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Exclusion of Migrants in Africa**

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**Opening up New Economic Frontiers: Migrants, Rural Integration  
and Conflicts in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire**

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In recent years Ghana has been depicted as a model of good governance based on neoliberal reform and parliamentary democracy, while Côte d'Ivoire has been depicted as a failed state, in which ethnic tensions and neo-patrimonial politics has torn apart the state and resulted in civil war. This represents a reversal of fortunes from the late 1970s and 1980s when Côte d'Ivoire was the miracle state and Ghana the problem case. However, there are many common elements in the histories of both states that revolve around the integration of migrant labour into the cocoa economy and social crises created by the patterns of boom and bust and expansion and contraction of the frontier, which are explored in this paper.

West African economies have long histories of migrations and of integrating migrants into society. This is not surprising given the history of long distance trade and emergence of various regional trading centres linked into the old international world economies of North Africa and the Mediterranean. This is reflected in the many migrant quarters in large towns and the networks of traders with their own political representatives and organisations that link migrants regionally through networks based on symbols of religion and ethnicity. Beyond the urban trade networks many rural societies have developed mechanisms for incorporating diverse populations into plural societies, based on notions of firstcomers and latecomers. Migrants have also come as conquerors, imposing new political structures but becoming incorporated into the culture of the vanquished people. In other societies they have been incorporated as slaves, absorbed into the family structure as dependent family members.

Colonialism altered previous processes and patterns of integration and pluralism, by creating a new category, the economic migrant, who would always remain a migrant and pass on migrant status to their descendants no matter how integrated within the society they became or alienated from their distant homelands, which they may have never visited. This designation of the economic migrant could only be worked out by engaging in ethnic stereotypes, by defining, fixing and freezing ethnic boundaries, in which identities became predetermined by the moment of colonial conquest and the memory of at the moment of conquest. As a consequence, whole rural settlements and sections of towns in polities became designated by the ethnic affiliation of migrants who have lived there for generations, with descendants who have never visited their hometowns, but continue to create that distant identity through use of language and customs, although they are equally at home in the language and cultural idioms of their hosts. The migrants often originate from distant locations, imparting to the independent states of Africa a truly multinational character. In Côte d'Ivoire around 28 percent of the population comprises migrants from other West African nationalities, designated as "strangers".

The economic migrant comes in two flavours: the investor with capital for accumulation, and the labourer who facilitates the investment of others by selling their labour power. The activities of the economic migrant are associated with opening up new frontiers of the economy to capitalist accumulation, export crop production, commercial food productions and the exploitation of a variety

of other commodities. This results in the radical transformation of the society and its identity. As a result the migrant becomes an agent of Faustian development, promising a new future of material prosperity and integration into world economies, but also producing social differentiation, the loss of land for those unable to accumulate, the loss of livelihood, and competition for labour. Thus the economic migrant becomes a source of consternation and moral dilemma, which results in attempts to incorporate them into precepts of a moral economy rooted in good citizenship, or to expel them in times of political and economic crisis. This paper examines the impact of the economic migrant in rural society in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. It examines the role that migrants play in redefining the social categories within societies, the conception of rights and redistribution and the impact of attempts to regulate rural migrants on commoditisation of resources. It examines the

### **The economic migrant and colonial rule**

The economic migrant in West Africa emerged out of the dilemmas of colonial rule. During the 1890s colonial policy was built on constructivist imperialism. In Britain, this was clearly articulated by Milner (1907), and popularised by Joseph Chamberlain (Philips 1989, Cowen and Shenton 1996). British colonialism attempted to create the conditions for European investment in Africa, in return for which European capital would provide colonial administration with royalties and taxes for the creation of a colonial infrastructure. However, European companies were unwilling to engage in large-scale long-term capital investment, and reluctant to finance colonial administration with taxes. Furthermore, the dominant companies in West Africa were mercantile trading companies, who since the end of the slave trade established themselves in import-export trade, of which the main exports were groundnuts and palm oil in the nineteenth century. These companies were alarmed by the prospects of the rise of industrial plantations, which would threaten their control over the trade in peasant produce. Through the Manchester, Liverpool and London Chambers of commerce, they lobbied for a non-interventionist economic policy, which would facilitate trade rather than encourage direct investment in agricultural production. Their great spokesman was E.D. Morel, editor of the *African Mail*. Agriculture was to remain the preserve of autonomous African peasant family farms, producing export crops for European industry. As a result of their pressures on government it became difficult for agro-industrial companies to gain access to concessions for plantation development in West Africa, as was reflected in administrative hostility towards the attempts of Lever Brothers to establish oil palm plantations in both British and French West Africa. Eventually Lever Brothers was forced to locate its plantations outside of West Africa into the Congo. Although a small French settler plantation sector existed in both colonial Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea, these were relatively small scale and did not form the nucleus of large agro-industrial concerns. They were ultimately unable to compete against African peasant production.

