

Migrants' participation in cocoa production: Trust building among multi-ethnic groups in West Africa

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Abstract

Since the 20th century, cocoa, coffee, and other cash crops have been a major part of the economic foundation of West African countries. These cash crops continue to have great significance as agricultural resources in contemporary West Africa. Cocoa is the second largest export of Ghana (the first being gold), constituting 15 per cent of the country's export value. Peasant farmers have been involved in the production of cocoa in Ghana since the colonial era. Many savanna people participate in cocoa production as agricultural labour in the forest areas of Ghana. During the colonial era, coastal ethnic groups bought savanna people as slaves to work on cocoa farms. Even after the abolition of slavery, savanna people were considered to be an essential part of the labour force for cocoa production. This article focuses on the process of savanna migrants' participation in cocoa production and the trust-building process within forest areas by tracing the historical networks of commerce in West Africa. Cocoa and kola have been produced together in cocoa farms around Kumasi, the capital of the Asante kingdom. Many kola merchants in this area act as mediators between savanna migrants and their host societies. Many savanna migrants connect to cocoa production through the kola trade network that developed in the 18th and 19th centuries between Asante and Hausa.

Keywords: cocoa production, kola, Hausa merchant, commercial network, *gaskiya*, *mai-gida*, *zongo*, West Africa



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1. Introduction

In recent years, issues related to migration have been attracting increasing attention around the world. In West Africa, changes in the political, economic, and natural environment since the 1970s and 1980s have led to increasing numbers of migrants (Rain 1999, Henry *et al.* 2003, Van der Geest 2011). In southern Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, local communities have become accustomed to, and have generally accepted, the large migrant population that sustains cocoa production in the areas (Hill 1963).

There are several challenges in cocoa production, especially related to land tenure and transactions between indigenous and migrant populations. In the instance of Côte d'Ivoire, the high economic growth of the country, after independence in the 1960s, has depended on the production of cocoa and coffee. The large numbers of migrants in the region - approximately 1.3 million - came mainly from Burkina Faso and Mali. They settled in the forest area of Côte d'Ivoire under political aegis in the period between 1976 and 1980 (OECD 2009). The main reason for this movement of people is attributed to the severe drought that struck from 1972-1974. The highest economic growth of the country was associated with the impact of migrant labour on production. However, relationships between the indigenous population and migrants became disagreeable because of rapid occupation of reserve lands without registration by the migrants. As a result, civil conflict broke out in 2003.

According to Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), cocoa products are the second largest export of Ghana behind gold, constituting 15 per cent of the country's export value in 2016. In a situation that is similar to former Côte d'Ivoire, cocoa production in Ghana is depends on the migrant agricultural labour population from the savanna area. Data from the Ghana Statistical Service (2013) shows that Ghana had approximately 400 thousand migrants in 2010. According to this data, the inflow of migrants is not rapid in Ghana, despite a dependence of migrants labour similar to former Côte d'Ivoire. Although this difference of both countries can be explained as arising from commonalities among francophone cultures in West Africa, it can also point to the fact that the Ghanaian people have own migrants acceptance based on strong links with their neighbouring countries through historical trades such as kola trade.

The kola trade created a vast network in the 18th and 19th centuries that covered the area from the Volta Basin to Lake Chad (Lovejoy 1980: 33-35). This commercial network contributed to supporting the primary cocoa production of Ghana in the 20th century (Abaka 2005: 121-122). This article focuses on the process of participation in cocoa production and trust-building with savanna migrants in forest areas by tracing the historical networks of commerce in West Africa through the kola trade.

2. Research area and method

This article is based on bibliographic surveys and three months of fieldwork to study the patterns of migration and social relations of contemporary kola trade. Fieldwork was conducted from 2015 to 2017, mainly in the forested area of Ghana, which is a centre for cocoa and kola production.

During fieldwork I carried out 25 life history interviews, observed the current kola trade and conducted

25 household surveys. The research areas are located in two villages in Kwahu West Municipal District, Eastern Region, Republic of Ghana (Figure 1). Village F is located near the main road and there is a centre of the kola trade in the area. Village S is located approximately 10 km from Village F. These villages belong in the area of Akan people habitat. However large numbers of migrants from the savanna and Sahel regions, including the Hausa, Mossi, Kusasi and Dagaare, live in both villages, and there are cultural, religious and societal differences between Akan people and migrants.

