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CHAPTER 7. Searching for external validity: The case of the coastal Western Region in Ghana

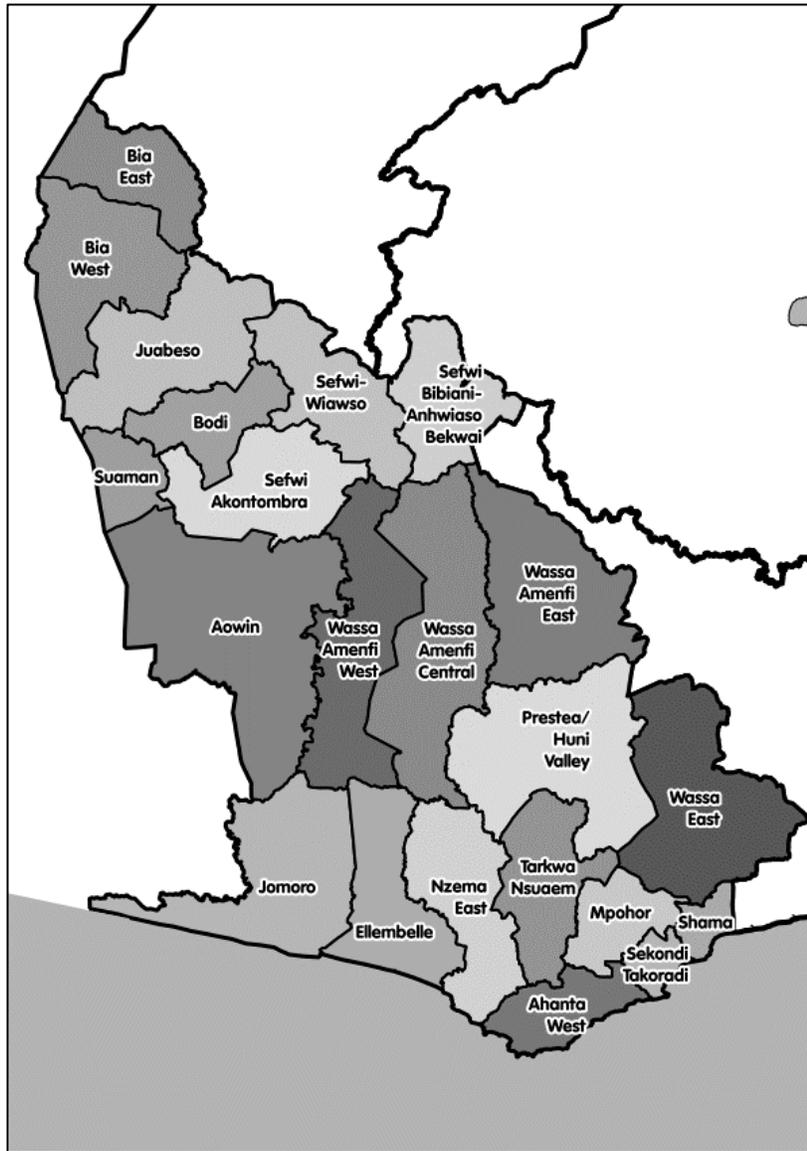
In this chapter, I will compare the case of the Western Region in Ghana to the Ndougou lagoon. If the conceptual conclusions reached in Chapter 4 are to be considered valid, they must be at least loosely applicable to the Western Region. Although Sekondi-Takoradi and the six coastal districts under investigation bare few contextual similarities to the Ndougou lagoon in Gabon, the local developmental outcomes and appearance of anomic structures are arguably identical, if one adjusts for scale. In this sense, the following study can be regarded as a Most Different Systems Design in the tradition of Theda Skocpol, in which the objective is to look for a sufficiently common explanatory factor of shared anomie and livelihood changes in different socio-economic and political contexts. Section 7.1 is therefore dedicated to establishing these differences with a method similar to that used in Chapter 3, where the Western Region is diachronically historicized so as to trace local institutions.

7.1. Institutions and Livelihoods in the Western Region, 1300s – 2007

The following section attempts to reconstruct a history of political institutions in the Western Region of Ghana, with emphasis placed on the region's administrative capital of Sekondi-Takoradi. For historical information and evidence predating the discovery of offshore oil (the Jubilee Field) in 2007, this section relies extensively on secondary sources, of which there are many owing to the relative accessibility to researchers of oral tradition and archives. For historical indices after 2007, I have relied on both secondary and original field research. The conclusions reached, therefore, are based on the state of knowledge as it existed at the time of fieldwork.

To adequately trace the evolutionary factors of change of political institutions in the Western Region of Ghana—that is, the region the most affected by and with the most claims on the proceeds derived from offshore oil deposits—it is necessary to focus on the region's present-day inhabitants: the Fante, the Ahanta, the Wassa, and the Nzema. Indeed, the objective is not to characterize a geographical territory but a group of people to the extent that they may be a self-

described group. Luckily for the ease of description, the groups mentioned share similar migratory histories and even common origins.



Map 11: Districts of the Western Region, Ghana.

The coastal shores of Ghana before the Atlantic slave trade were scarcely inhabited owing to low crop productivity along the Guinean littoral. The story of the Western Region's inhabitants, therefore, begins inland, from whence immigrated the Fante, whose present-day boundaries now extend across practically the entire coastline, with the highest concentrations between the littoral towns of Agona in the west and Winneba in the east. The Fante are of Akani origin, and therefore

share a common lineage with dozens of Akan groups—including the Wassa, Ahanta, and in fewer numbers the Nzema—through the migrations beginning in the 15th century. Better said, these groups were indistinguishable when they were dependents of the kingdom of Bonoman, which as early as the 12th century was established, prospering from a booming trade in gold thanks in large part to Muslim traders in the north. Over time, however, both internal and external forces led to migrations and resettlements over centuries which led to the formation of diverging identities, making possible the existence of “Fante” and “Asante” monikers. Newer historiography is yielding an emerging consensus that despite past efforts to conceptualize a pan-Akani identity, important differences exist between Akan sub-groups.

Akan groups do, however, share important cultural characteristics not limited to common linguistic roots. Akan peoples are matrilineal and more importantly exogamous, the consequences of which for political formations were discussed in previous chapters. Marriage, for instance, was banned within clans since all the members could be said to have descended from a single female. As with Gabon’s southern ethnic groups, it may be hypothesized that this system of inheritance yielded more centralized political formations to come, the Bonoman kingdom being one such example. Chiefs could, and still do, largely command the loyalties of those belonging to the same clan and inhabiting the land to which chiefly first-comers could lay claim. It is in the kingdom of Bonoman that the use of stools as symbols of power began, a tradition almost universally adhered to today. But how the Fante and their counterparts in the Western Region emerged cannot be explained by internal forces alone, but through internal forces within Bonoman reacting to external forces.

Consensus reveals that continuous migrations southwards from Bonoman led to separate groups forging separate identities. One of these groups was the Fante, whose name loosely means “the half that left.” In the midst of a 13th-century war with the Asante, these Bono Akan peoples, henceforth named “Borbor” Fante, departed (“left”) present-day Takyiman and founded the town of Mankessim. From the mid-15th century through the mid-18th century—when Mankessim and Bonoman came under Asante domination—Borbor Fante dispersed towards the coast and expanded in both easterly and westerly directions, though precise dates within this timeframe remain uncertain.⁵⁰⁷ During the time immediately following migrations, Borbor Fante institutions

⁵⁰⁷ James Robert Sanders, “The Political Development of the Fante in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: a Study of a West African Merchant Society” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1980), 66.

consisted of paramountcies with chiefs serving as the primary foci of power under the *Omanhene*, or king, in Mankessim. Agriculture was the primary means of subsistence. Throughout the 17th century, however, trade gradually replaced agriculture as European coastal forts, notably constructed by the Dutch and Portuguese, allowed Borbor Fante hopefuls to establish import-export operations with indiscriminating Europeans. At this time, a merchant class arose which, though subordinate to the relatively weak king in Mankessim, managed to use their wealth to increase their number of dependents, slave and free. Settlements and resettlements of dependents were increasingly carried out, further encouraging the expansion of Borbor Fante along the coast. In each merchant's new domain, territories and administrative units would eventually crystallize into full-scale paramountcies, eroding the powers of the king in Mankessim. The emerging power of merchants was such that they even commanded local *asafo*'s, small military organizations relying on newly arrived immigrants for manpower.⁵⁰⁸ Thus, the opportunities afforded to the Borbor Fante to act as middlemen in the trade of gold and slaves between Europeans and hinterland Akani gave way to two interrelated processes directly affecting the political institutions of the 17th century Fante: the emergence of a new merchant class and its attendant territorialization as well as the decentralization of the Borbor Fante as one political unit. This process of decentralization, in fact, is comparable to the Loango kingdom's experience, where the burgeoning merchant class of Point Noire gradually eroded the territorial empire of Kongo.

By 1700, European observers on the coast were able to describe in more detail the political organization of what they called the "Fante." Willem Bosman, a merchant working for the Dutch West India Company in the "Gold Coast," likened the government of Fanteland to "the English parliament." "No king has sovereignty here, but in the same place a distinguished chief, which they call a Braffo... 'He is the first man in the whole Country and has the greatest authority;' but is stout-heartedly held in restraint by a group of Patriarchs" who "do what they want to without caring about the Braffo."⁵⁰⁹ The sentiments were later echoed by Jean Barbot, who considered the Braffo as a "chief governor" bearing "only an empty title without any power" due to a relatively

⁵⁰⁸ Ray A. Kea, *Settlements, Trade, and Politics in the Seventeenth-Century Gold Coast* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), Chapters V-VI.

⁵⁰⁹ Willem Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea, Divided into the Gold, the Slave, and the Ivory Coasts* (Sir Alfred Jones, 1705), 58-59.

independent “parliament.”⁵¹⁰ James Sanders compares these descriptions to those of other Akan groups descended towards the coast, including the neighbouring Fetu who bore a “monarchical” structure compared to the Fante’s “commonwealth.”⁵¹¹ Before the Asante invasion from the north, therefore, relatively independent paramountcies had already begun to take place by 1700, even if the nobles and merchants still owed tribute to the king in Mankessim (known as the “Braffo” to Europeans), and even if traditional political institutions in smaller units remained intact; several reports by European observers suggest that merchants owed precise taxes and tribute to local chiefs acting as custodians of the land. As in Gabon during the Atlantic period, the accrual of wealth allowed chiefs to increase their respective numbers of dependents, even though symbolic importance was given to traditional structures. Whatever territory the Fante seized in migrating or warring southwards and along the coast, the autochthonal chiefs remained paramount in their respective territories, as was the case with the Etsi. Respect for first-comers and oral tradition persisted.

From 1700 to 1806, two external forces shaped Fanteland’s political geography: the inexorable rise of the Asante kingdom to the north and the proliferation of European forts trading in gold and slaves to the south. Both processes would serve to forge a Fante identity from common economic interests, i.e. the need to maintain a favorable coastal position in the European trade. Indeed, the aforementioned chiefs relied on duties and taxation emanating from trade routes in order to preserve their paramountcies, and, furthermore, lucrative trade had long replaced subsistence farming for local economic sustenance. Asante influence over the coastal trade was recognized as early as 1701, when both the British and then the Dutch saw opportunities to actively court the Asantahene. By this time, slaves were beginning to surpass gold in the overall volume of trade at the ports, and competition between the British and Dutch forts and spheres of influence raised prices all along the coast. The Asante therefore launched several military campaigns to bypass the Fante middlemen on their way to the coast, prompting the Fante to conduct preemptive territorial acquisitions east and west of their traditionally inhabited land in the region surrounding Cape Coast. By 1724, the Fante would control territories as far west as Elmina and as far east as Akwamu.

