Introduction

When we look at the political economy of Ghana we believe that the dominant and prevailing theory of both constancy and change in Ghana’s economic outcome is its continued overdependence on cash crops - in particular cocoa. First brought to the colony from the neighbouring Fernando Po, this non-native commodity comprised a substantial part of Ghana’s colonial economy and subsequently, the economic overdependence on its agricultural sector became a policy that makes a resurgence in times of economic crisis as seen in the 1960s for example. Cocoa created and reinforced ethnic and spatial inequalities because these plantations were primarily located within the geographical boundaries with one specific, ethnolinguistic group namely, the Ashanti. This provided this group with economic and de jure power that allowed them to mobilise politically both before and after independence. Today we still see the geopolitical strength of the Ashanti as a political bloc in Ghana’s modern democracy and see the region as a beneficiary of club goods from successive governments.

LOCATION, ENDOWMENT AND POPULATION

I.1 Location

Ghana is located on the southern coast of West Africa, between the Gulf of Guinea and the Sankofa River. It is bordered by four countries: Liberia to the north, Ivory Coast to the east and south, and the Gulf of Guinea to the west. It has a coastline stretching over 550 km. The republic is for the most part a highland area with the coastal plains and the coastal plains.

Following a recent referendum in 1958, the state went from 10 regions in the 1980s to 10 regions. The change was partly due to the current Ghanaian administrative efforts to decentralise decision-making as this is further divided for administrative purposes into 21 districts.

I.2 Agro-ecological Zones

Ghana’s climatic conditions are influenced by the Westerly Trade Winds and the thermal equator. The country is divided into agro-ecological zones and is generally divided into two main biomes: the savanna and the forest. The savanna is mostly found in the north and the forest is mostly found in the south. The savanna biome is characterized by a dry season and a wet season. The forest biome is characterized by a wet season and a dry season.

I.3 Resource Endowment

Ghana is rich in both mineral and agricultural resources. Historically it was known for its cocoa, gold, and diamonds. Today, the country is endowed with a diverse range of mineral resources, including bauxite, gold, and diamonds. In recent years it has turned towards exports, particularly of minerals and agricultural products.

II.1 Colonial Land Division

The British established Gold Coast as a Crown Colony in 1874, at which point the primary included the coastal area. In the first stage of development, the British colonial powers engaged in aggressive warfare against the Ashanti kingdom, which ultimately resulted in their defeat in 1935. The subsequent inclusion of Ashanti and Northern Territories into the Gold Coast Colony.

According to Attah (1957), Gold Coast was part of the first stage of development, where the economic growth of the country was driven by the British colonial powers against the Ashanti kingdom and then the Ashanti and Northern Territories into the Gold Coast Colony.

When the British needed a significant amount of labor on the plantations and they were initially able to attract the Ashanti and Northern Territories into the Gold Coast Colony.

II.1 Indirect Rule and Customary Law

Due to the long-term warfare against the Ashanti, the colonial government developed a colonial perception of their traditions. As such, upon the conquest of Ashanti territories, the British introduced customary law through local chiefs and councils as a part of their indirect rule strategy. Colonial law essentially governed the supply of labor to the expanding cocoa plantations as well as for infrastructure construction. According to Dzamara (2018), the indirect rule system undermined the traditional system of governance but it was merely forced to seek labor from the traditional system.

II.1 Infrastructure Development and Settlement

As with other commodity-exporting colonies in Africa, this infrastructure in Gold Coast was built in the rural areas with the major coastal centres. It was established in the early 19th century, using African labor. Colonial customary law, large majority of development took place in the 20th century as part of Government Land Development Act. Guggisberg’s view on the colonization of the Gold Coast is that it was a process of the colonial powers converting traditional landowners into colonial farmers. This process involved the evicting of traditional landowners and forcing them to work on the plantations. It also involved the establishment of a system of land tenure that was more favorable to the colonial powers.

ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHY

II.2 On agriculture and the service sector

Ghana's agricultural sector is vital for its economy and it contributes significantly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The agricultural sector is characterized by the production of cocoa, cashew nuts, oil palm, and tropical and temperate fruits. Cocoa is the most important crop in Ghana, providing the country with a substantial proportion of its GDP. The country has a long history of cocoa production, dating back to the Gold Coast era.

The cocoa economy has been the backbone of Ghana's economy, providing significant contributions to the GDP, employment, and foreign exchange earnings. The sector is highly volatile and is affected by factors such as weather, pests, and diseases. Despite these challenges, the cocoa sector remains a key driver of the economy. The recent increase in cocoa prices has led to an increase in the production of cocoa and a rise in the number of cocoa farmers. However, the sector is still facing challenges such as low productivity, limited access to inputs, and market constraints.

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

II.3 Political Economic Significance

The cocoa sector is significant for the Ghanaian economy, providing employment and foreign exchange earnings. The country is one of the world's largest cocoa producers and it is highly dependent on cocoa exports. The cocoa sector is also a major source of foreign exchange earnings for the country.

The cocoa sector is a key driver of Ghana's economy, providing employment and foreign exchange earnings. The country is one of the world's largest cocoa producers and relies heavily on cocoa exports. The cocoa sector is also a major source of foreign exchange earnings for the country.

II.4 Electoral Geography

Ghana possesses a national dual-party majority during its democratic history. These two main parties accumulate around 95% of the votes in the country, the National Democratic Congress and the New Patriotic Party. These two parties are very distinctly regionally split, with one party dominating the north and the other dominating the south.

The northern rural electorate is significant for the National Democratic Congress, while the rural coastal electorate is significant for the New Patriotic Party. This regional divide maps onto an economic trajectory as already discussed the south has a Cocoa economy and as a result a richer region which affects electoral perceptions. It is interesting to note the similarities in terms of time, one of the main events in the north in 2000 and one of the other 2016 presidential elections as depicted on the maps. Both the Ghanaian Democratic Congress was formed by Jerry Rawlings, capturing a strong hold with the first few elections following the introduction of multiparty democracy. The perception following this 2020 military coup is the opposite trend with the decentralization of Ghanaian governance.