The population of Village F is 1,222, half of which comprises migrants from the savanna and Sahel regions. Each village has an area populated by migrants called a *Zongo*. Symbolic places of migrants such as kola collection stations and mosques are found in *Zongos*.

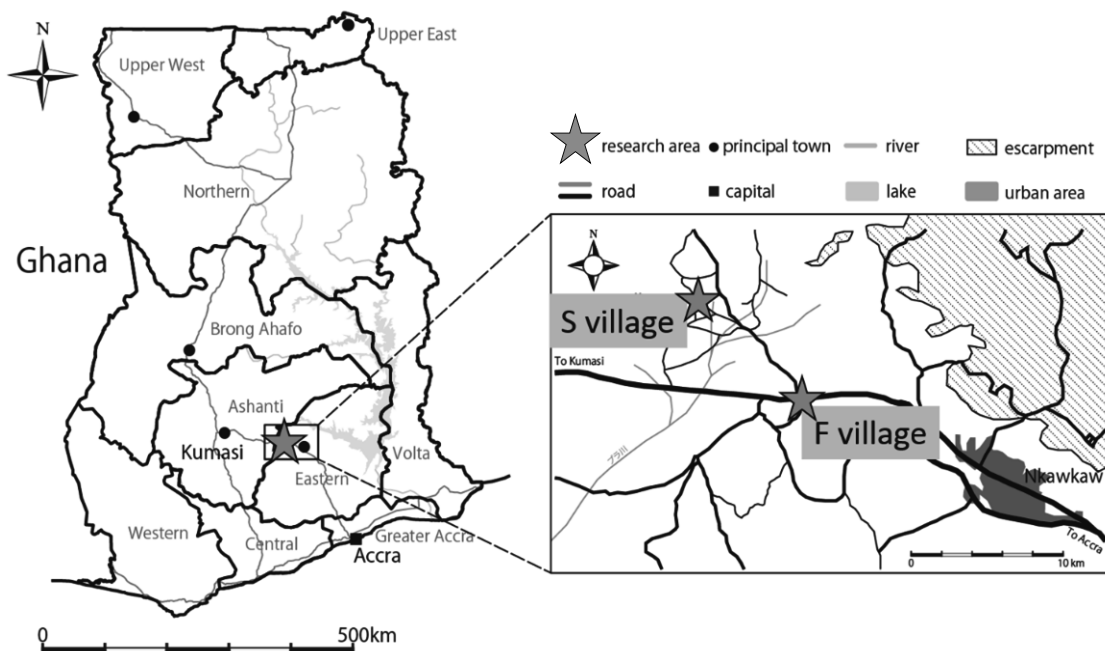


Figure 1. Research area

3. Contemporary kola trade in West Africa

3.1. Characteristics of kola

The kola nut is the fruit of the kola tree (*Cola nitida*). The genus *Cola* originated in tropical Africa, and kola trees grow well in forested areas. The kola nut contains caffeine and theobromine, both of which act as stimulants and energisers when consumed (Lovejoy 1980: 2-5, Burdock *et al.* 2009). Adults, both men and women, commonly chew the kola nut while working. An important characteristic of the kola is the separate locations of the areas of production and consumption. The centre of production is located in the south of the West African forest area, where the Akan people produce the crop. Many Akans are Christians. The area of consumption lies in the north of West Africa, in the savanna and Sahel regions, and the consumers are Muslims, including the Hausa and Mossi. Thus, the kola is transported across climate zones, ethnic groups, and religions.