The colonial administration found it difficult to recruit labour for public works and turned towards chiefly allies to recruit forced labour. Chiefly allies produced the labour needed for porters for the

army in the conquest of the interior and in road building initiatives. Finding it difficult and expensive to recruit free wage labour, the colonial administrations turned to chiefly allies to provide them with quotas of conscript labour in the early years of colonial rule, and to implement systems of taxation that would ensure that young men were forced to migrate to gain access to currency through labour to meet tax obligations. Through these actions both the system of indirect rule or *association* (in French colonies), which came to characterise early colonial rule was born, as was the economic migrant (Philips 1989, Suret-Canale 1971).

The system of taxation was not uniformly imposed on all West African societies, but certain societies were selected and stereotyped as suitable material for economic migrants. For instance the 1938 *Annual Report for the Northern Territories* describes the people of Northern Ghana as:

an amiable but backward people useful as soldiers, policemen, and labourers in the mines and cocoa farms, in short fit only to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for their brothers in the Colony and Ashanti (p3)<sup>1</sup>.

Before this conversion into migrant labourers came into being, the 1905 *Annual Report for the Northern Territories* noted the dense population of this area, and its potential, through administrative cooperation with chiefs, to becoming a vast labour reserve:

With the enormous population that exists in parts of this country I have great hopes of these young men forming in the near future a new source of labour for the mines at Tarkwa and Ashanti. This would bring money into the country, which is badly needed, and the chiefs recently interviewed on this matter have taken much interest in the question, and expressed themselves as very desirous of sending their young men to work<sup>2</sup>.

In 1911 Governor Guggisberg, questioned if the agricultural backwardness of the north had not emerged from the policy of starving it of resources to create a labour reserve:

I have absolute evidence that the Country [Northern Territories] is extremely rich ground for the development of a huge trade in both groundnuts and shea butter. It is also fine country for rice... a commodity badly needed here and for which, with a railway, we could export large quantities. I am doubtful if the agricultural poverty of the country was a reason for the desire to postpone the railway. Rather was it due to the policy which has openly obtained... of starving the Northern Territories of the means of development; that time is now past.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, visiting Upper Volta in the 1920s Albert Londres described the country as:

A reservoir of manpower: 3 million negroes. Everyone comes here to get them as one would go to a well for water. For the building of the Thiès-Kayes and Kayes-Niger railroad the Mossi are tapped. For the railroads of the Ivory Coast, Mossi country is tapped. The [French] woodcutters leave their lagoons [coastal areas] to tap the Mossi (Londres, 1929:129, quoted in Skinner 1965).

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<sup>1</sup> Gold Coast *Annual Report of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, 1938*, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Gold Coast *Annual Report of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast, 1905*, p. 9-10

<sup>3</sup> GNA, Tamale GNA, Tamale, ADM 12/3/32 Conference of 30<sup>th</sup> Nov 1919, pp 15-16.

Cutulo (2010) argues that from the 1920s colonial Côte d'Ivoire was governed according to a set of regional and ethnic stereotypes in which the southeastern Akan societies that were ruled by chiefs were considered potential entrepreneurs and planters; the northern sector habited by the Senufo, were designated as suitable labourers; the Dyula, as useful commercial agents; and the southwest as a region of important natural resources inhabited by primitive people, in which development was to come about through the entrepreneurial activities of Dyula planters. This stereotypical plan was reified by a series of ethnographic studies reproducing the ethnic characterisations, and differential policies shaping and determining Ivoirian society. Thus colonial policy sought to define and shape the main areas of natural resources, the main export producing zones, and the main people who would migrate to these areas.

