Traditional Authority, Enlightenment, and Education Bureaucracy in Ghana: The case of the Otumfuo Education Fund

by

HENRY BREFO

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Abstract

Since the colonial period, monarchs in Asante have undertaken important projects in education to improve their communities' social well-being and material welfare. Following this tradition, in 1999, the current Asantehene Osei Tutu II initiated the Otumfuo Education Fund (OEF) to make education accessible to 'brilliant but needy' children in Asante and Ghana as a whole. This thesis examines the rise and fall of the Otumfuo Education Fund (OEF), to shed light on the complex relationship between education and the legitimacy of traditional rulers ('chiefs') in Ghana. It explores the interplay between traditional authority, formal education, and localised notions of social progress and success, as summed up in the Twi term *anibue* (lit. 'eyes opened', also translated as 'enlightenment').

Existing analyses of access to formal education in Ghana begin with mission-initiated and state-regulated efforts in the colonial period and have focused on the state and donors in the postcolonial period. This has hindered a deeper understanding of local initiatives and chiefs' utilization of education beyond formal state policy and practice. Situating the OEF within the historical context of traditional rulers' involvement in formal education, and in the specific global and national circumstances of the late 1990s, including democratization, World Bank initiatives, and the recognition of basic education as a child's right, it offers an interdisciplinary analysis of why development interventions in education fail.

Relying on archival records, interviews and observations, as well as data generated via local documentary practices, our findings suggest that the Asantehene Osei Tutu II strategically used education to further his hegemonic and political ambitions, ultimately impacting local support and dissatisfaction for the OEF. Contrary to conventional analysis of chiefs' role in development, this thesis challenges actor-oriented approaches and assumptions of brokerage. It highlights the importance of emotional and interpersonal dynamics in development practice. It also establishes a crucial link between the historical literature on education and political insights into the continuing power of traditional rulers, by showing how chiefs have incorporated bureaucratic governance into their registers of power through their engagement with education. Findings from the research hold important lessons for ongoing state initiatives (such as free Senior High School education, SHS) in expanding access to education for poorer communities in Ghana and Africa more broadly.

-DEDICATION-

To all the black boys and black girls in the *endz*, waiting to be good *enuff*.

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Table of Content

Abstract *2*

-DEDICATION- *3*

Acknowledgement *4*

Abbreviations and Acronyms *10*

Glossary *11*

Chapter 1. Introduction ***14***

'King Solomon': Education and Development in Ghana *14*

Why the OEF *17*

Historical Background: Asante forest kingdom of gold *18*

Birth of a Nation 19

Political crisis and emergent groups 21

Elite formation and power in Asante 23

Literature Review: Education in Asante *25*

Growth of education in Ghana (1500-1700) 26

Mission Education 1830-1900 26

Asante (1830s-1930s) 27

Colonial policies 27

Post-colonial continuities and divergence in practices of modern kingship 29

Conceptual Framework: Development and chiefs in the post-colonial period *29*

Chiefs and the perils of brokerage 32

Brokerage as corruption 33

Bureaucracy as social practice *35*

Conceptualizing chiefs' legitimacy and neoliberal governance *37*

Methodology *41*

Homegoing of the Diasporic Insider 41

Identity and Access 42

George Floyd and cultural allyship 44

Paper trail 45

From multimedia to social media 46

The Structure of the Thesis *47*

Chapter 2. Anibue: Education in Asante and the opening of Society's eye ***50***

Introduction *50*

Structure *51*

Theorizing modernity in the Akan experience *52*

Power, wealth, and mobility in Colonial Asante (1901-1930) 54
Joining Power 57
Prempe and Education in Asante *58*
Colonial Education Policy 61
The Restoration of the Asante Confederacy Council (ACC) *63*
Ashanti Confederacy Council Scholarships (1945- 1960) 64
Young men and education in Asante 67
Teacher training 70
Scholarship bonds 71
The favoured ones and overseas education *74*
A.A.Y. Kyeremanten 75
Joseph Emmanuel Appiah 78
J.K.B. Asafu Adjaye 81
Closing remarks *83*
Chapter 3. A Modern King and the Bank 85
Introduction *85*
Structure *87*
The Asantehene and the making of the OEF *88*
Understanding the OEF 90
The Global Education Complex *93*
Education as Development 1960s and 1970s 97
"Fourth World Poverty": A recipe for intervention 1980s and 1990s 100
Education as a right -FCUBE and EFA (1990) *102*
Civil Society, Asantehene and the World Bank Partnership *105*
Closing remarks *109*
Chapter 4. 'Brilliant but needy'- OEF Scholarship Application 112
Introduction *112*
An economy of corruption in Africa 112
OEF and Patronage 113
Beyond corruption 114
Prickly terms and vague boundaries 117
Structure *117*
Chiefs and Development *118*
Who is a big man? 118
A bumpy start 119

Facing the Education Crisis in Ghana 122
Diversifying patronage 126
Debating impact 128
'Nipa ho yɛ mɔbɔ' (man is pitiable) *131*
Literacy as Social Action 133
OEF application letters and the networks of affection *136*
Closing remarks *144*
Chapter 5. Documents, Record-making, and Photographic Transparency 145
Introduction *145*
Sounding the alarm 146
Why Corruption? 148
Documentary verisimilitude *149*
Structure: Mapping the Argument *151*
Bureaucracy and Documents *152*
Bureaucracy as social practice 157
Photography *157*
OEF and Record-Keeping *162*
Enticing the King: Big Donors 164
Small Donors' dissatisfaction 168
The (un)making of a king *174*
Closing remarks *179*
Chapter 6. Asante Kɔtɔkɔ: Bloodlines and Brothers, the OEF and Beneficiary Communities 182
Introduction *182*
Sowing the seeds of discontent: defining eligibility 183
A framework for analysis: debating ethnicity and nationhood *185*
Beyond Ethnicity 189
Identity knots: social media and active histories 191
Dagbaŋ *192*
Historians and the past 196
Stranger Communities in Asante 197
Activating history for the present (bloggers and journalists) *200*
Friends or Vassal 202
The OEF and Worawora: 'Woraworaman are truly Ashantis *205*
Writing about Akan minorities 207
Akan minorities in the Volta 208

Colonialism and Nationalism in the Volta 209

Amalgamation and group identification in Buem 1930s and 1940s 211

Group mobilisation and nationalism in Ewedome 1940s and 1970s 212

'Worawora can't be under Asante.' *214*

Closing remarks: limits to eligibility *217*

Chapter 7. Conclusion 220

Educating Asante children during COVID-19, 13th May 2020 220

OEF as a form of hegemony 222

Corruption, Big Men, and Record-keeping 223

Belonging and Eligibility 224

Contesting anibue as community development 225

Elites and Development 226

Chiefs and Bureaucracy 227

Chiefs and access to Education 227

Bibliography *229*

Abbreviations and Acronyms

CPP- Convention People's Party

NPP- National Patriotic Party

IMF- International Monetary Fund

NDC- National Democratic Congress

PPTAP- Promoting Partnership with Traditional Authority Project

OEF- Otumfuo Education Fund

OTCF- Otumfuo Charity Foundation

IDA- International Development Association (IDA)

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

RORE- Rate of Return

NLC- National Liberation Council

NRC- National Redemption Council

SMC- Supreme Military Council

PNDC -Provisional National Defence Council

NERP-New Education Reform Programme

NSCE- New Structure and Content of Education

FCUBE- Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education

EFA- Education For All

NGO- Non- Governmental Organisation

CBO-Community Based Organisation

JHS- Junior High School

SHS- Senior High School

BECE- Basic Education Certificate Examination

TOLIMO-National Liberation Movement for Western Togoland

AEC- All-Ewe Conference (AEC)

CUT- Comité de l'unite Togolaise

TU-Togoland Union

TC- Togoland Congress

Glossary: *terms and definition*	
Abrafo	*royal executioners*
Adehyeɛ	*royal*
Agbogbomefia	*king (Ewe)*
Akwasidaɛ kɛseɛ	*a cultural celebration by the Asante people to commemorate the ancestors*
Amanfrafoɔ	*(outsiders/émigré)*
Amanhene	*supreme traditional ruler (king) of a larger town or region/ paramount chief*
Anibue	*eye opened; enlightenment*
Annuafoɔ	*siblings*
Asafo	*war company*
Asantehene	*king of Asante*
Asanteman kuo	*Asante committee*
Asikafo	*rich or wealthy wo/man*
Asomfo	*servant of the state*
Barimaa	*young male*
bibi ni	*black person*
bra fie	*come home*
Dukɔwo	*autonomous chiefdoms; confederacy*
Dwantoa	*appeal; petition*
Efiesɛm	*private matters*
Ɛserɛmfoɔ	*people of the savannah*
Fɔntɔmfrɔm	*an Ashanti type of hourglass-shaped royal drum mostly used to communicate messages from the royal palace to the public; to communicate with the ancestors and also played during ceremonial and state functions*
Konkofoɔ	*rich men; traders*
Kɔtɔkɔ	*Porcupine*
Mmamadwa	*traditional stools for the sons and patrilineal grandsons of the Asantehene*
Mmusua keseɛ	*Matrilineal clan/ matriclan*
Mogya	*blood*
Nkwankwaa	*youngmen*
Ntamoba	*marriage payment from the husband to the wife that recognises the father's obligation and right over the child.*
Ntoro	*spirit*
Ohene	*chief*
Otumfuo-	*title of the king of Asante*
Ɔbirɛmpɔn	*big man*
Ɔdekuro	*village head/ headman*
Ɔhɔhoɔ	*stranger*
Panyin	*elder*
Togbe	*chief (Ewe)*
Twi	*an Akan language commonly associated with the Asante people but also widely spoken across the country*

Ya-na	*king of Dagbon*

Note on language, spelling, and translation

Translation and terminology can pose challenges when discussing indigenous political offices and concepts in African political practice and thought. British colonial rule brought about changes in African political organization, resulting in distortions in the appropriate designation of traditional office and African political order (Comaroff and Comaroff 2018). The semantics of colonial rule have obfuscated the nature and significance of these offices within African societies and thus there are some dangers in applying generic English terms such as 'chief' to various offices and officeholders (Tordoff 1968). Terms such as 'chiefship,' 'chieftaincy,' 'traditional authority,' and 'custom' are deeply problematic and imprecise. Historians and anthropologists have shown that even what comes to be taken as tradition is often historically contingent and of recent vintage (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Lentz and Nugent 2000). Under the Ghana Chieftaincy Act 2008 (Act 759), section 57(1), a chief is named as 'a person who, hailing from the appropriate lineage, has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled, enskinned or installed as a chief or queen mother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage.' (26).

Notwithstanding the fuzziness of terms, in this study, special attention has been paid to accurate Akan / local spellings, with English translation. The word 'Ashanti' is a more colonial designation, which has been retained in post-independence political language (e.g., Ashanti Region). 'Asante' is the way that missionary orthographers - and their African collaborators and students - spelt the name. I tend to use Ashanti only when referring explicitly to the Ashanti region, or when quoting from primary sources. When using my own words to describe the place or people, I have opted for 'Asante'. Despite the challenges posed by terminology and translation, our usage of terms follows academic conventions and their application in common parlance in Ghana. I also acknowledge that these terms are highly contested and take up different meanings depending on the context. As a result, the choice of language and expressions is grounded in their historical and social-specific context.

