moreover, national revenue from cocoa is not enough to pay for imported agricultural and other inputs. In the end, this international unequal exchange became a factor in the relations between peasant cocoa farmers and the state in the socio-economic and political context of the hold-up discussed later in Chapter four.

II.5 Comparative Advantage

The philosophy of the liberal international economics that has transformed the world market economy in the last century is the concept of comparative advantage. The law of comparative advantage asserts that the flow of trade between two countries is decided by the relative costs of goods produced in each country. As a result, places and regions with higher comparative advantage in the production of certain commodities were made to specialize in production of such commodities. Consequently, countries search for trade in places and regions with lower comparative costs³⁹.

However, as discussed in the preceding subsection, the structuralists have rejected the validity of the basic assumptions of the classical international trade paradigm. Led by Raul Prebisch (1949), (and others like Nurske (1953) Arthur Lewis (1954), Myrdal (1971), Emmanuel (1972), the structuralists contend that trade increases choice and mutual gain only if there is fair and perfect competition. They insist that, through price manipulation, the core maintains both monopolistic and monopsonistic control over the commodities exchanged between the core and the periphery (Gilpin, 1988:276). They also argue, contrary to the claims of

³⁹ **During the industrial revolution in Europe, agrarian commodities were needed for European factories. Mineral products were also required to facilitate exchange relations elsewhere. Inevitably, these search efforts resulted in conquests, colonization, agrarian change and above all, the establishment of export economies as experienced in Ghana and other contemporary ex-colonies. See R.D. Wolff, *The Economics of Colonialism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974).**

comparative advantage theory, that structural differences in the institutions of the participating economies create inequitable trade relations and imperfect market competition. Such situations permit distortions of trade and exploitation of economies of scale by the centre (Hunt, 1989:300).

The main point here, however, is that in terms of comparative advantage theory, each country is made to produce what it can produce most cheaply. But the fallacy is that it does not make for fair exchange because prices of primary goods are set according to the criteria of the importing countries and the world market. In which case, the producing countries of the raw material do not benefit from the exchange. With respect to cocoa production in Ghana, whatever advantage there is in its growth is undermined by the prices being set by consumers who control the international market in the product.

II.6.0 Class system

The term "class"⁴⁰ delimits the relationship between social aggregates. Its structural underpinning relates to social relations of production which divides members of a social group into two: "producers" and "appropriators". While one group produces, another group appropriates the benefits. The concept of class not

⁴⁰ "Class" as used in the thesis relates to social structure and the pattern of social relationships existing within a social group. The various theories about "class" and "class" formation are not discussed. However, the application of the concept of class to society or social group is briefly examined.

only segmentizes members of a social group, but also suggests a potential conflict situation. In such a situation, one segment of the social group may be antagonistically pitched against the other, creating a necessary condition for conflict (Roxborough, 1979:70-71).

II.6.1 Potential class conflict conditions

Potentially, class conflict situations generally result from socio-economic and political conditions. Such conditions are created through economic exploitation, distrust and problems of inequitable distribution and redistribution⁴¹:

- economic conditions creating economic well-being (economic growth and development) in one class segment (the core); and economic decline and hardship (underdevelopment) in another segment (the periphery)
- political conditions as exemplified in Marxist theorising of feudalistic relations of production in the country side and capitalist relations of production in the cities.

As Ghana produces cocoa, it leaves the importers of its cocoa (the industrialized) states as its appropriators. This institutes a "conflict" situation between the core and the periphery. In other words, the struggles over pricing of

⁴¹ For some of the various factors that create conflict conditions: see Gerrit Huizer, *Peasant Rebellion in Latin America* (Harmondsworth: Penguin 1978), pp. 1-20.

cocoa at the international market level constitutes a "conflict" condition. The domestic counterpart of this core-periphery phenomenon is the arbitrary pricing of cocoa and taxation by the buying firms and the state respectively. These forms of exploitation generally create conflict situations.

In the time frame covered by this thesis, such activities by the government and buying firms engendered the conflict that resulted in the 1937-38 cocoa hold-up. The main issue involved in the hold-up was low producer prices. Such a general peasant concern put all peasants into one class. It is in this context, that the hold-up may be described as a demonstration of economic and political power from a peasant class position.

As will be shown in chapters three and four, this conflict resulted in exposing the peasant cocoa farmers as a socio-economic and political force to be tapped. This force was used against the colonial state to effect changes beneficial to the peasant cocoa farmers. Similarly, it was exploited by the elites in the struggle for independence.

II.7 Power and Authority

In Ghana, the various stools⁴² are symbols of "unity and tradition" and, in

⁴² **The "stool" is a consecrated wooden chair or seat that is held as a symbol of unity enshrining the soul or spirit of the common ancestor. The occupants of the stool represent sovereign authority over all group-owned property. In that context,**

fact, the sovereignty of the people, and so are their occupants (Busia, 1968:39). The chiefs are also regarded as epitomes of knowledge, wisdom, moral aptitude, bravery and good judgement. The question of whether or not the chiefs actually have these qualities is besides the point. What matters is the understanding that due to these considerations, traditional chiefs derive their power and authority from the people or social groups they serve. In other words, traditionally, power and authority reside in the chiefs (Wallerstein, 1964:15; Busia, 1968:9).

In their capacities as chiefs, they serve not only as symbols of unity and tradition, but also as allodial owners of the groups' resources. As allodial owners, the chiefs wield enormous power and control over the people they serve, especially where the resources are in abundance as among the Asante. As such, power and authority correlates positively with the amount of resources available to a particular group. In other words, by association, political power and authority go hand in hand with economic power. For example, the Asantehene is the allodial owner of the abundant resources within his jurisdiction. As his territorial jurisdiction is rich in natural endowments, the Asantehene is rich and wields a lot of power and control over the resources and the people (Wallerstein, 1964:15 and 154).

the allodial ownership of the land is vested in the chief who holds the land in absolute trust for the use and enjoyment of the group (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:42). In certain parts of Northern Ghana, the *skin* serves the same purpose as the stool (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964: 29). In this study, the stool and the skin will be used interchangeably. See K. A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief* (London, 1968), Chapters I & III for further details.

II.8 Land-use relationships

Land is a "primary capital asset" that provides sustenance through use for subsistence farming or for cash crop production. In that context, land is of supreme value to social groups in most agrarian economies. In such economies, individual group members' survival and achievement depend on their use of land and enjoyment of the fruits of their labour. However, the nature of group members' relationship to the land on which they live greatly regulates their use of it and enjoyment of its benefits. Land-use does not only decide the nature of social relationship within the social group, it also generally applies as a measure of material wealth. To be landless in an agrarian economy means to be without the means of sustenance or livelihood. In such situations, people do anything to acquire a portion of land, even if it means pledging their children. In effect, life in such economies revolves around the land, which emphasizes the importance of land to the social groups in agrarian economies (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:3).

In Ghana, over the years, practice and tradition evolved rules and concepts that protect the individual's interests in land, its use and tenure. The purpose is to avoid social conflicts within the group. Customarily, such practices allow individual members the freedom to use the land and to enjoy the fruits of their labour without any incumbrance from others (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:3).

During the era of pre-capitalist production, different places had different

land-use arrangements. While the feudal type was the norm in most of Europe, the tributary system operated in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:223). In Ghana, although land was plentiful, there was no ownerless land. Within the several independent territorial states⁴³ that formed Ghana, land was collectively owned for the common use of members in each social group.

Theoretically, every land lot was owned by a stool or skin and the extent of ownership was coterminous with use or land area brought under occupation by stool subjects. In other words, boundaries under the jurisdiction of each stool were decided by the extent of land that was put to use by subjects of each stool. For example, if subjects could cultivate, say a hundred hectares, then that is what the stool or the group can legally claim as theirs⁴⁴. This way, the stool becomes the allodial owner of the group's land just as it was in William the Conqueror's England--but with basic differences in the relational concepts (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:13; 223).

Irrespective of how each social group acquired its portion, land is collectively

⁴³ See footnote numbers 12 & 15 above.

⁴⁴ The various modes of acquisition of stool or community land include conquest, settlement, purchase and gift. Although a clear understanding of these modes is essential to understanding the principles involved in land administration, such a discussion is beyond the scope of this study. See Bentsi-Enchill (1964); Kludze, (1973); and Ollennu (1962) for details. See also Philipa England, "Cocoa Farmers and Human Rights in the Western Region of Ghana". *Journal of African Law* V Autumn 1983, pp. 166-167.

owned⁴⁵. Each member of the group has an inherently derived right to farm any part of what is owned by the group or the stool (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:8). For this study, we will examine the various relational concepts that apply to land-use, and especially, cocoa production and land tenure among the Asante social group. The different forms of land-use, acquisition, tenure and transfer in Ghana will however not be explored in this study⁴⁶. The most relevant are the allodial interest and the usufruct. It is from these, especially the usufruct, that the various transactions in land derive. These transactions or dealings include the pledge and the various forms of sharecropping that facilitated the spread of cocoa production. They are explained below.

II.8.1 Relational concepts

Relational concepts, as used in this study, describe the relationship between what is owned by whom and to whom it is owned⁴⁷. Such relationship is significant

⁴⁵ Security and the settlement pattern of the households are some of the many reasons offered for the collective ownership of land in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa. While some settled in areas where they had to conquer previous settlers, others found unoccupied areas like the forest belt of Ghana. For needs of security and self-defence, land tends to be regarded as common property of the whole community occupying it (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:13-14).

⁴⁶ See Bentsi-Enchill (1964) and Ollennu (1962) for fuller discussions.

⁴⁷ The relational concepts are applied to practices of land-use regarding cocoa farming, although the concepts have a general application. Understanding these concepts enhances the appreciation of power relations, the position and role of migrant labour in cocoa production among the Asante social group. However, detailed discussion of the relational concepts is beyond the scope of this study. See Bentsi-Enchill 1964; and Ollennu, 1962 for fuller discussions.

only if it is considered in relation to other potential individual owners or users of the land within a social group. Those are the individuals who may be excluded or be under duty to refrain from interfering with the use and enjoyment of the "thing" owned. These relational phenomena generate rules and regulations that prescribe remedial sanctions against violators and reduces conflict. Thus, the relational concepts flow from the need to promote the maximum security of the members of the society by avoiding or minimising community-destroying conflict (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:8-10). We first examine the concept of allodial ownership.

II.8.2 Allodial ownership

Allodial⁴⁸ ownership is a derivational notion that establishes ownership relationship between property and the corporate group that owns it. In other words, the concept refers to ownership of property by a group of people such as family, clan, village community, and even a whole state. Individual members of the family, the clan, the social group or the corporation do not hold allodial rights or titles to the group-owned land or property. Title to the land owned by the group or corporation can only be transferred by the same. By implication, the family, the

⁴⁸ The term "allodial" from the noun "allodium", means holding land in absolute possession, free from obligations to an overlord". See *The New Lexicon Webster's Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Lexicon Publications, Inc., 1991 edition).

It must be noted that allodial rights are vested in the stool. Successive occupants of the stool are natural custodians of such rights and interests, although the national government can usurp some of these rights and interests for public good (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:29).

clan, or the corporate social group represents the unit of ownership. (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:41;49).

The notion of allodial ownership is a common phenomenon in Ghana⁴⁹. As "groups exist and persist in the individuals that made up the groups", allodial ownership is conditioned upon individual possessor's membership in the owning group. For example, group ownership of land is manifested by the occupation and possession of the specific land by members of such group. In which case any member's possession of or right to a portion of the group-owned land is derived from being a member of the owning group. In practice, allodial ownership or stool authority is usually confined to vacant or unoccupied areas of the group-owned land. By courtesy, the stool occupier is commonly referred to as the owner of the land (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:10; 225; Ollennu, 1962: 42).

For example, if a member of a group possesses a portion of the group-owned land, such a possession may be considered a form of ownership. However, non-members of the particular group will be excluded from that type of possession or ownership, although they may be granted limited user-rights. The implication in

⁴⁹ The closest comparison to the concept and practice in Ghana is the King's declaration of crown lands in England, which is known as *fee simple* in English law. By that declaration, the King practically became the owner of all the lands, which was later divided among the barons, dukes, etc., in that hierarchical descending order. The difference, however, is that in Ghana, no such declarations existed and the people have free usufructuary access to the land by virtue of their group membership (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:228-229).

customary practice is that the notion of ownership of or interest⁵⁰ in land or property can be subdivided. In practice, therefore, lesser interests in land (less than the whole) are held simultaneously by different people at any given time. Such limited interests in land are considered "owned" by the individual and may be passed on to another person by way of inheritance. In other words, such interests are inheritable, although they are not alienable by sale (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:11-12).

II.8.3 Usufructuary interests

Usufructuary⁵¹ interest refers to the common-user interests or rights granted to any individual member of a particular social group. The concept of a usufruct denotes individual member's interest in land owned by a group of which such individual is a member. Individual ownership exists in the group-owned land in the form of usufructuary rights whereby each person is entitled to cultivate any unoccupied portion of it. Individual members of the group have absolute right to the crops they cultivate. However, they could not alienate any portion of the land through sale. Such user-interests or -rights are transferable from person to person as from father to son or from mother to daughter, once they are created and

⁵⁰ The word "interest" is used here to refer to a portion of land that a person claims to own, as distinguished from allodial ownership. Interest in or ownership of the said portion of land must be socially acknowledged and recognized within the community or social group (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:11-12).

⁵¹ "Usufruct" is the right to use and enjoy the profits of another person's property without diminishing, impairing or wasting the substance of it. See *The New Lexicon of Webster's Dictionary of the English Language* (New York: Lexicon Publications, Inc., 1991 edition).

from mother to daughter, once they are created and maintained (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:87).

Suffice it to say that during the era of pre-capitalist production, individual absolute ownership was non-existent. But the individual was allowed to use the land for food production. However, such an individual could not alienate any portion of the land. Besides, land was plentiful and there was no need to buy nor sell. However, with the introduction of cocoa production and the increased demand for virgin land, absolute ownership of land through alienation by sale emerged. We shall discuss the need for absolute ownership of land in Chapter III. For now, we look at the notion of the pledge.

II.8.4 Pledge

In matters of land-use, a "pledge"⁵² is one form of alienating land or interest in land, although any pledged property is not alienable by sale (Ollennu, 1962:95). What is essential in pledge transactions is the use of the pledged property for the benefit of the mesne profit by the pledgee. That is, the essence is not for collateral purposes. By implication, a pledged land must be used by the pledgee and the

⁵² Human beings were sometimes pledged for money to meet pressing needs. In this case, the pledgee remained in the service of the pledgor until redeemed. Pledging human beings takes the form of indentured labour and the pledged person is redeemable as is the case in other pledged property. The practice was common before the abolition of slavery (Ollennu, 1962:92-94).

profits be enjoyed by the same without any interference from the pledger. Ollennu defines "pledge" in customary law as

the delivery, possession and custody of property, real or personal, by a person to his creditor to hold and use until the debt due is paid, an article borrowed is returned or replaced, or obligation is discharged (Ollennu, 1962:94).

In practice, small-scale farmers in financial distress often pledge their farms to others for a financial help, with the result that these small-scale farmers become landless as their rights of possession and ownership are transferred and exchanged. Any pledged land or property is placed in possession, occupation and control of the pledgee until such time that it is redeemed by the pledger. Redemption of pledged property is by repayment of the debt owed to the pledgee. Although a pledged land is redeemable at any time, small-scale farmers often find it hard to meet their financial obligations to redeem. Thus, pledging is an effective element of the peasantization process.

As already explained, the allodial interest goes with the stool. The stool, theoretically owns all the land occupied by its subjects. Its ownership is not expressed in property terms, but in terms of jurisdiction to defend it. That is, for the purposes of defending it in law, and by other actions such as physical defence on behalf of the community to maintain it from encroachment by rival stools and their subjects. The allodial interest is the notional concept that sees the ultimate title and interest in the land as belonging to the stool.

In contrast, the usufruct is the more direct land interest, germane to crop cultivation. It is an interest that the whole family or its individual members have to occupy and cultivate any portion of family land. Implicit in this family user-rights is the freedom to enjoy the fruits of their labour without any interference from anybody. The individuals in this case do not own the portion they cultivate; it belongs to the family to which they belong.

But their farms could be passed down through inheritance. In this sense, when cocoa production was introduced, the nature of the crop as a perennial created a new dimension to land-use. This is because cocoa growing means that the land is grounded in the cultivar's possession for a long time. The commercial value of the cocoa crop meant that usufructuary interests could be easily monetized. This issue will be further discussed in Chapter III. For now, however, two important traditional land transactions associated with usufruct must be discussed. These transactions, *abusa* and *abunu*, are important in the lease of land to non-community members for cocoa cultivation in the forest areas of Asante.

II.8.5.0 Sharecropping

Sharecropping systems confer upon, especially non-members of a social group the "right to occupy and to use land for a special purpose for an indefinite period of time". Such arrangements usually remain valid for as long as the tenant "continues to observe and perform the terms and conditions" upon which grant of

possession was made (Ollennu, 1962:79). In a way, sharecropping arrangements in Ghana are similar to feudal relations elsewhere in the sense that landowners receive rent for the use of their land⁵³. In such arrangements, landowners allow the use of their land for agricultural purposes for a specific season and share the harvest with the peasant. The sharing of the harvested crops is a form of rent, but in this case, payment is in kind (Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:393).

Sharecropping arrangements among the Asante allow foreigners to benefit from grants of land for cultivating cocoa. There are two main types of sharecropping tenancy granted for agricultural purposes among the Asante. They are *abusa* and *abunu*. In both tenancies, the tenants have the right only to use and enjoy the proceeds of their labour. They do not own any portion of the land itself. Neither can they sell the farm, nor the land on which it stands. Most migrant cocoa farmers benefit from these sharecropping arrangements. The position in both cases can be likened to that of a licensee⁵⁴ (Ollennu, 1962:80-82).

II.8.5.1 *Abusa*

***Abusa* tenancy is a practice**

⁵³ "Feudalism" did not evolve with agricultural practices in Ghana or elsewhere in Africa. Although the capitalist mode of production produced patterns similar to it, it has traditionally not been part of the African mode of cultivation.

⁵⁴ "Licensee" is a person given the right to occupy and enjoy land for a specific period or for an indefinite duration of time (Ollennu, 1962:4).

whereby an owner of uncultivated land grants it to another person (usually a stranger)⁵⁵ to cultivate, and to share the produce of that farm with the owner in the ratio 1:2 (Ollennu, 1962:81).

In other words, the landowner is entitled to one-third of all produce harvested of the given land as a form of payment for the use of his or her land. The implication in the *abusa* arrangement is that the stranger cultivates the virgin land and maintains the farm through his own labour and at his own expense (Ollennu, 1962:81; Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:393).

Abusa tenancy is a popular practice in the cocoa growing areas where large numbers of stranger farmers seek land to farm cash crops. For one thing, *abusa* tenancy provides security to both the stranger-tenant and the landowner. While the tenant gets free fertile land to cultivate permanent crops like cocoa and coffee, the landowner also enjoys the benefits of its cultivation. The landowner not only enjoys the one-third share of the total harvest, but also retains the ownership of the land. Without putting the land under cultivation, the landlord risks losing it to other subjects who may see it as an abandoned free land to occupy (Ollennu, 1962:85).

The tenancy can either be permanent or seasonal and is not generally granted by a stool, but by a sub-stool. Although the cultivated land may be inherited, it is

⁵⁵ "Stranger" or "foreigner" in this study refers to a non-member of a particular social group.

the incident of *abusa* that the land is not alienable⁵⁶. Like in feudal relations, *abusa* tenants may build and live on their clearly designated farms (Ollennu, 1962:84).

II.8.5.2 *Abunu*

Abunu tenancy is a practice whereby a person hands over an already cultivated land to another person, "whether a stranger or not, to plant and maintain it, and to share the proceeds into moieties" (Ollennu, 1962:81). In some cases, landowners may provide financial assistance to the tenant in making the farm, especially in cases of elderly landowners. In this case the harvest is shared in four parts. The landowner takes one-quarter of the total harvest. *Abunu* tenancy is not as common as *abusa* (Ollennu, 1962:85).

In terms of cocoa production, *abusa* and *abunu* transactions provide opportunities for employing migrant labour to cultivate cocoa. Usually, families with large land holdings, or individuals in usufructuary possession of large plots of land from their families or through inheritance use these transactions. The *abusa* and *abunu* arrangements gave the migrant peasants some equitable monetary interest in the lands and entrenched their interest in the cocoa economy. At the same time, their subordinate land right created them into a lower class of cocoa farmers in comparison to the class of farmers from whom they rented land.

⁵⁶ See Ollennu (1962:86 & Chp. 6) for conditions for inheritance.