The kola has high value in several West African Muslim societies (Lovejoy 1980, Abaka 2005). Kola nuts are often offered to guests or friends and exchanged during proposals of marriage. The kola is also highly valued in celebrations in West African societies. For example, kolas are given to guests on the occasion of the public celebration to name a baby, which takes place at the end of the first week after birth. Additionally, the kola is routinely chewed in the savanna and Sahel regions. In contrast, the kola is rarely used in everyday life in the forest areas where it is produced. The harvesting season lasts from September to January, with the peak period between September and October, but it is possible to harvest a small amount of the crop all year round. The fruits mature in 120 - 150 days and fall to the ground. A single kola tree generally produces from 0 to 2,000 nuts per year (Tachie-Obeng and Brown 2001, FAO).

In West Africa, the climate varies with latitude. The south is more humid, and the climate becomes drier as you move north. Kola production is limited to the humid regions such as the southern Ghana forest areas, while the vast area of consumption lies in the northern arid region in the savanna and Sahel regions, which incorporate south Niger, north Nigeria and northeast Ghana. The region is the centre of kola consumption. Here, people mainly cultivate pearl millet, and groundnut in some areas as a cash crop. In the forest production areas of southern Ghana and southern Nigeria, the major staple food is plantain banana. The chief source of income for the Asante people of the area is cocoa production. Tree crops, especially the palm and kola, characterise agriculture in the forest areas.

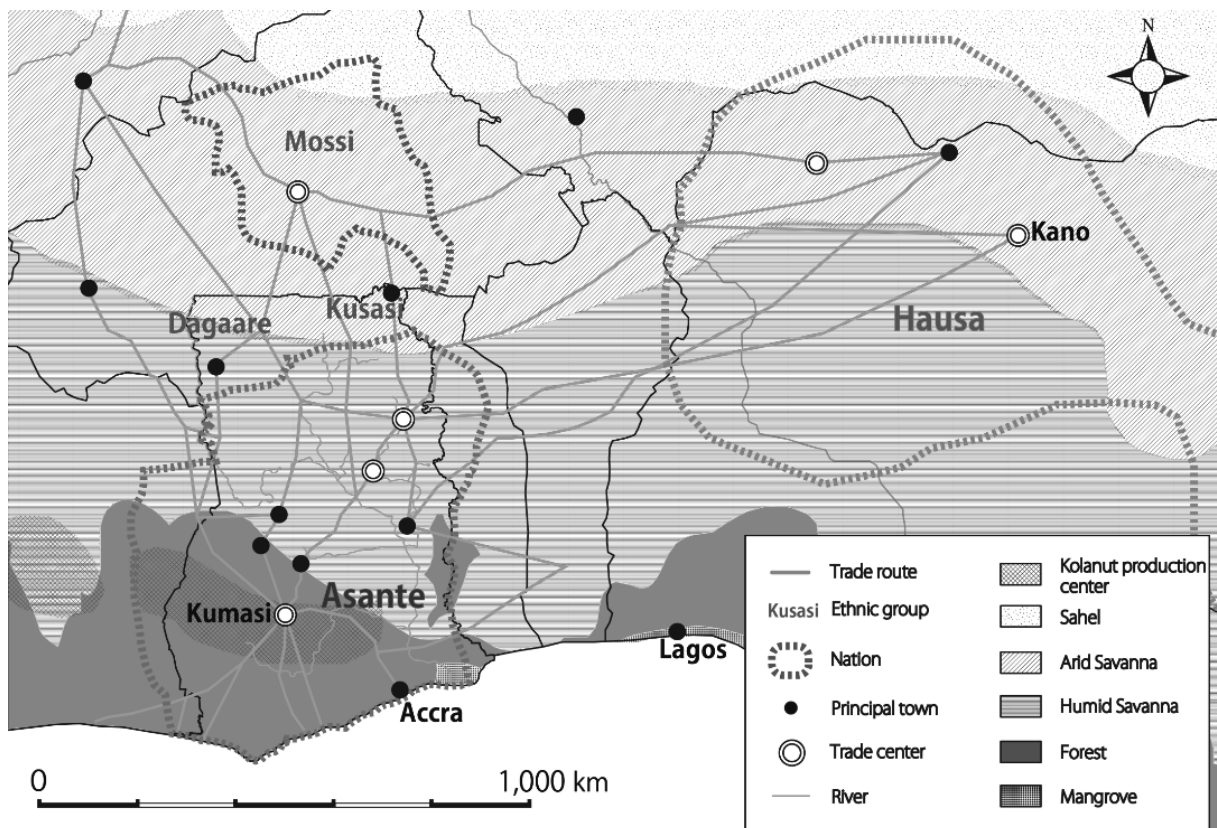


Figure 2. Trade routes between Asante and Hausa in the 18th and 19th centuries (based on Levtzion (1968), Wilks (1975), and Lovejoy (1980))