Although it was possible for colonial administrations to transform particular areas into labour reserves through taxation policies, it was much more difficult to control the movement of labour to particular areas. While the Mossi were transformed by French colonial policies into the main migrant labour in West Africa, most of them ended up in destinations outside of French colonies. Since labour remuneration was more favourable in the Gold Coast cocoa industry, large numbers of Mossi men chose to migrate there rather than to the favoured official French destinations of the Côte d'Ivoire, the Office du Niger, and Senegal. Delavignette (1950) estimated that the threat of recruitment for forced cotton cultivation in the 1930s encouraged about 100,000 Mossi to migrate to the southern Gold Coast. Coulibaly (1986) records that between 1935-1937 officials counted between 75,000 to 100,000 Mossi migrants on the Gold Coast, although numbers of migrants was likely to be much higher. By the late 1950s it was estimated that there were between 300,000-400,000 Mossi working in the Gold Coast (Rouch 1960). In a bid to redirect Mossi migrants to the French settler plantation sector in the Côte d'Ivoire, the south of Upper Volta was annexed to Côte d'Ivoire as a labour reserve from 1932-1947. However the policy rebounded against the French colonial administration, and much of this labour escaped forced labour on French plantations by relocating to indigenous cocoa and coffee plantations (Skinner 1965).

By the late 1940s France had to acknowledge the inhumanity of its forced labour policies in Côte d'Ivoire, scrapping the *indigénat*, withdrawing its support from French planter domination, and enabling indigenous planters to dominate production in the postwar period. Similarly on the Gold Coast, attempts to create labour reserves for the gold mines failed, as migrants preferred to work in the indigenous cocoa sector.

### **The role of labour in opening up the export frontier**

According to the vent for surplus theory the development of export crop production in Africa was relatively simple, once Europe had created market demand for export crops and an infrastructure of internal and sea transport. Prior to this production was constrained by limited market opportunities resulting in underemployed family labour and small farms. Farmers were easily able to meet the

demands for export crops by extending hours of farm labour and extending their holding sizes, without threatening food production (Myint 1957). In reality, this was far from the truth, and the opening up of export crops frontiers was dependent upon both the creation of prior surplus capital and of labour markets.

Palm oil and groundnuts emerged as the main export crops produced in West Africa in the early nineteenth century. The groundnut economy of the Senegambia was created by wealthy Soninke traders. In the north of Senegal they traded slaves and salt in exchange for cereals, which were produced by their slaves and bonded labour. In the south they sold salt, cattle and cotton cloth, which was also woven by their slaves. They also exchanged lagoon salt purchased in the coastal areas of the Gambia with gold produced in the north in the Bambuk area. During the wet season, when they moved into the Gambia they set their slaves to work the land and cultivate crops which were sold to purchase salt. With the emancipation of slaves under colonial rule this mode of accumulation was undermined. The Soninke traders could no longer trade in slaves, or move slave labour across borders. As a consequence these traders declined and were largely replaced by Soninke Islamic clerics who developed new labour relations based on their koranic schools. Student devotees (*talibes*) paid fees to their teachers in the form of labour services. Soninke clerics organised networks of *talibes* who moved into the Gambia developing the groundnut industry on the fertile moist soils, which were more productive than those in the Soninke area. They were given plots of land by Gambian farmers in exchange for a number of days labour on the landlord's farm, thus recreating the relations of production that characterised bonded labour as a free contract. Soninke youth also migrated to the Gambia as agricultural labour and farmers (Manchuelle 1997).

Within the Gold Coast oil palm production developed in the early nineteenth century alongside Volta trade, based on the southwards movement of slaves and the northern movement of salt. Wealthy Akuapim and Krobo traders purchased slaves which they set to open up large oil palm plantations in the forest area of south-eastern Ghana. These slaves were incorporated into their family structures. With the emancipation of slaves, these two societies were able to continue to invest in agrarian expansion, through using extended family labour, unlike the neighbouring Akyem Abuakwa in which there was widespread desertion of slaves (McSheffrey 1983). The profits invested in oil palm were later reinvested in the expansion of cocoa. However, the most significant expansion of cocoa farming and export crop production followed the development of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast and the Mossi area of the French colony of Upper Volta as labour reserves, which resulted in considerable movement of migrant labour into the forest area of the Gold Coast in search of work.