Chapter 1. Introduction

'King Solomon': Education and Development in Ghana

In April 2019, members of the Asante community gathered in the capital of the city, Kumasi, at Manhyia, where the Palace of their king - also known as the Asantehene - stood. From the public grounds of the palace, the beating sounds of the *fɔntɔmfrɔm* drums could be heard from afar. A jubilant crowd dressed in the traditional decorated patterned Kente cloth waved the *Kɔtɔkɔ* flag, - green, yellow, and black- the national symbol of Asanteman, and chimed the famed war cry,

Krobea Asante kotoko osei yee, yee, yee,
Yee, Yee, Yenim koo,
Yenim adwane o yee

Asante the porcupine / a group that always accomplishes its objective before returning / we are good at fighting and thus we do not retreat.[1]

The atmosphere was infused with a strong sense of national pride and consciousness. It was, after all, a momentous occasion. Besides being the *Akwasidaɛ kɛseɛ*, where the Asante celebrates past glories, the monarch Otumfuo Osei Tutu II was also commemorating 20 years of his reign on the Golden Stool.[2] Important dignitaries and ambassadors from around the world were also in attendance, including the incumbent president of Ghana, former presidents, and members of the opposition parties.[3] Notably, Tɔgbui Sri III, Awoamefia (king) of Aŋlɔ and the newly installed Yaa Naa (king) of Dagbaŋ, Abubakari Mahama II, were invited to join the king in the celebrations, marking the first time in Asante's post-colonial history. The Asantehene made a grand entrance, carried on a palanquin by the royal servants (*abrafoɔ*).[4] His presence was announced by the loud discharge of aged muskets.

[1] Obeng (1996) explains that the song is a common patriotic chant of the Asante people often sung in varied forums (religious, cultural, and political).
[2] The *Akwasidaɛ kɛseɛ* is traditionally celebrated by the Akans on the Sunday of every six-week cycle following the *Awukadaɛ*, which falls on the Wednesday of each cycle. It marks the commemoration of the ancestors and remembrance of past glories and noble feats of both dead and living kings (Frempong 2005: 733).
[3] Former presidents: J.J. Rawlings 1993-2001; John Agyekum Kufuor (2001-2009); John Dramani Mahama (2012-2017; and current president Nana Akufo Addo (2017- present)
[4] In Akan Tradition the *abrafoɔ* are the royal executioners.

The celebration was marked with great pomp and pageantry, with Asante chiefs draped in golden ornaments, from their heads to the soles of their feet. Beyond the elaborate display of patriotism, wealth, and status, considerable emphasis was placed on the king's development endeavours. The theme of the ceremony was 'Deepening our cultural heritage through socio-economic development.' The king used his address to stress the importance of traditional leaders in promoting effective development,

> A peep into the history of our colonial past will suggest that such developments as the colonial authorities brought to our people were at the behest of enlightened chiefs of the time. [...] As frontline leaders of the people, traditional leaders should be the ones who inspire and encourage effective development. Our heritage must mean more than the song and dance which have come to signify our culture.

A few days before the anniversary celebration, it was reported by a Palace source on a local radio station that the Otumfuo Education Fund (OEF) had provided scholarships to over 300,000 needy students. This figure was met with deep scepticism when repeated in conversations with research participants. The Fund had struggled to maintain its activities and educational programmes as far back as 2014.

This thesis examines the rise and fall of the Otumfuo Education Fund (OEF) in Asante, Ghana, from its promising beginnings to its subsequent decline. It aims to uncover the factors and reasons behind this transformation, shedding light on the dynamics that led to a once-praised initiative losing support from both the Asante community locally and internationally.

Studying the OEF

The OEF was established in the late 1990s and early 2000s, with the aim of increasing access to education for the 'brilliant but needy' children in the Asante region. The Fund was developed as part of a partnership between the Asantehene and Word Bank, under the Promoting Partnership with Traditional Authority Project (PPTAP), which released to the Asantehene a seed fund of $4.5 million for development projects (World Bank 2007). This was

the first time that the World Bank had directly supported traditional authorities in delivering development projects in their communities. In many ways, it reflected a change in the bank's approach towards civil society (see Chapter 3). During the active years of its operation, the OEF garnered support through donations and financial contributions from various sources, including the Ghanaian diaspora, corporate sponsors, GNAT (Ghana National Association of Teachers), and local traders and religious groups. Nevertheless, this was not enough to stop the Fund from suspending its activities following the announcement of its declining financial position in 2014, amid flagging public confidence and swirling allegations of corruption.

During my visits between 2018 and 2020, I observed that the Otumfuo Education Fund (OEF) office primarily carried out light administrative and ad hoc functions such as providing references and supporting students with university applications through their professional networks. The initiative had failed to sustain its initial success in raising funds or attracting public support, leading to disillusionment among Asante people, who had previously welcomed the programme. While the OEF was not the first time that an Asante king had undertaken educational initiatives, it was distinct in two key aspects. Firstly, it emerged from a partnership between the Asantehene and the World Bank towards the end of the period of neoliberal reforms and donor-driven democratization in the 1980s and 1990s. Secondly, it played a central role in rebranding the Asantehene's image and office nationally and internationally. It also signified both a local and global initiative, championed by a traditional monarch, yet simultaneously - and somewhat curiously - positioned within the discourse of strengthening civil society.

To fully appreciate the development of the OEF and its unfortunate decline, the thesis seeks to understand the longer trajectory of royal and chiefly interventions in formal education in Asante. It examines the underlying factors that drove these interventions, and what was particularly distinctive about the OEF in comparison to what had gone before. Why had the OEF initially been so popular amongst Asantes, and what ultimately 'went wrong'? What does the story of the OEF suggest about the nature, meaning, and intersection of formal education, bureaucracy, and modernity in Ghana? And what are the implications of that story for the exercise of 'traditional authority' in Africa more broadly? These questions sit at the intersections of, and gaps within, three main bodies of literature (history, anthropology, and

development), which we discuss in some detail throughout the introduction. We will also highlight the limitations of the scholarship of chiefship and education in the following observations. Importantly, the historical scholarship on Asante enables us to trace the evolution of the office of the Asantehene through the colonial and postcolonial periods, but it is quite limited when it comes to the particular matter of kingly and chiefly involvement in education. Meanwhile, the scholarship on colonial education broadly, and on Ghana and Asante in particular, explain the pervasive sense of 'catching up' that took hold in Asante by the mid-C20, yet it provides a fairly limited analysis of kingly and chiefly involvement in education. Finally, the scholarship on chiefs within the context of 'neopatrimonialism' and traditional resurgence sheds some light on the intricate power dynamics that shape chiefs' role as agents/brokers of development, but there remains a dearth of knowledge on their engagement in facilitating broader educational opportunities.

Why the OEF

Addressing the gaps in the literature, the PhD thesis contributes to the field of politics, anthropology, and development in particular and the broader scholarship on chiefship in Africa within the social sciences in three crucial ways. To our knowledge, few analyses of chiefly engagement in education have sought to understand continuities and divergence in the practices, norms, and ideas that have underpinned chiefs' administration of education scholarship over the C20 and into the C21 (Ampene and Nyantakyi II 2016; Donkoh 2011).

Firstly, setting our discussion of the OEF within the long-term involvement of chiefs in education against the broader historical context, social dynamics and ideological factors that facilitated their sustained interventions allows for a more nuanced understanding of the role of chiefs in development and education. This also offers a refreshing insight into how traditional authority has adapted to and sometimes resisted, external pressures and changes by incorporating bureaucratic governance and techniques into their repertoire of power. Thus, we situate our understanding of Asantehene's engagement in education within political and social transformations in Ghana since colonialism and their impact on the legitimacy of chiefs.

Secondly, the study highlights the intricate social dynamics that influenced and were influenced by the administrative and formal practices of the OEF. By so doing, we move the discussion beyond the limitations of actor-oriented approaches and its theoretical assumptions of brokerage, commonly found in post-colonial debates on chiefs or *big men* and the state in Africa (Chabal and Daloz 1999). Our analysis of the OEF views development as a set of empirical and ethnographic problems that give rise to particular subjectivities and forms of resistance within a socially and historically specific context (Long and Acre 2000; Yarrow 2011).

Thirdly, this dissertation establishes a crucial linkage between the historical literature on education and the political analysis of chiefs to offer a deeper comprehension of how chiefs have utilized their involvement in education to reconstruct their role as local agents of 'modernity' and sustain their legitimacy in various spheres of influence. This approach contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of power and authority in African societies and illuminates the complex interactions between chiefs, state, citizens cum subjects, within the globalizing context of post-colonial politics.

By studying the OEF, we can explore broader questions about traditional authority and education in Ghana, including why education has been a particular focus of some Asante monarchs (but not all), and what strategic interests may be driving the king's interventions in education. Ultimately, the OEF offers important lessons and insights that can inform future efforts to expand equitable access to education in Ghana and beyond. In essence, we argue that the OEF was part of the Asantehene's hegemonic interventions that tapped into local knowledge and belief systems to exert influence over the ideological components of power.

Historical Background: Asante forest kingdom of gold

There is a rich and detailed historiography on the evolution of Asante as a polity and culture, making a comprehensive account of its history superfluous (Wilks 1975; McCaskie 1995; Aidoo 1977; Yarak 1990; Arhin 1990; Tordoff 1962; Adjaye 1984). Between the 15th and 17th centuries, the Asante people developed a complex political and social organization aided by the free enterprise of commercial agriculture and gold production, which heavily relied on

the use of enslaved labour (Wilks 1975; LaTorre 1978; Arhin 1990; Kea 1982).[5] This process evolved around a distinctive system of social stratification based on the institution of exogamous matriclans (*mmusua keseɛ*) and allowed for the assimilation of enslaved people, migrants and free persons into early Akan society (McCaskie 1995). The *ɔbirɛmpɔn,* an emerging entrepreneurial class, spearheaded the agrarian revolution and transformed their economic power into political ascendancy through military conquest and territorial absorption (McCaskie 1995; Wilks 1975). The competition for territories and subjects amongst the *ɔbirɛmpɔn* culminated in the development of the institution of chiefship as the highest political office, with members of their family established as the hereditary lineage (*adehyeɛ*) along the principle of matrilineal succession (McCaskie 1995).

Birth of a Nation

Records show the Asante empire came into prominence under King Osei Tutu I in 1701 after the defeat of Denkyira, its former overlord, at the battle of Feyiase (Wilks 1975; McCaskie 1995; Aidoo 1977; Yarak 1990). This initially resulted in the formation of the Asante Confederacy Council or *Kɔtɔkɔ* council (Busia 1951). The council was a loose union of the five principal states *(pl., Aman, sing., Ɔman)* (Mampong, Esumengya, Nsuta, Dwaben, Bekwai), Kumasi chiefs, queen mother, and the king, which together constituted the judicial and legislative structures of Asante governance (Busia 1951). The *Kɔtɔkɔ* council and generally the structure of the Asante government were formally rationalised along military lines: Kontri, Akwamu, Adonten, Nifa, Benkum, Kyidom, Gyaase and Oyoko. For instance, the Mamponghene was the Nifahene, Asumengya the head of the Benkum, and Akwamuhene, the head of Asafo (war captains) (Hagan 1975). The formal division of government predicated on Asante military formation was universally applied to all the component states of the union and their subdivisions down to the village level (ibid).