⁵¹⁰ Jean Barbot, *A Supplement to the Description of the Coasts of North and South Guinea* (Henry Lintot and John Osborn, 1746), 175.

⁵¹¹ Sanders, *Political Development of the Fante*, 100-101.

At this time, evidence suggests that present-day Sekondi-Takoradi and much of the Western Region was part of the Wassa “kingdom,” while the nearest confirmed Fante paramountcy lay to the east at Komenda, in close proximity to the Eguafo paramountcy to the north. Little if any precise information exists on the history of whom we call today the “Ahanta,” except that they were most certainly an offshoot of the westward Fante migrations in the 15th century and that they had probably become small tributary villages to larger political formations—such as the Wassa, Asante, and Fante—at varying intervals. While oral tradition indicates that the Ahanta are simply Borbor Fante who crossed the river Pra, Bosman observed in the early 18th-century rites and dances in Axim that were identical to those along the Fante coast. Dutch maps from that time also indicate the dominance of Wassa in the Western Region, with whom the Fante were said to have frequent contact.

Though not formally grouped with Fante, perhaps due to the difficulties of maintaining polities across natural barriers such as the river Pra, there is no reason to believe the Ahanta—whose chiefs occupy the majority of paramountcies in the Western Region today—were substantially different from Fante in culture or economy. In terms of political organization, the Wassa kingdom was a typical Akan proto-state, akin to its neighboring Fante paramountcies which themselves had never truly united along the lines of the Asante. In this regard the Wassa kingdom could neither have been acephalous nor centralized. With respect to economy, there is little reason to doubt the Wassa/Ahanta were not fully engaged in the coastal trade. Not only was the Dutch fort at Butri close,⁵¹² but in the 18th century Wassa became the target of both Fante and Asante territorial ambitions precisely for its advantageous proximity to the trading coast.

Wassa’s unfortunate position in the midst of a regional power struggle was not unique; throughout the 18th century, the Fante would shift diplomatic stances from appeasement and/or preemption of an ever-strengthening Asante empire to building alliances in order to directly meet what would become an increasingly serious economic threat. The Fante therefore reacted to Asante encroachment by calling on *asafos* to conquer as many neighboring coastal states as possible and thereby preventing Asante merchants from reaching the coast. Wassa was one exception, having been invaded by Asante in 1726, after which its king, Ntsiful, fled to the Fante paramountcies for protection. By 1750, Wassa and several neighboring states, some the victims

⁵¹² Kwamina B. Dickson, *A Historical Geography of Ghana* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 57-58.

of past Fante invasions, formed a “Grand Alliance”⁵¹³ with the Fante which lasted until the successful Asante invasion of the Fante coast in 1806. What is interesting is that, as James Sanders points out, Fante political life had remained throughout in the form of a “commonwealth,” never crystallizing a vaster, more united kingdom as the Asante had done in the north.⁵¹⁴ Why this had not taken place despite shared interests and cultures among the several Fante and coastal Akan paramountcies is important for the present study, the objective of which is to outline the evolution of political institutions.

From the mid-18th century to 1806, the Fante responded to the Asante threat by coalescing with regional neighbours, as stated. This Grand Alliance, or “Coastal Coalition,” while contributing to a sense of Fante identity, did not lead to centralization along the lines of otherwise similar Akan states. The reasons for this are not certain, but Sanders is able to conclude through a study of Anomabo’s political institutions that paramountcy development was stunted primarily due to economic factors, as well as key institutional differences between the matrilineal Fante and the largely patrilineal autochtones they had conquered. Wealth was an important source of power for Fante chiefs who rivaled even each other, having migrated from various quarters of Mankessim owing allegiance to at least four different chiefs. Therefore, while the need to access trading routes unified chiefs in Anamoba, Cape Coast, Winneba, and beyond, against Asante encroachment, the relative ease of generating wealth for any particular chief and/or merchant stunted incipient political formation. In Asante, for instance, mining for gold required many capital and labor inputs which could only be marshalled by centralized authorities. In Fanteland, chiefs relied not on gold but on taxation of trade with the Europeans and, perhaps to a lesser extent, the sale of foodstuffs produced via small-scale agriculture. Neither required much labor input.

Until 1844, when the British sought more direct control over their coastal holdings in order to meet the Asante threat, an active policy of allying with the Fante was carried out, a process that further militarized the Fante and may have contributed to their expanded influence through piecemeal conquest of their neighbors. With the Anglo-Fante treaty in 1817, it was the explicit policy of the British to assign the Fante a “protectorate” status, and, in so doing, secure vital trade arrangements which they had good reason to believe would be threatened by Asante overlordship

⁵¹³ A. Adu Boahen, “Fante Diplomacy in the Eighteenth Century.” In *Foreign Relations of African States* (Ed. K. Ingham. London), 40.

⁵¹⁴ Sanders, *Political Development of the Fang*, 137.

of the coast.⁵¹⁵ This could only strengthen the asafos, which by this time had become a veritable institution, rivaling worship of the shrine of Nananom Mpow as the defining characteristic of Fante culture where no other national attributes can be said to have existed. Prior to more direct forms of British intervention on the coast, however, Fante political institutions remained difficult to characterize in concrete terms. This was not only due to the lack of centralization but also the co-existence of patrilineal asafos military organizations and matrilineal chiefs, which often became an issue in times of chiefly succession. In a pattern begun earlier in the 18th century, prominent men with either wealth or military prowess—who could also establish a royal lineage—succeeded in becoming enstooled.

Although Fanteland’s decentralized institutions experienced few disruptions prior to 1844, the groundwork was being laid for significant change in the future, reaffirming what Gocking termed as the uniquely “gradual and adaptive”⁵¹⁶ subjection of coastal Akani (primarily Fante) to British designs. Pursuant to intelligence that the Asante were planning coastal incursions, the British crown in 1821 decreed the direct administration of coastal forts and settlements. According to Gocking, this had the direct effect of empowering coastal chiefs at the expense of those further inland, while also concentrating merchants and commoners in those secured spaces.⁵¹⁷ While these developments helped to align the interests of local and British authorities, Wesleyan Methodists had established the first Christian mission in Cape Coast by 1838, boosting the European population and spreading Christianity to the general population.⁵¹⁸ Lastly, the British drafted and signed the Bond of 1844 in a preemptive response to further Asante threats. The Bond, which established a “protocolonial” relationship⁵¹⁹ between the British and the Fante, allowed British officials, in cooperation with “chiefs of the district,” to try serious crimes, a first of what was to become many intrusions into traditional chiefly prerogatives. Together with missionary activities, these developments led to the “creolization”⁵²⁰ of many Fante elites who would form the backbone of a wealthy, educated class of “natives.” This came roughly thirty years prior to the formal establishment of the Gold Coast colony, promising that the central coast of present-day Ghana

⁵¹⁵ Rebecca Shumway, *The Fante and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. Vol. 52.* (Boydell & Brewer, 2014), 11.

⁵¹⁶ Roger Gocking, *Facing Two Ways: Ghana's Coastal Communities under Colonial Rule.* (Univ Pr of Amer, 1999), 3.

⁵¹⁷ *ibid.*, 37-38.

⁵¹⁸ *ibid.*, 41.

⁵¹⁹ Shumway, *The Fante*, 12.

⁵²⁰ Gocking, *Ghana's Coastal Communities.*

would become quite powerful and, by West African standards, quite unique. As Gocking points out, the Fante creoles were quite close to their places of origin, ensuring that matrilineal traditions and modes of succession would still persist and creating mostly legitimate local rulers who were also members of the wealthy, educated elite. Such was not the case in places like Sierra Leone or Senegal.⁵²¹

As is well known in Ghanaian historiography, the British colonial administration was insistent on streamlining local governments under their domain, since officers neither had the expertise nor the resources to effectively govern at local levels. This necessitated a reduction in the severity and frequency of succession disputes between candidates for chiefly office. It appears as no coincidence, then, that dynastic rule among the coastal Akan began after the Bond of 1844. An example of British intervention towards these ends occurred in 1866, when King Aggrey of Cape Coast was successfully deposed for attempting to raise his own police force and administer his own justice. Taking advantage of the latent “confusion” between matrilineal Akan traditions and patrilineal asafos, the British replaced King Aggrey with the matrilineal incumbent Kwesi Atta.⁵²² Chiefs on the coast, closely watching these dispute outcomes and increasingly dependent on British trade and “protection,” vied for listing on the administration’s published gazette, the records of which began to betray more linear, descent-based patterns of succession, which arguably had never been the overriding norm among the Fante. Sanders’ analysis of stool chronologies in Anomabo indicates that its own paramountcy had not developed until the mid-19th century, confirming the general trend. Prior to the Bond of 1844, war chiefs propped up by asafos tended to dominate chronologies. After British interventions, royal paramountcies became prominent. Sanders, however—and in what Shumway considered to be an oversimplified dichotomy—seeks to distinguish the external influences on Fante political institutions from those which are internal, and in so doing marshals convincing evidence, including oral tradition, to support the idea that the development of Fante paramountcies “correlated with the wars which were fought during [the 19th century].”⁵²³ The “confused” nature of Fante political institutions seemed to remain salient.

By the time of the official crown declaration of the Gold Coast Colony in 1874, the coastal Fante had become very different from their Asante and northern territorial counterparts. Many

⁵²¹ *ibid.*, 9.

⁵²² Gocking, *Ghana’s Coastal Communities*, 40.

⁵²³ Sanders, *Political Development of the Fante*, 308.

successful merchants and literates saw themselves as go-betweens between the indigenous population and the British, as the power of non-merchant traditional chiefs was successively curtailed by missionaries, colonial administration of criminal justice, the progressive abolition of internal slavery, and the increasing importance of wealth and military might. It has also been well-documented that the Fante formed the core of a fledgling elite social class, one which would lead to the abortive Fante Confederation which lasted from 1868-1871; it also signaled among the first unambiguous gestures of Fante nationality. The intelligentsia and “creoles” were already establishing themselves as a powerful voice in the Gold Coast, and even felt themselves so aligned with British interests that they would support colonial expansion into the hinterland, undoubtedly to preempt further Asante attacks as well as to take advantage of what conquest had to offer in terms of trade. It is important to note, however, that the basic structure of matrilinearity and affiliation to the stool was not usurped. Rather, as some argue, its inherent flexibility allowed it to absorb commercial and cultural shocks.⁵²⁴

Between the establishments of the Gold Coast in 1874 and the Ashanti protectorate in 1897, paramountcies in Fanteland crystallized as the slave trade’s abolition unleashed legitimate commerce. More than ever, the means to wealth and political relevance in the Gold Coast became Christianity and schooling, as chiefs sought to have themselves as well as their children instructed in the English language and European mores in order to win the approval of colonial officials. The dominance of trade in Fanteland (Cape Coast), where agents of commercial kings, capitalists, and petty traders comprised an estimated 30.29% of the population, was apparent compared to Accra, where the same figures stood at 24.04%.⁵²⁵ From 1867 to 1897, the number of civil service employees increased tenfold, where most natives securing employment from the administration were Fante.⁵²⁶ In terms of traditional powers secured by the chiefs, not much had changed. Although the Supreme Court was established in 1878 which would follow common law jurisprudence on the English model, many facets of what was deemed “customary” law were upheld and woven into the colony’s legal fabric. Lastly, property and the transfer of wealth were largely managed within the confines of matrilinearity, which was showing signs of replacing the

⁵²⁴ Gocking, *Ghana’s Coastal Communities*, 63.