The kola requires transport over long distances, and the kola trade is comprised of a vast trade network between the Hausa-land and the Asante kingdom (Figure 2). This long-distance kola trade developed in West Africa during the 18th and 19th centuries and its historical roots can be recognised in the relationships between the various ethnic groups in the present-day kola trade. Kola is cultivated in cocoa forests around the city of Kumasi in southern Ghana. The Asante occupy large forested areas and engage in large-scale cocoa cultivation. The Hausa and other merchants from the savanna region buy kola in southern Ghana and transport them northwards to Burkina Faso, north Nigeria and Niger. In recent years people have started to refer to the kola trade as ‘kola business’. Kola and cocoa trees are planted, managed and share-harvested in a similar way. However, the harvesting method varies. Cocoa is harvested only by landowners or peasant farmers, and they do not permit the collection of fallen cocoa pods. However, people can collect fallen kola nuts from the cocoa farms without landowners’ permission.

3.2. Distribution of kola

Sellers collect kola from cocoa farmlands and store the nuts in a container until the container is completely full. The capacity of the container is 20 litres, which holds approximately 1,700 nuts. After people have collected a full container of kola, they sell it to brokers in their village. The selling price of a full container in May 2015 was 25 Ghana Cedi (GHS) (1 GHS = 0.25 USD). The sellers include not only migrants but also Akan people.

Kola brokers peel and wash the nuts before selling them to merchants, who then trade them to buyers in consumption areas like Niger or Nigeria. Brokers sell kola to merchants in volumes of 80 litres. Merchants carry kola to collecting stations called *shago*, and make parcels wrapped in leaves to protect the nuts from impact and drying (Figure 3). Each *shago* has a proprietor called *mai-gida* or *megida*. Merchants entrust these proprietors with the responsibility of storing the parcels at the *shago* until they are ready to be sold in consumption areas.

One of proprietors I encountered had a store of 619 parcels of 23 merchants in his *shago* on 15 March 2017 (Table 1). The transaction price of a parcel of kola was 17,000 Naira (NGN) in March 2017 (1 NGN = 0.00315 USD). Thus, the total price of 619 parcels would amount to 1,326,000 NGN (approximately 4,174.6 USD).

When the number of parcels of kola in a *shago* reaches 500 - 1,000, proprietors arrange trailers to carry them to consumption areas. They send assistants to manage the commodities and monitor transactions at the destinations. Assistants transfer the proceeds of the sales by bank to Ghana, and proprietors then pay each merchant their due. The proprietors and their assistants assume the responsibilities of managing the kola carefully through the entire process. Because kola requires speedy transportation to remain fresh, kola distribution requires high-speed trading to proceed with transactions smoothly. Kola is susceptible to heat, and if even one fruit is infected, it corrupts rapidly and spreads the infection to other nuts.



Figure 3. Parcel of kola

The trust factor is emphasised in the kola business because merchants' businesses face great risk of failure on even one single bad transaction. In kola transactions, each actor is evaluated on '*gaskiya*', a Hausa ethical concept that broadly covers truth, honesty, sincerity, faith, fairness, and objectivity (Aminu 2003). In the context of kola transactions, people demonstrate *gaskiya* by honest trade, for example by quoting the right price for commodities or by managing kola carefully. The term *gaskiya* is shared widely in West Africa and has found its use on names of newspapers, parties, and broadcasters. In addition, it is known in Hausa proverbs as a quality more precious than wealth, for example '*Gaskiya ta fi jaka*' (Truth is worth more than a penny). Non-Hausa merchants also use *gaskiya* as a critical term, and embrace its importance in transactions because it proves their prestige in businesses other than kola too.