The decentralised structure of the Asante government was prone to bitter rivalry, especially between the Kumasi chiefs and *amanhene*, which at times threatened national stability (Aidoo 1977). The Kumasi chiefs/ war captains (*asafo)* were appointed by the king rather than

[5] The Asante are one of the largest ethnic groups amongst the Akan in southern Ghana and have been present in the country's interior for more than 500 years (Daaku 1972; Wilks 1977).

through the principle of ascription. They oversaw the day-to-day administration of the empire which gave them a significant amount of influence in state affairs (Hagan 1971; Busia 1951; Tordoff 1961). The *amanhene*, on the other hand, although powerful saw the extent of their participation in a national government limited partly due to their distance from Kumasi and by the demands and local politics of their states. (ibid). Like the king, they oversaw their own states and held in their command several sizable villages, whose heads (*ɔdekuro*) and sub-chiefs owed them obligations similar to those which they in turn owed to the king (Tordoff 1962). King Opoku Ware I (1720-1750) is thought to have initiated early reforms within civil administration (i.e., *Gyaase*) to balance the distribution of power between the *asafo* and *amanhene* (Hagan 1971). *Gyaase* literally meant 'people of the hearth' and consisted of servants (*asomfo*) of the royal household (Hagan 1971, Wilks 1975). In other words, the *Gyaase* refers to the domestic functionaries of the royal palace (Hagan 1971).

By the mid-eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Asante expanded its power northwards and southwards through campaigns (Arhin 1967). Subsequent rulers, such as Osei Kwadwo (1767-1777), Osei Kwame (1777-1801), Osei Bonsu (1800-1824), and Kwaku Dua Panin (1834-1867), implemented reforms in state administration. The *Gyaase* division underwent reorganization, evolving from individuals chosen based on competency to allowing officeholders to pass their roles to male descendants. This division oversaw state finances, accounting, and taxation (Wilks 1975). The state strategically linked wealth with political power, legitimizing its control over wealth production and accumulation. Access to power and wealth was determined through formal processes and public honours, such as recognition as an *ɔbirɛmpɔn*, given to exceptional achievers in wealth accumulation (McCaskie 1995). Wealth and political power were tightly controlled, and the state facilitated upward mobility by guaranteeing access to wealth and political authority (McCaskie 1995). This process was also governed by prescriptive norms of reciprocity and obligation to the state and society (ibid).

Scholars have debated the nature of Asante's state administration during this period, with some arguing for a bureaucratic revolution (Wilks 1975; Hagan 1971) whilst others have challenged specific empirical details of Asante's state administration (Yarak 1990). The significance of ideological processes in legitimizing power and authority has also been

emphasized (McCaskie 1995). Such scholars have advocated for a hermeneutic and emic approach to understanding Asante's history (ibid). Contrary to the impression offered of a state monopoly of power, some studies have challenged this notion by highlighting the circumscribed and less concentrated nature of state power in Asante. They point to a spiritual dimension accessible to those with the knowledge to tap into it (Akyeampong and Obeng 1995483-5). Evidence of commoner and private involvement in the rubber export economy in the 1840s and 1880s further suggests that the state also did not possess absolute economic control (Austin 1996). Thus, power in Asante was contested and influenced by historical conditions and the situational context that shaped its exercise, distribution, and access.

We consider exercises of power in Asante by the turn of the twentieth century to be relational. Relational power, as described by Strange (1988), refers to the capacity of individuals or groups to control the asymmetrical distribution of resources among social actors.[6] Azmanova (2018) further explains that this power arises from the unequal distribution of ideational and material resources among actors (69). In the context of Asante, we apply the concept of power as relational to analyse social movements against the state during the transition from the precolonial to the colonial period, which is essential to our understanding of how education came to be enlisted in the registers of power by the twentieth century.

Political crisis and emergent groups

The last quarter of the nineteenth century marked a tumultuous period in Asante's history. During the harsh reign of Mensa Bonsu (1874-1883), the Asante state and its officeholders faced unprecedented opposition from society. Political instability, displacement of population, social unrest, and internecine conflicts defined the era (Aidoo 1977). An emerging social group of private entrepreneurs *ɑkonkofoɔ* (predominantly non–royals) who had amassed wealth through the rubber trade formed a broad coalition with the *nkwankwaa* (commoners/ young men without title) to resist state abuses of power, exploitation, and high

[6] For evidence of relational power in Asante history, McCaskie (1984) offers a splendid account of power in Asante mid-18C Asante as rested on the juridical confiscation and transfer of land and subjects to clients and allies by the central state to manage factional interests and bolster its authority.

taxation (Aidoo 1977; Arhin 1986: 25).[7] Their dissatisfaction with the ruling elites sometimes overlapped with secession movements within provincial states (Kwahu 1876, Dwaben 1874, Bekwae 1883) (Aidoo 1977). It must be noted that the *akonkofoɔ* and *nkwankwaa* did not represent distinct class groups but remained fluid categories defined by new patterns of wealth and status in Asante society.[8] The *akonkofoɔ* would later support the British in their military campaign against Asante in 1896, which led to the exile of Prempe I and the dissolution of the Asante government. However, their opposition to the state is said to have been limited to restrictions on private accumulation and not the chieftaincy institution as a whole (Austin 1996). The existing literature on *akonkofoɔ* predominantly highlights their significance in shaping the political and economic landscape of Asante during the transition from the precolonial to the colonial era. Yet, there is some ambiguity regarding their broader influence and rise to dominance in Asante society.

According to Aidoo (1977) and Austin (1996), despite their wealth and support from the British government, the *akonkofoɔ* and *nkwankwaa* were unable to bring about significant social change before the 1900s. Instead, they strategically consolidated their position within the existing power structure by pursuing traditional offices within the chieftaincy institution positions. This suggests that their ability to significantly influence the direction of power in Asante was limited. We challenge the notion of the *akonkofoɔ*'s limited influence and claim that it bypasses the relational dynamics of power and legitimation techniques opened to emerging social groups during this period of political change and uncertainty in Asante.

Arhin (1986) offers another perspective, highlighting the influence of the *akonkofoɔ* through their expression of *anibue. Anibue* literally means to 'open the eyes' but in Asante thought the term encapsulates wider meaning and influence closely associated with ideas of enlightenment, social progress, and Western education. By the twentieth century, the term was increasingly linked to Western education and development. Skinner (2009) in her research on mass education in the Ashanti Region in the 1950s shows that the popularity of education was usually explained by reference to the concept of *anibue* or 'enlightenment.' In

[7] Arhin (1986) describes the akonkofoɔ as 'an intermediary group between office holders and non-holders'.
[8] McCaskie (1999) shows that Kofi Sraha was both a wealthy *nkwankwaa* and member of the akonkofo (171-5)

the case of the *akonkofoɔ, anibue* was evinced through their lifestyle, promotion of spiritual and material development, and chiefly amongst this was their attitude towards education.[9] Arhin (1986) explains that although they were illiterate themselves the *akonkofoɔ* took 'unusual pains with the education of their children,' some of whom achieved prominence in politics and professions (28).[10] Educated relatives, children, and dependents of the *akonkofoɔ* would later shape the politics and social life of colonial Asante.[11] Arhin does not develop his argument to account for processes of legitimation, however, his depiction of the *akonkofoɔ* as a 'sub-elite' or 'intelligentsia' suggests that they exerted considerable influence on Asante society than previously assumed. It has also been established that in general, the *akonkofoɔ* epitomised new dynamics of power and status that aligned with the social norms of the nineteenth century (i.e., in relation to the *abirɛmpɔn*) while deviating from traditional ideals of wealth and accumulation (Lauterbach 2017). McCaskie, in his retrospective analysis of four decades of Asante studies, expands upon his understanding of power in Asante, offering valuable insight:

> '"Joining power" remains a sure path to self-realisation and success in Asante society, and the door to the career open to talent- best smoothed, of course, by connections- has been held ajar, but carefully policed, throughout Asante history (McCaskie 2007:151).

Elite formation and power in Asante

The metaphor of joining power as used by McCaskie implies that power in Asante was not political power in the strict sense of the word, neither was it simply about political authority nor control over material resources. Instead, it was encompassing and relational, and although informed by the shifting dynamics of wealth and status it relied on the

[9] The lifestyle of the *akonkofoɔ* was based upon their experience on the coast. Their dress was distinctive, consisting of a cloth thrown over a white vest, a pair of sandals and a walking stick. The *akonkofoɔ* were the first group of Asante to build wooden storeyed houses, which were modelled on those seen in the coastal town.

[10] Some of these men are known to us: Kofi Sraha, Kofi Ketewa, Kwabena Nketia, Kofi Ketewa, Kwasi Appiah, Kofi Tandoh, Kwadwo Jantuah, Kwabena Kese, Kwasi Kankam (Arhin 1986; McCaskie 1998)

[11] Men such as J.E Bandoh, J.W.K. Appiah, and I.K Agyeman identified in the literature as *nkwankwaa* on account of having low expectations of attaining office or wealth in Asante society will establish elite organisations such as the Asante Kotoko Society (McCaskie 1998) and become a formidable opposition against Nkrumah's regimes through the National Liberation Movement (Allman 1993).

interconnectedness of elites and the consent of those whom they wield social and political influence over. Pitcher et al (2009) remind us that for any system of power to be deemed legitimate it requires the voluntary compliance of the ruled.

Lauterbach (2017) expanding on McCaskie's concept of joining power, explores the contemporary trend of pastorship in Ghana, particularly in Asante, as an avenue to social mobility. This path she argues allows ambitious young men to achieve social mobility and attain the status of a 'small-big man,' by drawing on the norms and ideas associated with the *ɑbirɛmpɔn* (4-10).

Taking a similar approach, I move beyond the one-sided portrayal of joining power to emphasize its double effect. On one hand, its success depends on the ability of entrants to leverage locally rooted and recognizable norms and ideas about wealth and status linked to chiefship (*ɑbirɛmpɔn*). Conversely, to maintain their legitimacy traditional powerholders are compelled to adapt existing notions of power and status by redirecting the forces of social change, such as education, toward their own interests. The *ɑkonkofoɔ* therefore seeking membership into the chieftaincy, advanced new perspectives on success within Asante leadership, with education being seen as an important measure of progress (*anibue*). This presented a significant challenge to the authority of chiefs. In the colonial era, the uptake of education amongst the hereditary ruling class lagged behind the general population in Asante and the colony. As a result, careful management, and mediation of the effects of education were necessary to uphold the existing hierarchy. This led to the redefinition of *anibue* as a defining characteristic of effective leadership and governance in Asante, albeit subject to interpretation. Thus, I assert that power is not solely contingent on wealth acquisition but also by participation in the ideational and relational dynamics that shape its access and distribution.

In chapter one, I argue that the adoption of Western education in the 1930s by Asante traditional elites reflects the historical negotiation of power, wealth, and status in Asante society, which both emphasised the ideological and material basis of knowledge and belief in Akan cultural practice. To fully comprehend the role of chiefs in education, it is crucial to

situate the ongoing discussion within the wider scholarly discourse on the evolution of formal education in Ghana, with special emphasis on Asante.