⁵²⁵ *ibid.*, 58.

⁵²⁶ *ibid.*, 60.

patrilineal modes of succession among the asafo militias—by 1888 an asafo commander had been chosen through matrilineal lines.

Most historians, including Gocking, argue that the years prior to the imposition of indirect rule in 1898 represented the low-point of traditional chief rule in Fanteland and the wider Gold Coast, given the inroads made by merchant elites. With the Native Administration Bill, a process of taking away “the power of the traditional rulers and [giving] them authority in local government”⁵²⁷ would last until the 1940s. With respect to the Fante coast, and, more specifically, Sekondi-Takoradi, the degree of changes to political institutions must have been doubly severe. According to G.K. Nukunya, change in institutions “depends on the length and intensity of exposure to the factors [listed above].”⁵²⁸ A social anthropologist well-regarded by students of Ghanaian history, Nukunya lists four main factors of institutional change throughout Ghana’s history: the impact of colonialism, Christianity, classroom education, and a “money-using economy,” which served to reinforce one another and culminated in the peculiar political position chiefs occupy in Ghana today. Fanteland was arguably exposed to these four factors for longer and, perhaps, at a more intense degree than the eastern Gold Coast, Ashanti, or the Northern Territories.

Beginning with the Native Administration Bill of 1898, the British actively empowered chiefs at the level of local government, applying the same governance structure—deemed “native”—to all three of its otherwise distinct territories. After the forced submission of the Asantahene and his subjects, colonial officials found it expedient to apply an “Akan” model to what was now the entire Gold Coast, ignoring the fact that this model was more precisely Asante. Other Akans, like the Fante and Ahanta who had decentralized forms of governance, would have to adapt. From the turn of the century through the interwar period, the empowerment of chiefs at the expense of now-disempowered merchant elites would have repercussions through the postcolonial era. The empowerment of chiefs and the insistence on “custom” and tradition by the British was not a model of colonial governance shared by the French in southwestern Gabon, where populations were sparse and where traditions of centralized governance lent relatively easily to the emplacement of *chefs de village*, who more often than not were hereditary chiefs tracing lineages

⁵²⁷ Kwamina B. Dickson, *A Historical Geography of Ghana*. (CUP Archive, 1969, p. 108) in Rathbone, Richard. *Nkrumah and the Chiefs*. (Ohio State University Press, 2000), 11.

⁵²⁸ Godwin Kwaku Nukunya, *Tradition and Change in Ghana: An Introduction to Sociology*. (Ghana Universities Press, 2003), 139.

to ancestors in the Loango kingdom. A different vertical relationship of power existed in Gabon which will necessitate further analysis as to how it may have contributed to institutional development under oil extraction.

Chiefly *authority* in the southern Gold Coast largely exceeded chiefly *power*, endogenously derived, in precolonial Fanteland and much of Ahanta, and this succeeded in breeding much discontent from merchant elites. The accrual of authority by chiefs came about in a succession of bills and ordinances intended to carry out the efficient governance of local communities in accordance with colonial dictates; the Native Jurisdiction Bill of 1896, the Lands Bill of 1897, the 1904 Chiefs Ordinance, the 1904 Stool Property Detention Ordinance, the Towns Ordinances, the amended 1910 Native Jurisdiction Bill, etc. The legislative instruments together coalesced in giving chiefs near-despotic powers within their allotted jurisdictions, so long as they courted the favor of colonial overlords who, since the 1904 Chiefs Ordinance, retained the power to destool and enstool individuals at will. The powers to try crimes excluding the most serious felonies, to alienate land, and to pass a number of bylaws led to the intense competition for stools, whose qualifications gradually shifted from religion, wealth, and military prowess to literacy and education.

The new legislation required that most regions enstool a Head Chief occupying a Paramountcy, generating conflict in Ahanta where no Head Chief had occupied the Stool since 1838, when the Dutch abolished the position for insubordination. The most convincing claim to the Stool came from a descendant of the Head Chief at Busua (or Bushua) who had been deposed. But it was not apparent that eastern Ahanta, that which encompasses Sekondi-Takoradi, had ever been subservient to pre-Dutch Busua. Instead it was “common practice... to entrust the care of the smaller villages to an officer of the Asafo or company, known as an Asafo-asafohene,”⁵²⁹ confirming the claim that the Ahanta were relatives of the Fante. Nevertheless, in 1911 the Commissioner of the Western Province held an inquiry into the matter due to the proliferation of the region’s quasi-independent stools, leading to the reconstitution of the Busua Paramountcy in 1912.

By 1919, the new head chief, Baidu Bonso X was deposed by sub-chiefs unhabituated to central control and arbitrary powers. According to an account by a former Secretary for Native

⁵²⁹ Charles Wellesley Welman, *The Native States of the Gold Coast: Ahanta*. (London: Dawson, 1969 [1925]), 13.

Affairs on the Gold Coast, the head chief “abused the confidence and trust reposed in him”⁵³⁰ by appropriating land and lease holdings for himself and his family. Grown accustomed to independence, the sub-chiefs successfully petitioned the Government for a reelection, which was duly granted. In the imbroglio which transpired, another family surfaced with its own claims on the Stool, and proceeded to campaign with a series of eloquent letters and antiquated documents sent to the Commissioner. After years of litigation, it was decided that the claims by Francis Commey and Amba Alumoa were unfounded, despite the quick and ostensible support they had gathered amongst many of the sub-chiefs. Baidu Bonso XI was confirmed in 1924 amidst near-open rebellion by sub-chiefs and select families aligned with Commey and Alumoa. The retired Secretary suggested that order was in part restored due to the application of the Peace Preservation Ordinance 1921, which authorized visitation troops and arms confiscation until March, 1926. Reflecting on the dispute, Welman wrote the following:

Land provides a strong motive with the African at all times, and very often in his natural state a wholesome one but it is particularly strong, not to say violent and dangerous, in conditions such as existed in Ahanta, where there had been a considerable demand for land for some time by various European enterprises and the value of the land was suddenly being still further enhanced by the developments connected with Takoradi Harbour.⁵³¹

Despite its display of casual bigotry common among colonial officers of the time, Welman’s statement reflects an intensification of coastal institutional trends begun long ago, whereby proto-states were unable to crystallize into Asante-like kingdoms due to the character of contact with coastal Europeans (among other reasons), this time the British colonial state. This was so much the case that even the state had difficulty imposing a paramountcy with all its coercive prerogatives. As Welman points out, this trend fared little chance of abating with the construction of the artificial Takoradi Harbor in 1928, the first of its kind in all of West Africa. The reasons for why the British under Colonial Governor Sir Gordon Guggisberg would choose Takoradi for its

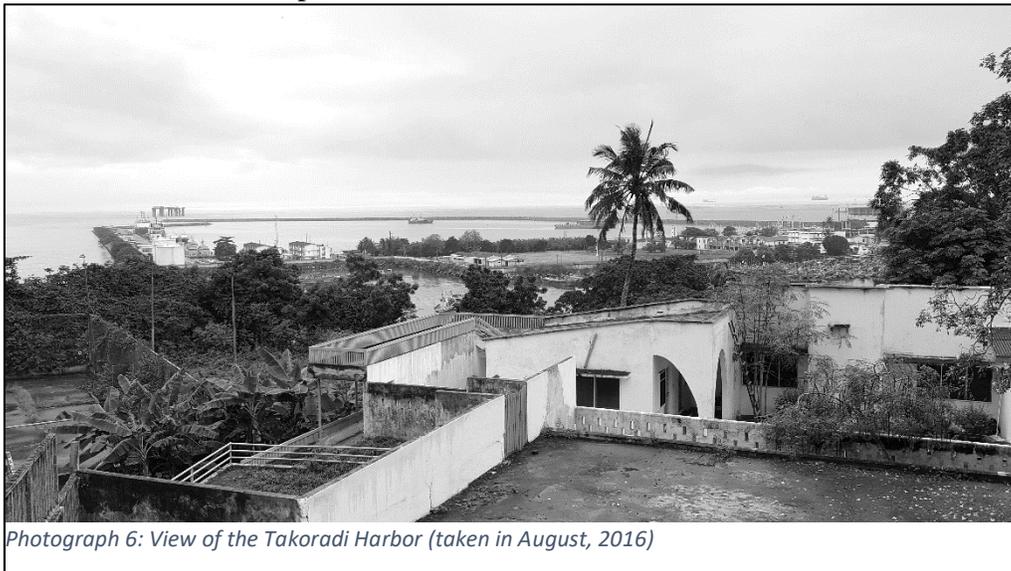
⁵³⁰ *ibid.*, 59.

⁵³¹ *ibid.*, 76.

harbor are based on several factors, including proximity to gold mines in nearby Tarkwa as well as to the railway depot in Sekondi. The massive investment—the most expensive in the British colonies in the 1920s⁵³²—coincided with the incorporation of the Town of Takoradi in 1926, and the years following were met with relatively large-scale immigration into the region and a general economic boom.

The construction of the harbor in Takoradi set in motion processes which gradually displaced the former role of Sekondi, which had been the political, economic, and clan fulcrum of the region since 1894 when it had been recognized as a town.⁵³³ Since 1898, Sekondi was the headquarters of the Railway organization, which was moved to Takoradi in 1934 after lines were extended to Takoradi in 1928. Already by 1927 the Railway and Harbor Administration was created as a merger of their former components, signaling the intention of colonial authorities to route most exports through the newly-built harbor. By 1946, the Sekondi-Takoradi Town Council replaced the former Sekondi Town Council which had governed the municipality since 1904.

Takoradi's population swelled with immigrants from the surrounding region, overtaking the Ahanta in numbers while contributing to farming, fishing, and more specifically cocoa production. K.A. Busia (1950), Officer-in-Charge of a survey conducted on behalf of the Government of the Gold Coast, recorded a population of just over 44,000 in 1948, just two decades after Takoradi had been incorporated. The new harbor and rail facilities led to the exponential



Photograph 6: View of the Takoradi Harbor (taken in August, 2016)

⁵³² Nate Plageman, "Colonial Ambition, Common Sense Thinking, and the Making of Takoradi Harbor, Gold Coast." *History in Africa* 40, no. 1 (2013): 317-352.

⁵³³ Franklin Obeng-Odoom, *Oiling the Urban Economy: Land, Labour, Capital, and the State in Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana*. (Routledge, 2014), 79.

growth of the local economy, demonstrated by the fact that between 1938 and 1939 exports from Takoradi Harbor had increased by 186 percent. Imports likewise grew by approximately one third.⁵³⁴

The new demographic pressures not only shifted the balance of local power from Sekondi to Takoradi but also intensified the proliferation and complexity of local public authorities. Busia lists those partaking in “municipal government” as the Native Authorities, The Town Council, “tribal associations,” and the Central Government, all of which derived their duties and powers in ordinances passed in 1944 and 1945.⁵³⁵ One key distinction to be made with the experience of Gamba, Gabon is the popular antipathy towards Sekondi-Takoradi’s Native Authority. As in Gamba, the Native Authority (consisting of chiefs in British Sekondi, Dutch Sekondi, Ahanta, and the Ahanta Confederacy) personified by a chief had traditionally exercised executive, legislative, religious, and military functions, and was answerable to the District Commissioner. But in a minor difference with their counterparts in the Ndougou, chiefs in Ahanta had already been restricted to administrative functions by 1950. At the same time, “administration” was much broader than in Gamba, and consisted not only of the maintenance of law and order but also judicial powers (Native Courts), policing (Police Force), and the provision of a few social services with the help of a Treasury.⁵³⁶ Vis-à-vis their counterparts in Gamba, Ahanta chiefs were likewise agents of the Central Government, yet with considerably more prerogatives. In another key distinction, “persons of African descent,” or those subject to the chiefs, expressed more antipathy towards their Native Authority chiefs than in Gamba. Through their powers to levy taxes and duties, chiefs typically charged 4s per man and 2s per woman, despite widespread complaints that chiefs “do not provide any services for the townspeople.”⁵³⁷ In the pre-oil Ndougou, there is no evidence that such antipathy was either as pervasive or acutely felt.