The opening up of the forest zone for cocoa production was dependent upon two factors: 1) the availability of capital to invest in the creation of an infrastructure for cocoa, which came to include purchase of land, purchase of cocoa seedlings, hiring of labour, creation of villages, roads, bridges, and investment in transport and marketing; and 2) the availability of labour.

Differences in the availability of these two factors in different localities account for variations in the nature of the cocoa frontier and tenure and production relations in various societies and regions. Where capital was available but labour scarce, the opening of the frontier depended upon the creation of migrant labour. However, where both labour and capital were scarce, the opening up of the export crop frontier was dependent upon the migration of both entrepreneurial farmers and of labourers.

The earliest cocoa frontier in the Gold Coast lay in the Akyem Abuakwa area. Merchant-farmers who had accumulated capital in oil palm in the Akuapem and Krobo areas began purchasing adjacent land from Akyem chiefs for oil palm from the 1830s. By the 1880s they began investing in cocoa. Since cocoa required thicker moist deciduous forest, the cultivation of cocoa entailed further migration deeper into Akyem territory. While Akyem Abuakwa was controlled by powerful chiefs, civil war and wars with Asante had resulted in an economic decline, which constrained the ability of the nobility in this area to mobilise labour and capital for accumulation. The Akyem chiefs willingly transacted lands with Akyem and Krobo migrant farmers to realise capital to meet their social obligation and expenditures (Hill 1963, Amanor 1994).

As news about the profitability of cocoa spread, less wealthy migrants would move to the new frontier areas in search of livelihoods and work, but without the capital to purchase land. The Akyem chiefs began to release land to these poorer migrants on sharecropping arrangements (*abusa*). The terms of these arrangements involved the chiefs releasing land to the migrant, and the migrant creating a plantation. After the plantation was created it was divided between the landlord and the farmers, with the landlord taking a two third share and the farmer a one thirds share of the plantation. Both parties worked their land independently. Alternatively, the tenant could work the whole land, in which case the landlord took one third of the produce or proceeds and the tenant two thirds. Through these sharecrop arrangements the landowning Akyem chiefs were able to emerge as cocoa farmers in their own right, without investing capital in the development of cocoa plantations (Amanor 1999, Hill 1956).

The creation of colonial labour reserves transformed cocoa production, resulting in the influx of a large labour force, which enabled cocoa farmers and landowners to expand the areas of cultivation. The northern migrants were largely employed as annual labourers or *abusa* caretakers. In contrast to the *abusa* tenant farmer, the *abusa* caretaker managed an established plantation and was remunerated with a third of the harvest for managing the farm. The annual labourers worked on a yearly contract, and were remunerated at the end of the year, after which they returned home with the money they had earned and goods they purchased (Hill 1956). The advantage of the annual contract for the migrant labourer was that it prevented them from frittering away their income. The advantage for the cocoa farmer was that it enabled them to pay their labourers after the cocoa had been harvested, enabling them to maximise capital investment in their farm enterprise by delaying labour payments.

In contrast with the Akyem area, the Ashanti region had many aspiring rural entrepreneurs who had accumulated money in the rubber trade and could mobilise rural labour. The later opening of

cocoa in Ashanti in comparison to the Eastern Province of the Gold Coast meant that Asante cocoa farmers they were able to better take advantage of migrant northern labour for the expansion of cocoa. As a consequence the accumulation of cocoa in Ashanti did not involve the alienation of land to migrant capitalist farmers or tenants, but expansion by aspiring Asante cocoa farmers with northern labour hired as annual labourers and *abusa* tenants.

In the Sefwi area, few indigenous farmers controlled the necessary capital and labour to invest in cocoa. Thus the opening up of cocoa involved alienation of land to migrant farmers able to invest in plantations and the attraction of labour to the area. Writing in the 1950s, as the Sefwi frontier began to open up Hill and McGlade (1957:10) noted:

the stranger farmers are opening up the Sefwi area with a vigour quite foreign to the native Sefwi farmers, whose are usually very small (an eight of an acre is a typical sort of size we have heard). Perhaps in the end the native farmers will come to resent the encouragement given to the immigrants by the chiefs. But for now there is little evidence of a conflict between the chiefs and the people.