Literature Review: Education in Asante

Education has been a significant factor in Asante politics, particularly during the colonial and post-colonial eras serving not only to promote social mobility but also to consolidate the power and status of chiefs (Akyeampong 1999; Ampene and Nyantakyi III 2016; Kleist 2011). Yet this aspect of education has been largely understudied. Much of the older literature on colonial education focuses on the social transformations and tensions that formal education wrought on traditional societies in the nineteenth century (Miller 1993; Foster 1965; Graham 1971; Boahen 1974; 1993). They often focus on the broader growth narrative of education in Ghana, overlooking specific regional dynamics and the distinct political effects of educational provision and access. This approach, although historically accurate, tends to generalize the Gold Coast's trajectory using it as the reference point for analysis and overshadows the complexities of education development in Asante. A characteristic feature of such analysis is the emphasis on the uneven spread and provision of education, with Asante placed in the runner-up position behind the Gold Coast but finishing ahead of the Northern territories (Afoakwah et al 2020; Aboagye 2021). As a corollary, chiefs' involvement in expanding educational access, especially during the colonial period, has received limited attention, with analyses mostly framed within administrative and technocratic perspectives (Whitehead 1989; 2006). Additionally, current literature on chiefs and education primarily revolves around the nation-state, nation-building, and state-initiated efforts, hindering a deeper understanding of chiefs' utilization of education beyond state policy and practice (Brown 2009; Akyeampong 2009; Aboagye 2021).

Whilst there has been some acknowledgement that chiefs have played a key role in encouraging access to and uptake of education (Foster 1965; Busia and Adjei 2020), this thesis examines the reciprocal relationship between education and chiefs. It provides a historical analysis of the importance that chiefs place on educational projects and initiatives, and how these endeavours influenced their legitimacy, authority, and recognition within the community. It does not simply focus on what Asante chiefs generally, or the Asantehene in

particular, did for education, rather, it also asks what education did for chiefs. Overall, we claim that the growth narrative of education limits our understanding of the ways that chiefs, especially in the post-colonial period used their engagement in education to advance their own political projects and hegemonic ambitions. Now let us explore the narrative of the growth of education in Ghana as commonly portrayed in the literature, which tends to gloss over the specific context and local factors that shaped education in Asante.

Growth of education in Ghana (1500-1700)

Established accounts of the spread of education in Ghana show that the growth of formal education in Asante was comparatively slow. The earliest development of education in the region started on the coast with the arrival of Europeans. The Portuguese, the first on the coast established a Catholic mission school in Elmina in 1572 (Ward 1948; Graham 1971), followed by the Dutch in 1637, and the British in 1752. These schools were maintained in the European fortified trading posts along the coastline. The impact of these efforts on the wider coastal community was minimal, and education for African children was generally experimental and limited to a select few (Odamtten 1978). The 'castle schools' particularly recruited biracial children and trained them to be intermediaries in the Euro-African trade (Martin 1924; McWilliams and Kwamena-Poh 1975). Schools were largely established and managed by trading companies, merchants, and missionary groups, with little involvement from colonial governments in the metropole (Martin 1924; Graham 1971).

Mission Education 1830-1900

The next phase of formal schooling occurred around the 1830s (Nketia 1953). Mission education gained prominence through the efforts of the Wesleyan, Basel, and Bremen missions. It generated a growing interest in education, primarily in coastal regions, with a focus on proselytization and religious conversion. Furthermore, the emergence of an educated elite from these areas led to demands for secondary education and representation in colonial governance (Boahen 1974; Kimble 1963). African interest in education as broadly explained in the literature stemmed from the desire for social and economic advancement within the context of colonial society (Foster 1965; McCaskie 2000; Nketia 1953; Boadu 2021).

Asante (1830s-1930s)

Meanwhile, in Asante, missionary attempts to establish schools in the 1830s and 1840s faced resistance due to the kingdom's cautious stance towards foreign influence and the fear that education may threaten the established order (Foster 1965; Graham 1971). Political instability and warfare further hindered educational development. Formal schooling gained traction after Asante was captured by the British in 1901 (Nketia 1953; Aidoo 1977). According to colonial records, the first secondary school in the region was Ashanti Collegiate School established in 1937 through collaboration between the Wesleyan mission and Asante aristocracy, reflecting a growing demand for education. Mass demand for education in Asante, however, would not take off until the 1930s.

The shift in the demand for education in Asante is commonly attributed to cocoa production and the monetization of the economy under colonial administration (Allman and Tashjian 2000; Boadu 2021; Nketia 1953; Whitehead 2005; Millier 1993; Foster 1965). This perspective emphasizes aspirations for social mobility and achievement beyond traditional structures, as well as the urge to catch up with the rest of the Gold Coast (ibid). We argue that this view only partly explains the growth of education in Asante and omits an important factor-i.e., chiefs. We suggest that placing chiefs as the object of analysis in the study of education in Asante allows for a deeper understanding of their agency and how they utilized colonial instruments for their own purposes (Berry 2001). It shifts the focus from solely examining colonial manoeuvres and policies as the shaping factors to reflecting on local dynamics and strategies that underpinned educational growth in Asante in the interwar years (Whitehead 2005; Steiner-Khamsi & Quist 2000; Yamada 2008).

Colonial policies

Discussions on colonial education and policies in the interwar years predominantly focus on the dynamics of foreign dominance and local resistance (Ngugi 1965, Amin 1977, Carney 1974). Analysis of the role of the latter is often confined to the type of education demanded (academic education) due to the supposed economic benefits associated with it (Steiner-Khamsi & Quist 2000; Quist 2003; Yamada 2008; Foster 1965; Graham 1971). Nevertheless,

Whitehead (1981; 1989) examining one of the landmark policies during this period, Colonial Development and Welfare Act 1940 (CD&W) rejects the claim that colonial education policies sought to subjugate Africans by providing them with an inferior form of education.[12] Instead, he claims that colonial education policy was influenced by the experiences in colonial India, aiming to prevent the emergence of rebellious semi-educated intellectuals. He therefore highlights factors such as political expediency, financial and administrative constraints, and personal motivations of officials. However, he overlooks the local political context and lacks appreciation for the historical and geographic factors that influenced education in Ghana. Consequently, the impact of education on chiefly legitimacy during the colonial period remains unclear.[13]

The thesis shows that education became important to Asante leadership from the 1930s. Through archival sources, it examines the engagement of the Asantehenes (Prempe I and II) with education, going beyond the conventional growth narrative. The research uncovers that Asante kings, particularly Prempe II, not only provided support and land for schools but also offered scholarships for further education. These scholarships were strategically linked to political objectives, such as enhancing the king's modern image and managing the influence of educated individuals outside traditional power structures. By leveraging the concept of *anibue*, which indexes ideas of enlightenment, social progress, and Western education in Asante culture, Prempeh II utilized colonial education bureaucracy to position his office as a driver of social change and progress. This strategic alignment of educational access with traditional elite dominance established a distinct pattern of educational practices among chiefs, which has persisted to some extent into the present era, albeit with contextual variations.

[12] The CD&W Act reflected Britain's growing sense of responsibility towards their subjects in the colonies (Whitehead 1981). Criticism of the poor living standards and social conditions in the colonies by the United States and the United Nations also played a role in shaping this shift in attitude (Whitehead 2006).

[13] Also see Whitehead, Clive. "Education in British Colonial Dependencies, 1919-39: A Re-Appraisal." *Comparative Education*, vol. 17, no. 1, 1981, pp. 71–80.

Post-colonial continuities and divergence in practices of modern kingship

Education remained a feature of modern kingship through the post-colonial era under subsequent monarchs like Opoku Ware II and Osei Tutu II, but its prioritization was influenced by wider political and economic factors. During the later years of Opoku Ware II's reign, he established the Jubilee Foundation (Hagan and Odetei 2001). However, due to political turmoil and shifts in education policies under authoritarian regimes in Ghana, education did not become a primary focus of the monarch. The foundation mainly offered scholarships to male offspring associated with the Asante royal palaces for overseas education (Donkoh, interview, 4 May 2020). Osei Tutu II, who became king in 1999, benefited from a more favourable political climate when the National Patriotic Party (NPP) came into power, with significant support from the Asante region (Abdulai and Hickey 2016). Additionally, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, there was a global and national shift in perspectives on education, which strongly emphasized the recognition of universal primary education as a fundamental right. This shift was reflected in the 1992 constitution of Ghana and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Little 2010).

In essence, since the reign of Prempe I, subsequent monarchs have upheld their relevance and influence by redefining their roles as agents of *anibue,* with varying emphasis on education based on the circumstances of their rule. Arguably, the Otumfuo Education Fund (OEF) by Osei Tutu II stands out as a prominent initiative in education undertaken by a contemporary monarch of Ghana. Examining scholarly discussions on the endurance and continuity of chiefs provides insights into the implications of their analyses for understanding the significance of the OEF.

Conceptual Framework: Development and chiefs in the post-colonial period

There is a limited amount of scholarship on the OEF (Donkoh 2011; Busia and Adjei 2020; Ampene and Nyantakyi III 2016; Asiedu et al 2009), and its mention in the literature often revolves around neotraditional brokerage and traditional resurgence within the framework of neoliberalism (Yarrow 2011; Knierzinger 2011). Even if the OEF is seen as reflecting the politics of traditional resurgence in the context of neoliberal poverty reforms, this perspective

offers only a partial understanding. Hence, we claim that the prevailing analytic models and interpretations based on neoliberal critiques of chiefship need to be re-examined.

During the 1980s, structural adjustment programs (SAPs) were implemented in response to ongoing political and economic instability, while the 1990s saw the introduction of multi-party democracy in Ghana. Throughout this period of uncertainty, chiefs in post-colonial Ghana maintained their relevance and played crucial roles in local politics, governance, and community development (Amanor-Wilks 1996, Amanor and Oquaye 2004). Scholars have applied the concept of brokerage to explain chiefs' durability, which they attribute to their ability to adapt and reinvent themselves as agents of peace, stability, and progress (E. Adriaan B. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal 1999; Comaroff and Comaroff 2018; Odotei and Awedoba 2012). Brokers are generally viewed as intermediaries (individuals or groups) that facilitate communication, negotiation, and coordination between different actors (Mosse and Lewis 2006; Kleist 2011; Bierschenk et al 2002). Within the development context, chiefs are seen as intermediaries navigating development complexities and facilitating the transfer of resources from development agencies and donors to local communities (Bierschenk et al., 2002; Knierzinger 2011). This perspective stresses the importance of chiefs as active agents of change, rather than passive recipients of development and state interventions, with the potential to influence outcomes (Rossi 2004).

The adoption of actor-oriented approaches such as brokerage has allowed us to move beyond traditional and customary explanations of chiefly authority, and to examine the broader power dynamics that shape the role of chiefs as important local actors in development (Bierschenk et al., 2002; Bierschenk 2021). However, they also present conceptual challenges that hinder nuanced ethnographic understanding. We explore this point further in relation to the analysis of chiefs in development. Critiques of chief and development can be broadly summarised under the three main theoretical approaches.

The first treats development as a hegemonic instrument that privileges Western knowledge and techniques while denigrating local ones, reinforcing Western domination over the 'Third World' (Escobar 1995; Cooper and Packard 1997). This perspective emphasizes power dynamics between the global North and South and advocates for participation and grassroots

action as an effective response to the relations of dominance embedded within Western knowledge systems and the global economy (Escobar 1995, Esteva 1985, Sachs 1989, Grillo and Stirrat 1997). From this perspective, meaningful participation of local actors can have a transformative impact on development objectives (Chambers 1983). Unfortunately, it sometimes denies local actors' agency and treats them as 'dupes' of the development complex (Yarrow 2011).