It should also be pointed out that the pledge transactions gave a rich individual access to cocoa farms of whatever size. For one thing, a peasant cocoa farmer's class status in the cocoa economy is determined by the size of the individual's cocoa farm. A large farm also requires a large household as a source of labour. In the household women and children provide the reproductive labour, although this labour is not recognized in monetary terms. We look at reproductive labour next.

II.8.6 Reproductive labour

One important element in cocoa cultivation is reproductive labour. "Reproductive labour" simply refers to "domestic work" or work involving the maintenance of the household. Reproductive labour generally includes selection and preparation of seeds for cultivation, small scale production and general domestic work directed at maintaining the household. It also involves food storage and food processing after harvest. Extending it a little further, reproductive labour is also concerned with reproduction of household members. In practice, therefore, reproductive labour is an extension to productive labour since "both food storage and food processing are simultaneously part of crop production" (Bernstein et al., 1992:97).

However, in exchange relations, reproductive labour is not monetized since only activities directed to market exchange are recognized and monetized as

productive labour. Nonetheless, reproductive labour, like productive labour, does in fact have cumulative effect on economic growth. Both contribute to the sum total of the nation's domestic growth and wealth as well. It is noteworthy that in pre-capitalist production relations, all three forms of labour are simultaneously employed on household unit production basis. Even though women and children are mostly involved in reproductive labour, that labour was judged as valuable to the household's production process. In other words, based on household unit production practices, reproductive labour merited equal labour-value as productive labour (Creham, 1992:102-103; in Bernstein et al. (1992); Hunt, 1989:183).

One basic characteristic of pre-capitalist peasant mode of production is its classic pattern of elementary division of labour that has no organized superstructure nor class division. Although peasant mode of production is fragmented and seemed uncoordinated, each unit of the production process is considered critical to the total output. Each member of the household contributes to and shares in the benefits without any interdependent structure bringing their activities into "reciprocal relations with each other" (Hyden, 1983:6).

In Ghana, cash crop production was, and still is, a household venture, which includes men, women and children. For example, women and children participate in preparing the cocoa beans for export, which counts as part of the productive labour (Bernstein et al., 1992:176). That is not to say that women only complement

men's activities. There are women cocoa farmers who owned large cocoa farms just like the men. In fact, in the household, women provide about 80% of the household's staple food requirements⁵⁷.

II.9.0 Peasants and Peasantization

II.9.1 Peasants

Historically, peasants are found in feudal and feudal-like political arrangements. Feudalism is a system of subordination and service in which the less powerful commend themselves to the more powerful for protection and survival. In a feudal system, the relationship is primarily between "lord and vassal". Although feudalism existed in various forms in other places other than Western Europe, its structure, practice and effects are comparable in all its types⁵⁸. Such systems usually have peasant classes at the bottom of the hierarchical power structure.

⁵⁷ The men were only responsible for providing "meat". With the advent of wage-labour, the men could not provide the meat through hunting. They do so by making available money for buying the meat. The idea and the practice translated into what is now widely talked about as "chop money" where the man, a wage-labourer, has to provide for the household by doling out "chop money": personal interview with Dr. Francis Boabang, May 31, 1995.

⁵⁸ The word "feudalism" has different meanings depending on the context. In this context, feudalism refers to a graded system of rights resulting in the creation of the dependency of one social group on another. Political authority in a feudal system was hierarchically segmented and personal rather than institutional. As such, political authority was never focused in a single centre (Anderson, 1974; Coulborn, 1965; Ganshof translated by Grierson, 1952).

Before the industrial revolution, feudal systems and similar arrangements were common features of life throughout Europe. Agriculture was the main economic activity and the most important source of wealth. In the feudal system, however, agrarian property was owned and controlled by the bourgeoisie or feudal lords⁵⁹. They owned large acres of land by buying out the smaller holdings of the poorer peasants. As a result, the peasants owned nothing and lived only by the fruits of their labour. Being rendered landless and with no viable alternative sources of livelihood, the peasants had to turn to the feudal lords for work and protection.

In return, these landless peasants provided labour in tilling the farm-lands they had lost to the bourgeoisie. Peasants were granted "rights" over portions of the land belonging to the feudal lords. The feudal lords had the authority to extract the surplus from the peasants who tilled the land in the name of labour services, or pay rents in kind or customary dues. By doing so, their existence was literally controlled by the wealthier landowners (Anderson, 1974: 147; Coulborn, 1965:6-7; Ganshof, 1952:3-6,15).

Practically, the pattern of their living arrangements with the feudal lords was a slave-and-master relationship. The peasant was subject to the jurisdiction of the feudal lord. Incidents of control manifested in the arbitrary determination of

⁵⁹ The terms "feudal lords" and "bourgeoisie" are used interchangeably to refer to the wealthy farmers. These terms are, however, avoided in this study as they do not strictly apply to the Ghanaian peasant situation.

wages, number of children a peasant should have if married, and in peasants' availability for military service. They could not have their own dwellings nor leave the employ of the landowner because of the practice enforced by the *act of commendation*⁶⁰ (Coulborn, 1965).

Peasants were usually prevented from making individual contacts and connections with anyone except with their feudal lords. The reasons were two fold. First, there was the fear that interaction with others may result in loss of feudal control and challenge to the lord's monopoly. Second, any new associations may occasion new alliances, which may lead to new social exchanges of dependencies and interdependencies. As a result, the feudal lords preferred dyadic relationships based on a social structure of atomized household units. This is to ensure absolute peasant dependency on the lords (Migdal, 1974:44-45).

Being landless and poor, peasants belong to the low income group and work long hours on the farm. Generally, peasants are powerless rural people, underclass, and a deprived social group exploited through taxation. They are usually associated with working the land and production of crops of all kinds. Although limited in every way through the act of commendation, the peasants also desire "improvement" in their life's conditions. However, this was never an easy

⁶⁰ The *act of commendation* was the legal agreement of mutual consent between the peasant and the feudal lord to work together for their mutual benefits: see Coulborn, (1965).

task for the peasants (DeGregori, 1969:51).

It should be noted, as discussed in the next chapter(s), that the form of peasantry engendered by commercial cocoa production in Ghana was different. For one thing, it was not as severely hierarchical and economically and socially depriving as the incidents of classical peasant life. For, most small-scale peasant cocoa farmers had, at least, unencumbered usufructuary rights over the lands they cultivated. In practice, that meant virtual ownership of the family's overall legal title.

For the small-scale Ghanaian cocoa farmer, however, his or her position, vis-a-vis the large-scale cocoa farmers and the state's monopoly to determine cocoa prices, mean that there are incidents that assimilate his or her position to that of a peasant. Of course, the small-scale cocoa peasant's circumstances here are not as bad as that of a classical peasant.

It is in this context that the next chapter looks at the introduction of cocoa in Asante, its acceptance and enthusiastic cultivation.

*** * * * ***

Chapter Three

III.0 The Colonial Era and Transition

**"New occasions teach new duties
Time makes ancient good uncouth"**

III.1 Introduction

Ghana's colonial and economic history may be broadly categorised into two main periods: informal and formal. The period between 1471 and 1900 marked the informal phase; that is, from the first European contact to the introduction of British rule. Although it was not until 1901 that the British proclaimed the whole country a British protectorate, the formal phase began effectively in 1874⁶¹ and ended in 1957. Talking about Ghana's colonial and economic history is, therefore, putting into perspective the socio-economic activities that took place there between 1874 and independence in 1957⁶². This period is central to this study.

The informal period may aptly be described as the trade era. During this

⁶¹ **The cocoa belt of the country was proclaimed a British protectorate in 1874 after the defeat of the Asante during the "Sagrenti" War. "Sagrenti" is a corruption of Sir Garnet Wolsley, the Commander of the British Army during the 1873-74 British expedition. See Hargreaves, (1963:165-73).**

⁶² **See Chapter One, footnote no. 8, for some of the leading studies on Ghana's colonial history.**

period the main objective was trade in gold, ivory and "labour"⁶³. With the introduction of British rule in 1874, a centralized administration was established to bring together all the different units of the British "possession". As this era is outside the scope of this study, suffice it to say that a number of excellent studies have been done on it⁶⁴.

In several ways, the characteristics of both periods overlap. One of the overlapping features is trade. Although demand for specific commodities has changed over time, trade has been a dominant factor in relations between Ghana, Europe and later, the United States. For this thesis, our main focus is on trade relations and the mechanisms of Ghana's articulation to the global economy⁶⁵. As

⁶³ The slave trade was in effect a trade in labour. The people were sold and bought for their services. At the time of the trade, there were indentured labourers brought from Europe to the New World to work and pay their debts.

⁶⁴ Relevant studies include John Vogt, *Portuguese Rule on the Gold Coast 1469-1682* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1979); W. Thomas, *Adventures and Observations on the West Coast of Africa* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1860); Ajayi, J. F. A. and J. D. Y. Peel. ed. *People and Empires in African History: Essays in Memory of Michael Crowder*. London: Longman Group UK Ltd., 1992; Daaku, K. Y. *Trade and Politics on the Gold Coast 1600-1720: A Study of the African Reaction to European Trade*. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.

⁶⁵ See some of the best works on the transformation of Ghana's agrarian economy, Christer Gunnarsson, *The Gold Coast Cocoa Industry 1900-1939, Production, Prices and Structural change* (Lund, 1978); R. Szereszewski, *Structural Changes in the Economy of Ghana 1891-1911* (London: Weindenfeld and Nicholson, 1965); Polly Hill, *The Migrant Cocoa-farmers of Southern Ghana* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1963); D. H. Urquhart *Cocoa* (London: Longman, 1953); Allan McPhee, *The Economic Revolution in British West Africa* (London: George Routledge, 1926); J. Gallagher and Robinson, "The Imperialism of free trade," *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 6(1953), pp.1-15.

such, this chapter focuses on cocoa production, the events that led to the 1937-38 cocoa hold-up and their socio-political implications within Asante.

In this chapter, the nature of the transition from a pre-capitalist to a capitalist mode of production is discussed. The chapter also establishes the basis for the transformation of peasant agriculture and traditional institutional structures. Specifically, the nature of the transformation and the empowerment process of Asante peasant cocoa farmers is examined. Of all the cash crops introduced into Ghana during the colonial period, cocoa was the most preferred and the most rapidly adopted crop. The factors that promoted that development are also explored.

III.2 Cocoa: Ghana's Mixed Blessings

The history of cocoa production in Ghana was an eventful one⁶⁶. On the one hand, it empowered the peasantry and made the peasants a force to be reckoned with in the national political economy. On the other hand, it altered household production relations and introduced new social values. The social protests and

⁶⁶ The following works provide excellent expositions of Ghana's cocoa industry: Beckett, *Akokoaso: A survey of a Gold Coast Village*, London: 1943; Bourett, *The Gold Coast* (1949:70-73, Chapter VIII; The Parliamentary Report of 1938, MacMillan, *Europe and West Africa*, pp.80-92; Report on Cocoa, Cmd. 5845, 1938; R. Polly Hill, *The Migrant Cocoa-farmers from Southern Ghana*, 1963; K. B. Dickson, "Origin of Ghana's Cocoa Industry" *Ghana Notes and Queries* 5(1963) pp.4-9; Howard, *Colonialism and Underdevelopment*, 1978: 206-218; G. Mikell, *Cocoa and Chaos in Ghana*, (1989).

agitations of the 1920s and 1930s took the form of cocoa hold-ups. The hold-ups marked the beginning of the use of peasant power, the focus of our study. Whether the protests were called for or not is outside the scope of this study. Also, the nature of the protests will not be discussed. What is central to this study is the effects of the events on the social, political and economic well-being of Asante peasant cocoa farmers.

Until cocoa was introduced, farming was never a monopolistic enterprise in Ghana. It was not necessary for any political authority to reorganize farming. Similarly, no political power regulated the peasantry in any significant way. Farming systems were generally organized in response to the nature of the ecological regions⁶⁷ in which the people settled. In general, the systems were directed towards forms of distribution within and between households. This way, households coped with the risks and vulnerabilities inherent in the environment (Bernstein, 1992:100). As land was abundant and collectively owned, people could cultivate as much as they could⁶⁸. There were no regulations on types of crops to produce, where to farm,

⁶⁷ For example, littoral dwellers naturally took to fishing and subsistence farming, while settlements in the forest zone concentrated mainly on food crop production. The different ecological zones exchanged their products to supplement their food requirements. Salt fish from the coast was exchanged for yam or maize from the forest zone. Traditionally, these were exchanged through the barter system until various forms of money were introduced.

⁶⁸ See Chapter II for discussion on land acquisition, use and tenure.

size of the farm, care for the farm, type of labour and farming methods to employ⁶⁹. In traditional societies, rights⁷⁰ to land is right to subsistence. Access to farmland and farming was, therefore, easy; and so was the exit (An-Na'im, 1991:170).

III.3.0 The Notion of Private Property in Land

Property relations in land is a relatively recent phenomenon in the economic history of Ghana and Africa in general. Conversion of land into absolute private property was comparatively low in most parts of Africa before the colonial rule. However, exceptions are found in Kenya, Zimbabwe and South Africa⁷¹. What set aside Ghana's case is the fact that production of cash crops, especially cocoa, was independently organized by the local farmers. That is why in Ghana, cocoa is mainly a peasant export. The pattern of production did not follow the feudalistic

⁶⁹ In a way, there was some implicit form of control and regulation in the use of clan or stool land. There were rules and customs regarding days of rest and payment of agricultural rent applicable to sharecropping, e.g. "abusa" and "abunu" discussed in Chap II.

⁷⁰ "Rights" is used here to mean a "bundle of rights" implying the right of using the land with some restrictions. For example, though the land is collectively owned, the person who starts using it first has the sole right to that specific piece. No other individual has the right to the same piece until the first person has left it. As such, what the user's rights entail is a notion of possession and not outright ownership.

It is noteworthy that collective ownership does not preclude individual ownership. Although individual ownership exists among the various ethnic groups, it is the notion of possession that prevails in all cases (Hallowell, 174:241).

⁷¹ See R. D. Wolff, *Economics of Colonialism*, (1974), Introduction, discussing organization of production by the settlers.

mode of agricultural production found in other parts of the world such as Latin America or India. Expropriation and incorporation of land in a system of private property rights by the colonialists was extensive in Latin America and India respectively. (Kay, 172:268).

Before the introduction of cash cropping in Ghana, land-use included food crop cultivation, fishing, hunting and gathering, reservation of land as groves for traditional, cultural and religious functions. As noted in Chapter II, land is the most important asset of all the social groups in Ghana. Membership of a social group confers an inalienable user-right on individual members and free access to the land under the group's jurisdiction. In spite of the collective ownership of the land, there was also a notion of private ownership inherent in the usufructuary interest⁷². For, where there was no sharecropping arrangement such as *abusa* and *abunu*, harvests from the farm *belonged solely* to the peasant farmers who cultivated the crops. However, proceeds from the farm would often be shared with the immediate family units or households, but not necessarily with the community at large. That is not to say that there was no sharing with other members of the extended family who may be in need. Thus, among the Asante social group, agricultural land is collectively owned, but whoever grows the crop owns the harvest (An-Na'im, 1992:173; Bentsi-Enchill, 1964:8).

⁷² For discussion of this and other traditional interests in land, see Chapter II.

It is difficult to determine when alienation of land by sale began in earnest. Some argue that it evolved by way of exchange or transfers⁷³, while others feel strongly that it started with the commercialization of agriculture. Obviously, the demand for farmland was not acute until the commercial success of cocoa production as an alternative cash crop was established. What is relevant in this study is that cocoa production created the need to own both the crop and the land on which it was cultivated. It not only established a capitalist mode of production, and made cocoa farm-land very expensive, it also made its production a monopoly of the rich. Thus, cocoa production introduced monopoly into Ghanaian agricultural practice. In this way, it set the stage for the development of social classes: only the wealthy can afford it! (Mikell, 1989:71).

The bulk of the cashcropping took place in the forest zone, also home to rubber and palm products. Most of the peasant cocoa farmers were also previously involved in the production of other cash crops. They were, therefore, aware of the profitability of the industry. Again, most of them used savings from the cashcropping to provide the necessary capital for entry into the more lucrative cocoa production (Hill, 1963:164-65).

The primary means of cocoa production are land and labour. As noted in Chapter 1, cocoa is an arboricultural produce that lasts for over forty years. Thus,

⁷³ See Hill, 1963 Chap. V, for a fuller discussion.

cocoa ties up the land virtually permanently. In that way, the land is kept away from other subsistence uses. Similarly, cocoa takes so much labour and care to produce that it emphasizes the need for private ownership of the property on which it is cultivated. Besides, the intensity of labour required makes it imperative to ensure continuity through inheritance and succession by one's heirs. In other words, the nature of cocoa production situates it in the capitalist framework of absolute ownership of private property. As Howard observed, the notion of private property⁷⁴ is a prerequisite for the development of capitalism in any economy (Howard, 1978:37).

III.3.1 Land-use and acquisition

Following the successful adoption of cocoa in Akuapem Mampong, the demand for cocoa farm land increased. The limited farm land in the Akuapem area could not meet the high demand. As a result, peasant cocoa farmers from the neighbouring south and north moved farther inland in search of virgin forest land on which to cultivate cocoa⁷⁵. As land was plentiful, portions of unappropriated or unoccupied stool or family land were granted to the strangers on various terms (Ollennu, 1962:89). At the initial stage, most migrants took advantage of the

⁷⁴ Note earlier discussion in Chapter II of British attempt to establish private property by way of plantation economy to control the production of cocoa. The Land Bill of 1897 and the Forest Bill of 1911 exemplify this attempt: see Howard (1978:37-55).

⁷⁵ The initial migration was started by Akuapem peasant cocoa farmers seeking larger virgin forest areas in Asante and other cocoa-growing areas (Mikell, 1989:71).

existing sharecropping arrangements of *abusa* and *abunu* (Mikell, 1969:71). As more people moved to these new areas, it put pressure on cocoa farmland and other resources with its attendant conflicts. Sharecropping arrangements were marked by outright cheating, violation of the terms of the original contracts and demands of high tributes (Mikell 1969:73-74). These problems, added to the intensity of labour required in producing cocoa, forced most peasants to demand absolute ownership of the land lots they cultivated. Largely, this is how the evolution of alienation of land by sale was precipitated by cocoa crop cultivation. As noted earlier, the land was very expensive, only the rich could afford it. Those who did not have the money but were desperately desirous to own cocoa farms pledged their children⁷⁶ to raise money for the purchase (Iliffe, 1983:24; Mikell, 1989:71).

In any case, Ghana's peasant export-crop and land-use arrangements contrast sharply with other feudalistic practices in other capitalist production relations. In such arrangements, export crops are organized on plantation basis and peasants worked on those plantations as wage-labourers. In those cases, they did not own the means of production, but worked for overlords either for pay or to pay ground rent. Examples of these arrangements could be found in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, the Caribbean and Latin America. As Rey points out, capitalism thrives well in

⁷⁶ Pledging of human beings was no longer popular after the abolition of slave trade and was replaced by wage-labour. Landless peasant cocoa farmers became wage-labourers or took advantage of sharecropping arrangements such as *abusa* and *abunu*.

feudalistic systems⁷⁷. To a large extent, this explains one of the factors that inhibits the entrenchment of capitalism among the Asante.

III.4 Labour

Another advantage the Asante area had was its readily available well-organized household labour⁷⁸. Owing to the small-size of peasant holdings, household labour was very effective in cocoa cultivation. Thus, there was no immediate need for hired labour. Women and children provided the necessary reproductive labour, while men did the heavier tasks of clearing the forest patches on the farms. Nevertheless, every member of the family/household benefited from the venture. There was no decision as to who contributed what and how much labour-value it yielded.

With time, as demand for cocoa beans outstripped supply, the peasant farmers responded by expanding their farm holdings. They discovered in the process that household labour could no longer cope with the increasing demands of production. For the first time, labour was in short supply and there was a real need for outside help (Kay, 1972:254; Hill, 1963:). Migrant labour from both south and

⁷⁷ See Pierre-Philip Rey, *Colonialisme, neo-colonialisme et transition au capitalisme: exemple de la Camlog' au Congo-Brazzaville* (Paris: Maspero, 1971) p. 365.

⁷⁸ For further discussion on the efficient organization of household labour in Ghana, see Myint (1969:40)

north provided the badly-needed shortfall. Most of the voluntary migration of labourers came from neighbouring disadvantaged ecological zones and beyond (Wallerstein 1964:17; Hunt, 1989:298).