By the 1980s, the Sefwi area was to become marked by conflicts between migrants and local youth as the youth experienced increasing land shortage and began to blame it on the influx of migrants. However, in the 1950s land could easily be acquired by migrants at favourable prices or under favourable condition. Hill and McGlade (1957) describe free gifts of land been made to northern migrants in the hope that this would attract their kith and kin to migrate into the area, creating an abundant supply of labour. Migrants could also purchase land or acquire it on an *abusa* basis, in which the tenant would provide the chief with one third of the plantation acquired.

Within the forest region of Côte d'Ivoire the opening up of the forest, particularly within the southwest was initially carried out by the Dyula, and Baule planters, the major investors in large plantations. Originally working as labourers and sharecroppers on Agni cocoa and coffee plantations in southeastern Côte d'Ivoire, the Baule gradually became established as the main cocoa planters (Kobben 1956). The main labourers originated from Burkina Faso and Mali, and often had close links with the Baule cocoa farmers, which was reflected in the close political alliance between the Parti Démocratique de Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI) and the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain (RDA) in Upper Volta, and the championing of the rights of the Dyula, Senufo and Mossi by the PDCI. This alliance emerged out of the annexation of the southern part of Upper Volta from 1932-1947. Baule cocoa farmers were well represented within the PDCI. By the early 1970s this incorporation of migrants into the opening up of the cocoa frontier became official national policy. At the 1971 Congress of the PDCI Houphouët Boigny declared:

There is enough cultivatable land, but a shortage of manpower. The government and the party have decided, in the national interest, to grant all citizens -whether Côte d'Ivoire is their country of origin or adoption - who cultivate a plot of land of whatever size, the right to permanent ownership which can be passed on to their heirs (quoted in Diaby 1996:151).



This policy was effective in facilitating the rapid expansion of the cocoa frontier into the southwest and led to Côte d'Ivoire emerging as the leading cocoa producer in the world controlling 40 percent of world cocoa production by the early 1990s. During the 1940s the marketing of export crops was taken over by state commodity marketing boards, which were bequeathed to the newly independent nation states. In this context, the rapid expansion of production served as a major source of revenue for the state, in the rents it derived from international marketing. Thus the rapid expansion of cocoa served to create important funds for state development initiatives. This came to form the basis of a new social contract in which the Baule planters emerged as the main investors in plantations, the Sahelian migrants as the major labour force, and the communities of the southwest as the major land leasers. The elders and chiefs within the southwest were encouraged to release land to migrants for cocoa production, in return for which the state invested in the development of infrastructure and education and the provision for the children to relocate to the urban areas. This social contract enabled migrants from neighbouring countries to fill the lowest rungs of rural society, while a rule of 'national preference' in access to employment, social housing, education enabled home grown Ivoirians to move up the social ladder in the urban world (Cutolo 2010, Chauveau 2006, Losch 2000, Akindès 2000). The state advised elders and chiefs to give land freely to migrants without selling it, but most of the chiefs innovated neo-customary institutions for land transactions which involved elements of fees and payments that reflected land values, although shrouded with customary symbols.

One of the major attractions of migrants for landowners during the phase of frontier development was the potential to gain revenues from land transactions. While colonial rule accorded chiefs rights in land as custodians of the community, the rights could not be transformed into monetary benefits within the community, since all community members had user rights in land. Thus, in areas where the landowning elite lacked the capacity to organise investment in cocoa production, it was only through alienation of land to migrants that the landowning elites could materially benefit from their control over land. However as land was rapidly alienated to migrants and its scarcity value increased, the perception developed among the landholding communities that the migrants had acquired the land cheaply in comparison to the potential profits from cocoa, and that this was were creating land scarcity for local people. Thus, the initial welcome of migrants rapidly turned into social tensions and conflicts.

Apart from the revenues that can be gained from giving migrants access to land, migrants also become incorporated into a web of moral economy based on notions of citizenship and respect. The simplest form of incorporation of migrants involves the payment of a tribute at the annual harvest festival, which signifies their acceptance of the control of the host community over the land, and their voluntary contributions towards the development of the community (Chauveau 2006). Access to land could be gained through service to a landlord. In addition to labouring on cocoa plantations, annual labourers also ran errands for their employers, such as fetching water, fuelwood, and helping in the more arduous tasks around the homesteads. The employer also helped the annual labourer, giving

them patches of land on which to grow food, and providing them with food, shelter and clothing. This moral economy was often expressed through the improvisation of neo-customary arrangements.