In order to avoid risks in kola transactions, people have to make an effort to build trustworthy networks by determining the presence of *gaskiya* in the behaviour of their counterparts. If they are successful in finding credible counterparts, they can maintain a long and sustainable business. This is all the more important as the kola trade exists based on a chain of merchant credit.

Table 1. Number of entrusted parcels to each merchant

Merchant No.	Number of entrusted parcels	Merchant No.	Number of entrusted parcels
1	78	13	20
2	67	14	18
3	56	15	14
4	50	16	7
5	48	17	6
6	46	18	3
7	39	19	2
8	37	20	3
9	33	21	2
10	30	22	1
11	29	23	4
12	26		
total			619
average			26.9

3.3. Relationship between kola nut production and immigrants in southern Ghana

The Asante farmers plant kola trees among their cocoa trees as a shade tree for the young cocoa trees. Migrants have two ways to obtain the kola nut. One is the share contract system, and other is the kola collection practice called *etewu*. In the former, the farmer uses a share contract system called *abusa* or *abunu*, where peasant farmers manage the kola and cocoa trees. The peasant farmers do not need to have capital for purchasing or renting farmland directly. They can obtain one third or one half of the cocoa beans and kola nuts produced. Additionally, peasant farmers are permitted to plant and harvest crops for their subsistence in the farmlands. In Village F, the landowners are the Asante people, and the peasant farmers are migrants from the savanna and Sahel regions.

The survey carried out in Village S showed that all the migrants from the savanna and Sahel regions are engaged in either the kola business or in cocoa production (Table 2). Furthermore, many of the migrants moved here after 1986, which is when the first kola buyer arrived and settled in the village. According to the migrants, people who engage in the kola business act as mediators for newcomers who arrive in the village. In many cases, newly arrived migrants become peasant farmers or kola buyers. Information about the kola business passes by word of mouth from person to person, and in this way the kola business network expands. Newcomers can find accommodation and employers if they have connections to kola merchants even if they have no networks with the Akan people. Merchants introduce newcomers to Akan people who display *gaskiya* in their behaviour, especially within kola transactions.

Table 2 tells us about two migrant women engaged in kola collection, *etewu*. The women learned about kola collection from kola merchants in their hometown. They heard that they could obtain kola nuts from the cocoa farmlands in southern Ghana, and that they could earn cash by selling these kola nuts to merchants

from the savanna and Sahel regions. This information encouraged these women to leave the savanna region and move to the forest areas further south.

Focusing on areas owned by migrants in Table 2, almost none of them own land despite many of them working as farmers. This means that they can harvest cash crops, cocoa and kola, and subsistence crops through the contract system of *abusa* or *abunu*. They think it is sufficient to live in the forest areas as peasant farmers, and many of them do not have the desire to own property in the forest area. This is because they consider their stay in south of Ghana as just temporary. When they get older, they return to their hometowns, leaving their sons as successors in the same line of work.

Table 2. History of immigration to Village S

No.	Sex of household head	Immigration year	Work	Owned area (acre)
1	Male	1969	Owner of collecting station	0.0
2	"	1986	Kola nut buyer in villages	0.0
3	"	1990	"	0.0
4	"	"	Peasant farmer of cocoa production	0.0
5	"	1991	"	0.0
6	"	1994	"	0.0
7	"	1995	"	0.0
8	"	"	"	0.0
9	"	2000	"	0.0
10	"	"	Kola nut transfer broker	0.0
11	Female	"	Kola nut collection	0.0
12	"	2003	"	0.0
13	Male	"	Peasant farmer of cocoa production	0.0
14	"	2004	"	0.0
15	"	2005	"	5.0
16	"	"	"	6.0
17	"	"	"	0.0
18	"	2009	Kola nut buyer / peasant farmer	0.0
19	"	2012	"	0.0
20	"	2013	"	0.0

From Figure 2 we can see that there are two migrants who own land. Both of them worked on cocoa farmlands as peasant farmers since 2005. According to them, they obtained the land from their employers and it is necessary to gain employers' trust if people desire to own land. It is a widely shared belief among migrants that it is very important to work diligently to stay on in the forest area under Akan people. Migrants living in Village F are aware that they would be forcibly removed from the village if savanna people working under Akan people cause trouble. Their concept of values can be explained by historical trade customs and unforgettable memories of slavery.