It must also be pointed out that the migrant labourers were driven by the need to pay the various colonial taxes and levies. These people, especially from the northern region flocked into the forest zone to sell their labour on the cocoa farms to meet their financial obligations. This form of labour movement created labour shortage in other parts of the country as well. In a way, this form of labour absorption could serve as an index of the prosperity of the cocoa industry⁷⁹. Furthermore, it also demonstrated how the different ethnic groups and agricultural zones were wittingly or unwittingly incorporated into the world economy (Mikell, 1969:73-75). Thus, driven by different needs, the whole country responded positively to external stimuli to specialize in producing a single crop: cocoa.

III.5 Capital

Cocoa production requires no heavy capital investment. At best, it requires mattock and cutlass and a circulating capital or subsistence fund. Immediate cash rewards realized from the sale of cocoa were reinvested in the farm or in trucks for

⁷⁹ Owing to the economic success of the cocoa industry, some of the traditional chiefs and educated elites became cocoa farmers. Most of these late entrants were absentee cocoa farmers as they did not do the cultivation themselves (Mikell, 1989:72)

transporting the farm produce. In other words, cocoa production was self-financing. The proximity of the cocoa trees also rules out mechanization, especially tractorization. Sometimes, peasant cocoa farmers would invest cocoa profits in private immovable property such as buildings within towns (Mikell, 1969:92-93). As regards capital formation and industrial development, cocoa production did not provide the opportunity for these, as the processing of cocoa was, and still is, done outside Ghana. Even the little capital requirements of the cocoa industry are externally generated. For example, the jute bags used in Ghana for hauling the cocoa beans are produced in India, which demonstrates a classic example of international division of labour.

Although the peasants also enjoyed some monetary returns, the real immediate economic benefits of cocoa went to the European buying firms on the coast. The colonial authorities also benefited through taxes and levies on cocoa sales. Meanwhile, the country's resources were tied up in the cultivation process.

III.6 The Transition: Laying the Basis

Although cocoa production accelerated the transformation process, it was not the only factor in the changes that took place within the Asante social group. The military and political upheavals of 1874, 1896 and 1900 should be recognized and explained as chief causal factors.

With the Asante defeat in 1873-74⁸⁰ and the subsequent exiling of Asantehene Prempeh I, the traditional Asante state was superseded by the colonial administration. The Asante defeat also marked the beginning of the collapse of the traditional sources of political authority and social status among the Asante social group. Money and wealth became the new sources of authority; hence, the new slogan: "money made the chief" (Mikell, 1989:63-64; 69).

By the 1900s, a new social order of a mixed group had already started to emerge. "Economic success and wealth" became accepted as status symbols creating a new mode of social mobility and an emerging social segment. The emerging class was a "mixed" group composed of both the former and present rich peasant cocoa farmers and educated elites, professionals and petty traders. There was a new emphasis in the economy in the rural areas based on land and its resources. The rich and the wealthy were given public recognition and held in high esteem both in their communities and by the colonial administration. During this time, the traditional sources of legitimacy of chiefs were replaced by rational sources of legitimacy: wealth, western education and modern political office. Some of the prosperous peasant cocoa farmers sought and obtained chieftaincy positions. Similarly, the general public demanded a voice in running the affairs of the social group. In all, the people had now possessed a certain degree of social power

⁸⁰ The expedition of Sir Garnet Wolsely in 1874 utterly destroyed Asante military power and its political hold on its tributary states.

hitherto unknown (Mikell, 1969:239-40).

The last straw was the monetization of the local agrarian economy as a result of the commercialization of agriculture. The profitability of commercial agriculture induced most peasants to devote all their resources to single crop-production to the exclusion of food crops. For example, although cocoa is intercropped with food crops prior to the maturation of the cocoa trees, the practice stops after the trees begin to yield⁸¹. The farmers have to purchase food with the money made from the sale of cocoa (Mikell, 1989:95).

Not only did all these factors initiate radical changes in Asante, but they also broke the hold of traditional office holders over Asante politics and economy. The results of these changes were greater "ethnic and social flexibility", greater freedom and economic mobility among ordinary Asante people. In their newly found social and economic power, the peasants found courage to resist such obligations as tribute payment, which was regarded as a form of economic subordination (Mikell, 1989:63-64; 69; 95).

It must be noted that every Asante was, and still is, a subject of some stool and, therefore, owes allegiance to a higher authority. Needless to say, the peasant

⁸¹ **Cocoa quickly depletes the fertility of the soil. As a result, food crops could only be cultivated on cocoa farm land prior to the maturation of the cocoa trees (Mikell, 1969:72).**

cocoa farmers owed the stool labour, tribute and military service. But with the social transformations noted, the relevancy and legitimacy of every action was questioned. In some cases, people would rather pay money than perform their traditional duties (Mikell, 1989:64; 69). Such were the times cocoa production was engendered and in which it thrived almost to the exclusion of other cash crops.

III.7 The Advent of Cocoa Production

By the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, cocoa became the major commodity that incorporated Ghana into the global capitalist economy⁴². Cocoa was first introduced into Ghana in 1879 by Tetteh Quarshie⁴³ in Akuapem

⁴² Gold and slaves were the first commodities that integrated Ghana (Gold Coast) into the triadic trade relationship involving Europe, Africa and the Americas. The triadic relationship greatly validated the profitability of the international division of labour and global trade. Cocoa, since its introduction into Ghana in 1879, has become "a major source of wealth" and change in Ghana (Mikell, 1989:xi, 2)

⁴³ Cocoa was originally a product of South America. The unofficial introduction of cocoa into Ghana in 1879 has been credited to Tetteh Quarshie. He was believed to have smuggled the seeds into Ghana from Fernando Po, a former Portuguese colony where he was a migrant labourer. He first planted them in Mampong, Akuapem. The pioneer growing areas include Shai and Krobo all in the Eastern Region of Ghana. Later, cocoa seeds from Sao Thome were officially distributed in Ghana (Gold Coast) in 1887 during the governorship of Sir William Branford Griffith, (1886-1895). In a way, such an open support only perpetuated the centre-periphery relationship as the peasants were merely encouraged to produce for and to sell to the centre. Ghana has been an exporter of cocoa since 1891 and became the world's largest producer of cocoa between 1911 and the early 1970s when it lost its leadership position to Cote d'Ivoire (Pugh and Perry, 1960:145; Hill, 1963:170-173; Mikell, 1989:70; Buchanan and Pugh, 1966:149).

The introduction of cocoa into Nigeria was similarly credited to Chief Squish Bamego in 1874. It later spread to Western Nigeria by 1882: see Wallerstein, 1964:12; and also Buchanan and Pugh, 1958:149-150; Olayemi, 1970:2; CIDA Country Report on Ghana, May 1990.

Mampong in the Eastern Region of contemporary Ghana (see fig. 7). Later, the production of cocoa spread to Asante and to the rest of the forest zone, also called the cocoa belt. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the forest region provides the best soil and weather conditions for the production of cocoa (Hill, 1963:170-172; Mikell, 1989:70; Agamah, 1978:2).

Beckett (1989) and Hill (1963) differ on how cocoa was spread within Ghana's cocoa belt⁸⁴ (Agamah, 1978:5). What is certain, however, is that the spread involved peasant initiative and participation. One advantage of peasant involvement is that cocoa production was organized on household-unit basis. Although the cultivation methods are relatively extensive, the adoption rate was "dramatic"⁸⁵. For example, twelve years after the introduction of cocoa into Ghana, the country marketed 80 pounds of the produce in the world market. In about thirty-three years, Ghana became a world leader in cocoa production; and forty years later, the production and export figures rose to 300,000 tons (see graph fig. 8).

Two factors favoured Ghana's situation. One advantage was the availability

⁸⁴ For the various views on the controversy of who actually introduced cocoa into Ghana, see K. B. Dickson, "Origin of Ghana's Cocoa Industry", *Ghana Notes and Queries* 5(1963) pp.3-9; Polly Hill, *Migrant Cocoa-farmers from Southern Ghana* (1963) pp.170-76; Beckett, *Akokoaso: A survey of A Gold Coast Village*, London: (1943); G. Mikell, *Cocoa and Chaos in Ghana*, (1972).

⁸⁵ West Africa not only surpassed South America in cocoa (production) output, but quickly became the world's largest producer (Olayemi, 1970:1). See also Mikell, 1989 and Hill, 1963).

of large tracts of virgin forest suitable to cocoa production. Another factor was the well-organized, readily available household labour (Bourret, 1949:v; Wallerstein, 1964:12; Myint, 1969:40; Hill, 1963:170-172; Buchanan and Pugh, 1966:149-150; Olayemi, 1970:1). As a result, the development of Ghana's cocoa industry was entirely through indigenous peasant initiative and preference (Buchanan and Pugh, 1966:149-150). Although the colonial government also supported their efforts⁶⁶, there was no coercion upon them to grow cocoa. As was the case of Western Nigeria, Ghana's household-unit cocoa production arrangement meant that production was generally organized on small landholdings. These holdings averaged between two and four acres⁶⁷. This underscores the peasant nature of the industry then and now (Kay, 1972:268).

Traditional agriculture in Ghana is rain-fed⁶⁸ and failure of rain means

⁶⁶ Until 1937, the Department of Agriculture had not established any agricultural station in the actual cocoa producing zone where research on the requirements of the crop could be carried out. For example, the Department of Agriculture set up an agricultural station at Kpeve in the Volta Region, which lies outside the proper cocoa producing belt: The West Africa Commission, 1938-9 *Technical Reports, Leverhulme Trust*. London, 1943, paragraphs 184-194. See also Kay, (1972:231-233).

Sir William Brandford Griffith, the then governor of Ghana, was very instrumental in the development of the cocoa industry. He was reported to have distributed seedlings to peasants: see Agamah, 1978: 4; and also Buchanan and Pugh, 1966; Chapter II. Also see footnote 83

⁶⁷ The European cocoa plantations are much larger.

⁶⁸ The peasants have no control over production conditions and therefore resist change or resist trying new production methods. As such, only time-tested agricultural practices are carried out for fear of general crop failure, which could spell disaster for the community.

starvation. As a result, peasant aversion to the risk of crop failure with the resultant starvation made them generally conservative and suspicious of change. For that reason, peasants usually demand excessive prior information and high probability of success before taking any risk (Wallerstein, 1964:13; Olayemi, 1970:135). It is noteworthy that prior to the introduction of cocoa into Ghana, there were other cash crops such as coffee⁸⁹, cotton, rubber, and palm oil (See Table 1). Apart from cotton, rubber and palm oil are natural products of the region and did not require extra investment.

III.8.0 Economic Factors

Given this attitude to change and the risk in cocoa production, why was the adoption of and adaptation to cocoa⁹⁰ production that rapid and dramatic? Several factors accounted for this paradox. They may be described as both economic and non-economic. The economic factors include surplus productive capacity, the profitability of cocoa, availability of market and transport and communications. Even within the economic spectrum, there is a wide range of determinants that could motivate the peasants to varying degrees of success. For example, within the profitability or prospective yield factor, determinants such as degree of peasants'

⁸⁹ Coffee production was not popular as it could be produced more easily and cheaply elsewhere in the empire, for example, in Kenya.

⁹⁰ The cocoa tree, unlike other cash crops, takes approximately five years to start bearing and some years more to reach full production (Wallerstein, 1964:14).

positive response to economic incentives play a significant role⁹¹ (Oluyemi, 1972:4).

III.8.1 Vent-for-surplus

The availability and abundance of virgin forest and efficient household labour in the Asante cocoa-growing area supports Myint's "vent-for-surplus" hypothesis⁹². It also helps to explain economically the rapid spread of cocoa production in Ghana. This hypothesis, which applies to peripheral countries, argues that a country is vent-for-surplus if it has abundant, under-used land and labour capacity. The utilization of such capacity for the production of a specific crop opens up that country and sets it up for incorporation into the world economy. The role of the international market in this process is that it provides an effective demand for the new product. In this case, the international market has for many years provided good demand for Ghana's cocoa.

But there is a caveat: the production techniques for the new crop should not be "drastically" different from the traditional methods of production. The peasants' advantage here is that cocoa production techniques are not far different from those employed in traditional subsistence cultivation. Being the heart of the cocoa-growing

⁹¹ For details: see also Keynes *General Theory of Employment Interest and Money*, 1936.

⁹² This is an adaptation of Adam Smith's vent-for-surplus theory of international trade in agrarian economies. See Myint, 1969 and Olayemi, 1972 for further discussions.

region, the Asante⁹³ traditional area also had an oversupply of rich virgin forest land and household labour (see fig. 6). The combination of these factors largely provided the initial impetus to the rapid adoption of cocoa as a producer crop (Myint, 1969:60-63; Olayemi, 1972:3).

The vent-for-surplus hypothesis, thus, complements the comparative advantage concept and the international trade theory inherent in the concept of division of labour. Ghana's ability to produce cocoa more efficiently than any other country gave it comparative advantage over other cocoa producers. Consequently, the profitability of the industry helped sustain interest in the crop. However, in both theory and practice, there is disincentive inherent in the spread of cocoa cultivation within the confines of traditional methods of crop cultivation. Theoretically, Ghana's abundance of land and labour encouraged the cocoa industry. What that implies is that Ghana would be confined to the utilization of its labour only in the agricultural sector. Such a condition only emphasises its peripheral location in the international economy (Kennedy, 1988:20-21). As it is, Ghana is incapable of developing a technological capacity commensurate with its advantage in labour-intensive cocoa production. It is this kind of result that the structuralists consider untenable because it undermines the development of a diversified economy. Although the inherent danger in depending upon cocoa as the country's main export-crop was realized early enough, it hardly adversely affected the spread of its

⁹³ See footnote 22.

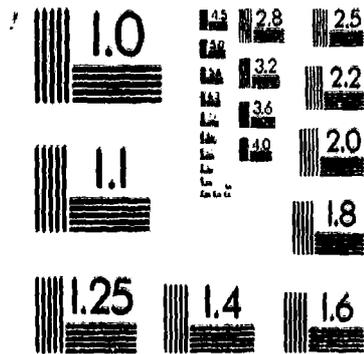
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cultivation.

III.8.2 Keynes' animal spirit

Keynes' "animal spirit" theory argues that there are those disposed to risk-taking, hoping to obtain great gain from their venture. These people are high risk takers or speculators who are profit-motivated. This group includes entrepreneurs as well as peasants. Thus, some peasants could have engaged in cocoa production with the expectation that it would pay off handsomely, notwithstanding its consequences for food crop production (Baumol et al., 1985:176). Certainly in Ghana, cocoa production was partly boosted by this "animal spirit" adventurism. Perhaps, the peasants found strength and motivation to cultivate cocoa from their experience with other cash crops.

III.8.4 Profitability

The profitability factor may be explained by Schumpeter's argument that relative profitability motivates people to innovate or to adopt new production techniques. According to Schumpeter, excess profit motivates people to "carry out new combinations" of production⁴. In other words, the expectation of large profits or prospective yields from a "successful innovation" is an incentive to adopting a new method of production, that is not yet tested by experience...

⁴ See Schumpeter (1959) Chapter II and Schultz, T. W. *Agriculture in an Unstable Economy* (McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1945) for further discussion of profit motivation; and also Olayemi 1970:133-135.

(Schumpeter, 1959:66).

Thus, to adopt a new production technique or a new crop like cocoa, the expected rate of economic return must exceed the combined effects of attendant risks and costs (Keynes, 1936:140-141). Although cocoa prices may not be as high as the peasants wanted, cocoa production was still considered a better investment than other cash crops.

Before the cocoa boom, coffee provided a superior rate of economic return (see Table 2). But the drop in world coffee price during the last quarter of the 19th century created the need for an alternative crop (McPhee, 1971:44; Hill, 1963:173; Agamah, 1978:2-3). The peasants also realized quickly that cocoa's yield on internal rate of return was much higher than any other cash crop. These relative differences in rates of economic returns in favour of cocoa influenced the peasants' choice and adoption of cocoa as a ready substitute export-crop. Thus, cocoa provided the peasants with guaranteed economic rewards which other crops could not (Wallerstein, 1964:13).

There was an internal complement to this "international market" development in favour of cocoa production. On the home front, rubber, palm oil, cotton and other cash crops then in production in Ghana yielded low profits. For instance, as observed by the district commissioner in Sunyani "the low price of cotton induced few people to grow it" (Mikell, 1989:63). Impliedly, the price of cocoa was higher

than cotton; and so, cocoa production was more profitable and more attractive to the peasants. For example, between 1913 and 1953, Ghana's expansion of cocoa production and export increased thirteen-fold²⁵ to the decline of other alternative cash crops (Myint, 1969:39; Mikell, 1989:144). As the focus shifted from these crops in Ghana, other countries in the empire that were more efficient at producing them took over.

That by 1938 cocoa producers in Ghana were nine times more numerous than all the other cash croppers put together is an indication of the lucrativeness of the cocoa industry. Alongside its absorption of labour, it also absorbed many lots of farm land (Gilpin, 1988).

III.8.4 Improved Transport

Another factor that contributed to the rapid adoption rate and the spread of cocoa was the revolution in railway and road transport. Between 1903 and 1907, more cocoa production districts became part of the larger coastal economy through the extension of road and railway lines. Through the construction of new roads, remoter cocoa production areas were opened up and integrated into the larger economic system. The extension of the Sekondi-Obuasi railway to Kumasi in 1903 greatly assisted the expansion of cocoa production to Asante (see fig. 9). Also, the

²⁵ Cocoa contributed 50% and 70% of Ghana's total exports in 1913 and 1953 respectively (Myint, 1969:39).

road from Kumasi to Berekum helped establish Pamu-Sunyani-Goaso cocoa triangle and greatly expanded the cocoa growing area. There were also roads linking the ports at Cape Coast and Winneba to the cocoa-growing centres (Dickson, 1969:166-167; 303-306; Bourett, 1949:79). Large-scale production of cocoa effectively began in Brong Ahafo region after World War I when lorry transportation became available⁸⁶ (Mikell, 1989:62-63; Williams, 1970:231; Myint, 1969:41; Kay, 1972:252).

The well-developed road network made it possible to transport cocoa from the hitherto impenetrable hinterland to the buyers on the coast (see fig. 9). Consequently, cocoa production and export capacity increased considerably. The result was an increase in cocoa production output. For example, Ghana's cocoa production output rose from 20,000 metric tons in the 1908/09 crop season⁸⁷ to 150,000 metric tons in 1918-19; and 300,000 metric tons in 1938-39 (Agamah, 1978:4).

III.8.5 Availability of Market and Marketing Systems

The availability of world market for cocoa and the establishment of export-import firms constituted a combined inducement to the peasant cocoa farmers.

⁸⁶ See also Myint, 1969:24-25.

⁸⁷ "Crop season" denotes the cocoa harvesting period starting from September of one year to August of the following year.

These export-import firms provided a valuable link between the peasant cocoa farmers and the international market. In various forms and through their services, these firms brought the peasant cocoa farmers into touch with the world market and helped to expand export production. The firms collected, processed and transported cocoa beans to foreign buyers, which greatly assured the peasants to increase their production. As a result, cocoa producers did not have to travel long distances to produce buying centres in order to sell their cocoa (Myint, 1969:41-42; Mikell, 1989:98).

In a way, these firms also contributed to the monetization process by selling imported goods to the peasants as cash payment was demanded for the imported goods. In other words, they combined produce-buying with sales of imported goods. Thus, any increase in demand for imported goods meant more money, which translated into producing more cocoa for more economic rewards. In that way, the services of the firms provided inducements to the peasant cocoa farmers to further increase and to expand their production capacities. Paradoxically, it is these activities of the same buying firms that contributed to the 1937 cocoa hold-up (Kay, 1972:253-254; Myint, 1969:41-42).

III.9.0 Non-economic factors

The non-economic factors that enhanced the spread of cocoa include the production and cultural practices existent within the peasants' social group. In this

case, such practices may be described in terms of the extent to which cocoa production methods differ from traditional methods of peasant cultivation. In specific terms, the factors include the degree to which cocoa production disrupted the existing peasant mode of production and its accompanying socio-economic order. For instance, the "foreign" peasants had easy access to land through sharecropping arrangements as discussed in Chapter II. Such ease of access is explained by the flexibility of the Asante matrilineal system, which creates room for non-members of the group to be economically integrated into the group. These factors are examined in turn.

III.9.1 Production techniques

Techniques for cocoa production were not radically different from the skills already known to the peasant farmers. Skills in food crop production were, therefore, easily transferred without disrupting the traditional social and economic structures of the society (Olayemi 1970:135). Besides, prior to the introduction of cocoa, most of the peasants had already been exposed to other forms of cashcropping. As a result, they did not need any special encouragement in experimenting with new crops like cocoa (Kennedy, 1988:11). Thus, cocoa production offered the peasant farmers a high degree of continuity in and maintenance of the existing socio-economic practices as well as monetary benefits.

The peasants, therefore, found security in aiming at

maximum profit in agricultural production while maintaining the same basic organization of labour and resources (Mikell, 1989:63).