Garnering much more respect was the Town Council, composed of elected, property-holding locals. Established by the 1945 Sekondi-Takoradi Town Council Ordinance, it was vested with the powers to draw up estimates, tax and spend, and enact bye-laws and regulations in the

⁵³⁴ *ibid.*, 80.

⁵³⁵ Kofi Abrefa Busia, *Report on a Social Survey of Sekondi-Takoradi*. (Crown Agents for the Colonies, 1951), 64-76.

⁵³⁶ *ibid.*, 65.

⁵³⁷ *ibid.*, 67.

fields of health, building, and transportation.⁵³⁸ In its estimates for the fiscal year 1950-1951, revenues collected primarily from bus services (53,808 pounds sterling), a loan (50,000) and other taxes such as licensing and real estate (25,443) would be spent on primarily health and sanitation (43,926), municipal works such as electricity (74,102), and bussing and other transportation services (54,859)⁵³⁹. For these reasons, the Council was generally regarded as a more efficient provider of services than the Native Authority. But, as Busia noted, the townspeople were rather apathetic towards the Council as a governing, political institution, and voter turnout in December, 1946 was roughly 20-25%.⁵⁴⁰ Noting that the Council was “remarkable” in that it was composed entirely of Ahanta in a very heterogeneous town, Busia explains that immigrants to the town had “other loyalties.”⁵⁴¹ Another conclusion drawn from Busia’s survey was that Ahantas were “cliquey,” in the words of one interviewee, and that newcomers (as members of outside clans) did not feel sufficiently tied to the future of Sekondi-Takoradi. According to Busia, “there is some truth in both explanations; the fact is that old tribal loyalties persist in the new situation of urban life, and put a brake on the development of Municipal Government along Western lines.”⁵⁴² The sentiments of alienation were, however, tempered by the multiplicity of “tribal” associations, which despite hindering a broader civic identity served to promote “law and order.”⁵⁴³

Busia lists the last municipal government institution as the Central Government in Accra, represented by the local District Commissioner who, as with the prefect in the Ndougou, enjoys supervisory capacity over the Council in addition to that over the Native Authority. Formally speaking, “the services which these Native Authorities provide in the town are, in fact, ancillary to those provided by the Central Government.”⁵⁴⁴ In this way, colonial Sekondi-Takoradi bears similarities to the relative centralization which persists in Gamba.

Though not included in the chapter on municipal government, Busia listed in Chapter VI of his study associations which were active in the town and which had clear implications for public authority. More numerous and prominent than at any point in Gamba’s history, those active in

⁵³⁸ Public Relations Department, “Know Your Council: A Brief Account of the Sekondi-Tekoradi Town Council.” (Accra, 1950), 11.

⁵³⁹ *ibid.*, 8-9.

⁵⁴⁰ Busia, *Report*, 69.

⁵⁴¹ (*ibid.*, 73).

⁵⁴² *ibid.*, 74.

⁵⁴³ *ibid.*, 75.

⁵⁴⁴ *ibid.*, 76.

Sekondi-Takoradi included churches (70% of the population attended services of either denominational or inter-denominational churches regularly), a “rival” religious association Tigare which had made its appearance one year prior to Busia’s publication and which was composed of believers in all kinds of world faiths, the Ratepayers’ Association “designed to meet the new urban situation where the population include many more than the indigenous Ahanta,”⁵⁴⁵ the local branch of the United Gold Coast Convention militating for independence as soon as possible (with 1,500 members in town), and the Asafo companies among the Ahanta. By 1950, the asafo companies had been stripped of their former military functions, yet “every Ahanta belongs to one” through the patrilineal line.⁵⁴⁶ As they were influential in electing, installing, and even deposing chiefs, they “served as a political organ through which the popular will found expression.”⁵⁴⁷ Neither the richness, rate of participation in, nor complexity of, associations had ever existed in pre-oil Gamba, and this fact proves to be one of the prevailing differences between the two public arenas. Gamba was, of course, almost purely agrarian with a small minority of the sparse population being employed by loggers, thus it would make sense that few associations developed. But even after Shell-Gabon’s arrival, when the population rose above a few thousand to roughly 10,000, we have seen that the only viable association has been a civic cleanliness group. Because of this fact, Gamba’s lower population (both before and after oil) cannot fully account for the difference in the number of associations. Gamba also faced a less permissible bureaucracy (as was shown with the taxi association’s failure to gain legal status) and a culture of deference.

Though the initial boom from the harbor seemed to have given Takoradi a vibrant and dynamic feel, already by 1950 the city had begun to show signs of anomie, mirroring quite accurately the social pathologies which afflicted Gamba in the 1990s (pathologies which could just as easily be attributed to oil rentierism). On the one hand, the harbor and the industry it supported brought new employment opportunities to the town. In total, the government (Gold Coast Railways, Medical Department, Public Works Department, Takoradi Harbour, etc.) employed 5,523 people, whose wages ranged from 85 pounds to 1000 per year, depending on their seniority. Private firms (General Engineer 28ing and Construction Company, Takoradi Coaling and Lighterage Company, United Africa Company, etc.) for their part employed 3,050 workers

⁵⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 82.

⁵⁴⁶ *ibid.* 82.

⁵⁴⁷ *ibid.*

with wide-ranging wages (the highest private-sector employee salary recorded in the survey was 420 pounds per year). Others were engaged in street commerce, and to lesser degrees fishing and farming. Occupational associations and trade unions also served collective interest purposes, whether for pooling resources to purchase fishing nets, securing burial funds when native villages were distant, or negotiating with employers for better pay and conditions. Busia's survey indicated that at least 10,000 townspeople were members of one of a dozen unions, such as the Gold Coast Railway Employees Union or the Union of the Public Works Departments.⁵⁴⁸

On the other hand, much of the survey in its exquisite detail painted a dim picture of social degradation, during a time which is often referenced for being the "heyday" of Sekondi-Takoradi. A majority of townspeople were renters in dilapidated conditions, with densities exceeding 500 persons per acre in Anafo, while only 32 of 193 dwellings surveyed had private latrines.⁵⁴⁹ Groups of workers routinely complained of having to "make ends meet," with a significant number living in "primary and secondary poverty."⁵⁵⁰ Prices had risen significantly, and most respondents were purchasing food imports with fewer nutrients. Bridegrooms among the Ahanta could scarcely afford customary presents such as cloth and soaps, which had risen twofold in real prices from the 1860s to the 1940s. Schoolchildren were being trained in skills applicable to the Railways,⁵⁵¹ even as those jobs were becoming scarcer and scarcer. Youth unemployment and dissatisfaction was such an issue that juvenile delinquency was given its own chapter in Busia's study (VII). "Maladjustment to urban life" was cited as a cause for crime, collapse of "sexual morality," and even bribery and corruption. Even though Sekondi-Takoradi could not be described as a rentier space, there was "convincing evidence of corrupt practices in certain Government Departments," black-marketing, and other practices which were "evidence of the unbridled acquisitiveness which was a marked response of the community to the opportunities presented by the new economic system." Loosely mirroring the experience of Gamba as industrial presence grew, "stealing, burglary, fighting, quarreling, prostitution, and gambling" became more

⁵⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 28 ; 136.

⁵⁴⁹ *ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁵⁰ *ibid.*, 19 ; For Busia, people in primary poverty are those who have insufficient means of existence, while those in secondary poverty are those who live precariously on a day-to-day basis and risk falling into primary poverty.

⁵⁵¹ *ibid.*, 62.

pronounced.⁵⁵² It is notable that in Sekondi, an older town with less industrial presence, these indices were much fewer.

From the leadup to independence to the discovery of the Jubilee field in 2007, Sekondi-Takoradi paralleled the rest of the country in experiencing a post-independence economic boom, followed by the onset of decline in the 1960s. As one of the nation's most important industrial hubs, the twin city's unions contributed to the anti-colonial bent of Sekondi-Takoradi, with a breakaway party from the UGCC calling for a more radical break with the UK. In addition, the post-war antagonisms created by discrimination within the military were doubly felt in Takoradi, where the Anglo-American alliance had established an airbase to combat Vichy forces in West Africa. Social activism continued as the city's population ballooned to nearly 200,000 by the 1970s. Many leading members of the militant nationalist Convention People's Party (CPP) were residents of the twin city, and the Railway Workers Union was regarded as the country's most powerful union.

Some argue that perpetual decline set in with the construction of the rival Tema harbor (just east of Accra) in 1962, realized as part of Kwame Nkrumah's "scientific socialism" scheme. Other cited contributing factors were the construction of a national road network, the decoupling of port and railways administration, and the institution of parallel government unions (such as the Ghana Trades Union Congress) in competition with existing structures. Finally, Ghana's general recession from 1966 to 1982 had a severe impact on port activity, even if Takoradi's unloading rate remained the second-highest in West Africa.⁵⁵³

Though the 1980s are generally regarded as a time of economic recovery for Ghana as a whole, the same cannot be said of Sekondi-Takoradi. Beginning in 1983, Bretton Woods institutions began devising neoliberal, market-led programs for economic revitalization. The net effect, however, was to concentrate capital in the country's largest urban areas of Accra and Kumasi, while secondary agglomerations like Sekondi-Takoradi and Tamale were virtually ignored.⁵⁵⁴ Furthermore, the 1987 Rehabilitation Programme—part of Ghana's own IMF-led structural adjustment, the Economic Recovery Program—targeted the lagging Railways for

⁵⁵² *ibid.*, 106-110.

⁵⁵³ Obeng-Odoom, *Sekondi-Takoradi*, 88.