### **Declining frontiers, recession and changing neo-customary arrangements**

Cocoa production is a highly vulnerable economic activity. While the cocoa frontier develops rapidly cocoa production is susceptible to fluctuating cycles of boom and bust, in which international prices collapse and world production becomes saturated. In old frontier districts cocoa is vulnerable to pest attacks and difficulties and high costs of replanting (Ruf 2001). The rapid expansion of the cocoa frontier can result in the economy becoming increasingly dependent upon cocoa, to the extent that a decline in the fortunes of cocoa affects the whole economy. The rapid expansion of the frontier leads to a transformation of the economy, in which land begins to be perceived as scarce and labour abundant. This results in changing attitudes to migrants who become seen as a nuisance, blocking opportunities for locals, and the principal source of economic woes.

In the 1950s migrants were welcomed into the Sefwi area in western Ghana to help develop cocoa farming. With the influx of migrants in search of land, land became more valuable and migrants were willing to pay more for land. Initial gifts of land that had been granted to migrants were replaced by land sales, and then later by sharecrop arrangements, in which tenants provided the chiefs with a proportion of the developed cocoa plantation. With each development in tenure relations, the new relations were made to apply retrospectively to the earlier arrangements as custom was transformed. Migrants who had understood that they had purchased land found that these arrangements were redefined as customary prestations to gain access to land, and their land now became subject to sharecrop arrangements. Land purchases were also interpreted by the chiefs as being arrangements specifically for the cultivation of cocoa. When the plantation became old and in need of replanting chiefs argued the migrants had to renegotiate for the land. During the 1970s and 1980s chiefs began to impose newly created taxes on migrant tenants, and tenants could be individually summoned to the Traditional Councils of Chiefs to make payments. In 1986 the Traditional Council of Chiefs announced a campaign to register the lands of migrants. Fearing that this would lead to the expropriation of parts of their land, the migrants refused to this registration. The chiefs instructed the migrants to either submit or stop cultivation and mobilised local youth to expel migrants from their farms. The youth were embittered by their lack of access to land and viable livelihoods. The chiefs expropriated farms and imposed a 10 percent levy on cocoa production. In the ensuing violence the government intervened and found in favour of the migrant farmers (Boni 2008, 2005).

Government in Ghana has not always intervened on behalf of migrants, or protected their rights. For instance, during the late 1960s and early 1970s the government blamed the economic recession on immigrants from neighbouring West African Country. In an interview in the *Daily Graphic* of 19 January 1970, the Prime Minister, Dr Kofi Busia stated:

of the people who have registered for work, one in every four is unemployed. Rising prices and pressures: what were we to do? Then, as you know our estimated population now is about eight million. The aliens also number one million and a half. We know that many of them are in the country without resident permits, because of the policies of the Nkrumah government which seemed to invite everybody at all who like to come and stay in Ghana.... Also a number of people have noticed aliens who were unemployed and engaged in stealing. And some were engaged in petty trading in foodstuffs and the rest. So people began to ask why there were so many aliens here. This is a question that no popularly elected government can ignore. So we said let our laws be fulfilled. We have regulations and those aliens who have come without residence papers must obtain them.