One major difference between cocoa production and other locally cultivated crops is that cocoa has a longer gestation period. As a result, cocoa cultivation requires a lot of patience and investment on the part of the peasant cocoa farmer. Another departure from the traditional mode of production is that cocoa is an arboricultural crop and so, does not lend itself to shifting cultivation.

III.9.2 The Inheritance System

Another non-economic factor that boosted cocoa production was the inheritance system among the Asante. Descent and inheritance in the group is matrilineal. That means that the children inherit *via* their mother's lineage. For example, the economic gains of an Asante man would fall to the children of his "sisters"³⁸. The organization of a matrilineal descent group is generally exogamous; and usually, it is the male members who go to live with their wives (Kessing, 1975:18, 62-65; Douglas and Kaberry, 1969:127). This arrangement suits foreign labourers who were almost always men and for various reasons were ready to marry Asante women³⁹.

Foreign labourers who married Asante women did not pose any threat to the Asante in terms of "foreign" control of the valuable cocoa land and its profits. For

³⁸ "Sisters" is used here to represent female relatives.

³⁹ Some of the best studies on matrilineal descent groups include Kessing, 1975; Douglas and Kaberry, 1969; K. A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief* (1968); Owusu-Ansah, (1981).

one thing, these male foreigners have nothing to inherit. Secondly, the children would inherit whatever their fathers have acquired as most of these foreigners belonged to the patrilineal descent group. Either way, whatever is inherited by these children ultimately returns to the corporate stock. Essentially, what this implies is that the men would just work and create wealth for the Asante.

Thus, the flexibilities existent in Asante matrilineal corporate group greatly contributed to the spread of cocoa production. These flexibilities created room for non-members of the Asante group and allowed easy access to land through sharecropping arrangements as discussed in Chapter II. Such ease of access facilitated the easy integration of "foreigners" into the Asante socio-cultural group. These factors were altogether a major boost to cocoa production within the cocoa belt.

III.9.3 Flexible land-use arrangements

The Asante social organization had long perfected sharecropping methods to boost crop production. As discussed in Chapter II, the *abusa* and *abunu* arrangements provide economic returns to the landowners. These arrangements allow landowners sizeable economic returns from whatever size of farm a foreign peasant cultivated. Besides, though these arrangements put the possession of the land in the hands of the "foreigners", the lessors retained legal ownership of the land. In any case, where a lessee under this arrangement bought the land, it still

remained within the Asante agricultural economy.

To sum up, the spread of cocoa production in Asante was encouraged by a number of factors. These include the imperatives of national and international economic factors, the flexibility and adaptability of Asante culture and its inherent traditional agricultural practices and improved transportation. We now look at the hold-up of 1937-38.

III.10 The Hold-up¹⁰⁰

In this section, we will investigate the causes and outcomes of the 1937-38 cocoa hold-up by the peasant cocoa farmers of Ghana. For two reasons, the hold-up was not a peasant protest nor could it be described as a rural social protest. First, the difficulty arises from the composition of the rural social strata during the

¹⁰⁰ The "hold-up" was an organized withholding of cocoa by producers with the expectation that their action would force up the producer price of cocoa. There were a series of incidents of hold-ups in Ghana. The earlier ones did not score as major a success as the 1937-38 crop season one (Mikell, 1989:98).

Some of the best studies that have been done on the hold-ups since 1910 include J. B. Danquah, *Liberty of the Subject: A monograph on the Gold Coast Hold-up and Boycott of Foreign Goods 1937-38*, Kibbi (1938), Gold Coast n.d.) pp.9-24. Danquah's work provides an African perspective of the hold-up; John Mills, "Rural protests in the Gold Coast: the Cocoa Hold-ups 1908-1938" in C. Dewey and Hopkins *Imperial Impact on Economic Development in Africa and India under Colonial Rule* London: Athlone 1978, pp.152-170; Sam Rhodie, "The Gold Coast hold-up 1930-31" *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana* 9(1968) pp.105-118; Gareth Austin, "Capitalists and Chiefs in the Cocoa Hold-ups in South Asante, 1927-1938," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 21:1(1988), pp.95.

colonial era. The social strata in rural communities was usually a mixed group comprising chiefs, priests, petty traders, educated and semi-educated people (Mikell, 1989:98).

As noted earlier in this chapter, the introduction of cocoa and its handsome economic rewards attracted both rural and urban residents to the industry. Some of these late entrants included chiefs, petty traders and educated elites some of whom were also urban residents. In such a situation, the urban residents were absentee cocoa farmers. That is to say, even though they did not live in the rural areas, they did have vested interests in issues concerning cocoa production (Anshan Li, 1993:13). In other words, Ghana's rural area is not demographically clearly defined as one would find in industrialized settings. Thus, the nature of Ghana's traditional rural areas did not fit the European notion of town or village¹⁰¹ (Anshan Li, 1993:12).

Second, rural protests often included urban participation just as urban

¹⁰¹ Kofi Awoonor defines the concept of "town" as follows:

A town is the large village, made up of many villages or divisions possessing of certain geographic boundaries within and outside. The town therefore becomes our first complex political unit, connecting a high level of division or diffusion of political authority, covering wider territory (Awoonor, quoted in Anshan Li, 1993:12).

See also Kofi N. Awoonor, *Ghana A Political History* (Acrra: Sedco & Woeli, 1990), pp.11; Thomas L. Hodgkin, *Nationalism in Colonial Africa* (New York: New York University Press, 1956), pp.64.

protests also involved rural participants. The Accra riot of 1924 evidenced this¹⁰². It was difficult to make any distinction between rural and urban protests. This was the case in the 1937-38 the cocoa hold-up. The participants were a mixed group of chiefs, drivers, traders, lawyers, peasants and all those who had vested interests in the protest (Aushan Li, 1993:13). It is the presence of this urban component in the cocoa hold-up that made it difficult to define the hold-up in terms of peasant or rural protest.

The cocoa hold-up was a manifestation and a successful use of socio-economic power by the peasant cocoa farmers to achieve set objectives in the political arena. Their main objective was to force up falling cocoa prices¹⁰³. To achieve this

¹⁰² Although the attempted destoolment of the *Ga Mantse* took place in Accra, it involved both rural and urban residents: see Dominic Fortescue, "The Accra crowd, the Asafo, and the opposition to the Municipal Corporations Ordinance, 1924-25," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 24:3(1990), pp. 348-75.

¹⁰³ It is also important to note that the cocoa hold-up did not represent a typical opposition of peasants to any specific superordinate power or classes, notably government, landowners and merchants. In our analysis, the hold-up was a single issue protest: to force up cocoa price. As a result, none of the various perspectives on the theory of Rural Social Protests exactly fits the analysis of this study. See the following works for the discussion of those perspectives on primary resistance: A. B. Davidson "African Resistance and Rebellion against the Imposition and Colonial Rule" in T. O. Ranger ed. *Emerging Themes of African History* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968), pp. 177-88; T. O. Ranger *Revolt in southern Rhodesia 1896-7: A study in African Resistance* (London: Heinmann, 1967); "Connection between 'primary resistance' and modern mass nationalism in East and Central Africa," *Journal of African History* 9:3 (1968) pp. 437-54. These works represent the core literature on primary resistance or the "Continuist" approach to which we will return later in Chapter IV. F. Agbodeka's *African Politics and Policy in the Gold Coast 1868-1900 A Study in the forms of force of protest*(London: Longman, 1971) also provides a good study of the early forms of primary resistance

objective, the peasants organized themselves into a unit of strong social power. In spite of their disparate grouping and their internal conflicts and differences, they acted with a single purpose (Anshan Li, 1993:8). Thus, the protest group was constructed around dissatisfied cells of existing peasant groups with no local interconnections, but whose common interest was discontent (Wallerstein, 1964:245). One element in the cocoa hold-up that was consistent with outcomes of peasant protests was how the "weak" could turn out to be "strong" through organization¹⁰⁴ (Ashan Li, 1993:7). As noted in Chapter 1, peasants are generally regarded as weak or powerless, having no political clout in society. The 1937/38 cocoa hold-up demonstrated, however, that such a broad assessment is not always true.

III.11.0 Causes of the hold-up

The causes of the hold-up may be explained by several interrelated factors with cumulative effects: both remote and immediate. One thing that developed alongside the expansion of cocoa production, among other things, was entrepreneurship. Both educated and semi-educated Ghanaians became local entrepreneurs in the cocoa industry. Some acted as "middlemen" for the buying firms, others had their own buying firms and were speculators just like their

to colonial rule in Ghana.

¹⁰⁴ According to Gareth Austin, the hold-up was a demonstration that, "organized resistance to foreign monopoly could be powerful, even in a colonial context." Gareth Austin, "Capitalists and Chiefs in the Cocoa Hold-ups in South Asante, 1927-1938," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 21:1(1988), pp.95.

European counterparts. Needless to say, these activities provoked unfair competition among the buying firms as each of them sought economic profit and a larger market share. In the process, the local competition got out of hand and resulted in unprecedented reactions from the peasant cocoa farmers. Thus, the reactionary strategy (the hold-up) was largely precipitated by the activities of these cocoa entrepreneurs. For this study, the causes of the hold-up may be broadly categorized into two: remote and immediate. We look at them in turn.

III.11.1.0 Remote causes

Factors that remotely contributed to the hold-up included falling cocoa prices, the systems of marketing the cocoa and the peasant perception of the buying firms.

III.11.1.1 Falling cocoa prices

Through international trade, peasant cocoa farmers became inextricably linked to the global economy. Consequently, any crisis in the international economic system duly affected peasants in the remotest Asante village as well (Mikell, 1989:78; 98). During the time of high prices, cocoa cultivation was expanded. However, cocoa takes between three to five years to yield. Thus, by the time the cocoa trees had started to yield, prices began to fall on the international market¹⁰⁵. The result

¹⁰⁵ From 1915 onwards, cocoa prices got higher inducing expansion in cocoa farms with increased output. The net result was overproduction in the 1920s when the trees started yielding. Perhaps, one can infer from the falling prices an indication of "market glut".

was that increased production could not be commensurately remunerated¹⁰⁶ (Hyden, 1988:49). This was the case from 1920 onwards: a steady decline in prices on the world market (Mikell, 1989:98).

Owing to the low cocoa producer prices, it became difficult for the peasant cocoa farmers to maintain their farms, their households and the workers. Nor could they maintain their children at school. In short, they could not maintain their newly acquired standard of living because of the falling cocoa prices (Kay, 1972:251).

III.11.1.2 Marketing systems

Initial lack of adequate means of transport meant that cocoa had to be transported to the produce buying centres by head portage. Not only was it difficult for most farmers, it was also unreliable and expensive to use. The peasants were, therefore, unwilling or unable to deliver their own cocoa to the buying firms at the designated buying centres. Most of them preferred the arrangement whereby buying agents acting as "middlemen" for their various firms would go to the cocoa farms to purchase cocoa. With the expansion in cocoa production and the subsequent increase in output, the number of the buying firms and their "middlemen" also increased. The net effect was an intensified competition among the European buying firms and the large number of commission buyers or

¹⁰⁶ See Goran Hyden, "Beyond Hunger in Africa-Breaking the Spell of Mono-Culture" in Ronald Cohen, ed. *Satisfying Africa's Food Needs* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988) pp. 47-78, for a general discussion.

"middlemen" (Kay, 1989:252).

By and large, the effects of the competition began to show in the manipulation of the farmers by these "middlemen" buyers. Their closeness to the farmers in the remote areas gave them the chance to identify producers in financial difficulties and reported such predicaments to money-lenders. These money-lenders took advantage of the poor peasants. Not only did this increase their debt loads but it also made them lose their farms to wealthy farmers. These "kiss-and-tell" practices and the cheating perpetrated on unsuspecting peasants made them distrust the "middlemen" buyers (Mikell, 1989:98).

III.11.1.3 Peasant Perception

The inter-firm rivalry resulted in increased overhead costs. To minimize the internal rivalry, the cocoa purchasing firms decided to merge the fourteen buying firms dealing in Ghana. The objective of the Buying Agreement was to limit internal competition and to reduce overhead costs by cutting down on commission payments. But since cocoa prices were not determined by the market forces of supply and demand, the peasants tended to benefit from the local "cut-throat" competition. In their view then, the Buying Agreement became an instrument of exploitation. They saw and interpreted the creation of the Buying Agreement as an attempt by the buying firms not only to consolidate their monopolistic position, but

also to create a monopsony¹⁰⁷. Either way, the peasants became the losers as the Buying Agreement eliminated competition in the sale or purchase of their produce. They could not be persuaded otherwise! (Kay, 1972:253).

To make matters worse, prices fell on the international market and diseased cocoa trees were also cut¹⁰⁸. Whether the farmers would understand or not, nobody tried to explain to them the operations of the price mechanisms of the world market. The peasants therefore blamed the steady decline of prices on the European buying firms, although the latter were only partially responsible for it. Thus, the secrecy that surrounded the merger and its suddenness only heightened the peasants' suspicion of European conspiracy against them.

Furthermore, there was a resentment against the Europeans for their domination of the cocoa industry. Both educated and semi-educated Africans felt left out of the cocoa industry and were therefore predisposed to the hold-up. In fact, they saw it as an opportunity to vent their anger and frustration against their European counterparts. This general resentment and frustration effectively united

¹⁰⁷ It is necessary to remember that the peasant cocoa farmers played the dual role of producers of cocoa and consumers of imported goods. Similarly, the buying firms were both suppliers of the foreign goods and the buyers of the coco produce. Their advantage was that whether buying or selling, they fix the prices. In this way, the peasants were mere price takers.

¹⁰⁸ The cocoa trees affected by the "swollen shoot" disease were cut to check its spread: see Bourett, 1949:178-179.

the peasants and the elites together in the hold-up against a "common enemy". Thus, the presence of these elements of general discontent, a perceived "common enemy" and a frustrated group of people propitiously set the stage for a protest. All that it would require was a spark to set it off.

III.11.2 Immediate causes

The spark came in the form of colonial authorities' poor handling of the swollen shoot disease and the 1937 fall in cocoa prices. The cutting of the diseased "swollen shoot" trees in 1936 without sufficient education of the farmers was one of the causes that immediately precipitated the hold-up (Mikell, 1989:98). The farmers regarded the cutting of the diseased cocoa trees as a ploy by the government to cut down production. It is noteworthy that most of the peasant cocoa farmers had already been exposed to "market (money) economy" through earlier trade in other cash crops, viz., palm oil, rubber, coffee and cotton (Kennedy, 1988:11). They, therefore, regarded government's policy of cutting down their cocoa trees as a senseless destruction of their life investments, and they detested it.

As noted earlier, cocoa prices were not dictated by the market forces of supply and demand; the peasant cocoa farmers were merely price takers. The mechanisms for fixing cocoa prices were externally generated by the demand side, the buyers. As a result, those who produce the cocoa had no hand in determining the price for their produce. Local prices for cocoa were, therefore, fixed at very low

rates by the buying firms. In reality, what that meant to the cocoa peasants was that they would have to produce more if they wanted to make more money. With the peasant cocoa farmers' dependency on cocoa as their sole income earner, cutting the diseased cocoa trees was, in reality, destruction of their livelihood. In other words, it meant a reduction in their income, a decline in their newly acquired standard of living and the cause of their default in respecting their obligations to others. This, the peasants were prepared to fight at all costs.

As already noted, what triggered the 1937-38 cocoa hold-up was the fall in the cocoa price preceding the 1937-38 crop season¹⁰⁹. Some of the middlemen speculated and made advance purchases of cocoa based on past high prices. The fall in cocoa prices was a heavy loss. They tried to mitigate their losses at the expense of the peasant cocoa farmers. Given the amount of resources and investment involved in cocoa production, it was difficult for the farmers to bear the situation. In terms of protest strategy, the peasants only resort was to withhold their produce¹¹⁰. Not only did the farmers withhold their produce, they also boycotted

¹⁰⁹ The general fluctuations in the world market cocoa prices had volatile ripple effects on domestic prices as well. In 1919, for example, cocoa prices for a "hundredweight" was "47 shillings" on the average. By 1920, a year later, cocoa prices rose to "123 shillings" for the same weight, but dropped again by the end of that year (Kennedy, 1988:37). See also Kay, 1975:123-24.

As the farmers had no say in fixing the prices, they were not fully aware of the influence of these "fluctuations" on locally fixed cocoa prices.

¹¹⁰ In terms of strategy, the peasant cocoa farmers had no options. The over-glorified "exit" strategy could not apply in this case for two reasons. First, cocoa is an arboreal crop and takes three to five years of intensive care to start yielding

the shippers' goods throughout the crop season.

III.12.0 Effects of the hold-up

The effects of the hold-up were both positive and negative. On the one hand, it furthered the cause of the Asante peasants and drew their attention to their hitherto unknown source of power: organized resistance. On the other hand, it also revealed the weaknesses existent in the cocoa industry and the need for reform. On the whole, the effects may be described in terms of economic and socio-political.

III.12.1 Economic

The economic effects of the hold-up were generally devastating to both sides, but more so to the purchasing giants: the United Africa Company (U.A.C.) and A.G. Leventis who benefited more from the buying agreement. Between them, these two giants handled a total of nearly 88% of the total cocoa purchases in the country. They lost revenue from being unable to sell their imported goods as well as being unable to export the expected volume of cocoa. Needless to say, the effects were generally damaging.

In case of the peasant farmers, the main economic effect of the hold-up on

and the production cycle lasts for over forty years. It is, therefore, difficult to "exit" cocoa production, once the production process is started. For a fuller discussion of the "exit" strategy, see Goran Hyden, *Beyond Ujamaa*, 1980; and James Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 245.

them was the lack of cash income. This made it impossible for most of them to meet their financial obligations. As a result, they pledged their farms. But for the most part, they lost their farm lands, and were reduced to wage-labourers. However, the rich wealthy farmers gained because most of them diversified their sources of cash income. The net effect was an increased gap between the rich and the poor peasants, which, in a way, proletarianized most of the peasants. The middlemen also survived. After all, they had nothing to lose but to gain from the reorganization of the faulty cocoa industry, although they also suffered some loss of cash income.

For the state, the hold-up revealed its economic vulnerability engendered by its dependency on a monocrop export capacity. As already noted, the colonial government encouraged production of cocoa to the exclusion of other crops, a practice that fitted the tenets of the comparative advantage principle. Although attempts were made to encourage the cultivation of alternative agricultural products, these were, overall, half-hearted. For the most part, the British indirectly but effectively discouraged any such diversification. For example, the British realized that rice grown in the Ho area in the Volta Region of Ghana was better than the imported type. However, for fear that locally grown rice could obviate the grain import trade, rice growing was not encouraged (Mikell, 1989:59)¹¹¹. Thus,

¹¹¹ For further discussion of the colonial government's policy on grain production: see also Johnston, B. F. *The Staple Food Economics of Western Tropical Africa* (Stanford, 1958), pp. 172-73; and also Dickson, 1969:122-23.

although the hold-up showed that the state could not always encourage cocoa production through ensuring good purchase prices, it made no attempt to remove this dangerous dependency. Obviously, the state could take advantage of other forms of agriculture in which Ghana's peasants showed clear competitive leverage. Even after independence, nothing has changed.

III.12.2 Socio-Political

The hold-up achieved a number of socio-political successes. First, it demonstrated that peasant socio-economic power could prevail against the politico-economic power of the colonial government once the peasants organized themselves. It brought along sweeping socio-economic changes into Ghana's political economy. That by their action, they could effect changes in colonial government's policy alone was a significant political success (Mikell, 1989:99). Besides, the peasants' ability to organize and to mobilize the disparate peasant groups at that time was also a great political achievement in itself. The peasants were able to organize with one resolve to force up purchase prices.

Furthermore, their success at forcing up the cocoa prices and the immediate reforms the hold-up brought into the cocoa industry empowered the peasants. It made them part-players in government policy decision making process. The hold-up also brought recognition and respect to the farmers and made them a force to reckon with. Beyond the recognition, the hold-up also led to the formation of a

national farmers' union to represent the farmers interests at both national and international level. The next chapter looks at the general effects of cocoa production in Ghana.

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Chapter Four

IV.0 The Transformation of Asante Peasant Agriculture

"The old order changeth, yielding place to the new"

IV.1 Introduction

On the whole, this thesis seeks to achieve three objectives. First, to establish that the transformation of Ghana's peasant agriculture was induced by the introduction of cocoa cultivation. Second, to show that the incorporation of Ghana's agrarian economy into the world economy was accomplished through the consumption of Ghana's cocoa by the industrialized world. Third, to show that the empowerment of Asante peasant cocoa farmers was occasioned by the cultivation and the sale of cocoa in the international market.