⁵⁵⁴ Ian EA Yeboah, "Structural Adjustment and Emerging Urban Form in Accra, Ghana." (*Africa Today* (2000): 61-89) ; Ian EA Yeboah, "Demographic and Housing Aspects of Structural Adjustment and Emerging Urban Form in Accra, Ghana." (*Africa Today* (2003): 107-119).

privatization, which also ushered in the secondment of expatriate managerial staff. Though new coaches and other innovations were made, the Railways faltered, and with it its robust contribution to local employment. Since the Railways' incorporation as a listed company in 2001, there has been little investor interest.⁵⁵⁵ Franklin Obeng-Odoom, whose study in part traces the local social economy of Sekondi-Takoradi, analyzes the impact of these trends:

For now, it will suffice to say that the cumulative effect of these political economic processes is that the city is governed by a highly deradicalised local government system, which is poorly funded, poorly resourced, and poorly motivated trying to manage what some, knowing the hey-day of Sekondi-Takoradi, often described as a dead city [...]. Housing conditions deteriorated, as did the state of general infrastructure [...]. Writers familiar with Sekondi in its hey-day could only euphemistically say that it had 'seen better days' [...].⁵⁵⁶

Since the days of the Atlantic Trade, the Fante/Ahanta of Ghana's Western Region have been inserted within global economies, and often depend on chance geographical emplacement for a way of life which can be reasonably described as cosmopolitan, relative to much of the rest of Ghana. The region's luck was given a new lease of life with the construction of the Takoradi Harbour and its coupling with the Railways, but it also set in motion a process of industrialization and monetization with detrimental effects on socio-economic and political development, leading to anomie evidenced in detail by Busia. The Native Authority—and later the Ministry of Chieftaincy—while much more authoritarian and resourced than early colonial Ahanta, often abused its powers of alienation, while the Town Council (and later the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly) escaped neither charges of corruption nor divisions along ethnic lines. On the other hand, and much more than their counterparts in Gamba, workers of Sekondi-Takoradi were successful in pooling their efforts and grievances, regardless of tribal affiliations. But most remarkable are the similarities in trends (and often factors of anomie) between Takoradi after its harbor construction and Gamba after the first production of Rabi-Kounga: contested moralities following immigration and monetization, reduced confidence in representation bodies, lack of

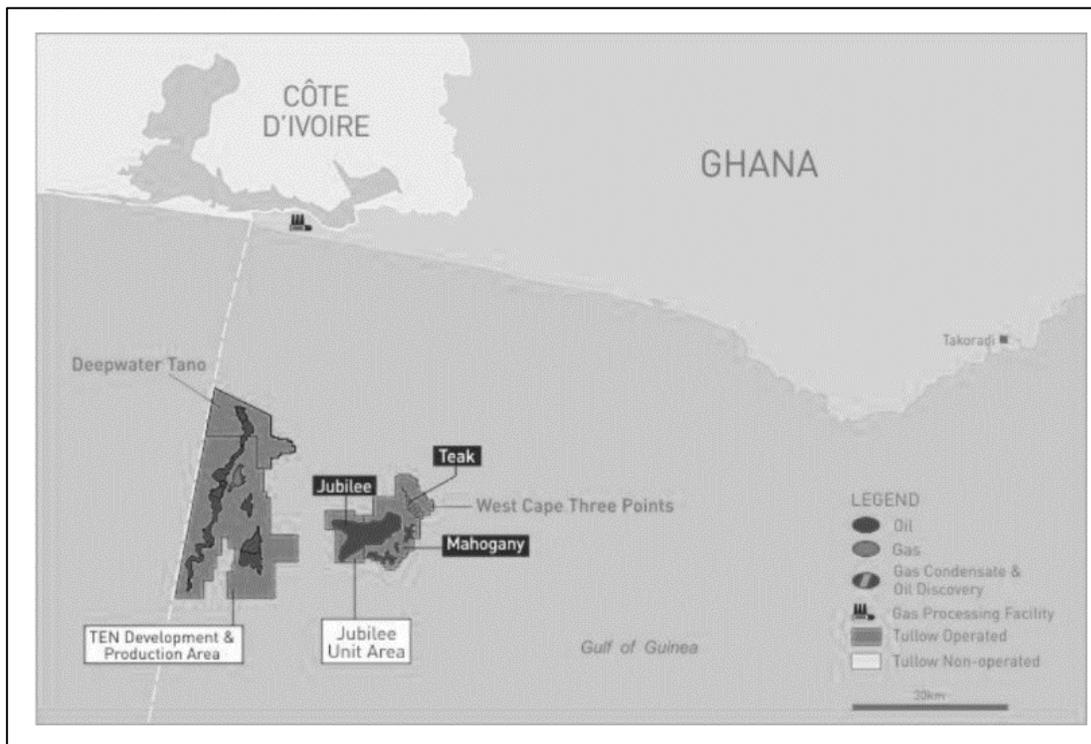
⁵⁵⁵ Obeng-Odoom, *Sekondi-Takoradi*, 89.

⁵⁵⁶ *ibid.*, 89.

respect for chiefs, syncretized religious beliefs, and mistrust. Whether these trends altered their course after the discovery of the Jubilee Field in 2007 is the subject of the next section.

7.2. Institutions and Livelihoods in the Western Region, 2007 – 2015

In June and September of 2007, a consortium of oil companies including Kosmos Energy Ghana, Tullow Ghana Limited, Anadarko Petroleum Corporation, and the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation announced the discovery of oil and gas in commercial quantities. 63 miles



Map 12: The Jubilee Field (tulloil.com)

from Takoradi in the Gulf of Guinea, the offshore find was named the Jubilee Field and was estimated to contain 3 billion barrels of crude oil. With Takoradi already boasting one of West Africa’s largest harbors, it quickly became the natural choice as a base of operations for the consortium.

As the “Unit Operator,” Tullow was responsible for much of the industrial and administrative infrastructure required to export its product. By December 2010, production was underway and most infrastructure put in place. 17 wells had been drilled and developed and a vast network of underwater pipelines laid to support to the Jubilee field’s Floating Production, Storage,

and Offloading vessel. Onshore facilities in Takoradi included the Tullow Logistic Shore Base, as well as the adjacent pipe yard and chemicals storage facilities. In the years following, at least 8 additional wells were drilled and the harbor in Takoradi was expanded to meet the needs of the industry. From 2010 to 2015, production hovered around and intermittently dipped below 150,000 barrels a day.⁵⁵⁷

Unlike in the Ndougou, measures were taken to ensure compliance with relatively new international standards of due diligence in the oil industry. Third-party assessors were hired by Tullow to ensure benchmarks were reached, and that Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) were employed to track the grievances of the population in the 6 coastal districts nominally affected by the extractive activities. At Tullow Ghana Ltd.'s headquarters off of Independence Square, a representative of Social Performance confirmed that the CLOs were chosen among their communities and took their work seriously. In 2011, parliament enacted the Revenue Management Act, which instituted the Public Interest Accountability Committee (PIAC). PIAC since then has regularly acted as a watchdog and brought to light even minor instances of unaccounted oil revenues.⁵⁵⁸ Ghana has, unlike Gabon, remained in good standing with the EITI, and evidence suggests that it will continue to do so.

But as with all major oil finds, a host of ancillary industries and services grew up around the consortium's primary activities. Waste management and food contractors began servicing the members of the consortium, and bars, nightclubs, and supermarkets sprang up to service a wealthier, foreign clientele. Most of these services are located in and around the wealthy area of Beach Road, which has seen luxury real estate development since oil was struck and which is also near the harbor.

In all, the physical and administrative infrastructure of the consortium's implantation as well as its ancillary industries are estimated to have directly contributed not more than hundreds of jobs. Though not insignificant, the oil industry's share of the monetized local economy would pale in comparison to that of the Ndougou.

⁵⁵⁷ Tullow Oil. "Jubilee Field." (<https://www.tulloil.com/operations/west-africa/ghana/jubilee-field>, Accessed December 30, 2018)

⁵⁵⁸ Business Ghana. "Govt has breached Petroleum Act—PIAC." (<https://www.businessghana.com/site/news/general/167544/Govt-has-breached-Petroleum-Act-PIAC>, Accessed December 30, 2018)

Lastly, the indirect societal consequences of the industry's implantation would seem to be disproportionate to the relatively small direct economic consequences. Studies have revealed that the attraction of oil jobs and ancillary work contributed to the population's increase, as 10% of a sample of newcomers attest to have arrived in the area since 2010. Real estate prices have risen dramatically, putting pressure on renters and small businesses. Banks have opened in various locations, as well as higher-end supermarkets catering to wealthier residents. Restaurants, hotels, bars, and nightclubs target similar clientele, contributing to what some have even termed "gentrification."

In Chapter 2's discussion of institutions and livelihoods in Gamba since the advent of the oil industry, particular attention was given to three components of well-being—spiritual, material, and associative—as a means to focus on different aspects of anomie. The same will be done here, but in less detail. This is so for two reasons: First, it is evident that a time-span of roughly ten years is hardly enough to document detailed changes, let alone account for the inter-generational changes outlined in Chapter 2; second, a historicization of Sekondi-Takoradi is not required as was the case for Gamba, where no such thick descriptions previously existed. Thanks to its long-established trade links within Ghana and with the rest of the world, the twin city has enjoyed substantial academic exposure, most notably perhaps in a detailed analysis by Franklin Obeng-Odoom's analysis of the city's land economics.⁵⁵⁹ I will therefore summarize his findings and fill certain gaps with my own observations and data.

7.2.1. Material well-being

This measure of our dependent variables is predictably, with respect to Sekondi-Takoradi, the one with the least observable changes with the timespan identified (2007 – 2016). The best objective and longitudinal source of information concerning the material lives of those in and around Sekondi-Takoradi is given by the Population and Housing Censuses of the Ghana Statistical Service, which conducts these censuses roughly every decade. The most recent were conducted in 1984, 2000, and 2010, enough to provide general trends but whose time intervals are too wide to yield analyses of the oil industry's relative impact. Since the Jubilee field had not

⁵⁵⁹ Obeng-Odoom, *Sekondi-Takoradi*.

become operative until 2010, the real value of these statistics for the present study are in their ability to give us longer-term trends with which to compare with the most contemporary observations.

Despite the more popular conceptions of oil exploitation's impact on local economies, the most dramatic social and demographic changes in Takoradi predated even the discovery of Jubilee. Survey data from 1984 to 2000 betrays the greatest population increase in the Western Region. Most of the increase went to urban areas, and the statistics reveal as well that individuals in urban areas lived in smaller and smaller dwellings. Concurrently, the number of single parents rose, which suggests that the region's urbanization also put pressure on individual livelihoods. The survey statistics confirm what Obeng-Odoom identified as the urbanizing pressure of structural adjustment reforms. Indeed, the rural areas had not seen a significant increase in population vis-à-vis their urban counterparts.

By contrast, the years 2000-2010 suggest trends in the opposite direction, lending more credence to the neoliberal urbanization theory. Population growth slowed, and the proportion of single-parent households stabilized. Of course, it is impossible to tell whether these trends were arrested at the discovery of the Jubilee field (2007), given the ten-year timespan. Nevertheless, Obeng-Odoom, writing in 2014, uses his observations, interviews, and private-sector statistics to provide a thorough (and convincing) account of the half-decade following oil operations. One is led to conclude that the trends of 1984-2000 took new form, if they were not entirely aggravated.

7.2.1.1. Housing

We learn through Obeng-Odoom that the oil industry put considerable stress on a number of quality-of-life indicators. The most poignant among them is housing, where anecdotal and interview evidence tell of increasing rents, food and commodity prices, density, and deteriorating conditions. The link with the arrival of Tullow and ENI in Takoradi is not only coincidental; in the Beach Road neighborhood, roughly two kilometers from Tullow's regional headquarters on Independence Square, once-inhabited property has been sold *en masse* to oil companies looking for temporary worker residences. Meeting at an upscale coffee shop of the same neighborhood, one chief confessed to me that just a few years ago, none of this (gesturing one-handed to the

physical surroundings) was here. He was also referring to the new and renovated hotels and residential lodges springing up in every direction, and whose rooms according to Obeng-Odoom were mostly vacant and on lease to energy companies. The result of the buyouts has ostensibly been to aggravate the already-crowded conditions of Takoradi's older neighborhoods, made worse by the influx of immigrants pursuing scant oil jobs. In the villages of the six coastal districts, by contrast, there does not appear to be a similar surge in population and crowded conditions, but new housing construction can yet be spotted along well-traveled routes.

7.2.1.2. Food and consumer prices

Also affecting material livelihoods are food and consumer prices. Though food has not been produced locally for decades (at the very least since the time of Busia's study), complaints of rising prices appear in Obeng-Odoom's ethnography. In addition, the offshore oil rigs, gas pipelines and other real estate required to operate a booming industry have crowded out former agricultural and fishing zones and helped push up prices.⁵⁶⁰ Land values have risen to such a point that rents have increased, forcing smallholders to push up prices on their produce. Added to this is the "quasi-mercantilist" food services regime used by the energy companies,⁵⁶¹ where contracted catering services source locally. Given the catering services' clientele, preferred suppliers are in a position to raise prices, further limiting supply to local, non-oil-worker consumers. In total, it seems that a local Dutch Disease is in its infant stages, though given the diversity of productive pursuits in the region, such as farming coconuts and palm oil, mining, etc., it is unlikely to rise to the severity seen in Gamba.