4. Historical linkage between cocoa production and the kola trade

4.1. Initiation of overseas trade of kola and cocoa in the 19th century

According to legend, Tetteh Quarshie brought the cocoa tree to Ghana from Fernão do Pó in 1876. The first

cocoa cultivation started in 1879, and the first export initiative was in 1891 (Dickson 1969: 165-171). The price of cocoa increased gradually during the period after the abolition of slavery in 1807. Some cash crops, including cocoa, coffee, and palm became recognised as legitimate commodities, replacing the slave trade.

On the other hand, kola contributed mainly to overland trade until the 19th century. In this regard, kola was collected in forests, not cultivated by local people. The overseas trade began modestly with the experimental export of two packages to the United Kingdom in 1867, before the initiation of cocoa trade. Kola trees were introduced positively to cocoa farmland as shade trees during this period though the domestication of kola did not progress until the 19th century. As the trade increased, kola plantations were established in east Ghana. The peak of overseas kola export was in 1921, after which it started declining in early 1920s against a background of rapid growth of kola export of Nigeria (Dickson 1969: 151-153, Abaka 2005: 87). In contrast, the amount of cocoa exported increased in the 1920s and superseded the export of kola in 1930 (Dickson 1969: 153, 165-171).

Since the colonial era, the production of cocoa in Ghana has depended on peasant farmers. Akan farmers required large numbers of labour forces because of the rapid growth of cocoa production. Even after the abolition of slavery, the Akan peoples traded savanna people as slaves in coastal areas to work on cocoa farms during the early colonial era. However, slave transaction gradually decreased over the decades. Savanna people however, continued to be regarded as essential to the labour force for cocoa production. To the present day, many people from savanna and Sahel region participate in cocoa production as agricultural labour of Ghana.

4.2. Movement of migrants working in cocoa farmlands in the 20th century

As described earlier, under the *abusa* or *abunu* contract, savannah people do not need to have sufficient capital to purchase or rent farmland directly, but are permitted to cultivate their subsistent crops in cocoa farmland. This contract system triggered the movement of savanna people to southern forested areas and directly impacted the increase of cocoa production in the 20th century (Kolavalli and Vigneri 2011).

Similar to the production of cocoa, *abusa* and *abunu* contracts were applied to kola production too. Savanna people could obtain kola through these contracts by working under Akan people as employees (Abaka 2005: 122-123). Gold Coast and Ghana succeeded in engaging the participation of savanna people who were involved in cocoa production by applying the same contracts to kola production. The rapid growth of cocoa production in the 20th century is proof of the success of this system, and Ghana maintained the largest cocoa production in the world until 1977.

Though the kola trade of Gold Coast did not develop into overseas exports, it maintained a stable supply for inland consumption, and assumed great importance in the Gold Coast. People from savanna and Sahel region were compelled to engage in cocoa production at first, but they had a natural advantage in the purchasing of kola. They engaged in cocoa production, harvest, transaction in the market, and initially bought kola for their hometown as a by-product of cocoa. In this cycle, they succeeded in bringing kola inland

effectively (Abaka 2005: 121-122). As a result, this movement of kola purchase occasioned inflow of labours from savanna area. It can think that savanna people contributed to the development of cocoa production in Ghana by supplying essential labour force through the kola trade.

Although there were business opportunities in cocoa and kola in southern Ghana, savanna people experienced some difficulties when they entered Akan society. According to interviewees in Village F and Village S, during the 20th century Akan people made savanna people work in cocoa farmlands, but they often injured or killed them. When Akan people required additional labour forces, savanna people introduced others as their real brothers and always moved together to protect themselves.

Evidence of the relations among savanna people is visible in contemporary *zongos*. Savanna people call each other *aboki* (meaning 'friend' in Hausa) or brother, beyond ethnic groups. When Akan people require additional labour, migrants introduce trustworthy friends to their employers. However, they keep to their own space in the *zongo* in Akan society. They support each other and avoid causing any trouble with local people. Even in the present day, there are barriers between migrants in *zongos* and the local population. However, migrants have succeeded in acquiring the position of peasant farmers under Akan people. In some instances, they have also gained opportunities to acquire land. We will study how migrants have earned the trust of local people in contemporary kola business.