The theoretical underpinning to the study is founded in two schools of structuralist thought and concepts drawn from classical and neo-classical economists. Other key concepts used are drawn from anthropological studies of kinship relations and political economy. These concepts and ideas include international division of labour, comparative advantage, social and economic organization of social groups and traditional concepts and practices in land-use.

Within the framework of these ideas, this chapter analyses the circumstances

that created Ghana's dependency on a single export-crop, cocoa, and the transformation and empowerment of Asante peasantry. The discussion is organized in two parts. These are an overview and conclusion. Part 1 provides a general overview of international trade theory based on the assumed mutual benefits of international division of labour and comparative advantage. In this section, we revisit the theories and related concepts addressed in Chapter II in the context of Ghana's cocoa economy as so far discussed. This section explores the inadequacies inherent in the concepts of comparative advantage and division of labour in peripheral economies like Ghana's.

The analysis also focuses on a number of impact issues that are related to economic, political and social impacts of cocoa production in Ghana in the period under discussion. These include the monetization of the economy, the growth of peasant economic and political power, the emergence of rich peasants as challenges to traditional political authority. Another impact is the social mix of Ghanaian demography that is due to population movements occasioned by the spread of cocoa.

Also central to our analysis are social organization in Asante, social classes and the emergence of fluid class categories among the peasants¹¹². Infrastructural

¹¹² The "fluid" class categories that emerged among the peasants is due to constant changes in land ownership. These changes are primarily due to peasants' increased indebtedness, bad weather, black pod disease or mere ostentatious living. See Mikell, *Cocoa and Chaos*, (1989:95).

benefits such as transportation that resulted from cocoa production are also analyzed.

Finally, the hold-up is reconsidered as a politico-economic strategy. The lessons it offers for subsequent organizing and mobilizing for political and labour relations during and after colonial rule are identified.

IV.2.0 Overview: The Theories

IV.2.1 The Myth of Comparative Advantage

Implicit in the notion of comparative advantage is the assumption that surplus production capacity exists in agrarian economies. The argument is that due to the "absence of market outlets" economic activities are not vigorously pursued in these economies (Kennedy, 1988:21). To induce such economic activities, trade must be developed to provide a "vent" for channelling goods and services "in and out to the external world". This assumption, among other things, established the centre-periphery relationship. In such a relationship, the agrarian economies (ex-colonies) that produce raw materials formed the periphery, while the industrialized states that consume these raw materials constituted the centre. The centre or the core was and is still the processor. In this way, the agrarian economies were and are still "attached to a centre" that commands and controls the whole "productive process from growth to consumption". Inevitably, this relationship has created a *structural dependence* of the periphery on the centre (Manley, 1991:29; Kennedy, 1988:21).

As noted in Chapter III, Ghana had been the leading producer of cocoa in the world for over half a century. In that capacity, Ghana had absolute advantage in cocoa production over any other country. However, Ghana's comparatively advantageous position in cocoa production only translated into its dependency on cocoa as its single export-crop. The only opportunity it gave Ghana was to enable it utilize its "abundant" resources in producing cocoa for and selling it to the industrialized centre as raw material¹¹³ (Kennedy, 1988:22). In other words, through the advantage, Ghana produces a crop it does not consume in exchange for manufactured goods it does not produce. Thus, production and consumption have not been integrated within the country. The level of cocoa production *thus* determines Ghana's capacity to consume manufactured goods via external trade.

It should be noted clearly, however, that cocoa can be processed into many other products. Some of these other products include cocoa lubricant, cocoa oil, fertilizer, soap, poultry feed and particularly feed for pigs, chocolate and cocoa drink. These cocoa derivatives clearly show that processing of cocoa "at home" can provide Ghana with a wide range of commercial and economic possibilities.

¹¹³ The following explains the implicit attachment to the centre through the principle of comparative advantage. Ghana has comparative advantage in cocoa production and so exports raw cocoa beans to U.K where they are processed into "cocoa powder". Jamaica, in the Caribbeans, also has comparative advantage in sugar cane, and so exports "wet sugar", the "extract" from sugar cane, to U. K. where it is crystallized into sugar. By mixing sugar and "cocoa powder" in some proportion, chocolate is obtained both for domestic consumption and for sale to the countries in the periphery (Manley, 19:14-15).

Similarly, by siting the cocoa-based industry at the source of the raw materials, Ghana would have enjoyed industrial and technological transformation as well. And this is what simple economics dictates! Given that situation, Ghana could genuinely be proclaimed as having a good comparative advantage in cocoa production. As it is, the practical application of the so-called developmental concept of comparative advantage in Ghana, as in other peripheral economies, has not been holistic¹⁴. Consequently, the benefits of any such "advantage" have, and continue to elude Ghana and similar other economies.

Indeed, Ghana's dependence on the centre for the processing of its cocoa has made its economy structurally dependent and "underdeveloped" (Genoud 1969:23). This is partly why independent Ghana continues to face major obstacles in its effort to create a self-supporting economy¹⁵.

¹⁴ A "holistic comparative advantage approach" denotes a situation in which the country with the absolute advantage enjoys the fullest benefit of its advantage. In which case, what is shared through trade for mutual benefit is the advantage and not the "excess capacity" or resources. For example, instead of Jamaica exporting "wet sugar" to U.K. for crystallisation, it should be done right there in Jamaica. Similarly, Ghana should be able to process its cocoa and export the finished product to non-cocoa producing countries: see Manley, (1991:14-15) for the Jamaican experience.

¹⁵ This is where the merits of Acheampong's "Operation Feed Yourself" program commends itself. The program was the first government attempt to redirect the country's productive forces into domestic food production. In spite of its flaws, it succeeded in raising national consciousness and awareness as to self-reliant responsibility for national food security. But even so, the economy remains dependent: see G. Mikell, *Cocoa and Chaos in Ghana*, 1989:200-205 for details.

Ghana's 'achievement' in the pursuit of a "cocoa economy" shows, in the language of comparative advantage theory, that the country possesses "excess productive capacity". This capacity could certainly have been used to produce other crops as well. Such a diversity would have provided a "balance" for cocoa and subsequently, diversified Ghana's agrarian economy as a whole. As it is, Ghana devotes the greater part of its best land and human resources to cocoa production. Food crop production, for instance, suffers from inadequate land and other inputs to support it (Schumpeter, 19:68). Thus, in reality, Ghana's opportunity cost in producing cocoa must be measured in terms of the alternatives it did not produce. The substitutes in this case would include staple food crops such as maize, rice, and yam that Ghana could have produced on a comparatively large-scale. The stark reality is that these crops and other food items are ironically supplemented by food imports. That, in turn, draws away earnings from other internal development projects.

IV.2.2 The Dilemma of Division of Labour and Trade Theory

As noted in Chapter II, liberal and neo-liberal analysis of the concepts of comparative advantage and international division of labour focus on international "free trade". They argue that "free trade" bestows "mutual benefits" on the individual participants. They contend that trade will extend the frontier of a participating country's possibility curve. By so doing, it will increase the participant's consumption and, possibly, its investment opportunities.

It was pointed out in that Chapter that this argument simplifies the Heckscher-Ohlin theory of comparative advantage which advocates product specialization by each country. That theory led to the internationalization of the concept of division of labour and its practice in international trade relations¹¹⁶ (Kennedy, 1988:21). However, though usually conveniently ignored, for the participants to enjoy the "mutual benefits" of the "free trade", there must be free and fair competition.

As shown in Ghana's case in Chapter III, trade in cocoa did not bring along any "mutual benefits". Instead, trade made Ghana "an appendage to the economic needs of the industrialized centre" (Manley, 1991:24). First, cocoa producer prices are low and inadequate. The implication is that Ghana has to produce more cocoa in order to earn a reasonable income to buy needed imported goods. Such a pattern is typical of unfair trade practices experienced in the periphery. For example, during the depression of 1929, the "price of palm oil fell from 14 shillings per a gallon" to "one shilling and two pence". On the other hand, during the same period, the United Africa Company

¹¹⁶ Although agriculture was not given any significant consideration in their analysis, the internationalization of the concept of division of labour initiated the industrialization of agriculture in most agrarian economies. As a result, most agrarian economies became articulated to the economies at the centre through trade and specialization in single export-crops. Such single export-crops include cocoa in Ghana, coffee in Kenya, groundnut in Senegal and Nigeria, sugar cane in the Caribbean Islands and rubber in Liberia. Thus, most of these economies specialize in monocrop cultivation at the expense of traditional non-industrial commodities, namely food crops (Kay, 1972:xv).

continued to make tremendous profits and maintained its 15 per cent dividend on ordinary shares throughout the entire period (Manley, 1991:40).

Again, during the Second World War, "the price of cocoa fell from F50 per ton to F10". Meanwhile, the prices of imported goods were skyrocketed. For instance, the price of khaki rose from "3 shillings to 10 shillings a yard", and the price of iron sheets "moved from 30 shillings to 100 shillings each"¹¹⁷ (Manley, 1991:40).

In spite of all this, peasant cocoa farmers responded to the increases in demand for cocoa by increasing their output and by allocating more resources to its production. Such a response in the first place is incongruous with what monopolistic industry stands for. The point to note is that high cocoa prices at the international market did not translate into high domestic prices. However, prices for imported goods did "obey" market forces. Yet, market forces of supply and demand did not determine the local equilibrium producer prices for cocoa. In fact, the local prices were arbitrarily fixed by the local oligopsonistic¹¹⁸ buying firms. On the other hand, the world cocoa price was also fixed by the monopsonist¹¹⁹ who is, collectively, the industrialized centre. In the midst of all these was the peasant cocoa farmer who was neither heard nor seen and in the end was merely a price-taker (Colclough, 1991:1-2).

¹¹⁷ The issues of unequal trade and underdevelopment are well discussed in Walter Rodney's *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, 1970.

¹¹⁸ "Oligopsonistic": few purchasers buying a "significant proportion" of the total output (Agamah, 1978:47).

¹¹⁹ "Monopsonists": sole buyer(s) in a particular market (Agamah, 1978:47).

Thus, the disparity between domestic and international price structure contributes, inter alia, to Ghana's post-independence balance of payment problems. Differences in basic institutional structures between the centre and periphery also created barriers in the periphery. As noted in Chapter II, these are barriers to practices of fair trade, development of advanced technology and product variety (Gilpin, 1987:28). It is in this context that Ghana's experience lends credence to the structuralist argument that the pricing of agricultural produce at the centre is inappropriate. It is not only unfair to the agrarian producers, it is also exploitative!

What is obvious from the study so far is that Ghana's dependency on cocoa as a major foreign exchange earner is traceable to a configuration of historical factors. First, the history of the dependency is consistent with the tenets of the concepts of international division of labour and comparative advantage. One major effect is that Ghana has become *structurally dependent* on the centre in terms of what to produce and to sell on the world market (Manley, 1991:24). Such dependency has left the country open to the vicissitudes of world market price mechanisms and created inadequate infrastructural and technological support for the industry at home.

Ghana's traditional economic structures are significantly different from those of the industrialized centre. The effect is that similar economic events in each environment systematically reflect these basic differences in the economic outcomes

produced. One example is the pricing of commodities. While demand and supply dictates the equilibrium price in the industrialized centre, it does not produce the same effect in the periphery. Thus, the unequal structures produce inequitable exchange relations between the centre and the periphery. For Ghana, the impact is its historical underdevelopment and stunted technological transformation. In a situation like this, the structuralist advocacy for state intervention¹²⁰ to reverse this state of affairs is both appealing and reasonable.

IV.3.0 Socio-Economic Impacts of Comparative Advantage and Division of Labour in Ghana's Cocoa Economy

Through trade and product specialization, the notions of comparative advantage and international division of labour introduced profound changes in indigenous agrarian economies. These changes effectively altered production and exchange relations in these economies. As noted in Chapter III, the introduction of cocoa into Ghana in the late nineteenth century altered the pre-capitalist household production and exchange relations. For one thing, it consolidated a capitalist mode of production in Ghana and created a shift from food crop production to cash cropping. Alongside the cash cropping evolved the notion of "absolute ownership" in land interests. Technologically, however, Ghana did not benefit much from the emergence of capitalist mode of production. We examine these effects more closely below.

¹²⁰ See Lewis, (1955:384).

IV.3.1 Impact on International Trade

Without a doubt, there is much to gain, by any country, from international trade as advocated by the trade theorists. However, the structuralists remind us that trade increases choice and bestows mutual benefits only if there is fair and perfect competition. As it is, trade between the core and the periphery has been anything but equitable exchange relations. The notion of free and fair trade relations and regulations exist only within the industrialized centre and not between the centre and the periphery. As noted earlier, the obvious structural differences between the centre and the peripheral economies partly accounts for this.

These inequalities make room for exploitation of economies of scale and trade distortions, which disadvantage the peripheral economies. The net result is that the periphery receives low prices on the world market in exchange for higher priced imported goods and services. In effect, while exports from the periphery increase, its export earnings plummet. These countries are then compelled to borrow increasingly. So far, this has been Ghana's experience from its reliance on cocoa as its main item of trade in the international market. Thus, the notion of comparative advantage and international division of labour is for the periphery, a myth and an unrealizable illusion!

IV.3.2 Impact on Domestic Prices

It is an open secret that the cocoa producer price at the international level is

not determined by the market forces of supply and demand. Nor is it decided by the peasant producers or the producing countries; but by the buyers in the international market. The effect is that, neither Ghana nor any of the cocoa producing countries has been able to guarantee a good stable producer price for their farmers. As such, it is difficult to guarantee to the farmers a stable price for any considerable period of time. The total effect is that, the farmers as well as the country have been disposed to unstable income earnings.

IV.3.3 Technological impacts

Technological demands in cocoa crop production are very little. The basic tools required for cultivating cocoa are cutlass and mattock, which are still used today. There is no new or modern way of either extending the cocoa farms or improving on the production process. As noted in Chapter III, cocoa farming is not mechanized. Indeed, if there has been any scientific underpinnings to the crop production process, it is simply the development of hybrid seeds or quicker yielding seeds. But that is not fundamental to national dependence on cocoa cropping. It is helpful only in the sense that the hybrid seeds yield more quickly and, perhaps, more highly.

It must be noted, however, that specialization in cocoa production or the development of quicker yielding seeds alone amounts to nothing of economic significance since Ghana does not control the international market. The quicker and

higher yielding seeds increase crop output, which in turn also glut the market and depress cocoa prices. Thus, notwithstanding increased output, Ghana is not guaranteed any more reliable earnings from the crop. Experience has shown that the higher the crop production output is the lower the price it. This was the case in the period between 1915 and 1960, so much so that even the rich farmers could not support their children studying overseas (Genoud, 1969:22).

One other reason for encouraging specialization in primary commodity production in the peripheral economies was to increase the general level of skills and productivity (Myint, 1969:27). However, Ghana's specialization in a single export-crop only resulted in its incorporation into an expanding world economy. Besides, Ghana not only became structurally dependent on the centre, its economy was concomitantly shaped by that dependence (Kennedy, 1988:21-22). That shaping did not include the development of an industry-based integrated cocoa production process accompanying technological innovations. The shaping was simply confined to ensuring that greater volumes of raw cocoa are produced by the country.

IV.4.0 Impacts of Cocoa Production

Beyond the analytical insights offered by the theories for assessing the impact of a cocoa economy on Ghana, cocoa production itself affected Ghana in various ways. As discussed in the preceding chapters, the peasants were at the forefront of accepting and spreading the crop. Its production accelerated their rise to social and

accepting and spreading the crop. Its production accelerated their rise to social and political prominence, just as it transformed, under their influence, the traditional land interests and use. Also, cocoa production accelerated the monetization of Ghana's economy and gave birth to new social classes. These impacts are now discussed in detail.

IV.4.1 Cocoa as a Catalyst of Change

Cocoa production was a critical agent in the process of social transformation and empowerment of the peasantry in Ghana. In other words, it established the defining moment in the creation of the new social and political order. The cocoa industry accelerated the monetization of the economy and provided the peasants with an opportunity to earn cash incomes. In that context, cocoa provided the economic base for the expansion of export-import activities of shipping, trucking and the services ancillary to the cocoa industry (Wallerstein, 1964:14). Thus, cocoa production effectively replaced the non-cash economy and supported its expansionary activities through the use of money.

As a product for the international market, cocoa production induces dealing between governments. It also makes it possible for international buyers and local sellers to interact at government level. Furthermore, peasant producers also interact directly with both government and international representatives. Through such interactions, cocoa producers became conscious of their role in the political economy

of the country (Mikell, 1989:147). As well, they inevitably became drawn to the local power centres. Thus, being involved in the emergence of a growing cash economy founded on monopolistic cocoa industry put them directly in touch with political power. This way, the peasants became powerful. They experienced an enhanced social status and became important power brokers because of their economic power.

IV.4.2 Transport and Communication

Cocoa production was directly responsible for the development of a network of roads and railways running throughout the cocoa belt. These roads and rails linked the belt with the coast. The effects of the improved transportation network were three fold. It broke down the isolation of the hinterland, introduced city norms into the country-side and generally increased cocoa production (Wallerstein, 1964:13). These roads and rails linked the cocoa-producing areas to the marketing centres on the coast. More broadly, improved transportation linked the peasant cocoa farmers to the outside world.

New towns and villages mushroomed along the main railway lines and road networks and cocoa buying centres. Most of these villages and "new towns" gradually grew into urban centres. The emergence of these towns and villages into urban centres created new and more opportunities for employment as wage-labourers emerged to provide basic maintenance services in these places. Some of

these wage-labourers were clerks, drivers, artisans, messengers, and the police¹²¹ (Mikell, 1989:76). On the other hand, the development of railway and road networks opened doors for the government's influence to be felt far and wide.

Similarly, the improved transport network paved the way for new values to develop in the rural areas. Traditional values gave way to western values that were taking root in the cities. Some of these values are the need to attain high social status through "individualized" effort in acquiring money, property and western education.

IV.4.3 Ethnic Diversity

Another effect of cocoa production is the ethnic diversity it created in Asante in particular and in the rest of the country. As noted in Chapter III, cocoa cultivation created demand for labour. This resulted in cocoa-induced migration into Asante and the rest of the cocoa belt. The population movement was from both north and southern regions of Ghana involving many different ethnic groups.

Similarly, services ancillary to the cocoa industry also created job opportunities at the city centres. People emigrated from rural areas to urban centres to work as wage-labourers. Such migrations caused cultural diversity within

¹²¹ In a way, this marked the beginning of the rural-urban migration, which became a significant factor in Ghana's post-independence era.

Asante and in the rest of the cocoa growing areas as well as the city-centres (Mikell, 1989:70).

IV.4.4 Monetization of the economy

Monetization of the economy created a standardized medium of exchange, a universal economic language and a unit of measure. Peasants could easily relate to the international economic units of measure (money). To some extent, they could also positively respond to this unspoken international economic language as money became the standard of measure for their production efforts. Thus, with the monetization of the economy, international trade replaced the indigenous barter system of exchange. Goods could be exported to or imported from overseas without either side having to see each other. Above all, by the use of money, all segments of society and every aspect of economic relationship was conducted directly or indirectly around money. Goods and services could only be exchanged through money transaction.

The monetization of the economy also facilitated the introduction of wage-labour. This new phenomenon featured more in the cocoa growing areas and in the mining areas where people could now sell their labour for money income. Gradually, payment for services in cash supplanted the practice of payment in kind. As such, indebted, landless or migrant peasant cocoa farmers could earn cash

incomes through wage-labour to supplement other incomes or just to subsist¹²². Thus, wage-labour was not limited to farming alone, it covered the entire spectrum of the economic life of the society (Howard, 1978:200) This way, cocoa altered production and exchange relations in Ghana.

IV.4.5 Changes in Land-use

Another shift created by the transformation from food crop to cash crop production was the change in the system of land-use and tenure. As noted in Chapter III, the main individual interest in land prior to the introduction of commercial agriculture was the subsistence usufruct. With cocoa production, however, land became absolutely alienable and could therefore be owned outright by any individual.

The change from user-rights to saleable rights in land was significant for two reasons. As noted in Chapter III, the notion of private property is a prerequisite for the development of capitalism¹²³. This absolute ownership in land-use, therefore, completed the basic form of the transition of Ghana's agrarian economy from pre-capitalist to capitalist mode of production. Furthermore, the change enhanced and emphasized the transformation of the Ghanaian traditional society into an achievement-based one.

¹²² See Rhoda Howard, 1978:178-199).

¹²³ See Howard, *Colonialism and Underdevelopment*, 1978:37

However, the change in itself did not institute a capitalist "relations of production," nor did it create a total capitalist society. First, that the transformation itself was imposed on the society, more specifically on the Asante group, defined its incompleteness. Similarly, the age-old traditional sharecropping arrangements remained largely unaffected by these changes. If anything, it only reinforced the practices. The combination of these factors made it possible for both peasants and landowners to obviate the "capitalism-enhancing" effects of the transformation of land-use interests.