7.2.1.3. Employment

Lastly, it has been largely acknowledged that the employment benefits of hosting oil companies are only marginally felt by a region with roughly two million people. Though the

⁵⁶⁰ *ibid.*, 132.

⁵⁶¹ *ibid.*, 157.

central government in Accra passed the Local Content Law 2013, it has been deemed so vaguely written and sparingly enforced that it has had no impact on the Western Region *per se*. Recruitment for the semi-skilled labor on oil rigs is largely conducted in Accra via a handful of agencies, while the numbers of Takoradi natives hired has remained low. In other sectors, as we have seen with agriculture and fishing, the impact on employment has of course been moderately detrimental. One of the most organized trade union movements has come from the largely Fante fishermen, who have popularly expressed their frustration to news media, politicians, and the traditional authorities. Their most central arguments are that catches have dropped (a statistical fact) due to the presence of black seaweed (sargossum), and that oil rig lights attract schools of fish to the rigs, where fishers are forbidden to lay nets.⁵⁶² Because of the diminished catch, fishing as a profession has slumped and livelihoods have been compromised. Since the past few years, however, government, energy, and NGO researchers have made a convincing case that the diminished catch is rather owed to overfishing and other environmental factors, rather than the oil industry.⁵⁶³ According to one NGO which routinely acts on behalf of fishers and farmers, the number of demands for compensation or access by energy companies has died down.

7.2.2. Spiritual well-being and expectations

Changes to the Western Region's material and infrastructural landscape, as well as sensational media reports, contributed to growing expectations shortly after Jubilee's discovery. Kweku of Accra-based Joy FM, which broadcasts locally as Empire Radio and is located near Market Circle in Takoradi, claims that expectations were especially high at the time of Jubilee's discovery. After releasing a 3-part radio documentary on the impact of oil production on the region, Kweku concluded that the media in general were to blame for unreasonably high expectations. According to him, the media were not sufficiently educated on the topic, and thus were unable to properly distill and process information.⁵⁶⁴ High initial expectations among the Western Region's population were confirmed through a number of my interviews. Locals went

⁵⁶² Interview with Chief of fishermen, Baku, Ghana, August 30, 2016 ; Interview with Nana Akosua Gyamfiaba and elders, Shama, August 26, 2016 ; Participation in FON/Peace Corps engagement, Nyankrom, August 28, 2016)

⁵⁶³ Interview with Mores, "The Daily Graphic," Takoradi, January 18, 2016

⁵⁶⁴ Interview with Kweku, Joy FM, Takoradi, January 18, 2016

through stages, beginning with high expectations before essentially losing hope that the oil industry would bring much in terms of employment or living conditions.⁵⁶⁵ Initially confident, local chiefs began a campaign to set aside 10% of oil revenues for the Western Region's development, while some local parliamentarians agitated for a port/harbor to be built between the Atwabo gas plant and Orochi, because the labor-intensive project would lower unemployment (Essien Ghana Aug 30). Lastly, the sudden population boom following the Jubilee discovery remains the most important testament to raised expectations.

During fieldwork, however, it was ascertained that expectations were well tempered by 2016. According to Orei-Akoto of the Community Land and Development Foundation (COLANDEF), who worked with locals on a daily basis, a "majority" had since accepted that nothing much would come of oil. Beginning with the failure of the chiefs to secure a 10% stipend for the region, expectations returned to somewhat realistic. According to a panel of chiefs presided over by a highly respected Queen Mother, there's been "no improvement" in their lives, and "nothing came." This despite the Queen Mother's subtle chastisement of the chiefs' initial excitement: "We got more than 10% through the Atwabo gas plant!"⁵⁶⁶ Others in policy and development agree that people have abandoned high hopes.⁵⁶⁷

Realistic expectations appear to have come about through two processes. First, a relative sense of deprivation could not overcome the promise of improvement. Community centers and health clinics were built,⁵⁶⁸ street lighting added to areas of housing booms, and other minor infrastructural improvements such as drainage ditches have been contributed by Ghana Gas.⁵⁶⁹ Korkor of Tullow's Social Performance adds that they have helped by providing bore holes for drinkable water in areas affected by industrial activity. Tullow has also provided scholarships for a limited number of students attending polytechnical institutes, seeming in part an effort to reach benchmarks set in the Local Content Law.

But when certain expectations were not reached, such as local employment, feelings of relative deprivation surfaced. Richard Acheampong of the Trade Union Congress, who has

⁵⁶⁵ Interviews with Orei-Akoto, COLANDEF, Takoradi, January 13, 2016 ; Matthew, Oswald, and Bernice, WRCF, Takoradi, January 20, 2016 ; Nana Gyiamfiaba and elders ; Joseph Kudjo, Presiding Member, Nzema East District Assembly, Esiama, August 30, 2016

⁵⁶⁶ Interview with Nana Gyiamfiaba and elders

⁵⁶⁷ Interview with Joseph Kudjo ; Interview with Matthew, Oswald, and Bernice

⁵⁶⁸ Interview with Nana Gyiamfiaba and elders

⁵⁶⁹ Interview with elders, Atuabo, August 30, 2016

extensive contacts in the region, claimed that foreigners to the Western Region seemed to be taking all the jobs, in accordance with the companies' desired flexibility and preference for 28-day work/leave cycles.⁵⁷⁰ Field studies by the Western Region Coastal Foundation (WRCF) also support the claim that there is widespread concern that outsiders are taking all the jobs.⁵⁷¹ Even the ancillary industries are being sourced outside.⁵⁷² And despite the lack of local employment, people in the east of the coastal regions complain because they do not get the same onshore infrastructure as the west.⁵⁷³ For the predominantly Ahanta farmers, meager benefits from hosting oil's infrastructure means they are often left only with devastated or compromised farmland. Gas pipelines were built in the Shama District (Atuabo to Aboundze) with little or no consultation of the local farmers, which reportedly affected many crop outputs.⁵⁷⁴ The Volta Aluminum Company acquired vast tracts of land for the construction of a power plant near Ghana Gas' facilities in Atuabo, consulting chiefs in the process but failing to compensate them in time. Farmers' plantations were reportedly destroyed.⁵⁷⁵ Some accused gas flaring for the wilting of coconut trees.⁵⁷⁶ The situation is such that many districts have taken to introducing skills training for women whose lands were taken by force for the construction of hydrocarbons facilities.⁵⁷⁷ In the small village of Nyankrom, one community member decried the abuses of the oil and gas waste-management firm Zeal Environmental Technologies, whose spillages apparently ruined his tree crop.⁵⁷⁸ For the Ahanta of the coastal Western Region, machine-intensive oil exploitation has not been one of the many trades which have fit into their perennial patterns of economic exchange.

Second, expectations were actively tempered by civil society and policy-makers, or even "managed."⁵⁷⁹ The WRCF, which disburses funds to and coordinates the activities of locally-operating NGOs such as the Friends of the Nation (FON), COLANDEF, and the United Civil Society Organisations for National Development (UCSOND). In each project report, local NGOs must demonstrate measures taken to mitigate not only high expectations produced by the offshore

⁵⁷⁰ Interview with Richard Acheampong, Labour Organizer, Accra, January 10, 2016

⁵⁷¹ Interview with Matthew, Oswald, and Bernice

⁵⁷² Interview with Richard Acheampong

⁵⁷³ Interview with Matthew, Oswald, and Bernice

⁵⁷⁴ Interview with Solomon Ampofo, Conversation Manager, FON, Takoradi, August 24, 2016

⁵⁷⁵ Interview with Maxwell Essien, National Assemblyman, Esiama, August 30, 2016

⁵⁷⁶ Interview with Osei Akoto, COLANDEF, Takoradi, August 26, 2016

⁵⁷⁷ Interview with Wisdom, Community Development Officer of Ellembelle, Esiama, August 30, 2016

⁵⁷⁸ Participation in FON/Peace Corps engagement

⁵⁷⁹ Interview with Matthew, Oswald, and Bernice

discoveries, but also high expectations produced by their own community engagements. In UCSOND's 2015 end-of-year project report, the authors defended inter-community "area" meetings as a means to provide "the opportunity for community member [sic] to hear issues in other communities [whereupon] some of them became empathetic with others and this helped to manage expectations since they realised that their concerns are not too peculiar."⁵⁸⁰ The FON assessed one risk of a particular community engagement as the "failure to achieve a representative and credible community conversations and dialogue mechanism leading to increasing community frustration," with its "mitigating measure" being "careful management of expectations together with feedback mechanisms providing evidence that community priorities are acted upon."⁵⁸¹ Colandef in its own report lists the three main challenges to its community dialogue engagements as chieftaincy disputes, poor transportation, and "[h]igh expectations of community members of the oil and gas find."⁵⁸² Since the consortium of NGOs together engages with 117 communities, almost the entirety of the 6 coastal Districts,⁵⁸³ it is safe to assume they have had a moderating impact on the area's previously outsized aspirations for oil-led growth and development.

The WRCF also engages policymakers, notably the planners in each of the 6 coastal districts. It is evident that many civil servants working in the Sekodi Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA) look upon "high expectations" as a challenge to overcome.⁵⁸⁴ But in the more rural surrounding coastal districts, the WRCF has sought fit to engage the staff of the District Executives in an effort to encourage public-private partnerships in sustainable development unrelated to the hydrocarbons industry. I was able to attend an assembly of district planners hosted by the WRCF in Dixcove on August 25, 2016, where planners and civil servants working for each of the 6 District Executives presented their projects for promoting "viable business" within their jurisdictions. Because the capital-intensive nature of the oil industry is a barrier to entry for common people, Mabel, who helped organized the assembly and direct the proceedings, admitted

⁵⁸⁰ United Civil Society Organisations for National Development – UCSOND. "Annual Progress Report: Community Conversations." (Submitted to the WRCF, November, 2015), 4

⁵⁸¹ Friends of the Nation. "Annual Progress Report: Community Conversations." (Submitted to the WRCF, November, 2015), 14

⁵⁸² COLANDEF, "Annual Progress Report: Community Conversations." (Submitted to the WRCF, November, 2015), 9

⁵⁸³ Interview with Matthew, Oswald, and Bernice

⁵⁸⁴ Interviews with Emmanuel Papa Assan, Regional Youth, Sekondi, August 23, 2016 ; Stephen Blighton, Regional Co-Coordination Councillor, Sekondi, August 23 ; Elizabeth Arthur, Presiding Member, Policy Planner, Takoradi, August 23, 2016

that they prefer to de-emphasize tapping into ancillary hydrocarbons industries. The planners appeared to follow suit in their presentations, with all pursuing development of either their agricultural, fishery, or tourism sectors. The district Jomoro, with 150,107 people of whom approximately 53,000 are rural, had prospects in coconut processing, tourism development, and cassava production, among other things. They boasted taking advantage of the country's Rural Enterprise Program, as 542 enterprises and 222 artisans benefited from the scheme. Challenges to realizing the development of their aims included insufficient funds, lack of youth training centers, and the rising cost of farmland. Planners from Nzema East likewise sought to boost farming and take advantage of the country's Rural Technology Fund to obtain modern equipment. Fishing has always been a primary economic activity in the District, but planners assumed that marketing fish from Nzema East would be futile in the face of competition from larger fisheries in Takoradi. Ahanta West, like Jomoro, sought to promote artisans for tourism, and sponsored 20 students to learn a variety of skills. The STMA was also present, elaborating on a plan to better market palm oil from the metropolitan area, admitting candidly that eliminating fatty acids which were scorned by Western buyers was a difficult task since many of their producers had been stuck in their ways for roughly twenty years. In Ellembelle, the 44.8% of the district's 87,000 inhabitants engaged in agriculture were meeting difficulties obtaining land and even small bodies of water which were being sold to oil and gas companies. Finally, the WRCF concluded the presentation by encouraging each of the districts to think strategically and to consider all risks and opportunities associated with their respective plans. As a suggestion, representatives from the WRCF strongly suggested pursuing fishing, as they pointed out that Ghana produced only half of the fish it consumed. They then re-emphasized the need to "build capacity to follow best practices."⁵⁸⁵

Relative to the Ndougou's experience, what is revealing about the District planners' assembly is the sense of pragmatism policymakers brought to their planning efforts. In none of the proposals did the civil servants attempt to have oil proceeds—whether derived internally or allocated by Accra—bankroll their efforts. Budgeting appeared to be done in accordance with the Accra government's central development programs. In the Ndougou, the *PDL*, which outlined the department's development plan for the near future, grossly overestimated its budget capacity to fulfill medium and long term objectives. Secondly, while both sets of communities sought to boost

⁵⁸⁵ Participation in WRCF Assembly, Dixcove, August 25, 2016

agriculture, fishing, and tourism, the proposals from the Western Region Districts largely took all market metrics into account, assessing risks and rewards along the way. Doubtless this is due at least in part to the engagement of the WRCF.