5. The process of trust-building between migrants and local people

5.1. Trust-building in kola transactions and cocoa production

Migrants and Akan people have little contact generally, as a result of the differences in their cultures, religions, and societies. Many migrants mention that they do not have *aboki* (very good friends) within Akan people.

On the other hand, some kola merchants and Akan call each other *aboki*. According to them, they call an Akan *aboki* if they find *gaskiya* in their behaviour. It is difficult to observe *gaskiya* in their daily life in *zongos*, but in kola transactions, they can perceive the behaviour of Akan people in detail. Akan people sell kola to merchants who live in *zongos*, and a merchant typically conducts transactions with 1-10 Akan people. If Akan people misrepresent the amount of kola to earn more, or delay the delivery, kola merchants decide that they do not have *gaskiya*. But if an Akan consistently displays honest behaviour, merchants judge them as a trustworthy person possessing *gaskiya*.

In a similar way, migrants can gain the trust and respect of Akan people through kola transactions. Migrants show their *gaskiya* by behaving with honesty, for example by purchasing kola at the correct rate, and demonstrating honesty in the work of cocoa production. Migrants believe that diligent work is one way to build trust and express *gaskiya* to their Akan employers. According to people who live in Village F and Village S, it takes more than five years to build trust in each other in kola transactions or cocoa contracts.

However, if their employers do not try to exhibit a better understanding of migrants, it is difficult to create good relations even if migrants indicate their honesty. Thus, it is important for migrants to find receptive and trustworthy people before they start their kola business or peasant work. If they get good mediators, it is

relatively easy to find good business partners or employers.

5.2. Importance of ‘*mai-gida*’ on the linkage between migrants and local people

Before the colonial era, in the 18th and 19th centuries, many *zongos* were established near main markets on the trade routes between the Asante kingdom and Hausa land. Though *zongo* originally meant ‘camp’ in Hausa language, the word was used to describe a temporary camp of trade caravans, and it later came to represent sites of diaspora communities (Lovejoy 1980: 53). In the trade of 18th and 19th centuries, each *zongo* had a proprietor of the compound, which served as hostelry, stables, and storage facilities for itinerant traders who used it as their headquarters (Lovejoy 1980: 127). The proprietor was called *mai-gida*, which means ‘owner of a compound’ in Hausa language, and always applies to the head of a household. Lovejoy (1980) notes,

Although anyone could be a broker, not everyone could be a *mai gida* with access to commercial information and clients. As the trusted and respected leaders of their communities, *mai gida* were able to extend credit during the complicated transactions they oversaw.

Because kola has high value in historical trade in West Africa, trust and respect were emphasised in former kola transactions. *Mai-gida* who oversaw all transactions in the *zongo* had to demonstrate *gaskiya* in their behaviour. Additionally, Curtin (1984) mentions the linkage between *mai-gida* and local society:

The landlord-broker (*jaatigi* in Malinke, *maigida* in Hausa) normally came from the same ethnic group as the moving traders, but he had usually been established in alien territory for some years, often for several generations. It might take that long to build up the local knowledge, local roots, and local position that he could then put at the service of the travelling merchants – at a price. The most important things he had to offer were lodging and protection.

This shows that the *mai-gida* acted as a mediator between the diaspora and local society. He had to gain trust not only from the diaspora but also from the locals in order to guarantee the security of visitors and ensure smooth transactions.

In recent years, proprietors of *zongos* are called *mai-gida* or *megida* (declensional word derived from *mai-gida*). Many belong to the kola business as overseers and have accumulated trust and respect from the Akan people as well as their community over numerous transactions. Migrants choose their leader after taking into consideration whether the person has gained the trust of the Akan people.