IV.4.6 Shift in Traditional Power Sources

As noted in Chapter III, economic power became the most effective source of power, second only to western education. Money and control of wealth have replaced the traditional authority inherent in royalty and other political customary positions. Thus, money defined the basis of power and authority (Wallerstein, 1964:17). The result was a movement from a traditional society based on traditional oligarchy or ascribed authority to a traditional society based on "achievement"¹²⁴. Similarly, new values emerged to replace the old ones that were either rejected or deprecated.

Simultaneously, city centres began to replace the rural communities as centres

¹²⁴ Achievement-based authority is the type that is prevalent in the city centres.

of social and political authority. This is because though the cocoa economy is rural-based, the cities are the export centres. Such a movement greatly reduced the power of the chiefs as traditional custodians of power and authority. As acquired wealth became a measure of a person's social status, people with wealth, notably rich cocoa farmers¹²⁵ began to seek the public offices chiefs customarily held. Some of these *nouveaux riches* did replace chiefs whose right to that public office had from time immemorial, been based on royal descent¹²⁶.

IV.4.7 Social Impacts

The introduction of cocoa into Ghana's agricultural practices greatly accelerated the social transformation process taking place during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. As noted in Chapter III, the British defeat of Asante in the "Sagrenti" War initiated a series of changes within the Asante social group. These propitious micro changes and developments set the stage for the macro changes that followed. In this case, the timing of the introduction of cocoa was the greatest deciding factor in the transformation process. In other words, had any other crop received similar attention and colonial support at that time, it would have, perhaps, produced similar outcomes.

¹²⁵ Without holding any of such traditional public offices, the rich farmers still had no status. They needed such public offices to consolidate their newly acquired status as economic power brokers.

¹²⁶ Most of Ghana's chieftaincy disputes and destoolments are historically rooted in these shifts.

Whether these changes were intended or unintended is irrelevant to this study. What matters is that the changes did occur. The factors that set them in motion also instituted a rapid process of social change by creating several shifts in the traditional social structure. To some extent, these factors were largely exogenous. First, there was the Asante defeat and the subsequent exiling of the Asantehene, Prempeh I and close members of the royal house to the Seychelles Island. Second, the introduction of cocoa heightened the growth of market economy with the consequent total monetization of Ghana's agrarian economy. Contemporaneous with these social changes was the emergence of a new class of rulers comprising professionals and administrators and rich farmers.¹²⁷

IV.4.8 Political impacts

Among the Asante and in Ghana as a whole, political power was customarily vested in traditional leaders. Generally, peasant farmers had no political clout. Farming was presumed to require no special skill. As such, farming was not regarded as a specialized profession, but considered a residual job. Chiefs and elders could be farmers, but they did not become elders because they were farmers. In other words, a member of a social group would not be given any special status merely because the person was a farmer. In most social groups, such recognition is based on concrete achievements or on satisfaction of specific requirements of the

¹²⁷ For want of a better terminology, we will label the emergent *mixed* group as the "middle class".

status. Most often, a farmer would be socially elevated for being a successful or an outstanding farmer, or one who had made some other significant contribution to the groups fortunes. For example, a farmer may be given a special status for showing bravery in the face of danger as in a war.

Such recognition could as well be given to any successful "modern" business person. Peasant farmers were, therefore, not treated differently from other persons. Neither were they exempted from any duty on account of their occupation. For example, in times of war, when male farmers were away on military service, female farmers would simply take full charge of the farming activities. Thus, anybody ready and willing could be a farmer and farming has no special status, certainly not in political terms.

As a group, peasants generally formed the bulk of society, but they had "only peripheral political interest" (Lewis, 1965:22). They had a limited role in running the daily affairs of their communities. Individually, their role in the community was not considered vital to the survival of the entire community. As such, farming may be described as a powerless occupation. Perhaps, their political apathy may be a reflection of their low social status and economic power.

But as discussed in this thesis, the commercialization and monetization engendered by capitalist cocoa production turned around the fortunes of the

farmers. Cocoa production put money and wealth into the hands of many of them. Also, with the steady erosion of the prestige of royalty under the colonial overlordship, most rich farmers put in bids for the chiefly stools. In some cases, they were either appointed or confirmed in power by the colonial authorities. This was because the authorities saw a farmer-chief as a guarantee of political clout to support any colonial economic policy. As a result, the peasants' voices began to be respected in issues concerning the running of their various communities. Clearly, then, cocoa production converted the poor, lowly peasant into an individual with political clout.

IV.5.0 Class system and Class Formation

As noted in Chapter III, cocoa production in Asante did not institute any rigid feudalistic or capitalist class structure. Various reasons accounted for this phenomenon. These reasons may be grouped into three broad categories: the nature of social organization, mode of production, and ownership of the means of production. We examine each factor in turn.

IV.5.1 Nature of Social Organization

The nature of the socio-political organization of a group is a factor in the degree of its success in social transformation. In the case of the Asante cocoa peasant, the matrilineal descent orientation of the social group was an enabling factor. As indicated in Chapter II, matrilineal systems are achievement-based,

which explains in part, the rapid expansion of cocoa production among Asante cocoa peasants. The open-door policy of Asante towards foreigners or non-Asante greatly helped migrant cocoa farmers to settle fairly easily among the Asante. In this way, Asante continued to be more diversified¹²⁸ without any undue strain on the traditional social structure (Wallerstein, 1964:13).

Furthermore, Asante social relations and interactions were guided by kinship factors and, therefore, not confined to any economic determinants. Nevertheless, with the advent of cocoa production, the nature of such social relations was somewhat altered. But the social groups largely retained their traditional systems of operation. As discussed above, this is owed to the dynamism of Asante matrilinealism. Its in-built flexibility allows and recognizes industry and achievement and, by so doing, creates equal opportunity for all its members¹²⁹. As a result, any hard-working individual peasant could become a rich or a powerful potentate of the group. It is in this context that the Asante social group is fluid.

For the foregoing reasons, a rigid stratified class system is almost non-

¹²⁸ Through its wars and the nature of its social organization, Asante was traditionally a diversified society (Wallerstein, 1964:13).

¹²⁹ During Osei Tutu's reign a law was made forbidding members of the "common citizenship to speak of any of the old separate histories of the now united groups". Thus, the law provided an avenue for social mobility. Any hard working member of the social group, including ex-slaves, could rise up the social ladder. See Davidson, (1981:243); and Iliffe, (1983:14).

existent. Indeed, in the whole country, there was no neat division of traditional social classes with opposing interests. Rather, there is a continuum from landless labourer through smallholder (who is also part-land owner and part-labourer) to other self-sufficient small-holders and large-scale land owners. In all these cases, social ties still bind together the landless peasant and the landowner peasant cocoa farmer (Harrison, 1987:395). Thus, this fluid communalistic socio-economic organization largely explains why indigenous capitalism did not evolve easily among Asante.¹³⁰ However, the advent of cocoa production as a long-term investment and commercial enterprise not only set the stage, but also speeded up the emergence of fledgling capitalism among the Asante.

IV.5.2 Mode of Production

As shown in Chapter III, cocoa production among the Asante was largely organized on a household-unit basis. As such, cocoa has remained a peasant export-crop in Ghana. For that reason, the production of cocoa did not destroy the lineage-based pattern of the Asante social organization. Similarly, the effect of the capitalist mode of production¹³¹ it engendered did not fully penetrate the traditional core of

¹³⁰ See Marx, *Capital*, vol. II (1961) pp. 4, Vol. III pp. 325-35; Magnus J. Sampson, *Gold Coast Men of Affairs* reprinted London: Dawson, (1969); John Iliffe, *Emergence of Capitalism* (1983) Chapters 1 and 2.

¹³¹ Arguments for the development or non-development of capitalist mode of production and class system have been well developed in other works like the following: J. Iliffe, *The Emergence of African Capitalism*. London: Macmillan, 1983, Chapter 2; G. Kay. *Development and Underdevelopment: Marxist Analysis*. London: Macmillan, 1975; J. G. Taylor. *From Modernization to Modes of*

Ghana's rural socio-economic system (Kennedy, 1988:16). Nor did it institute any rigid capitalist class structure within the Asante social group. Thus, it is difficult to make any clear-cut class analysis of the composition of Ghana's rural society based on the mode of cocoa production alone.

Besides, the capitalist mode of production was imposed on the Asante pre-capitalist production practices creating a synthesis of modes of production relations. In a way, this synthesis of traditional and capitalist modes of production made it difficult for rural capitalism to supplant the pre-capitalist production relations in Ghana¹³² (Iiffe, 1983:35;38).

Several reasons account for this¹³³. For one thing, there was no ground rent to pay as is the practice in most feudalistic production arrangements. The nature of the sharecropping arrangements also prevented the entrenchment of capitalist mode of production and practices within the social group. The combination of these forms of production relations inhibited rigid class formation

***Production.* London: Macmillan, 1979, especially in Chapter 10.**

¹³² **As noted in Chapter III, cocoa production did not require the acquisition of any new skills. The peasant cocoa farmers simply built on the skills they already had.**

¹³³ **In analyzing agrarian class structure, a close examination must be given to two factors. The first one is the nature of the social organization; and the second one is the "type of economic experience" the group had (Manley, 1991:75).**

among the Asante¹³⁴.

One other factor was the pattern of land tenure. As noted in Chapter II, there was abundant collectively-owned land that allowed for freehold usufruct. This pattern of land-use protected the body of landless peasant wage-labourers from exploitation. The peasant cocoa farmers, therefore, were their own employers.

That is not to say, however, that cocoa production in Ghana did not introduce any form of class system within the generality of the peasant community. As noted in Chapter III, among the cocoa peasantry, four different categories of peasant farmers could be identified. The first group consists of landless peasants who were dispossessed of their land through outright sale or pledging. As a result, they had to work for the richer peasant cocoa farmers either on an annual basis or on some other working arrangements.

Another category of the peasant wage-labourers may be described as seasonal workers who work as labourers to supplement their family incomes. Most people in this category also did their own subsistence farming. A third category includes independent cocoa farmers who work for themselves and depend mainly on their households for the labour needed on their farms. The fourth category consists of

¹³⁴ See also, A. Mafeje, *Agrarian Revolution and the Land Question in Buganda* (Institute of Social Studies, The Hague: Occasional Paper, No. 32 1973) for further discussion.

farmers who own plantations and who are best placed to take advantage of useful technological innovations in cocoa production. They employ wage-labourers or other peasants who become dispossessed of their land¹³⁵.

IV.5.3 Ownership of the Means of Production

As noted in Chapter II, African traditional societies were, in most cases, organized around households. These societies have a strong group orientation and intense communal interests. Such interests are reflected in land ownership and use. Basically, an individual's access to a group's means of production and other group-owned resources depends largely on the individual's membership of that particular group. That way, every member of the social group has equal access to and use of land. No one individual member of the group has any absolute ownership nor the capacity to monopolize land or its use. Individual ownership is recognized and encouraged within the group, but it is group ownership that supersedes.

Among the Asante, there were also flexible land-use arrangements built into the group's land tenure system. Particular examples are the sharecropping agreements of *abusa* and *abunu*. These arrangements allowed even foreigners to feel a sense of ownership of land. Such a situation enabled them to exercise some form of "permanent control over the means of production" (Kennedy, 1988:100). These

¹³⁵ None of these categorizations remains permanent. Some landless peasants work their way up and become cocoa farm landowners or self-employed farmers; or *vice versa*.

kinds of arrangements greatly reduced peasant vulnerability, exploitation and the emergence of a powerful "dominant" class. With this strong sense of group ownership and the usufructuary interests, the increased demand for cocoa farm land did not fully proletarianize the peasants. But it did encourage absolute ownership in many cases.

What the foregoing emphatically implies is that the capitalist mode of cocoa production did not result in capitalist class formation¹³⁶. In other words, the capitalist transformation process was not complete, at least, during the period under review. As noted earlier, kinship defined social relations among the Asante social group. As a result, even with the introduction of capitalist cocoa agriculture and a monetized economy, money did not define "every social relation" (Anshan Li, 1993:21). More so as capitalism was an exogenous feature, it did not evolve with the social group and so did not have any significant immediate effects.

IV.6.0 The Hold-up Strategy

The focus of the analysis of this study is mainly on the outcome of the cocoa hold-up and not the hold-up itself. As such, the cocoa hold-up is conceived as a

¹³⁶ For fuller discussions of class systems and class formation, see Irving Leonard Markovit, *Power and Class in Africa: An Introduction to Change and Conflict in African Politics* (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1977:153-72); Konnings, P. *The State and Rural Class Formation in Ghana: A Comparative Analysis* (London: KPI Ltd., 1986:14), this study discusses the issue in relation to the post-colonial period. See also Anshan Li, "Social Protests" (1993:21-22).

"strategy" or a "reaction" rather than a "peasant protest". As noted in Chapter III, the cocoa hold-up was a single-issue protest. Its main objective was to halt and to force up the falling price of cocoa. In other words, the hold-up was a strategic reaction of cocoa producers to the practice of monopoly price fixing by the monopsonists.

IV.6.1 The "Continuist" Approach

As a strategy, the hold-up was unique in that it did not fall into any of the existing schools of protest strategies. In the various studies of protest strategies, two broad categories have emerged: the "continuist" approach and the "exit" strategy. In terms of strategy, the "continuist"¹³⁷ approach generally embodies resistance to colonialism. The danger in that approach is that it regards all social protests as protests against "whites" or colonial domination. This broad generalization and

¹³⁷ **The early proponents of the African resistance school or the "continuist" approach were Davidson (1968) and Ranger (1968). For full discussion, see A. B. Davidson, "African Resistance and Rebellion against the Imposition of Colonial Rule" in T. O. Ranger, *Emerging Themes of African History*. Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968; T. O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia 1896-7: A Study in African Resistance* (London: Heinman, 1967); "Connection between 'primary resistance' movements and modern mass nationalism in East and Central Africa" *Journal of African History*, 9:3(1968), pp. 437-54.**

The "continuist" approach has expanded to include "collaboration" and "neutrality" as other forms of response to colonial rule. See Allen Isaacman, *The Tradition of Resistance in Mozambique: Anti-colonial Activity in the Zambezi Valley 1850-1921* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Allen Isaacman and Barbara Isaacman, "Resistance and Collaboration in Southern and Central Africa. ca. 1850-1920," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 10:1(1977), pp. 31-62. See also, Li, 1993:2-3.

application of the concept potentially obscures the real problems behind an event like the cocoa hold-up. It also overlooks problems in the rural communities or within the various segments of the social group in issue (Anshan Li, 1993:3). In this sense, this approach is not flexible enough to deal with issue-specific problems such as cocoa prices. Indeed, the cocoa hold-up had a singular, clearly-defined objective that did not situate itself immediately in a typical colonial resistance mould.

IV.6.2 The "Exit" Strategy

The "exit"¹³⁸ strategy, on the other hand, is a typical agrarian tactic. In a nutshell, the "exit" strategy is simply a withdrawal from cash cropping and returning to subsistence production (Anshan Li, 1993:4, n.9). As noted in Chapter I, cocoa is an arboreal crop. As an arboreal crop, once the cultivation process is started, it is impossible to stop production without losing the investment. The crop has to go its full cycle. Not only does cocoa take many years to mature, it also takes much more patience and investment to cultivate. In this light, the "exit" strategy is too costly to contemplate and could not apply to cocoa production. In such a situation, the only option left to the cocoa producers was to withhold their produce till the price was right¹³⁹. It was the only tool the Asante-led Ghanaian cocoa

¹³⁸ The "exit" strategy is well-discussed in Goran Hyden's *Beyond Ujamaa: Underdevelopment and Uncaptured Peasantry* (London: Heinmann, 1980). See also Frederick Cooper, "Peasants, Capitalists and Historians: A review of article," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 7:2(1981).

¹³⁹ The cocoa producers did not only withhold their produce, they boycotted the manufactured goods sold by the monopolistic firms. It is important to note that

farmers had and they used it very effectively.

IV.7 The Significance of the Hold-up

Although the *modus operandi* of the hold-up strategy differed in several ways, its results were similar to and as effective as those of peasant revolts. The success of the hold-up established it as political watershed from which a number of issues flowed. First, it confirmed the latent power of the peasant cocoa farmers and their widespread presence in the country. The fact that they were widely dispersed and existed only in disparate units with no local interconnections, their mobilization for the hold-up was a significant achievement¹⁴⁰ (Austin, 1964:116; Wallerstein, 1964:245).

Among other things, the hold-up brought together disparate peasant groups to act as one. The hold-up also raised a general awareness among all Gold Coasters. Significantly, the hold-up proved that in unity the peasants could make their voices heard concerning grievances they had against the colonial government and the

these monopoly firms are the same monopsonists. From the producers' point of view, the idea is that without the sale of their produce, they could not buy the imported goods: see Bourret, 1949:121-149; also Chapters I-V11 for details.

¹⁴⁰ The hold-up united peasant cocoa farmers from the Gold Coast Colony, Togoland, and Asante under the guidance of their chiefs and leaders of local farmers' unions: see Bourret, 1949:71-73; and Anshan Li, (1993:10).

buying firms¹⁴¹. This was a major effect as it did set the stage for subsequent organized resistance to colonial government policy¹⁴².

The hold-up also vividly exposed the inherent danger in Ghana's heavy dependency on cocoa as its main export commodity. It also revealed the government's vulnerability to the power of the peasants in its dependency on cocoa as its major source of revenue¹⁴³. In a curious form of triangular dependency, cocoa producers, produce buying firms and the colonial government—all depended on the sale of cocoa for their revenues. Most significantly, the buying firms and the colonial government were supported in this link by the peasant cocoa farmers whose hard work maintained them both. That was why any decrease in production or peasant refusal to sell cocoa inevitably meant a serious financial crisis for both entities.

Overall, the hold-up constituted the peasant cocoa farmers into an important

¹⁴¹ The strategy made the people realize the effectiveness of their latent political power. Nkrumah and his Convention People's Party (CPP) used this realization to their political advantage during the struggle for independence. The strategy was also employed during the grassroots political organization of the CPP in the struggle for independence. As it turned out, it was easier for the CPP to mobilize the farmers than the elite: see Austin, 1964:59-66; Wilson, 1977:301.

¹⁴² The same tactic was employed in the 1948 riot following Nkrumah's declared "Positive Action". For full discussion, see Austin, 1964:59-66.

¹⁴³ Cocoa contributed about two-thirds of colonial government revenue. Any drop in cocoa export revenue was thus a drop in the internal revenue of the colonial government: Bourret, (1949) at Chapter VIII.

socio-political segment of the Ghanaian political economy. It made them ready to be mobilized for causes pertaining to Ghana's political transformation process. Thus, it was not surprising when Nkrumah put a cocoa farmer on the Presidential Commission to run the country during his fateful trip to Vietnam in 1966. But in its historical context, the 1937-38 cocoa hold-up demonstrated that the colonial administration could be challenged quite successfully.

Of more permanent value was that the hold-up showed that through mobilization, peasant cocoa farmers could influence both the formulation and implementation of policies, more especially policies relating to their economic lives. The restructuring of the domestic cocoa marketing system and the reorganization of the cocoa industry concretely evidence the farmers' role in directing policies in these areas.

In terms of political power, the hold-up was a demonstration of peasant socio-economic power against the politico-economic power of the colonial government. Given the sweeping socio-economic changes that it brought into Ghana's political economy and regardless of the strategy, one could say that the hold-up fits the peasant stereotype:

peasants influence state power only through open rebellion (San Miguel, 1995:42).

The ability to organize and to mobilize the disparate peasant groups alone was in itself a great political achievement. That the peasants were able to organize with

one resolve to force up the purchase prices made the hold-up a political success.

In sum, the success of the hold-up marked the early beginnings of trade unionism in Ghana. After the hold-up, the peasant cocoa farmers learnt to advance their interests through union representatives and so became a socio-political force to reckon with in Ghana¹⁴⁴.

¹⁴⁴ A national farmers' union was formed in 1949: Austin, 1964:116.

IV.8 Conclusion

The thesis has shown clearly that the establishment and development of Ghana's cocoa economy was an offshoot of colonial economic policy. That policy was rooted in the concepts of "international division of labour" and "comparative advantage". Their implementation in running Ghana's colonial economy constituted the country into a major producer of cocoa: Ghana specialized in cocoa production which subsequently became its main export commodity.