At the end of 1969 an Aliens Compliance Act was introduced which gave immigrants two weeks to leave Ghana. Many hundreds of thousands of immigrants were expelled and many of them had to abandon their property, or had it seized. The expulsion mainly focused on petty traders and the informal sector, but rural youth began to point the finger at “alien” farm labour from Sahelian countries and demand that they leave. In many parts of the forest, the influx of migrant labour had resulted in a shortage of land for youth, as cocoa farmers expanded their plantations. Youth had limited options to gain livelihoods through labouring since they had to compete with the much cheaper labour of migrant labourers, in the form of annual labourers and sharecrop caretakers. Thus, local youth began to resent the migrant labourers from the Sahel. Thousands of farm labourers from Sahelian countries departed and the structure of rural labour relations became transformed, with local youth replacing migrant labourers, and casual daily labour replacing annual and sharecrop caretakers (Amanor 1996). This resulted a decline of cocoa production as farmers found the costs of replanting old plantations high in relation to depressed prices for cocoa in the 1970s, and plantations were converted to food farms. Youth also increasingly acquired land for food cropping on an annual sharecrop arrangements from landowners. Labour for cocoa production became increasingly scarce and expensive and cocoa production declined in Ghana, as Côte d’Ivoire emerged as the dominant cocoa producing country in the world, deploying considerable Sahelian labour that had relocated from Ghana. Thus the timing of Houphouët Boigny’s declaration in 1971, welcoming Sahelian migrants to cultivate land in Côte d’Ivoire and acquire rights to land, coincided with the expulsion of immigrants from Ghana.

Land allocation to migrants in the southwest Côte d’Ivoire began to follow similar patterns to Ghana, although the migrants gained much wider scope for owning land. The landowning elders improvised the *tutorat*, a neo-customary institution based on notions of tribute for the allocation of land. The *tutorat* establishes a relationship between landlords and migrants in which the migrant gains access to land in return for social obligations to respect the landowners and their ownership of the land, and to acknowledge this by providing them with annual gifts of agricultural produce, and voluntary contributions towards social expenditures incurred by the hosts and local development initiatives. Since this was conceived of as a social relationship of generalised reciprocity the terms of the land transactions were not specifically laid out but evolved over time, reflecting the increasing commodification of agriculture and land (Chauveau and Colin 2010). As in Sefwi, the prestations

made by migrants became increasingly monetarised and adjusted upwards in relation to the changing values of land. Migrants understood these arrangements to be land sales couched within customary social conventions.

The success of rapid expansion of the cocoa frontier into the southwest during the 1980s brought problems during the 1990s, particularly as it contributed toward a world glut of cocoa and collapsing prices. The ensuing world crisis would result in the collapse of cocoa production in Brazil and Malaysia. But in Côte d'Ivoire, with so many resources committed to cocoa this resulted in a political crisis of the state. State marketing of cocoa collapsed and aggressive takeover bids from transnational companies to control Ivoirian cocoa production were successful. The loss of control over cocoa revenues ultimately undermined the social contract that underpinned accumulation in cocoa and the transfers of rural surpluses into urban development. The collapse in cocoa prices also occurred in a period in which the frontier of new land became exhausted and further accumulation in cocoa was dependent upon the rehabilitation of old plantations and replanting in fallow rather than forest land. The costs of replanting cocoa in fallow land are considerably higher than in new forests, requiring larger outlays in labour and inputs. Ruf (2001) estimates that the establishment of cocoa plantations in fallow land is twice as high as on forestland.

In these new conditions, the fortunes of the large Baule cocoa farmers declined. Baule strategies were based on continual expansion of farms into new frontier land and the establishment of extensive plantations with hired labour. With economic success, Baule farmers often spread their investments into real estate, trade and education for children. With increasing costs of production, declining prices for cocoa, and increasing cost of privatised social welfare and education, Baule farmers found it increasingly difficult to maintain their social status, social investments and increased expenditures on cocoa production (Léonard and Oswald 1997, Léonard 1997, Chauveau and Léonard 1996). The Baule cocoa farmers were replaced by Burkinabe farmers, who cultivated much smaller plots, which they farmed more intensively. They planted their seedlings in nurseries, used more inputs, and weeded more effectively. They were accustomed to lower standards of living, and had fewer social investments in education of children. Those who had land were able to draw upon the large networks of Burkinabe migrants to negotiate cheaper labour and engage in reciprocal labour ties. Thus, the cocoa landscape was transformed from large Baule plantations to smaller Burkinabe plantations. By the 1990s Burkinabe farmers began to intensify investments in purchasing old cocoa land for rehabilitation and became the dominant force in cocoa.