One institution and set of public authorities which mirrored the general public's (rather than civil society and policymakers) rise and fall of expectations were chiefs. Almost as soon as Tullow made its Jubilee discovery, influential paramount chiefs and sub-chiefs in the region began petitioning Parliament that 10% of all oil proceeds to the government be reserved for the Western Region as the industry's host. Claiming that President Mahama (2012-2017) had promised during his campaigns to secure a stipend for the Western Region, the failure by Parliament to do so has generated considerable acrimony between chiefs and lawmakers. While chiefs interviewed claim the demand for 10% of oil proceeds was meant to be put in a public account, and not in their pockets,⁵⁸⁶ many, especially those interviewed in public service and civil society, have become wary of chiefs' designs and ambitions.

In Ghana, roughly 80% of land is owned by traditional authorities.⁵⁸⁷ While farmers have surface rights, they are almost always tenants, and much of the time the landowner is a chief. As many stools hold allodial interest in the land, oil and gas companies have approached many chiefs, neglecting that farmers might be considered stakeholders as well. Unfortunately for many, "engaging the chief doesn't necessarily mean engaging the community."⁵⁸⁸ This would especially be the case if many claims were true. Planners for the Ellebelle District admitted to working with chiefs in order to prevent the sale of crucial farmland to companies. According to them, chiefs tended to take one-off payments and not consider others or even the future.⁵⁸⁹ Kweku of Joy FM, active in community affairs, claimed the sale of lands has worried citizens from Takoradi to Agona Nkwanta Junction. Chiefs reportedly take company cash and make several purchases, such as police cars and community centers, while the rest is spent at their discretion.⁵⁹⁰

The opportunism of chiefs is exemplified by Ghana Gas' construction of its gas plant in Atuabo, a group of 7 villages in the district of Ellembele. Publicly promised to the adjacent district of Jomoro in 2009, Ghana Gas three years later suddenly decided to relocate construction plans to

⁵⁸⁶ Interview with Osabarima, Kwaw Entsie II, Takoradi, January 19, 2016

⁵⁸⁷ Interview with Nana Ama, COLANDEF, Accra, January 8, 2016

⁵⁸⁸ Interview with Solomon Ampofo

⁵⁸⁹ Ellebelle district representatives (participation in WRCF Assembly) ; Interview with Matthew, Oswald, and Bernice

⁵⁹⁰ Interview with Kweku, Joy FM

Atuabo. Since the MP of Ellembele was at the time serving as the Minister of Petroleum in addition to the chairman of the GNPC being from Atuabo, much speculation ensued among locals that politics had played a role in the relocation.⁵⁹¹ Interviews with elders in Atuabo revealed that chiefs had political influence with Ghana Gas as well and were instrumental in relocating the plant. Others went as far as to claim that Atuabo's chiefs were successful in having their MP become the oil minister.⁵⁹² According to some of the elders, many palm farmers had yet to be compensated by Ghana Gas. While Atuabo's 400-500 years old Paramountcy (a fact of which the elders were immensely proud) benefited from a boost of employment at roughly 8-10%, many are clearly aggrieved.⁵⁹³ When I asked civil society members why people withhold their grievances, a representative of COLANDEF responded that although chiefs do sell land for personal profit, "people don't easily open up on it."⁵⁹⁴

Financial enticements are not the only threat to the enduring legitimacy of chiefs. Urbanization has also been mentioned as a culprit. Since service jobs predominate in urban centers like Takoradi, education and literacy become marketable assets, albeit sometimes at the expense of foregoing ancestral cosmologies. In nearby Winneba, a candidate with a Ph.D. ascended the throne "illegally," and further alienated many of his subjects through ignorance of tradition and history, to the point where police presence was required at certain gatherings.⁵⁹⁵ Also threatening towards established interpretive models of chieftaincy are power-hungry chiefs, such as Nana Eskado of Takoradi, an active and vocal political figure occupying a recently created paramountcy. According to many, involvement in politics diminishes chiefs' legitimacy and sanctity.⁵⁹⁶

It is clear that despite presumed transgressions mentioned above, chiefs are still held in very high esteem. In keeping with the Western Region's interpretive models of tradition and ancestry, the vast majority of chiefs in the coastal districts, as in much of Ghana, obey traditions and thus secure widespread legitimacy.⁵⁹⁷ "The stool resides in the family," one chief told me emphatically.⁵⁹⁸ In the vast majority of cases, a vacant stool sets off an age-old protocol whereby

⁵⁹¹ Francesca Pugliese, "Corporate Social Responsibility and local perceptions: A case study in Western Ghana." (MA Thesis. Leiden University, 2014).

⁵⁹² Interview with Richard Acheampong

⁵⁹³ Interview with elders, Atuabo

⁵⁹⁴ Interview with Osei Akoto, August 26

⁵⁹⁵ Interview with Richard Acheampong

⁵⁹⁶ Interview with Stephen Blighton

⁵⁹⁷ Interview with Kweku, Joy FM

⁵⁹⁸ Interview with chief, member of PIAC, Takoradi, January 19, 2016

elders nominate their preferred candidate for succession for further review by themselves and the Queen Mother. The candidate's background is scrutinized, and he must demonstrate knowledge of tradition, history, and exhibit the proper comportment. After acceptance is "confinement," during which the chief becomes a spirit and the embodiment of tradition.⁵⁹⁹ Many chiefs accept themselves as repositories of tradition. Many disparage the loss of land to other, more opportunistic chiefs, and acknowledge that their popular legitimacy rests in being "neutral" and level-headed in the sense that they discourage violence and/or disruption as an acceptable grievance mechanism.⁶⁰⁰ Chiefs do not even typically seek jobs in the oil industry, for the simple reason that they consider themselves "above" this kind of work.⁶⁰¹ Councils of elders view their roles as supporting chiefs in the maintenance of peace and order, even when the "government" comes to forcibly acquire land.⁶⁰²

The legitimacy of chiefs is such that politicians and other actors can be punished for showing disrespect to the institution. Many chiefs, "always agitated" with respect to competition they get for ownership and custody of the land, act on principle.⁶⁰³ Chief Entsie II claimed that a mining company in 1996 failed to consult chiefs and was told to leave.⁶⁰⁴ One MP campaigned on the platform of pushing through the de-stooling of an unpopular chief, but abandoned the idea once elected after fierce opposition from chiefs.⁶⁰⁵ Most recently, Tullow was forced to change their policy of recruiting CLOs from among the cadres of recent graduates employed by Ghana's civil service. After Nana Kwaa Ogyema lobbied her peers on one of the company's advisory councils, Tullow agreed to hire local community members as CLOs.⁶⁰⁶

Chiefs are also known to act in good faith on behalf of their communities in other ways, for instance in creating a Platform for Coastal Communities in order to preserve languages and customs in the face of mass immigration,⁶⁰⁷ proposing initiatives to assure that land is released to public and private concerns in a way more beneficial to communities,⁶⁰⁸ and serving on the boards

⁵⁹⁹ Interview with Osabarima, Kwaw Entsie II

⁶⁰⁰ Interviews with chief, member of PIAC ; Nana Kwasi Ogyema, Takoradi, January 22, 2016

⁶⁰¹ Interview with Orei Akoto, January 13

⁶⁰² Interview with Nana Akosua Gyamfiaba and elders

⁶⁰³ Interview with Nana Ama

⁶⁰⁴ Interview with Osabarima, Kwaw Entsie II

⁶⁰⁵ Interview with Richard Acheampong

⁶⁰⁶ Interview with Korkor, Social Performance, Tullow, Takoradi, January 22, 2016

⁶⁰⁷ Interview with Matthew, Oswald, and Bernice

⁶⁰⁸ Interview with Ruth Anwuboh, Unit Community Member, Esiama, August 30, 2016

of PIAC and the GNPC. Immigration in particular has shown signs of putting strains on collective identities, which in turn provide platforms for association. While big families still provide mutual aid, and in many instances legal and financial assistance, the Nzema for instance have claimed to be losing their language to the influx of Fante,⁶⁰⁹ something which the Ahanta have suffered for decades. With clothing and diets changing rapidly as well, the agrarian communal bonds risk gradually eroding. For many, chiefs are a source of constancy in a changing social environment.

Yet even with lingering doubts as to chiefly decorum, chiefs in the region (as well as in much of Ghana) enjoy a high social standing unseen in Gamba and the Ndougou. This is of course a legacy of British use of traditional authorities during colonial administration, and interviews suggest the rites and prerogatives surrounding chiefs and succession are taken seriously. One chief, notable for his seat on the PIAC, emphasized that “the stool resides in the family,” while another prominent chief laid out chiefly pre-requisites: candidates for the chieftaincy must be level-headed, know their group’s traditions, and, in a departure from their counterparts in Gabon, become a spirit/embodiment of tradition and ancestry. The communal respect for chiefs and their duties/privileges is confirmed by even those critical of the institution; one interviewee averred that in Ghana you can lose electorally if you oppose chiefs, owing to the fact that they have remained quite legitimate. This system coexists—sometimes in syncretic fashion—with the institution of Christianity, the dominant religion in southern Gabon. At the village level, the hierarchy of traditional authorities seems to give sense and purpose to communities, and might just as well contribute to the associative qualities of the region described below. In another way, chieftaincy represents a sort of constancy to locals who might otherwise feel alienated by the abrupt socio-economic shifts taking place around them.

Lastly, Obeng-Odoom in particular employs his investigation of prostitution to hint at creeping social anomie. In ethnographic detail, Obend-Odoom describes the growing market for prostitution in Takoradi, and the parallel growth in its supply. Young women, some perhaps minors, can indeed be seen stalking international hotels so as to solicit potential customers. Temporary oil workers are known to be fond of their services, and offer more compensation than the locals. Taxi drivers have also integrated themselves by offering to transport prostitutes in

⁶⁰⁹ Interview with Matthew, Oswald, and Bernice

exchange for a cut of their earnings, or for their actual services. Those with a moral stake in Takoradi's daily life disparage the new audacities of solicitation.