The peripheral status of the cocoa-based Ghanaian economy defined Ghana's articulation as an appendage to a world economy which is dominated by the industrialized north. For, consistent with its status, Ghana's cocoa industry has practically no technological component. The mode of cocoa cultivation typically remains the traditional subsistence means of physical labour utilizing simple farm implements such as mattocks and cutlasses. It is true that over the years, cocoa processing factories sprung up in the country. But the raw materials which feed these cocoa factories are partly processed foreign cocoa products derived from raw cocoa beans exported from Ghana.

The thesis thus conclusively shows that praxis based on the concept of international division of labour firmly set Ghana up as a dependent economy. As well, "comparative advantage" does not offer Ghana any prospect of developing an integrated cocoa industry. This is simply because any such development would start

to negate Ghana's place as a dependent economy contrary to the dictates of the core-periphery philosophies. As argued, only conscious implementation of economic policies founded in structuralist thought hold some hope of getting the country out of its place in the periphery of the world economy.

The spread of cocoa in Ghana was itself not an accident. Even though cocoa was "accidentally" introduced, its spread was facilitated by a number of factors. First, the suitable geographical region occupied mainly by the Asante made it an immediately acceptable agricultural crop among them. Second, their flexible agricultural practices founded in their notion of land tenure facilitated the commercial production of cocoa. Those concepts and derivative practices ensured that cocoa production did not destroy traditional interests in land. This had one major related benefit that encouraged the spread of the crop: it allowed the Asante to admit peasant farmers from other parts of Ghana to hold cocoa-growing farmlands in their own right as terminable interests, or as interests defined in the sharecropping arrangements of *abunu* and *abusa*.

Third, the spread of the crop was also facilitated by Asante social organization. The matrilineal pattern of inheritance meant that non-Asante farmers were absorbed into Asante society through marriage, and through inheritance going to descendants of the female line. Thus, by a combination of favourable climate, land tenure interests and social organization, commercial cocoa production

encouraged by colonial policy thrived among the Asante.

There were consequences for Ghana's economy and social structure arising from the spread of cocoa production. As shown, these include the monetization of the economy; the political and economic ascendancy of peasant cocoa farmers as a heterogenous social group united, nevertheless, by their status as cocoa farmers; the usurpation of traditional political office by mainly monied large-scale commercial cocoa farmers; the development of road and rail facilities opening up the interior cocoa-producing areas to contact with the coastal towns and cities; and the spread of non-traditional western social values to the cocoa-growing areas through education and growing contact with the coastal areas.

It is in the context of the economic ascendancy of peasant cocoa farmers, and their political awareness and familiarity with the mechanics of international trade in cocoa that the hold-up of 1937-38 was discussed. It was shown that the peasants were aware of the centrality of their efforts to the economic health of the colony. Their eagerness to expand production was, however, done in expectation of increased earnings to provide for themselves a better standard of living, and to cater for other needs such as educating their children.

In the absence of good purchase prices, they resented their exploitation by the cocoa purchasing companies and their agents. They resented the growing

impoverishment into which they fell, including the loss of their farmlands to pledgees. They lost patience with the government's inability to guarantee decent returns on their produce.

As a strategy, it was shown that the hold-up was organized to demonstrate the power of the peasants to undermine the colonial economy by withholding their produce and boycotting manufactured imports. It was this strategy that brought them the results they desired: purchase prices were increased, and the whole purchasing system was reorganized to remove some of the exploitative practices of the purchasing agents.

On the whole, the hold-up established a precedent for peasant involvement in Ghana's political process from the colonial era to post-independence.

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Appendix A

Ghana: Regional Boundaries and Capitals 1983

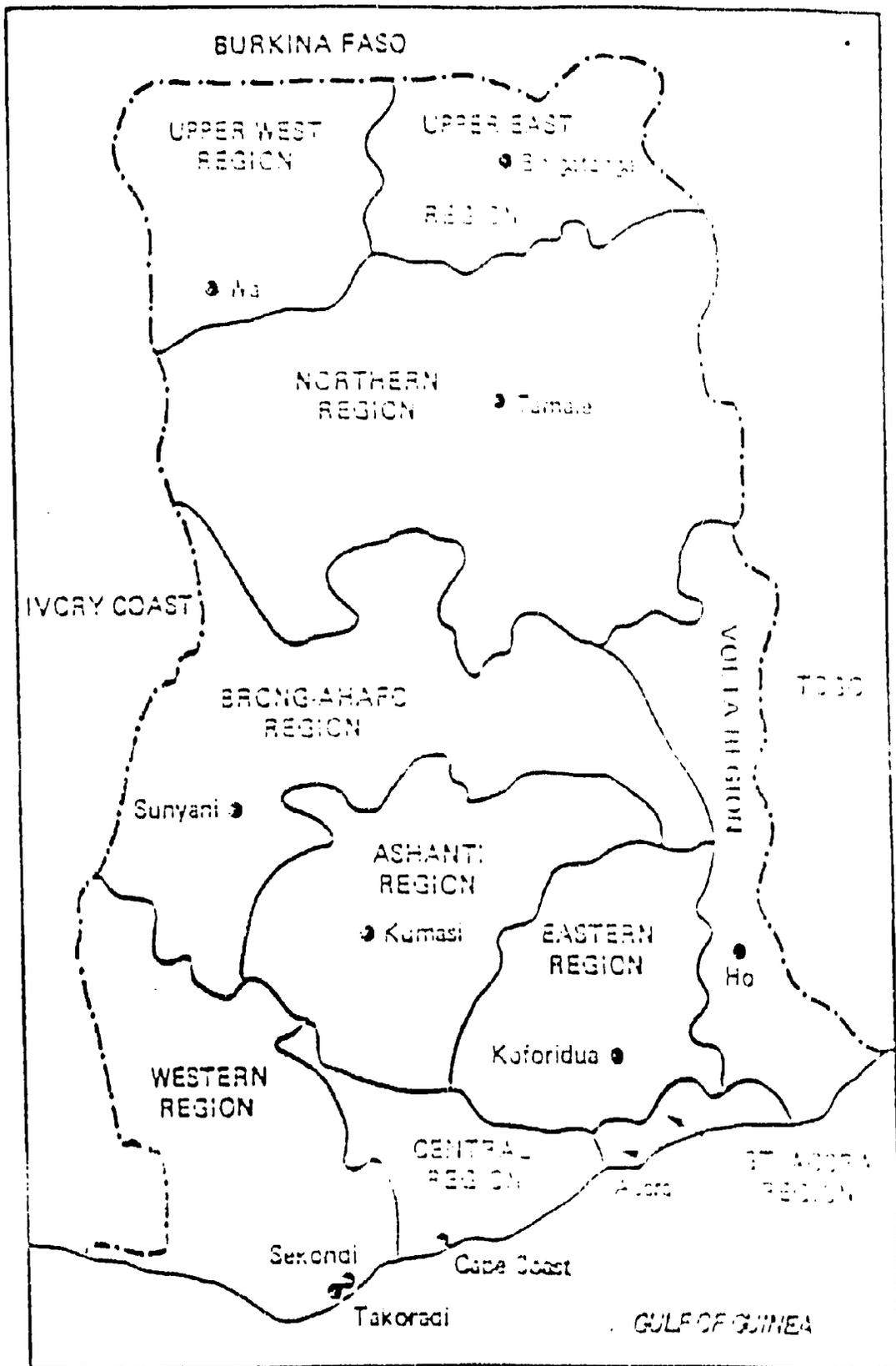
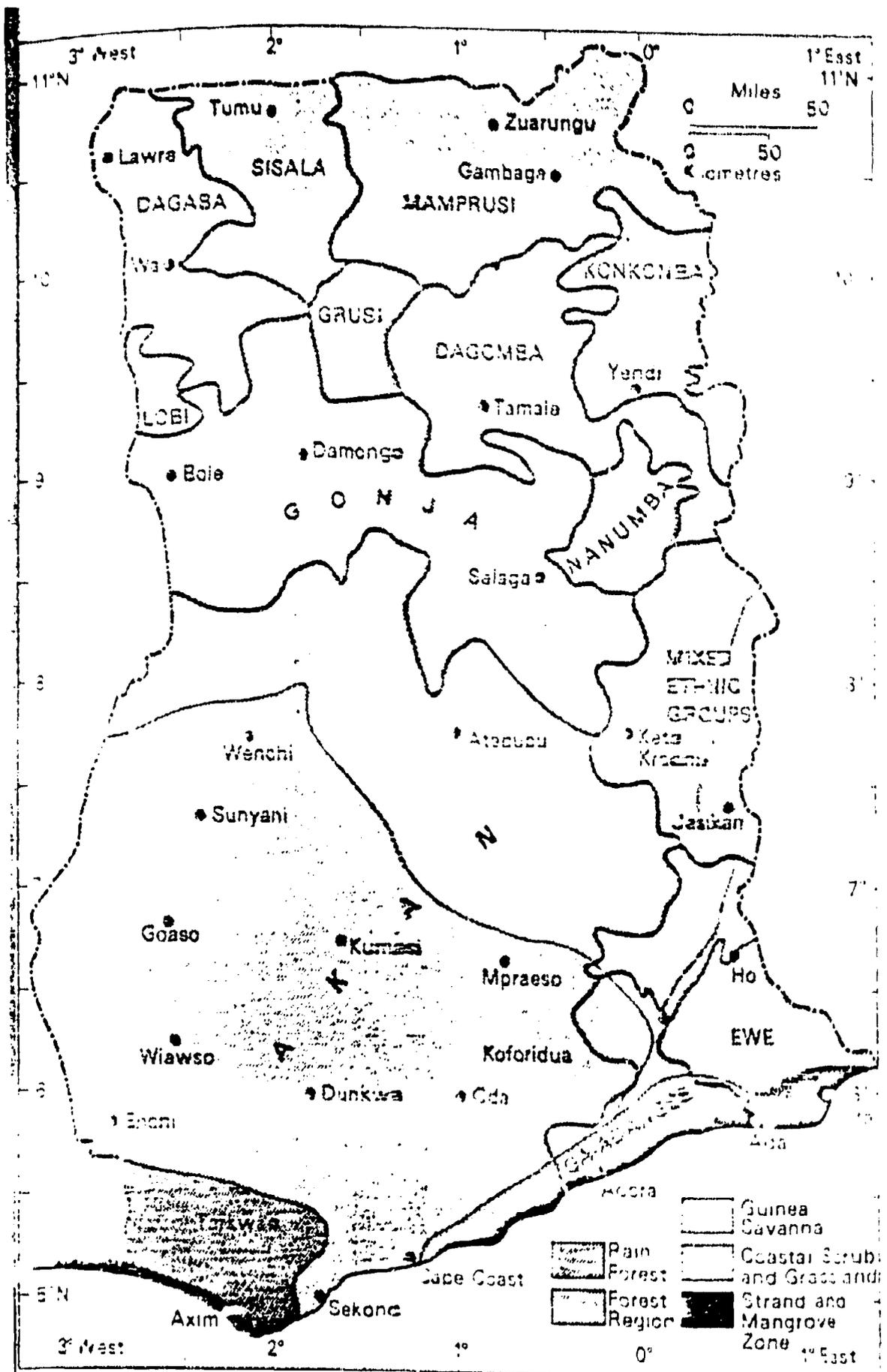


Fig. 1

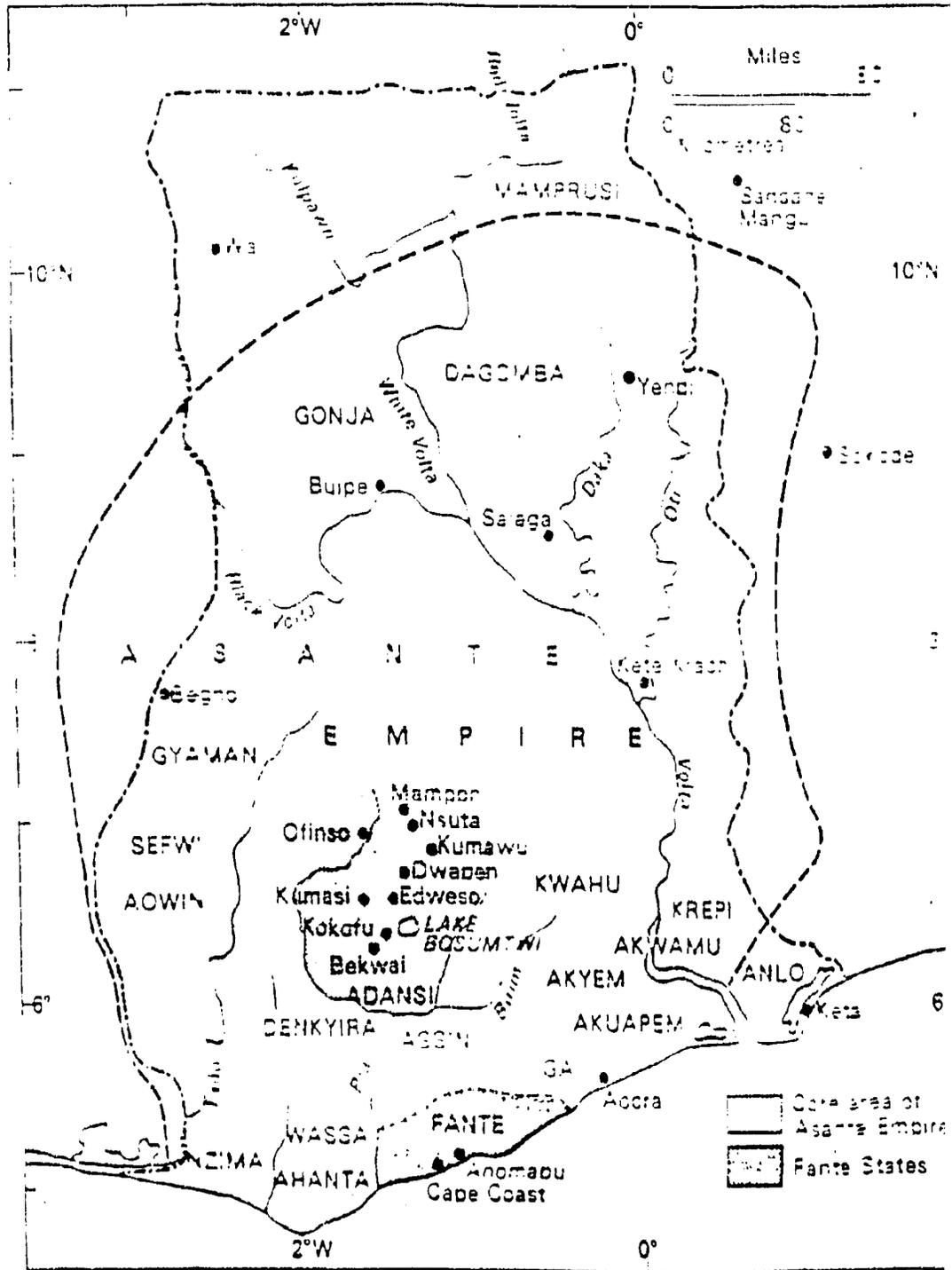
Source: Huij, *The Economy of Ghana*, 1989, p. 245.

✓



Linguistic, cultural and vegetational zones

Source: Adu Boahen, *Ghana: evolution and change*, 1975, p. 90. Fig. 3a



The Asante empire by 1824

Source: Adu Boahen, *Ghana: evolution and change*, 1975, p. 90. Fig. 36'

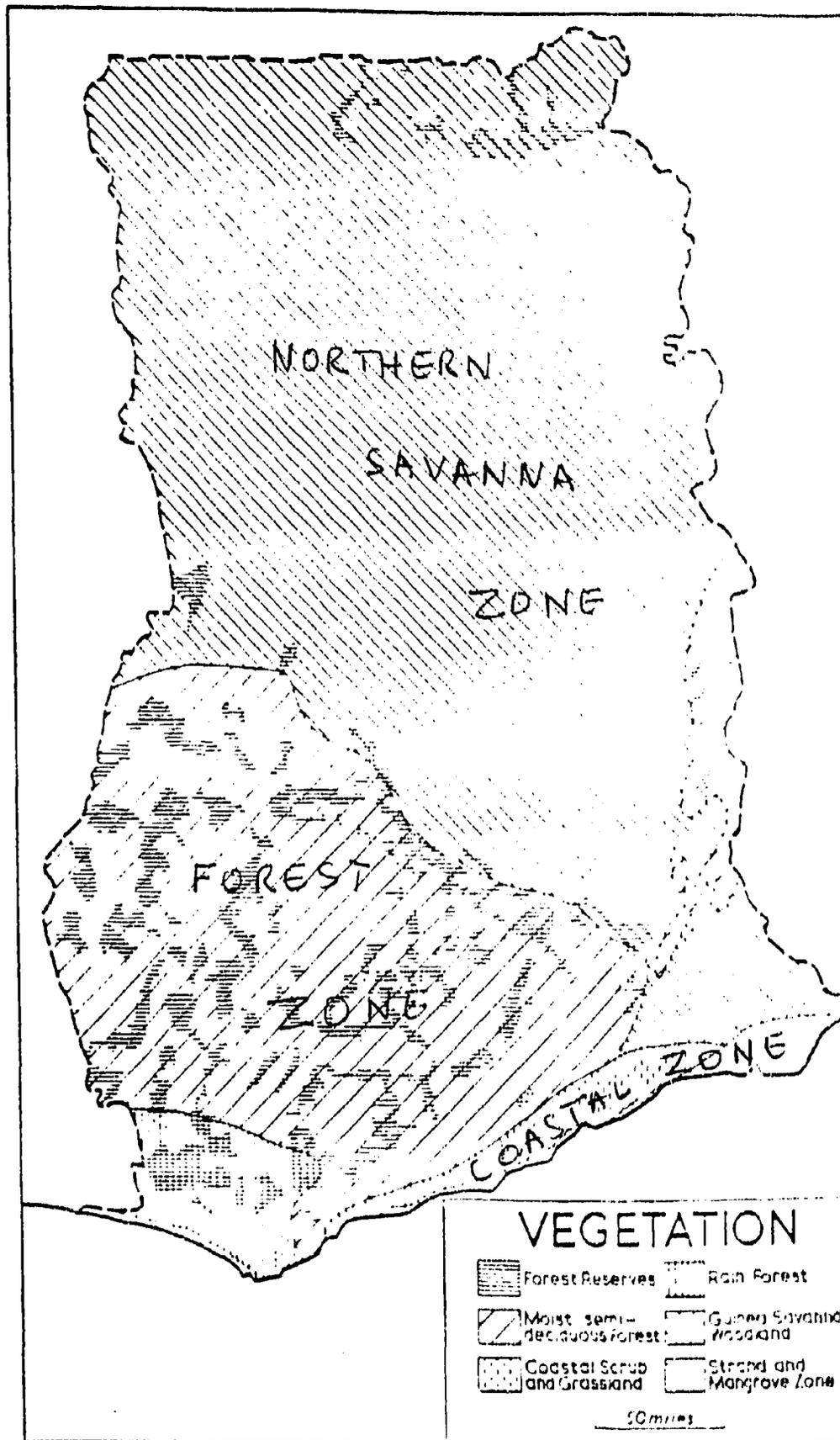
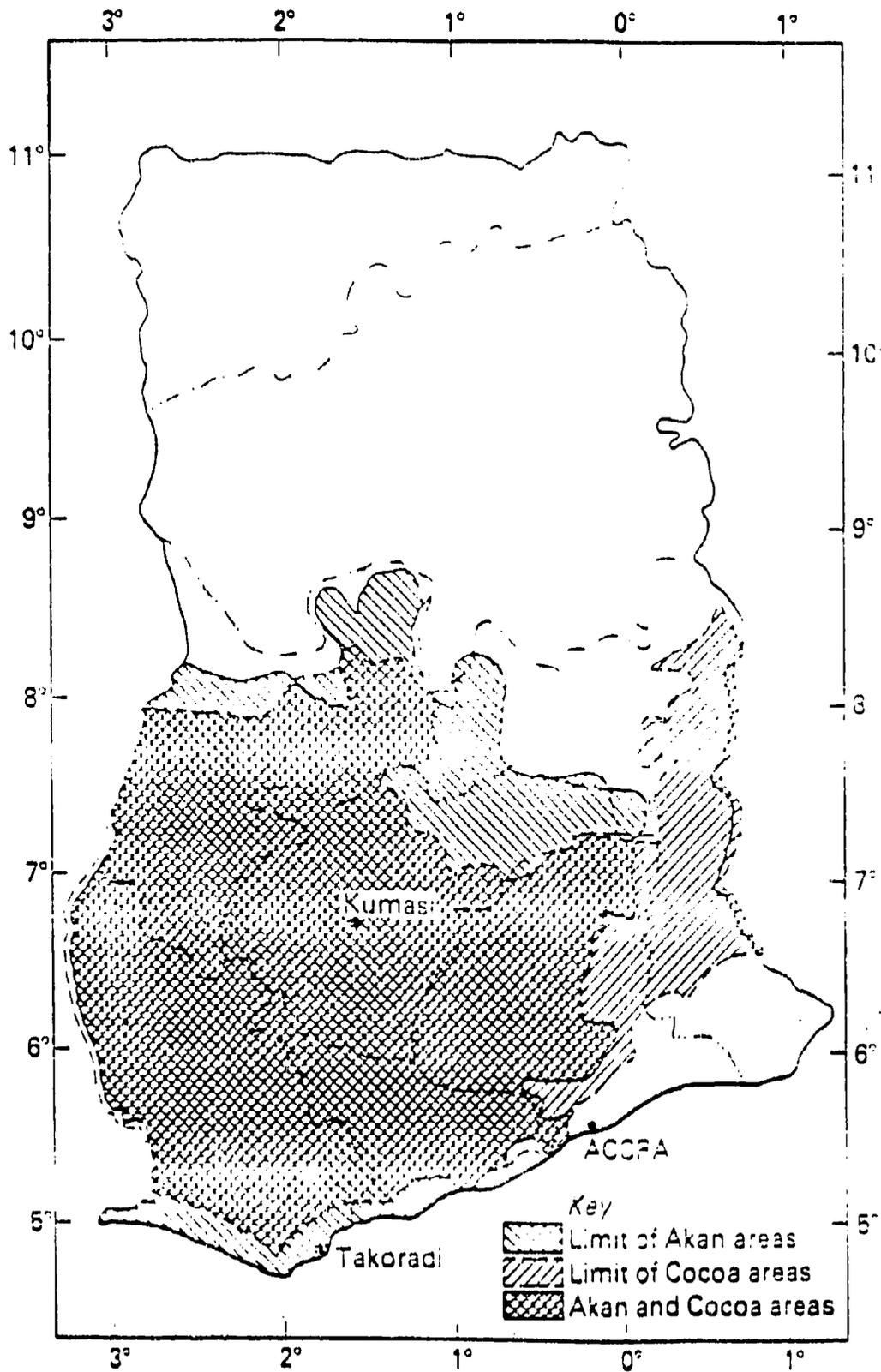


Fig 4.