The second paradigm conceives development as a marketplace, where relatively powerful actors strategically manipulate and exploit legitimating discourses such as customs, good governance, and participation for their own personal gain. This tradition views chiefs and local actors as self-maximizing individuals motivated by the financial and political gain associated with development (Oomen 1996; E. Adriaan B. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal 1999, Cook and Kothari 2001). Thus, it glosses over the historical and geographic-specific forms of relations and understanding through which development projects are enacted.

The third paradigm examines development within the context of heterogeneous relations, emphasizing compromise and collaboration facilitated by intermediaries such as brokers and go-betweens (Mosse and Lewis 2006; Rossi 2004; Kleist 2011; Bierschenk et al., 2002). It recognizes local actors and chiefs as intermediaries between local and global practices, marked by contrasting logics, economic interests, cultural clashes, and political agendas. These approaches enhance our understanding of the dynamic nature of development and shed light on the strategies employed by local actors to mediate development resources. They also highlight the role played by the global market and neoliberal policies in the assertion of chiefs' influence within the development arena in the 1980s and 1990s, facilitated by new opportunities for capital investment (e.g., agribusiness, mining concessions, real estate, and cultural royalties) (Oomen 2005). However, they tend to oversimplify the role of chiefs as either altruistic or self-seeking agents of development, neglecting development actors' own understanding of the often complex situations in which they find themselves (Mkandawire 2015).

Two important questions thus emerge. The first is methodological: What challenges arise when treating chiefs' engagement in development through the lens of brokerage? The second

is more practical: How do we move beyond the impulsive reflex on chiefs' hidden intentions or motivations?

We take up the first question in respect of scholarly perspectives on chiefs' handling of development brokerage as applied to discussions on the OEF. As we pursue the enquiry, it is also helpful to keep in mind the question posed earlier - what does chiefs' engagement in education allow them to do?

Chiefs and the perils of brokerage

The concept of brokerage is frequently used in the political and development literature within the framework of neopatrimonialism (Mkandawire 2015). Neopatrimonialism is understood as a system or form of organization in which personal relationships and interests are intertwined with formal bureaucratic structures (Clapham 1985; Erdmann and Engel 2006). This concept suggests chiefs may use their position of power and influence for personal gain rather than for the public good. (Chabal and Daloz 1999). Chiefs are therefore viewed as 'straddling' traditional and modern institutional domains and as combining formal and informal spheres of authority (Bayart 1989). Writers have argued that since the 1980s and 1990s, chiefs have re-adapted and repositioned their legitimacy by converting their traditional offices into fungible resources in response to neoliberal market reforms (Comaroff and Comaroff 2018). These 'neotraditional' strategies involved fostering relations of patronage with politicians; leveraging ethnicity and kinship networks; establishing offices as mechanisms for conflict resolution; and capturing development resources for their own personal interest (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997; Medard 1982; Oomen 2005). Through these strategies, chiefs aim to attain the status of 'big men' who are said to wield considerable economic and political power in Africa (Lentz 1998). However, not all chiefs are successful in this highly competitive game of brinkmanship to obtain 'bigness' (Comaroff and Comaroff 2018).

Yarrow (2011) argues that development involves complex ideological and practical commitments but fails to extend this insight to chiefs in Ghana. Referring to Otumfuo Osei Tutu II's partnership with the World Bank, he draws on Bayart's concept of "extraversion" to

explain that chiefs repositioning as development brokers is designed to exploit the discursive and financial resources associated with development for their personal and political agendas. This perspective contrasts chiefs' actions and motives with those of other Ghanaian NGO workers, portraying them as strategies of straddling.

Similarly, Knierzinger (2011) explores the concept of brokerage in the context of the Asantehene's collaboration with the World Bank. Chiefs are characterized as 'neotraditional' actors who engage in development projects as a means of compensating for their diminished influence during colonial times. Obtaining a neotraditional office is seen as a 'rational stage' and strategic step in the 'economic and political careers of chiefs.' (2)

Donkoh (2011) links the decline of the OEF to local patronage practices- *Dwantoa* - which in her view undermined formal processes of eligibility by awarding scholarships to undeserving applicants with powerful connections. *Dwantoa*, as shown in Chapter 3, is an Akan system of petition that involves appealing to big men, chiefs, and solidarity networks to intercede on behalf of applicants. What all these works share is that they strongly link development brokerage to practices of corruption in the form of resource appropriation and exploitation.

While they offer a useful starting point for examining the OEF, this study shows that analysis of chiefs' engagement in development will greatly benefit from empirical studies that both situate the OEF in its historical context and as well as complemented by a detailed ethnography of the OEF's administrative practices to offer a deeper understanding of its operations and impact. For now, we reflect on the relationship between brokerage and corruption.

Brokerage as corruption

Critics of neopatrimonialism argue that the term has come to shape how corruption in public institutions in Africa is understood, which can perpetuate stereotypes of African elites and culture as inherently dysfunctional (Mkandawire 2015; Pitcher et al 2009). They suggest that while neopatrimonialism draws from Weber's concept of domination, it fails to adequately account for practices of legitimacy and locally embedded notions of reciprocity and voluntary

compliance between rulers and the ruled. Pitcher et al (2009) explain that the term emerged out of political discourses on West Africa in the 60s, and inaccurately combined two of Weber's ideals - patrimonial authority and legal-rational bureaucracy - to elaborate the reassertion of forms of personalised logic that undermine impersonal rules and formal practices (138-44). This analysis, they argue, was based on the 'normative conviction' that there is a clear separation of boundaries between the personal and formal spheres within the legal-rational bureaucracy, which made the latter more suitable for the equitable allocation of resources (138). This normative conviction we assert denies Africans agency and reduces them to a cultural logic that fails to provide an adequate understanding of specific situations, contradictory interests, ideologies, and motivations of social actors. The permeability of bureaucracies to the external world is also not exclusive to Africa; it can be observed in Western administrations as well. The allocation of public goods and services in these contexts does not always adhere to rationality or impartiality, highlighting a divergence between commonly held expectations and actual implementation. Nevertheless, the normative concept of bureaucracy has held a strong purchase in the critiques of African institutions.

A classic example of the normative classification of the African social world into personal and formal logic is Peter Ekeh's essay *Two Publics* (1975). He argues that colonialism in Africa created two publics with distinct logics: the primordial and the civic. The primordial public is moral and based on the cultural orders, namely ethnicity and community, where individuals contribute materially, in exchange for intangible benefits such as identity and psychological security (107). In contrast, the civic public is amoral, where individuals seek personal gain without a moral obligation to give back (108). Ekeh suggests that the veneer of rational-legal authority imposed by colonialism was undermined by personalistic and patrimonial logics of patronage, clientelism, and corruption that were inherent in African societies (110). Corruption arises from the amorality of the civic public and the need to seize resources from it to benefit the primordial public. Implicitly, it is not just the normative categories of the private and public that are taken as a truism. But equally, bureaucracy is seen as a bounded concept that operates within a specific set of rules and procedures, and thus any deviation from them is generally viewed as a sign of dysfunction or inefficiency. In Chapter 5, we suggest that analysis of bureaucratic practices would benefit from critically engaging how documents shape perceptions and power dynamics in bureaucratic practices. Suspicions of corruption,

stemming from inadequate record-keeping, led the OEF to use photo albums as tangible proof of project activities. This shifted blame from operational issues to implicating the king and eventually influencing public opinion. Hence, viewing corruption against the OEF solely as a bureaucratic dysfunction obscures the intricate ways in which the network of individuals involved in the OEF's administrative practices used documentary *artifacts* to enhance their own interests and even contest the king's authority.

Bureaucracy as social practice

Max Weber's theoretical concept of bureaucracy has been widely recognized as a significant contribution to the understanding of public administration and statecraft (Roth and Witt ich 1968). Weber identified distinct forms of authority, including the bureaucratic form, which he considered as a rational-legal type of authority that derived its legitimacy from a legal order characterized by specialization of labour, a formal set of rules and regulations, a well-defined hierarchy, and impersonality in the application of rules. Scholars have criticized the concept of bureaucracy as being overly general and lacking in real-world applicability, and also that it perpetuates a Eurocentric and evolutionary view of history (Zalta 2010).

In the analysis of food regulation in Britain and Nigeria, Guyer (1993) from a historical viewpoint shows that bureaucratic governance and practice are historically contingent rather than technical and fixed. She claims that bureaucracy is a repertoire of knowledge (both old and new) that is selectively mobilised in different contexts, favouring certain intentions and definitions through time and space.

Similarly, in a recent publication edited by Felten and von Oertzen (2020), bureaucracies are described as 'socio-material structures in perpetual motion, which constantly adapt their procedures to meet shifting goals as they regulate state, economic, or religious affairs' (2). Bureaucracies are viewed as knowledge practices that provide actors with a durable mechanism to organize social and material worlds (8). Whilst implicitly recognising that bureaucracies are embedded within social relations, the writers of the collection mainly highlight the role of functionaries (yamen, clerks, inquisitors, and civil servants) and their potential effect on the wider populace that they govern (6-8). They underscore the kinds of

knowledge and actions bureaucracies make possible through registers of documentation, record keeping, mapping, and accounting. It is in this sense that they argue that bureaucracies can make or break the world by perpetuating a niche epistemic culture that can foreclose action or invigorate new possibilities (2). This, however, tends to offer the impression that power within bureaucratic governance is primarily unidirectional, exercised by experts or functionaries (insiders) over the target population (outsiders).

Moving away from the normative tradition, Felten and von Oertzen (2020), help us to understand bureaucracies as material and social practices that are locally embedded and shaped by shifting social dynamics (2-8). Building on the concept of bureaucracy as social practice, we shift the focus towards the social relations that shaped and engendered specific administrative practices, ways of knowing and acting on the world. This approach is not merely a matter of semantics but is essential to the analysis. We are not solely interested in understanding what bureaucracy, as a knowledge culture and disciplinary technology enables its actors to do and to whom. But also, in how bureaucratic systems legitimate their actions. Viewing bureaucracy as a social practice, we take the argument a step further showing that bureaucracies are not static entities, but rather, dynamic social-material structures, in which power is not entirely monopolized by a cadre of experts or functionaries. Power is thus accessible to those who understand and can manipulate the organization's practices and procedures. This approach also helps reconcile the assumed negative correlation between patronage and bureaucracy. In Chapter 4, the analysis of scholarship applications reveals that besides applicants with powerful networks of big men, those without powerful connections were sometimes able to compensate for their weak position and receive scholarships. This they achieved by utilizing delicately crafted application letters to appeal to shared norms and values. The emotional narratives of applicants and displays of social empathy reveal the presence of affective bonds and affective patronage. These networks of affection, as described, were embedded in the formal bureaucratic processes of scholarship application and evaluation. In this way literacy practices were put to use, to perform particular social functions and facilitate renegotiations of power relations (Barber 2007). I claim that literacy is not solely a neutral tool or one that inherently serves bureaucratic objectives. Instead, applicants actively utilized it to mitigate their disadvantaged position within the sociocultural networks of patronage. As a result, suitable applicants who would have been otherwise

overlooked based on their lack of powerful 'brokers' were able to exercise their eligibility. The analysis also emphasizes the role of literacy in enabling interpersonal relations across temporal and spatial landscapes, which in turn helps to establish and affirm human connections. Thus, we question whether the bureaucracies that administer educational scholarships – and perhaps development programmes more generally – can ever truly operate separately from sensibility, sentimentality, or feelings. The study recommends that development bureaucracies should take seriously the literacy practices of local communities, which are embedded in affective dynamics.