7.2.3. Associative well-being

If anomic structures were tamed vis-à-vis the evolution of societal norms, the same can be said of political anomie. Rather than disaffection and cynicism, the coastal districts of the Western Region exhibit a fair degree of active participation in public policy and public interests, further distinguishing their trajectory from that experienced in the Ndougou. While in Gamba these means are mostly limited to religious fora, in the Western Region of Ghana there are governmental, private, and NGO agencies that regularly promote active community participation in self-help projects. For example, the WCRF, which engages six coastal districts (along with their respective District Assemblies), 12 traditional councils, and 117 communities, can boast active members of the organization in almost all communities. In addition, representatives of the WCRF (who oversee several other civil society organizations) attest that community members themselves are “most cooperative.” Much to the contrary, long-term residents of the Ndougou tend to express their frustration at NGOs and civil society for raising expectations which are rarely met. CLOs employed by oil and gas, and public community liaisons, such as those working for District Assemblies and Chief Executives, largely attest to the participatory enthusiasm of the region's citizens. People are especially receptive to engagement, however, if it is an issue affecting them directly, such as small scale mining.⁶¹⁰ As demonstrated by the FON and Peace Corps assembly in the village of Nyankrom (Shama District), people readily express their concerns and partake in problem-solving discussions, even when it concerns how best to address environmental devastation wrought by oil and gas.⁶¹¹ Through such engagements, civil society is able to increase awareness of legal rights, especially as they pertain to land tenure.⁶¹² Fishers will also consult NGOs such as the WRCF to address decreasing catches, even if the intent is to gain leverage in other policy areas.⁶¹³ This strategy extends to making use of the several independent news media

⁶¹⁰ Interview with Wisdom, Community Development Officer

⁶¹¹ Participation in FON/Peace Corps engagement

⁶¹² Interview with Solomon Ampofo

⁶¹³ Interview with Kweku, Joy FM

outlets specializing in local news, such as the Daily Graphic—whose readership nationwide numbers in the millions—and Joy FM, whose 3-part series on oil and gas in Takoradi conveyed the fishers’ grievances.



Map 13: Sekondi-Takoradi (WRCF)

Though locals appear to moderately distrust public institutions and expect relatively little,⁶¹⁴ vehemence towards local assemblies does not approach that seen in the Ndougou. According to the WRCF, locals regularly express their needs to the District Assemblies, which appear to be quite active in their respective communities as was demonstrated by the WRCF's "Viable Business" assembly with District planners, as well as by the presence of several District civil servants at the Ghana Gas conference to discuss the issue of marker buoys.⁶¹⁵ Somewhat akin to the Gabonese Départements, Ghanaian Districts are disbursed government subsidies. The coastal districts receive these on a quarterly basis via the District Assembly Fund. Spending discretion is determined by assemblymen and assemblywomen elected by universal suffrage, who, like the departmental councilors in the Ndougou, are also free to collect taxes on a limited number of services, land and licenses. As in the Ndougou, capacity and effectiveness appear to be minor issues for the Districts, as issues have surfaced regarding the improper valuation of property taxes and its negative impact on the District Assembly Common Funds throughout the Western Region.⁶¹⁶ But that is where similarities end. Each Assembly is presided over by a District Chief Executive (DCE) appointed by the President of Ghana. Though reminiscent of the departmental prefect in Gabon, the DCE must be confirmed by the popularly elected assemblies, and can also be overridden by the assemblies. Furthermore, many DCEs also have ambitions of becoming MPs, which conditions their political decision-making.⁶¹⁷ Lastly, the DCEs are highly sensitive to the will of chiefs and the traditional authority framework in general, as the DCEs are cognizant that opposing a strident chief could lead to electoral disaster.⁶¹⁸ These factors combine to assure that public trust in District government remains viable and that the petitioning of District Assemblies is not considered an exercise in vain.

⁶¹⁴ Interview with Mabel, WRCF, Takoradi, August 22, 2016

⁶¹⁵ Participation in Ghana Gas Workshop, Esiama, August 30, 2016

⁶¹⁶ Interview with Stephen Blighton

⁶¹⁷ *ibid.*

⁶¹⁸ Interview with Nana Ama



Photograph 7: Peace Corps/FON Engagement in Nyankrom, Shama District (taken in August, 2016)

Public and international pressure on state institutions—often in the form of independent local, national, and international media—also serve to limit disaffection and cynicism through the encouragement of transparency. Much of course was made of the dangers of a resource curse upon the Jubilee discovery which might overturn Ghana’s cherished democratic consolidation. In 2011, the Petroleum Revenue Management Act set out to address local and international concerns with the allocation of oil proceeds and taking sufficient measures to ensure transparency in line with the country’s membership in the EITI. Of all oil receipts, the Ghana Revenue Authority would commit 70% to the annual budget to be used at Parliament’s discretion, 21% to an investment fund (Heritage Fund), and the remaining 9% to a stabilization fund. In addition, the Act established PIAC, whose mission was “to monitor and evaluate compliance by government and other relevant institutions in the management and use of the petroleum revenues and investments.”⁶¹⁹ According to Chief Entsie II, the establishment of such a committee, composed of members from such diverse organizations such as the Trade Unions Congress, the Association of Queen Mothers, the National House of Chiefs, the Ghana Journalists Association, and the Ghana EITI, was wholly unprecedented, as “nothing like it” had ever been applied to other extractive industries such as gold mining or timber.⁶²⁰ Companies such as Tullow, ENI, and Hess, all active

⁶¹⁹ Public Interest and Accountability Committee (PIAC), “Simplified Guide to the Petroleum Revenue Management Law in Ghana.” (Accra, June 2017). http://www.piacghana.org/portal/files/downloads/simplified_guide_to_ghana's_petroleum.pdf, Accessed December 31, 2018), 30

⁶²⁰ Interview with Osabarima, Kwawa Entsie II

in the region's extractive industries at the time of fieldwork, would be held accountable by the International Finance Corporation (World Bank).

7.3. Explaining Social and Political Anomie in Sekondi-Takoradi and the Western Region with Political Institutions

A few broader trends can be summarized here, despite the relatively short experience of the Western Region with oil production. First, Tullow's discovery of oil in 2007 did not seem to instigate any dramatic negative trends that were not already present. Social and political anomie were identifiable as early as the 1940s, following the construction of the Takoradi Harbour. The record then suggests that the population boom of the 1980s-1990s contributed to anomie, after a decades-long stagnation following the construction of the rival Tema Harbour in 1962. While many saw the Jubilee field as a chance to restore the declining economic vitality of Sekondi-Takoradi, little evidence suggests that any downward trends have been reversed. Instead, it appears that unrealistic expectations run up against economic realities, while large quantities of foreign exchange help to create contested moralities.

Since Ghana is by no means a rentier state, rentierism cannot account for the observed changes. At the same time, however, these changes bear many similarities to what occurred in Gamba beginning in the late 1990s, when decentralization, immigration and a burgeoning cash nexus helped lead to social and political anomie witnessed by the region's contemporary elders. But it is also the case, as was shown in previous chapters, that rentierism cannot have engendered these processes in Gamba. That we see similar changes in both spaces, and various times, suggests a common denominator, but because Gamba and Takoradi are susceptible to being cast aside as "oil cities" whose fates are pre-determined, underlying factors risk being overlooked.

In Sekondi-Takoradi, the arrival of the oil industry brought with it much attention from the press and researchers alike. One unintended consequence of this attention for academics is to prematurely attribute many societal ills to the industry itself. In reality, and as we have seen, the real material impact of oil has been subdued, thanks to a number of factors. First, the industry in

Sekondi-Takoradi is geographically limited to offshore installations, an industrial park at independence square, and the Beach Road neighborhood which has admittedly been transformed. In nearby Atwaba, the gas plant dominates the cityscape and gas pipelines converge there from several districts. Other than these geographic manifestations of the new energy sector, few signs of environmental adjustment appear to exist. Second, the coastal districts and Sekondi-Takoradi have a long history of exporting, beginning with the Brandenburg and Dutch forts of the 17th century. The twin city is itself a product of market forces thanks in part to its location, ushering slaves, gold, palm oil, and coconuts for external consumption. Oil has merely been, in one way, the latest edition of this trend. Third, the area's population, dwarfing that of the Ndougou's, mediates the relative effects of the oil industry. Though it is undeniable that oil and gas extraction has generated substantial cash flows for the government, it is the national government and the country as a whole that benefit, which is decidedly not the case for Gabon. Aside from the relatively small number of lucky locals who have managed to secure oil jobs, and despite the multiplier effects (particularly where it concerns certain elements of the service sector and hotels) emanating from both those few jobs and better-endowed foreign workers, the impact of the oil industry is diffuse.

In a Most Different Systems Design, a common, underlying factor is sought. In Gamba, rentierism and "neo-Tillyian" approaches were ruled out. Hybrid governance was held to account more for the changes perceived. In Sekondi-Takoradi, the realm of explanatory factors for the changes perceived will now be limited to hybrid governance. In Gamba, the most noxious changes occurred when the introduction of large-scale industry coincided with decentralization in 1996/1997. What resulted was a "perfect storm" of legal and moral ambiguity. It is possible to demonstrate a similar effect with respect to the Western Region. In the years before and after 1928, when the Takoradi Harbour was constructed, during the post-colonial period of decline beginning with the construction of Tema Harbour in 1962 and including the neoliberal reforms, and finally following Tullow's discovery of Jubilee in 2007, incongruity produced social and political anomie, especially where it concerned mal-adjustment to new social structures.

The Ndougou and the Western region do, however, differ in one important respect. Political anomie and corrosive informalization were not apparent in the Western Region, at least not to the extent seen in the Ndougou. A dizzying array of public authorities exist to preempt and deter corrupt practices. Some of these, such as the PIAC (which convenes both traditional

authorities and elected officials), focus on the transparency of oil revenues at the national level and publish in detail how every last dollar is spent. Others, such as the WCRF (subsidized by UKAid), the FON and COLANDEF interface with the region's communities. UNDP selected the region to draft Ghana's first regional human development report. Like Shell in Gamba, Tullow and ENI employ a cadre of community liaison officers who, according to Obeng-Odoom, are quite responsive to local requests, in one case honoring a promise to provide several communities with potable water. Ghana Gas, in joint ventures across the region, hosted a public workshop on August 30th, 2008 to discuss the advantages and pitfalls of installing a special marker buoy on an offshore pipeline. Audience members were invited to ask questions and provide commentary, and I had the occasion to question politicians and energy industry representatives following the closing prayers, indicating that there is to some extent a culture of transparency.

Decentralized Districts were introduced in 1988/1989, which coincides with an era of economic stagnation in Sekondi-Takoradi, which is evidenced by statistics from both the Ghana Statistical Service and the research of Obeng-Odoom. Indeed, interlocutors normally disparaged the local politicians, as they had in Gamba, yet without the same noted vehemence and frequency. Formal public authorities such as the District Assemblies and the STMA are, in fact, quite active in public policy as of 2016, whether the intervention concerns development projects, job training, or encouraging youth to become engaged members of society (according to several chiefs, youth in the coastal districts are largely respectful of their elders, a sentiment not shared by the chiefs and elders of the Ndougou). In a workshop organized by the WCRF, representatives from all six coastal districts of the Western Region shared their plans for and progress towards sustainable businesses promotion, many of which concerned the plight of fishers. All in all, simple observations dictate that little of the apathy and disaffection seen in the Ndougou exists in the Western Region of Ghana.

In both the Western Region of Ghana and the Ndougou of Gabon, industry and reforms brought with them the plurification of institutions, which in turn led to instances of situational adjustment, as well as moral and political ambiguities. In the former, however, the observable instances were contained in space and time, and institutional congruence allowed to take hold. The conclusions of this thesis attempt to explain the disparity.