The decline of migrant Ivoirian Baule planter, and their replacement by small Burkinabe planters, resulted in the Burkinabe rural communities becoming increasingly vulnerable to ethnic resentment and political retributions. The decline of cocoa resulted in a national economic crisis. With bleak prospects for employment in the urban areas many of the southern youth began to return to rural areas. However, they found it difficult to gain access to land, which had been rapidly alienated to cocoa farming, or to gain a livelihood through labouring, which was largely performed by Sahelian

migrants. The crisis of cocoa had produced a profound political crisis in the Côte d'Ivoire, and as in Ghana at an earlier time, many politicians took to blaming immigrants for the crisis, and the largesse of the PDCI, which had distributed national resources for the benefits of "strangers". In political, intellectual and NGO circles notions of *Ivoirité*, the exclusive rights of autochthonous Ivoirians to the benefits of citizenship, began to gain ground, and be used as an ideological means of deflecting political blame for the crisis, and mobilising political support following the death of Houphouët Boigny (Cutolo 2010). These ideas found a particular resonance with many of the international policy initiatives of the period, which were based on notions of community participation, community management, and indigenous rights. Notions of *Ivoirité* moved out of party political circles into the implementation of rural forestry, rural land administration, and the NGO sector (Diaby 1996; Stamm 2000, Chauveau 2009). In this milieu migrant Sahelian farmers were depicted as destroyers of the forest environment without the local knowledge of the forest ecosystem, and their rights in land were questioned, leading to a distinction between the land rights of Ivoirians and non-Ivoirians in land policy forums. Rural dignitaries and chiefs were invited to parliament to provide information on the customary rules governing tenure and to make recommendations for the formulation of a new land law. In 1998 a new land reform law was announced which would restrict ownership of land to nationals. This would not recognise the acquired land rights of non-nationals. This implicitly privileged autochthony as the main principle for acquiring land rights outside of the formal commercial sector (Stamm 2000, Chauveau 2009).

Local youth within the cocoa belt became increasingly disgruntled by lack of access to land, and lack of livelihoods and employment opportunities within both urban and rural areas. They compared their lack of a sense of a viable future with the apparent success of Burkinabe migrants in agriculture. They became particularly vocal in articulating xenophobic ethnic sentiments (Chauveau 2006, Chauveau and Richards 2008, Kouame 2010). These grievances were based on an underlying perception that their parents' generation had failed to provide them with a solid foundation for gaining a meaningful livelihood, and had sold out their land rights (their rightful heritage) to migrants (Chauveau and Richards 2008). The youth began to mobilise to take action against the immigrants and this escalated into violent confrontations in 1999 in which large numbers of Burkinabe were forced to flee the country. However issues of autochthony and indigeneity do not only concern relations between Ivoirians and non-Ivoirians, but also the large number of northern Ivoirians who have migrated to the south, while retaining close ties with communities within Burkina Faso, with who they share common culture and history. Thus the crisis of migrants within the cocoa belt escalated into a national crisis and a civil war based on a north south divide (Dozon 2000).

## **Conclusion**

Ghana appears as a bastion of stability in contemporary West Africa and Côte d'Ivoire as a country troubled by political crisis. However many of the elements of tension within Côte d'Ivoire can be

found in the recent history of cocoa frontiers in Ghana, and have common structural features. This includes the increasing tension between migrants and local dignitaries as chiefs and elders attempt to alter the reinvent the conditions under which land is held as land becomes more scarce, and migrants resisting the reduction of their rights to land they acquired. In both nations the integration of migrants have involved notions of a moral economy based on local citizenship, in which migrants are expected to contribute towards the development of the local area. The success of the participation of migrants in cocoa production has produced both a process of accumulation based on social differentiation in which land becomes scarce for the poorer stratum of local farmers and youth, who also find it difficult to gain livelihoods as labourers, since these occupations are controlled by migrants. Thus, the youth and poorer sections of communities become embittered towards migrants, who they see as the cause for their predicament. While these tensions and conflicts often play out in the confines of localised politics, the centrality of cocoa to the national economy and the vulnerability of cocoa to cycles of boom and bust brought upon by the pattern of frontier development frontier, and world gluts, results in national economic crises, in which immigrants from neighbouring countries are frequently blamed for the ills of the economy. This in effect generalises the problem of the migrant labour in frontier development as a national problem of immigration. This has profound implications for internal processes of migration within the nation, and the construction of national citizenship as based on freedom of movement, residence and participation in the market economy within the nation state, rather than on restricted rights to the use of resources based on affiliation to a hometown and an ethnic identity symbolised by a chiefly authority.

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