Considering that the framework of development brokerage may lead to oversimplified assumptions about their intentions, how can we understand the legitimacy of chiefs within the neoliberal context of traditional resurgence?

Conceptualizing chiefs' legitimacy and neoliberal governance

In a recent volume titled *Politics of Customs,* edited by Comaroff and Comaroff (2018), the authors explain the so-called 'resurgence of chiefs' across Africa since the 1990s in two ways. Firstly, we are told that chiefs exploit the language of tradition, culture, and customs to legitimize their power. The concept of custom, they argue, is a colonial invention that has come to be seen as timeless and naturalized in the vernacular of rule through systems of codification and discourse deployed by chiefs themselves, governments (colonial and post-colonial) and scholars (i.e., anthropologists) (9). Secondly, the resurgence of chiefs is intricately connected to non-traditional factors such as entrepreneurship and commercial activities, driven by neoliberal policies that prioritize the commodification of culture and the privatization of state functions (21). Chiefs engage in various market strategies, including profiting from extractive industries and agribusiness, asserting intellectual property rights, and seeking constitutional recognition to solidify their position as local leaders. The authors argue that what unifies all these legitimacy strategies is the chiefs' role as intermediaries, operating at various interfaces of social action. They serve as brokers between culture and identity, tradition and modernity, governments and citizens, political parties and the electorate, as well as local communities and development agencies. Central to their

argument, is that the notion of resurgence and return of chiefship is misleading as chiefs never left. 'But their durability is not to do with staying the same' (10).

Partially agreeing with this analysis, we argue that it overlooks a crucial aspect of Asante chiefship. It is also only fair to point out that the Comaroffs do not propose a unified theory but acknowledge that their emphasis on the commodification of customs reflects part of the diverse ways that customary authority is manifesting itself across the continent, and why (39). We acknowledge that the 1980s and 1990s marked a significant shift in how chiefs negotiated legitimacy and influence, facilitated by a neoliberal order. However, we caution against overemphasizing the extent to which chiefs' engagement in development since the 1990s has been driven by rational individualism.

Examining the OEF through an ethnographic and historical lens, we come to understand that the Asante monarchs' interest in education is not solely focused on increasing their wealth or expanding their global connections. Although these are certainly appealing and part of their calculations, they do not fully explain why both 'development kings': Prempe II and Osei Tutu II, sought to re-establish their legitimacy within state structures rather than without, even if their motivations markedly differed from state officials and agendas. Critiques of chiefly 'resurgence' or 'reinvention' from a predominantly market-oriented perspective underestimate the full scale of political work at play, especially in the case of the OEF. Moreover, such critiques fail to recognize how these political projects contributed to the widespread support the Fund enjoyed in its initial years and its sudden and precipitous decline in its final days.

We build on Comaroff and Comaroff (2018) concept of neoliberal governance to add an ideological dimension to our analysis of the OEF and the legitimacy of the Asantehene. Neoliberal governance implies chiefs' strategic emphasis and exploitation of the globalised discourses of good governance, democracy, and grassroots participation to (re)-establish their legitimacy within the state. We argue that the OEF constituted a hegemonic intervention by the Asantehene, leveraging local knowledge and belief systems to assert influence over the ideological dimensions of power. Rather than aiming to capture the state, the king sought to capture the allegiance of its citizens by strategically expanding the OEF eligibility based on

historical ties of statehood and relational citizenship (Strange 1988). Even though the king presented the OEF as a national initiative, the practice and official interpretation of community eligibility closely contoured Asante's historical boundaries of belonging and statehood. In Chapter 6, our analysis acknowledges that although development efforts can sometimes serve personal and patrimonial ends, a deeper understanding of why development projects fail emerges when we consider emotional dynamics and interpersonal power structures that transcend ethnic identity. The study highlights that while ethnic identity matters, they do not solely determine who receives support and who does not in the distribution of development resources. This emphasizes the politics of eligibility forged through communicative processes of identification that draw from historical registers to foster relational interdependence and solidary ties across cognitive and social boundaries of belonging.

Our use of the term 'hegemony' relates to Gramsci's understanding as a form of moral and cultural leadership forged by a ruling class and exercised through civil society structures to maintain dominance over society. It also encapsulates Strange (1988) notion of relational power as outlined above. Gramsci explains that ruling classes use both the state's bureaucratic and cultural instruments to present themselves as 'civilizing' forces or 'educators' promoting a certain way of life for citizens (Hoare and Nowell-Smith 1971). This is achieved through a combination of force and consent, which involves co-opting civil society to further elite political agendas (Gramsci 1971). Gramsci's concept of hegemony has been applied to the understanding of power in Asante. In McCaskie (1995) examination of power in C18 and C19 Asante, he applies Gramsci's notion of hegemony to unveil the state's ideological structuration of knowledge and belief in Asante society to legitimate its rule rather than purely exercising dominance through brute force. From a different viewpoint, we find that Gramsci's concept of hegemony remains viable to understanding the Asantehene's renegotiation of power and influence within the post-colonial state in Ghana. Gramsci's notion of hegemony extends beyond the state and has been applied to cultural and social institutions (Lears 1985).

As seen in the case of the OEF, the Asantehene Osei Tutu II aligned himself with civil society and the global consensus on good governance by engaging with education. He projected

himself as an alternative to the state, but not as an opposition while also working through the state to legitimate his authority in the eyes of his subjects. As he claimed, 'chiefs have the moral obligation to contribute to the lives of their individual citizens [..] and to the nationals of their country at large […] These institutions and programmes are not intended to replace those that must be provided by the central and regional government, but rather to supplement them.' In other words, the OEF re-enacts the cartographies of belonging and statehood, to refashion citizens into subjects owing their allegiance to the king. The point here is not that the OEF fosters the reconstruction of a state in the traditional sense, but that the king's ambitious expansion of the Fund's activities invokes deep attachments to statehood and belonging within the Asante political imaginary. By viewing the OEF as a hegemonic project we also emphasise that hegemony is neither static nor ever complete, but always contested.

Overall, the thesis argues that the Asantehene used the OEF to promote his hegemonic interests, presenting himself as an enlightened (*anibue*) leader dedicated to the national development of the country through bureaucratic governance. This approach followed a distinct pattern established by previous monarchs in the 20th century, albeit adapted to the neoliberal age of democratisation and globalisation of education. This strategy increased his power and influence but also opened up new discursive spaces for opponents to challenge his authority through social practices of documentary techniques that mobilized historical conflicts over eligibility and belonging. Despite the Asantehene's successful efforts to associate his office with national development, including in areas such as diplomacy, urban planning, and higher education, the expansion of his influence has also made him vulnerable to public scrutiny, which further threatens the legitimacy of his office.

Education has historically served as a tool for the Asante kings to legitimize their authority and maintain relevance within state governance and society at large. The OEF serves as a reminder that development efforts in education must seriously consider the underlying political implications and the historical and cultural contexts in which practices of educational access are embedded.

Methodology

Homegoing of the Diasporic Insider

Traditional Authority, Enlightenment, and Education Bureaucracy in Ghana is an ethnographic study conducted in Ghana, focusing on chiefs and education in the Asante region. It employs an interdisciplinary approach that draws on various fields including anthropology, history, literary criticism, sociology, politics, and development (Murchison 2010). Data was collected over a period of two years (2018-2020) within the Ashanti region and Eastern region and in Greater Accra through field observations, interviews, archives, social media, and newspaper reporting.[14] As a British-Ghanaian researcher, my dual identity as both an insider and an outsider influenced the data collection process, providing unique access and building trust, while also eliciting suspicion (Bukamal 2020). It is important to briefly discuss the motivation behind choosing this topic and its significance to the scholarly discourse on Africa within the social sciences.

Diaspora social gatherings

In 2002, I became aware of the Otumfuo Education Fund (OEF) during an *Asanteman kuo* meeting (Asante community) in London. The committee chairperson announced a fundraising campaign for the OEF, an initiative founded by the newly enstooled Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, to support the education of underprivileged children in Asante. For Asantes living abroad, this announcement brought hope, as they often carried the financial burden of providing education for less fortunate relatives back home. However, as time went on, discussions about the Fund's performance at funerals and cultural events in London took on a critical and dissatisfied tone. It was during a book launch at the Houses of Parliament that I first heard King Osei Tutu II speak about the OEF's success in expanding educational opportunities for the 'brilliant but needy'.[15] Embarking on a PhD program some years after, the OEF appeared as a suitable topic to showcase the significance of chiefs to Ghana's national development.

[14] Bohyen, Heman (Santaase), Atia District, Kwahu Jejeti, and Accra
[15] Otumfuo Osei Tutu II (2016) Africa's democratic path and the search for economic transformation. Lecture. Houses of Parliament.

Identity and Access

Researching chiefship in Ghana, particularly the Otumfuo Education Fund (OEF), posed challenges due to the strict secrecy surrounding chieftaincy in the Asante community. Obtaining information from the public was initially difficult, as they feigned ignorance or directed me to the Palace. Despite introductions, the Palace delayed my interview requests due to scepticism towards my diaspora background. My unfamiliarity with the Palace's intricate codes and conventions was met with disapproval from administrative staff, whilst others questioned my focus on the OEF rather than the major urban commercial project in Kejetia, currently undertaken by the king. However, an unexpected opportunity arose during the celebration of the king's 20th anniversary, coinciding with the *Akwasidaɛ*. The Palace strategically promoted the achievements of the OEF through media coverage, triggering reflections within the community. Conversations with residents and members of the public in the Manhyia area and around the new Kejetia market shed light on their mixed feelings about the legacy of the OEF. Where often the researcher may have a higher socioeconomic/educational status than the people he/she is researching, this was not the case for this project. Most of my interviewees were either successful professionals, members of the Palace or highly achieved women of seniority. Instead, my status as a relatively younger man (*barimaa*) in Asante society shaped power dynamics between myself and my interlocutors (Warren and Hackney 2000).

Knowledge production as a cultural site of (re)connection

Since Bowdich's mission to Kumasi on 19 May 1817, during the *Akwasidaɛ* celebration under the reign of Asantehene Osei Tutu Kwame, cultural festivals in Asante have often offered valuable opportunities to gain insight into Asante, its people, local culture, and politics (Bowdich 1819: XVII).[16] However, access to specific kinds of knowledge and the limits of what can be known are often shaped by the identity and perceived status of the researcher (Yarrow 2011).

[16] Also see Olga Najera-Ramirez (1999) Of Fieldwork, Folklore, and Festival: Personal Encounters. *Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 112 (444), pp., 183-199

During the 2019 *Akwasidaɛ* festival, I had the opportunity to join the procession of my maternal uncle, the chief of Bremang. Being amongst the chief's entourage gave me access to the festival grounds, where other dignitaries and chiefs were gathered. My connection to the Bremang stool briefly earned me the trust of members of the public, making them open to my inquiries. I also had valuable access to important individuals within the king's circle, including his personal physician, the then director of OTCF (Otumfuo Charity Foundation).