Source: Baoteng: *A Geography of Ghana*, 1959, p. 47.

Areas of cocoa production and Akan



Source: Christine Okali, *Cocoa and Kinship in Ghana*, 1983, p. 18

Fig. 5

✓

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE SAMPLE SURVEY
(Conducted in 1970)

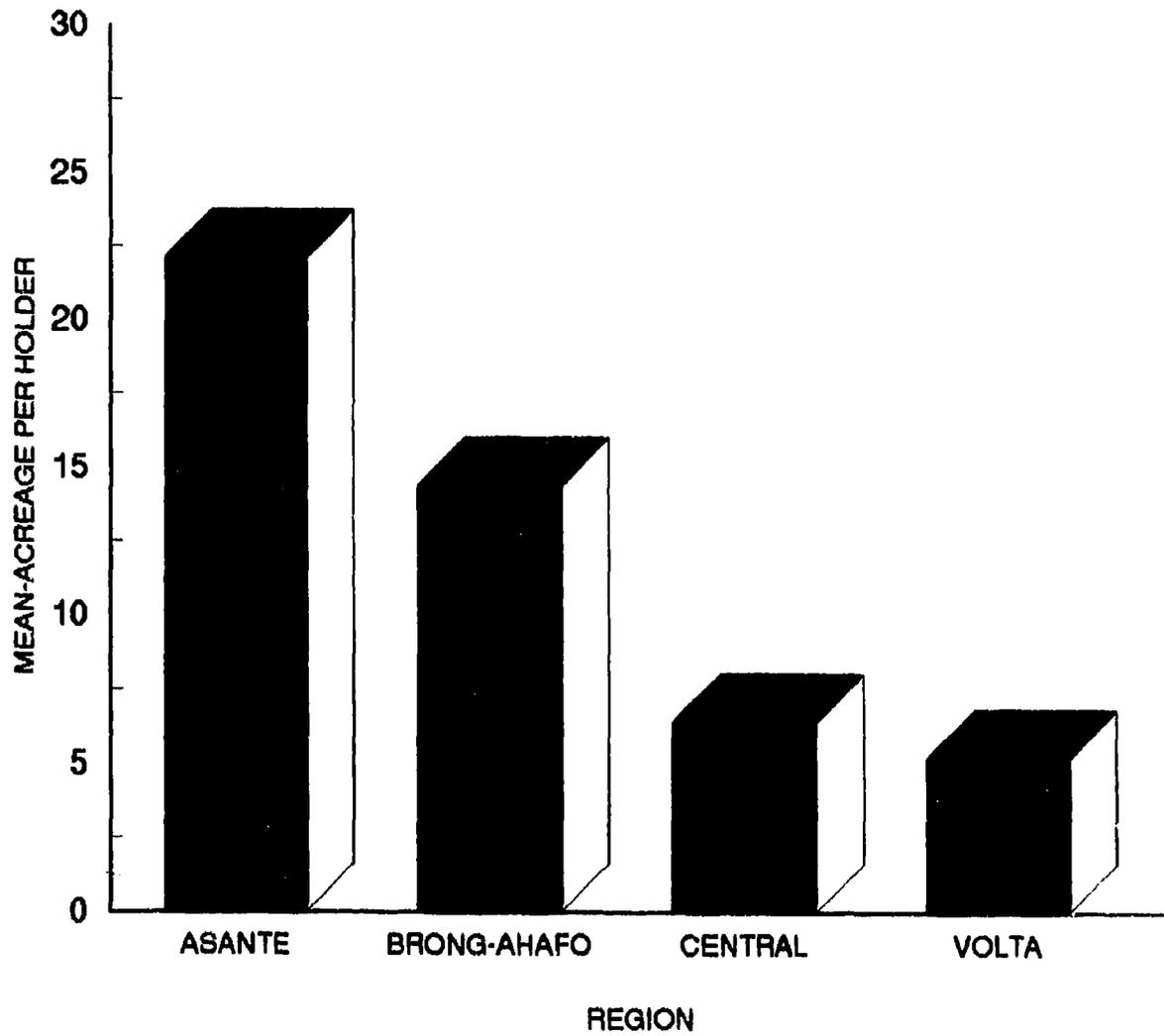


Fig.6

Note: Asante Region as the heart of production
Source: Based on Raw Figs. from Agamah, "Supply Response Relationships in Crop Prod.", 1978, pp.4

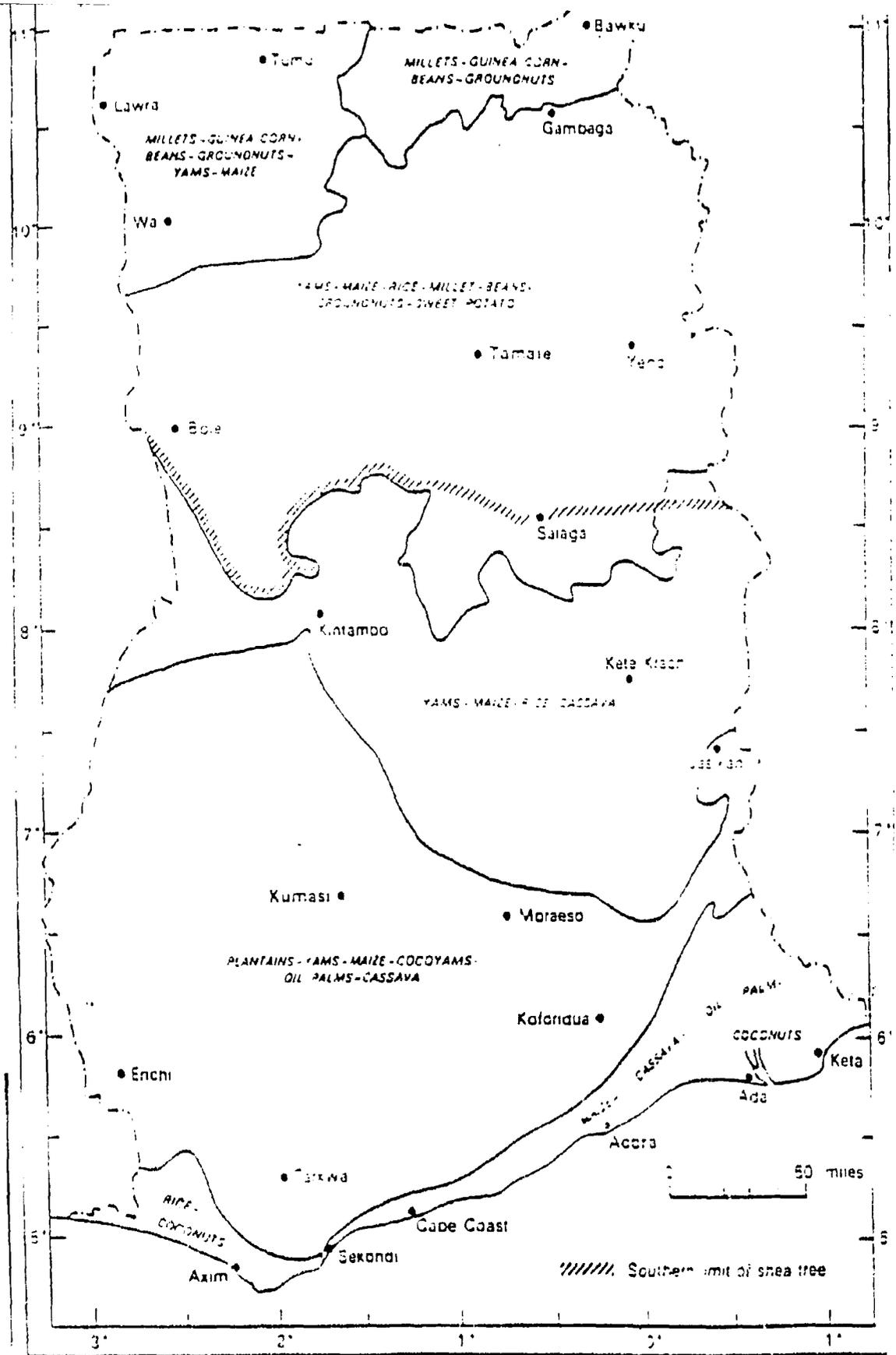
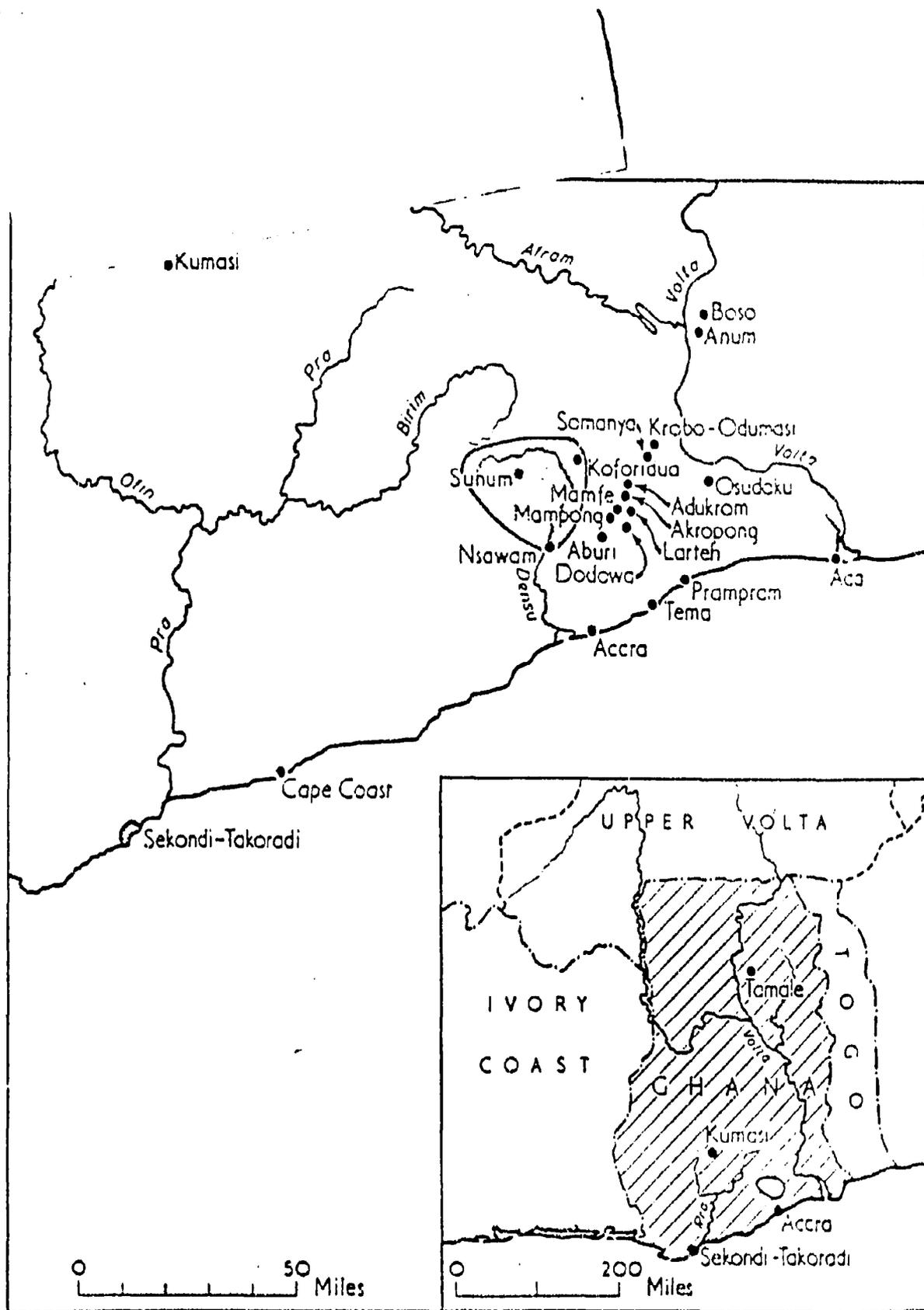


Fig. 6a Food crop regions, 1939



2 Ghana, showing the location of the historic cocoa-growing area.

Fig 7

GHANA: COCOA PRODUCTION

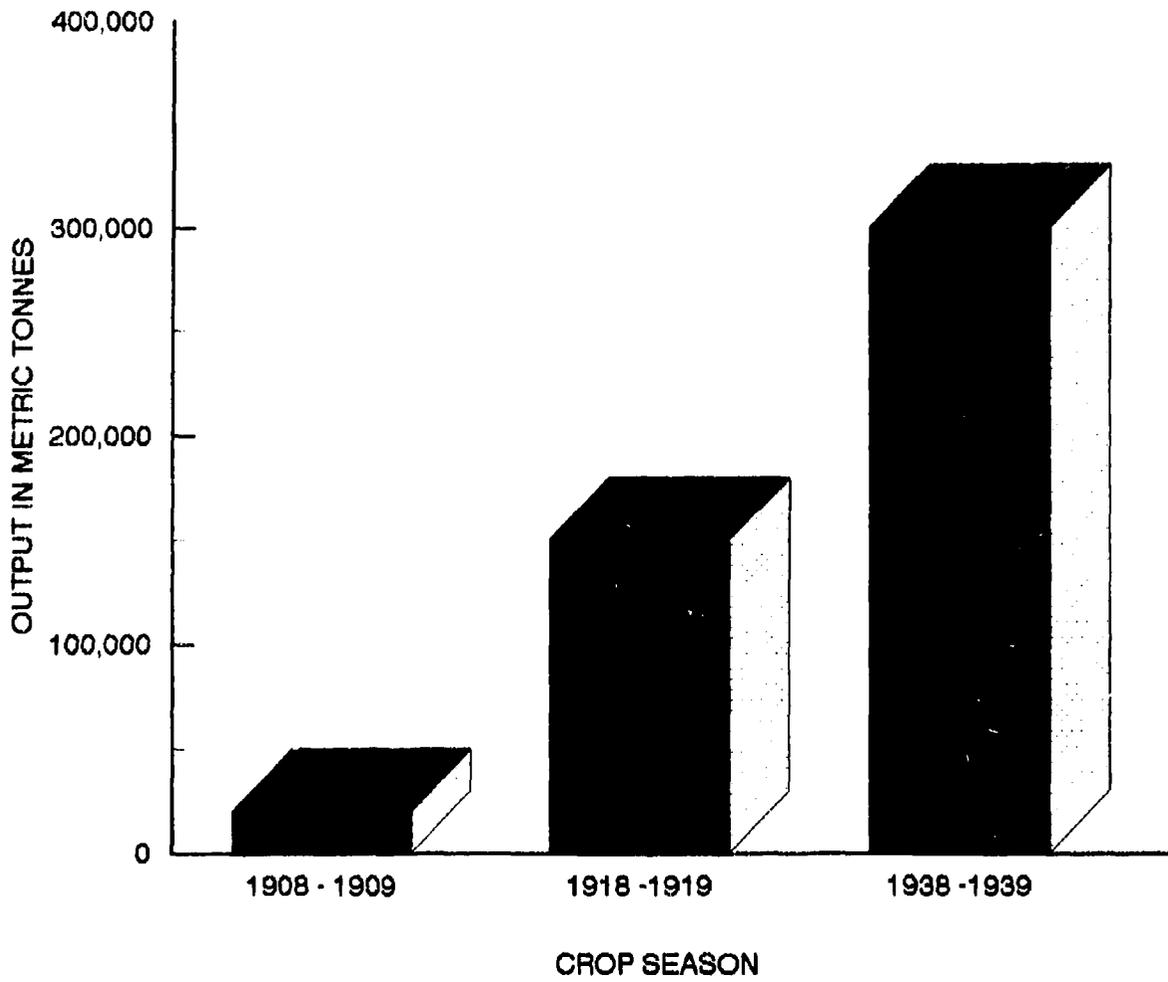


Fig. 8

Note: Ghana became World leader in 1911
Source: Based on raw fig. from Agamah, "Supply
Response Relationships in Crops", 1978, pp. 6

Appendix B

Ghana: Percentage Value of Total Major Exports,
by Five-Year Averages, 1885 - 1959

(PRIVATE) YEARS	TOTAL EXPORT 000s	COCOA	RUBBER	PALM OIL	PALM KERNELS	GOLD	TOTAL EXPORTS
1885- 89	394	-	14	37	11	27	97
1890- 94	704	0	30	26	13	12	81
1895- 99	927	0	46	16	9	8	79
1900- 4	803	11	26	23	12	18	90
1905- 9	2019	23	14	5	4	46	93
1910- 14	3787	46	4	2	4	34	90
1915- 19	6238	66	.9	.6	2	23	93
1920- 24	8737	78	.1	4	1	9	92
1925- 29	12323	81	.2	.2	.9	6	98
1930- 34	8183	65	.09	.06	.5	3	68
1935- 39	12254	53	.2	.05	.5	33	86
1940- 44	12059	30	1.2	.09	.5	50	91
1945- 49	32432	67	.2	.2	.02	16	83
1950- 54	88080	69	.04	.03	.04	10	79
1955- 59	95834	62	.04	-	.04	10	72

Source: J. H. Coatsworth, *Political economy of colonialism in Ghana*.

Table 1

✓

**Ghana: Volume of Major Agricultural Exports,
by Five-Year Totals, 1900 - 1959**

Volume (000 tons)

YEARS	COCOA	RUBBER	PALM OIL	PALM KERNELS
1900 - 4	11.4	5.7	66	66.8
1905 - 9	57.1	6.8	39.7	49.3
1910 - 14	206.7	4.4	25.9	57.3
1915 - 19	483	3.5	10.4	33.5
1920 - 24	841.1	.5*	6.3	22.7
1925 - 29	1122.1	1.9	5.3	33.5
1930 - 34	1134.8	.4*	1.6*	22.8
1935 - 39	1360.1	2.4	2.4	35.6
1940 - 44	956.8	2.4	2.3	33
1945 - 49	1126.6	3.7	1.0*	27.6
1950 - 54	1159.6	1.5	1.5	28.5
1955 - 59	1148	1.8	-	38.7

Source: Raw figures from Kay, *Political Economy of Colonialism in Ghana*, Table 21a ----

* According to Hill. (1964:177) Appendix VI.2. production output for cocoa in 1891 was 80 lb., 1893 - 346,000 lb., 1894 - 20.3, 1895 - 28.9; 1896 - 86.8

1897 - 157

1898 - 414

1899 - 715

It must be noted that bulk of the cashcropping took place in the forest zone where most of rubber and palm products were produced. Cashcropping provided the necessary source of capital for landpurchase for cocoa production. Hill. (1963:164-65). It is also worth noting that most of the peasant cocoa farmers were involved in earlier production of other cash crops rubber Hill. (1963:164-65).

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