The *mai-gida* endeavour build trust between the *zongos* and local societies so that the migrant population can continue to stay in the forest area as aliens. They do this by demonstrating *gaskiya*, and establishing trust over personal kola transactions. Their role in the *zongo* is to oversee trading and relationships between people,

arbitrate over any disputes, and liaison to resolve issues and keep the peace. In addition, the evaluation of kola transactions influences other scenarios such as *asusa / abunu* contracts in cocoa production. Akan people request *mai-gida* or merchants they trust to establish contacts with good people they can hire as labourers for their cocoa farmlands. Even in case of land settlements, landowners seek out the opinion of the *mai-gida* to determine labours' honesty, besides referring to other sources such as their work on cocoa farmlands and social reputation.

6. Discussion

Contemporary cocoa production in Ghana is dependent on peasant farmers. There are many migrants in the region and they play an essential role in the labour force in cocoa production. The importance of migrants in cocoa production goes back to the history of slave and kola trade from the 19th to the 20th century. Despite these memories of past slavery, today migrants desire to stay in the forest area and want to continue to participate in cocoa production.

The reason for the movement of migrants is the difficulty in finding a livelihood in the savanna environment. The causes for this include the rapid growth of population, increasing desertification, and frequent droughts or too much rainfall as a result of climate change (Van der Geest 2011). There are other causes as well. Some of these include regional differences between arid inland and coastal areas in West African countries in public services. This affects every area, including political, educational, and medical services, and other systems influenced by colonisation. It is documented that a large number of migrants moved from inland to coastal areas and entered into the agricultural or trade sector in the period from 1970s to 1980s (Clough 1985, Turner 1999, Van der Geest 2011). In the past, the uncertain, vulnerable environment of savanna and Sahel region had created mutual ties beyond ethnic groups in West Africa. However, the drastic environmental and economic transformation of the 1980s and the 1990s encouraged the movement of people, debilitated the ties of ethnicity, and caused conflicts in various locations (Hussein *et al.* 1999). The case of Côte d'Ivoire may be counted as one of them.

The present-day *zongo* comprises a migrant community that has been built on the trading histories of West Africa, and it serves as a buffer between newly arrived migrants and the local community (Curtin 1984). Migrants follow the traditional customs established in historical trade, such as mutual cooperation within the *zongo* or establishing contact with indigenous people through the *mai-gida*. Migrants need to earn the trust of local Akan people to maintain their status in the forest area. This holds especially true in the process of participating in cocoa production or acquiring land from indigenous people. Migrants have to find good mediators and show their diligence and honesty, or what is referred to as *gaskiya* in Hausa. If they succeed in proving to the Akan people that they have *gaskiya*, many opportunities will be opened up to them to live in the forest area and earn money.

The kola transaction offers one way to build trust between migrants and local people. The kola transaction needs *gaskiya*, because the price of the commodity is high, and merchants stand a great risk of

losing the entire consignment of kola at once. It is common knowledge in the *zongos* of West Africa that it is possible to accumulate trust by maintaining successive transactions in the kola trade. This experience over a period of time is applied to building trust with the indigenous people of Ghana.

It is believed that the methods of relationship building through the kola trade or *zongos* give rise to unclear methods of land management in Ghana. According to Aryeetey *et al.* (2007), documented land registration has operated since the colonial times. Documentation was necessary for clear land titles, due to the high incidence of title insecurity and conflict. However, in reality, the management of land (in many cases defined as including trees and their products) has always embraced a dual system - legal and customary. Aryeetey *et al.* (2007) points out that such unclear land management in Ghana causes several conflicts and disputes over land. The point being made by Aryeetey *et al.* (2007) addresses one of the aspects related to land management. However, it also goes to show that this unclear land management also allows scope for systems based on trust among individuals. This argument can apply not only to land management, but also to contracts in cocoa production. People can make decisions based solely on trust, without definitive documentation to govern the transaction.

In recent years, the number of migrants to southern Ghana has increased as a result of the unrest in neighbouring countries. The situation surrounding migrants is changing and the displeasure with immigration is gradually increasing in Akan society. This is a similar trend to the one that transformed Côte d'Ivoire in the 20th century, and necessitates continuous observation of the state of affairs of trust-building between migrants and indigenous peoples.

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