Conducting interviews with chiefs required observing the customs and protocol of court etiquette. I presented myself in traditional attire and brought a bottle of schnapps and a small gift to the chiefs.[17] To elicit a positive reception from chiefs, I followed the rules of court speech, by conveying my message through a senior male family member which in turn was translated to the chief by his linguist. Though I am fluent in the local language, Twi, my speech lacked the eloquence expected of court discourse, making it challenging to ask direct questions (Yankah 1995). The conversations remained largely formal and polite. Even with the support of a senior mediator, my lesser status in the Akan traditional hierarchy as a *barimaa* (young man) meant that some chiefs were less likely to engage me on *Efiesɛm* (private matters). Despite these constraints, some chiefs appreciated my adherence to customs and saw me as a good and enlightened citizen (*Wo yɛ akanniba a w'ani abue*) who had not forgotten my roots (*Wo werɛ mfi wakyi*) (Geertz 1988). They were willing to engage further through personal phone calls, where they felt comfortable speaking freely. In these instances, my diaspora background seemed less relevant compared to my knowledge of Akan traditions and customs, which they linked to their reason for participating (Bob-Milliar 2020).

Research in times of crisis

On my next trip in 2020, I split my time between working at the OEF office located in Kumasi, Adum, SNITT house and trawling through the regional archives in Kumasi and Accra the (Public Records Administration and Archive Department: PRAAD, Manhyia Archives).

[17] Schnapps is a herbal and aromatic infused gin which is used for pouring libation to the gods and ancestors in several traditional religious and cultural practices in Ghana (marriages, cultural festivals, naming ceremonies)

However, the Covid-19 outbreak posed challenges to the research. The government in Ghana introduced lockdown measures from 30 March 2020- 19 April 2020. A partial lockdown was implemented in the last week but restriction on movements across regions was kept in place. Travel between cities was restricted and government offices were closed. Research participants in their relatively advanced age or with underlying health conditions were advised to shield and could not take part in the research. Furthermore, travel from the southern part of the country (Kumasi/ Accra) to the northern regions was tightly controlled. As a result, some of the site visits to observe project buildings in remote areas of the country, where the OEF had undertaken projects were not possible. I was however able to visit some sites but mainly in the southern parts.

Notwithstanding the disruption of travel restrictions to data collection, the reopening of the national archives, and Kumasi branch of national archives, and the Manhyia archives provided an opportunity to shift the focus beyond an ethnographic approach towards a more interdisciplinary approach. Thus, archival research became an important component of the project and allowed for the historical contextualisation of the OEF via research on initiatives of earlier Asantehene(s) in education. The slowdown of the pace of social and daily activities in Kumasi also provided ample opportunity to deeply engage residents of Kumasi, especially those in the Manhyia ward. Newspaper coverage and online blogs on the OEF offered crucial insights into public perceptions of the OEF projects and beneficiary communities.

George Floyd and cultural allyship

The tragic murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, had a global impact, leading to widespread expressions of outrage and gestures of allyship with Black people. In Ghana, the response took a different form than the Black Lives Matter slogan. The day after the tragic event, the staff members at the national archives showed a significant change in attitude, expressing sympathy and cultural solidarity. The head archivist expressed concern for my well-being as a 'black' (*bibi ni*) in the West and urged me to expedite my studies and return home (*bra fie*), irrespective of the fact that I was a resident of the United Kingdom rather than America.

This breakthrough in rapport opened access to colonial files related to Prempe II's involvement in education, such as the Asante Confederacy Scholarship and the Colonial Development & Welfare (CD&W) files. He also facilitated further connections with his colleagues at PRAAD Accra. Much of the files on the work of the Asante Confederacy Scholarship Council have been underutilized in the scholarship on education in colonial Ghana. The personal correspondence between the kings (Prempe I and II), chiefs, and colonial officials provides intimate insights into policy challenges, implementation, local expectations, and chiefs' advocacy for education in their communities. It would be a grave error to view the tragic death of George Floyd referenced here as a re-enactment of collective trauma or a deft act of exploitation for dramatic effect or otherwise. Instead, it affirms how racial solidarity remains - no matter how thin - critical to Ghanaian expressions of citizenship and belonging (Pierre 2013).

Paper trail

During the period of field research, the OEF had stopped accepting applications and managing scholarships, except for providing guidance on university admissions and assisting with formal references. The office operated its regular opening hours with only two members of staff and received occasional visitors seeking funding advice. The office held important documents related to the Fund's activities (completed applications, donor agreements, correspondence with sponsors and the Palace, project plans, photo albums, donor receipts, logbooks, etc.). These documents, although sometimes disorganized, provided revealing insights into its management, relationships, and scholarship evaluation.

Formal approval was obtained from the OEF director, and consent was sought from student applicants, ensuring their anonymity. Interviews were conducted with 10 former (student) beneficiaries of the OEF scholarships, many of whom were adults aged 30+ and, holding highly professional positions such as lawyers, academics, politicians, and medical doctors. The successful careers of OEF beneficiaries demonstrate the central role that the OEF played in the lives of some Ghanaians. Some interviews have been anonymized due to perceived or potential risks to participants' identity, reputation, or livelihood, especially where information shared seemed sensitive or could be easily traced back to them. A few of the participants

who took part in the study were drawn from a limited pool of individuals within the OEF and the chieftaincy institution in Kumasi. Names of those participants have been deliberately removed and replaced by generic locations of where the interview took place, except for instances where the information shared was already in the public domain and posed limited or no risk to participants.

Obtaining information on the World Bank's PPTAP project, which was key to the establishment of the OEF, was challenging. The project officer mentioned in the PPTAP Project appraisal report declined an interview, and the recollection of the then Country Director of the World Bank was somewhat vague. However, the Country Director's participation provided important insights into the political atmosphere surrounding the partnership. Accessing project documents required assistance from a bank employee through personal networks. The World Bank's publicly available strategy reports, accessible through the World Bank Archive Group and UNESCO online library, were beneficial for understanding the bank's evolving approach to local partnerships from the 1960s to the 1990s.

From multimedia to social media

The J.H. Kwabena Nketia Archive at the University of Ghana and online platforms like YouTube serve as valuable sources of video footage on King Osei Tutu II, providing insights into his educational vision. Online newspapers such as Daily Graphic, Ghana Web, Ghana Telegraph, and Ghana Chronicles were systematically searched using specific keywords, yielding information on the OEF and public perceptions. Local history sources, including royal palace websites and Facebook pages, offer untapped knowledge on chiefship and power (Bob-Milliar 2020). To understand education in Ghana, it is crucial to go beyond official sources and state initiatives. The significance of education for the Asante people requires an exploration of local initiatives that deeply resonate with their aspirations*. Traditional Authority, Enlightenment, and Education Bureaucracy in Ghana* comprehensively analyses the historical and cultural contexts that shape educational access. The study contributes to understanding Ghana's education system and recognizes its multifaceted nature while emphasizing the role of identity and cultural connections in knowledge production (Afolabi 2020).

The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into six main sections. This first, introductory chapter has outlined the background of the study, literature review and methodology. Chapter 2 addresses the limited attention given to the role of chiefs in the development of education in Asante. It analyses how Asante monarchs, particularly during Prempe II's reign, engaged with formal education in their jurisdiction in both the colonial and postcolonial periods. The chapter examines the Asante Confederacy Council and its scholarship program as key administrative mechanisms employed by Prempe II for political purposes. It examines archival materials from the Ashanti Confederacy Council (ACC) and colonial education records to explore the strategic distribution of scholarships to different demographics of students, including prominent figures such as A. A.Y. Kyeremanten and J.B.K. Asafu Adjaye. The chapter uses archival sources to analyse scholarship allocation, recipient demographics, and the interplay between modernity and education in Asante in the 1930s and 1950s. It bridges the gap between the historical and political literature, providing insights into the chiefs' utilization of education to redefine their role and sustain their legitimacy.

Chapter 3 critically examines the partnership between the World Bank and the Asantehene in establishing the Otumfuo Education Fund (OEF) under the leadership of Asantehene Osei Tutu II. It analyses the Asantehene's use of education to maintain influence within the neoliberal context of educational reform and governance in Ghana during the 1980s and 1990s. The chapter explores global and national factors that facilitated this process, including educational standards in Asante and the global shift towards viewing education as a basic right and a means of reducing poverty. Utilizing speeches, OEF reports, and World Bank documents, the chapter highlights similarities and differences with previous chiefs' interventions in education. It argues that the OEF represents a neoliberal configuration of chiefly authority, influenced by global and local dynamics. The chapter challenges market-oriented models and argues that chiefs use development to assert authority by leveraging local knowledge and belief systems. It also contends that the Bank's adoption of civil society in partnership frameworks provided the Asantehene a platform to assert authority within the Bank's development discourse and practices. The Asantehene utilized this framework to redefine his personal authority within and beyond the state.

Chapter 4 examines the Otumfuo Education Fund (OEF) as a charity organisation, including its operation, objectives, and beneficiary selection. It challenges assumptions about the distinction between personalized versus impersonalized or bureaucratic interaction and explores allegations of corruption in the OEF's eligibility processes. The analysis of application letters shows that successful applicants without powerful connections or big men used emotional narratives to appeal to shared norms and values, revealing the deep bonds of affective patronage in formal literacy practices. The chapter raises a fundamental question about whether development bureaucracies overseeing educational scholarships, as well as development programs in a broader sense, can truly divorce themselves from emotional structures of sensibility, sentimentality, or feelings. It underscores the significance of development bureaucracies giving due attention to the literacy practices of local communities, which are intricately embedded within affective dynamics.

Chapter 5 delves into the issue of corruption allegations and its potential role in the decline of the OEF. It highlights the importance of record-keeping and documentation in bureaucratic practices, but also acknowledges the limitations of these practices in terms of obscuring power dynamics and complex relations. To mitigate growing public dissatisfaction, the OEF utilized photo albums as visual evidence of project activities. Project photos were strategically ‘placed’ to closely associate the OEF with the king and increase public support for their activities. However, this also made the king the focus of public criticism and suspicion, as claims of corruption were often directed towards the monarch's wider engagement, rather than the OEF's operational failings. It argues that claims of corruption should not be taken prima facie or viewed as a dysfunction of bureaucratic practices but should be analysed in terms of their underlying motivations and the material possibilities afforded by documentary evidence. The chapter poses the question of how we can understand claims of corruption beyond individual culpability and how the use of documentary evidence shapes the production and reception of such claims. Both Chapters 4 and 5 offer different perspectives on corruption and emphasize the importance of contextualizing such claims.

Chapter 6 explores the concept of eligibility and its implications for the decline of support for the OEF. It argues that the competing visions of communities' entitlement to OEF support

played a central role in the Fund's decline, leading to widespread discontent. The chapter presents a comparative case study of two beneficiary communities, one in the Volta region and the other in the Northern region. In particular, the chapter explores why support for Dagbaŋ in the Northern region was met with approval from Asante, while support for Worawora in the Volta region risked donor withdrawal. Despite sharing ancestry and swearing allegiance to the Asante king, the Worawora community faced opposition from donors who believed that resources were being diverted from Asanteman's needy children to those from 'other' communities. Overall, the chapter argues that disagreements over community eligibility for OEF support raised questions and doubts about the Fund's end goals, contributing to its decline. By examining the specific case of these two communities, the chapter sheds light on the complex dynamics at play and the challenges of balancing competing visions of entitlement to support.

The concluding chapter reflects on the official closure of the OEF amid the takeover by the Otumfuo Charity Foundation (OTCF). It draws together the central points of our argument and suggests that initiatives like the OEF can enhance ongoing efforts towards expanding access to education if properly incorporated into national policy and practice. In sum, we claim that the OEF's failure cannot be solely attributed to administrative shortcomings or financial mismanagement, although these did raise public concerns and scrutiny. Its downfall, however, was intimately tied to the inability to sustain and nurture the aspirations and dreams of Asante people for a better future, especially for Asante children.

Chapter 2. Anibue: Education in Asante and the opening of Society's eye

Introduction

The Otumfuo Osei Tutu II (1999 to present) has often likened his decision to establish the Otumfuo Education Fund as a 'modern war against ignorance' in which access to education for the 'brilliant but needy' children of Asante is said to be the answer (World Bank 2007).[18] Chiefs' purported role in 'bringing' modernity to their subjects through the promotion of education however remains underproblematised. What underpins the conceptualisation of chiefs' engagement in development as a form of *anibue*? In other words, what do chiefs mean when they refer to their role in development (especially education) as a process of *anibue* and why do they speak of their engagement in development in such terms?

This chapter contextualizes the connection between modernity and education in the Asante experience. Tracing chiefs' engagement in education to the colonial period, we claim that as formal schooling increased in the 1930s onwards, aided by new commercial opportunities (cocoa production and clerical employment), chiefs strived to define education and shape access to education in distinct ways. The formation of a scholarship scheme, following the restoration of the Asante Confederacy Council (ACC) in 1935, allowed the Asante king to articulate a compelling vision around education as a form of *anibue* (social progress) strongly aligned with the hegemonic interests of Asante kingship. This meant that education was to aid Asante to catch up with the Gold Coast in terms of material and social development; and simultaneously, to contain the growing influence of educated classes in Asante society. By so doing, the ACC aimed to perpetuate the historical ascendancy and status of Asante powerholders within the colonial arrangement of power.

[18] Tutu O. "Traditional Systems of Governance and the Modern State." Keynote Address at the Fourth Development Forum, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Oct 12, 2004, In Economic Commission of Africa (2007). Relevance of African Traditional Institutions of Governance. Keynote address, pp 35-8
Also See Tutu, O. Chieftaincy and Development in contemporary Africa". Annual Distinguished African Lecture, 3 November 2005. Harvard. In. Speech

Developing my argument, I turn to the work of Lauterbach (2016), who is similarly interested in understanding how precolonial exercises of chiefly power relate to and diverge from colonial and precolonial antecedents. I am not just interested in the rationale and strategies or approaches deployed, but crucially in understanding what education did for chiefs. This chapter therefore considers the role chiefs played in expanding educational opportunities; why their support took specific forms; and more importantly how scholarship provision relates to older ideas about individual achievement, wealth accumulation and distribution, and legitimacy of power in Asante. The aim is to move the conversation on education beyond issues of broader and more equitable access to examine the politics of legitimacy that animates chiefly engagement in education.[19] This aspect of education has received insufficient attention in both the older and current scholarship of educational access in Ghana (Busia and Adjei 2020; Aboagye 2021; Akyeampong 2010; Foster 1965).

Structure

The chapter addresses the gap in the literature using archival materials to illuminate the role of Asante kings (Prempe I and especially Prempe II) in promoting education in the colonial period. It falls into four main parts. The first part outlines key concepts and opens with a discussion on the concept of modernity within the Akan experience, recognizing the impact of colonialism on chiefs' authority and legitimacy in Asante. The second part focuses on the engagement of Prempe I and Prempe II in education, along with an overview of educational policies during colonial rule. The next section examines the Ashanti Confederacy Council (ACC), which led to the establishment of the Ashanti Confederacy Council Scholarship. Followed by an exploration of the scholarships, their recipients, and the institutions involved. Here we take a closer look at the different approaches to scholarships: teacher training and overseas scholarships, and their underlying implications. The fourth section offers a

[19] Atuahene, F. and Owusu-Ansah, A. (2013) 'A descriptive assessment of higher education access, participation, equity, and disparity in Ghana', Sage Open, 3(3), p.2158244013497725.
Bloom DE, Canning D and Chan K (2006) 'Higher education and economic development in Africa', (Vol. 102), Washington, DC: World Bank
Gajigo, O. (2016) 'Closing the education gender gap: estimating the impact of girls' scholarship program in The Gambia', Education Economics, 24(2), pp.167-188.

prosopographical account of overseas scholarship students from notable families, such as A.A.Y. Kyeremanten, J.E. Appiah, and J.K.B. Asafu Adjaye, to better understand their relation to the Asantehene's Palace and chieftaincy institution broadly. It is important to point out here that whilst Appiah is not an ACC scholar, his relationship with the Asantehene and chiefship demonstrates the complex dialectical process of 'joining power' by Asante 'youngmen' in the 1950s. We argue that whilst the colonial period paved the way for an emerging educated group to join power by drawing on socially embedded ideas of status associated with chiefship, in turn, established powerholders also sought to maintain their authority and legitimacy by closely aligning and redefining educational access with their hegemonic interest.

Theorizing modernity in the Akan experience

Scholars have underscored the difficulty in arriving at a working definition of modernity because of its elusiveness (McCaskie 2000, Comaroff and Comaroff 1993; Bloom, Miescher and Manuh 2014). Nevertheless, modernity is said to be profoundly ideological and profoundly historical (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993: x). Akyeampong (1999) claims that 'it is a somewhat shifting assemblage that manifests itself differently in time and space' (280). In this way, modernity disavows singularity, whilst several 'modernities' are believed to co-exist in the global system (Appadurai 1996, Larkin 1997). Although it is somewhat difficult to arrive at a precise definition or expression for modernity within Asante historical experience, the term *anibue* is closely associated with modernity. *Anibue* in the literal sense means to open the eyes but in Asante thought the term encapsulates a wider meaning often associated with ideas of enlightenment, social progress, and Western education.

Peel (1978) found amongst the Yoruba in Ilesha a powerful but definite referent of modernity, *olaju,* which also literally means 'opening the eyes' but metaphorically denotes: 'enlightenment, a social state or process of increased knowledge which is a condition of greater effectiveness and prosperity' (144). Like *olaju,* the concept of *anibue* is constructed around notions and practices of development understood to foster communal advancement/ progress through the 'aggregated effect' of successful individuals (Peel 1978:150). In this vein education projects are thus framed around ideas of self-improvement and success that link the individual's progress to that of a wider community. Borrowing the words of Peel, 'as the

individual, unmetaphorically becomes "enlightened" by opening his eyes, a society does so through opening itself to experience of the outer world' (1978:144). In short, through education, a community can potentially attain *anibue*. Skinner (2009) observed in her research on mass education in Asante in the 1950s that the popularity of mass education was consistently explained by reference to the concept of 'enlightenment' (*anibu*e-literally to open the eyes) (482).

A corollary is that the spread of education will not only build 'individual capacity to access enlightenment' but rather the very attainment of enlightenment holds generative possibilities. It is expected that the most successfully educated people would use their newfound status and elevated positions as big men to actively negotiate wealth and power to advance the material prospects of their community.[20] But this does not preclude individual ambition and display of wealth, because to become a 'big man' one must build a following and to do so requires having resources to distribute (i.e., spiritual/ material/ social) (Lentz 1998). As Lauterbach (2016) found for charismatic pastors seeking power via the acquisition of spiritual knowledge, the conviction 'To take everything that belongs to you does not necessarily imply that one does not share or redistribute, but rather that it is seen as morally acceptable to be successful and to have wealth' (75). Consequently, amongst pastors with small congregations who aspire to build much bigger ones (pastors whom she describes as 'small-big men'), the invocation of *anibue* assumes a reflexive meaning conjoining ideas of individual prosperity with redistribution, conveyed through 'prosperity gospels' (ibid). *Anibue* is a key reference within a repertoire of shared understandings of achievement and success. It could be described as a central point in a sense-making network of established but debate-able and potentially change-able ideals of self-improvement and social change.

For our purpose, modernity is understood here as an ideological and discursive category that takes recognisable and altered forms of specific, local, cultural, and historical enactments of social progress. Our definition draws on Long and Acre (2000) notion of modernity as situational: 'ideas and practices of modernity are themselves appropriated and re-embedded in locally situated practices' (2). It also acknowledges that expressions of modernity are

[20] The term big men as used in the literature is ungendered and denotes women or men of high social status and standing in their community (Lentz 2016)

multifaceted and can be interpreted differently, influenced by varying sociological conditions and historical contexts (Comaroff and Comaroff 1993; Bloom, Miescher, and Takyiwaa 2014).

Power, wealth, and mobility in Colonial Asante (1901-1930)

The impact of colonial rule on the institution of chieftaincy and Asante broadly has been well documented (McCaskie 2000; Tordoff 1968; Berry 2001; Boahen 1972; Busia 1951). Therefore, a few remarks concerning the relations of power, wealth and mobility in colonial Asante would suffice. British rule dismantled the council of state (*Kɔtɔkɔ council*) weakening Asante political power and placing the hierarchy of chiefly authority in disarray (Tordoff 1968:154; Berry 2001: 3). A reshuffle of lands, subjects, and territories ensued in line with British objectives (Berry 2001). In Kumasi, the former administrative capital of the kingdom, most of the chiefs saw their authority reduced as they were stripped of their lands and subjects outside of the capital, and confined to local matters, subject to colonial supervision (Tordoff 1968: 157; Akyeampong et al 2003:48). The British introduced indirect rule, establishing the Kumasi Council of Chiefs in 1905 to integrate loyal chiefs into colonial administration, with little regard for the established order of Asante political hierarchy (Tordoff 1965: 149-55; also see Berry 2001:10). Colonial rule was partly reinforced and legitimated through reproductions of particular versions of African traditions and the (re)making of customary laws as the foundational pretext of social order, knowledge, and belief, albeit opened to interpretation (Mamdani 1996; Tordoff 1965:152). Hence, the (re)creation and application of customary laws by chiefs and administrators during indirect rule sparked debates and contestations over historical precedents and over the very definition of tradition (Berry 2001: 7-20).[21]

Aside from the political changes, the region also experienced significant economic transformation due to the rubber boom (1880s/90s) and the expansion of cocoa (1917-1945) (Tordoff 1965:187). Scholars underscore the emergence of cocoa *asikafoɔ* (wealthy men), many of whom were chiefs or aspired to traditional offices between the 1930s and 1940s. They are known to have conspicuously displayed wealth in ways reminiscent of the

[21] Customary law in Asante experience was less of a colonial invention (Lentz and Nugent 2000; Berry 2001; Spear 2003) as compared to elsewhere in the British Colony (Mamdani 1996)

precolonial *ɔbirɛmpɔn* (big man), with their patterns of consumption and way of life signalling the growth of urbanization and economic prosperity in Asante (Austin 1996; Adomako-Sarfoh 1974; Donkoh 2004; Berry 2016: 37-8). According to (McCaskie 1986:15) money became the key to individual success, altering economic relations, kinship networks, and social obligations. The production of cocoa and access to wage employment, like the rubber trade before, spurred a growing demand for education in Asante, albeit the availability of schooling still lagged behind the coastal towns (particularly Cape Coast) (Foster 1964:126).

The story of cocoa as it is often told was introduced to Asante in the 1900s and expanded across the region through farmers leaving their hometowns and villages in search of arable forest land in different chiefly jurisdictions. Generally, migrant farmers were not formally/ legally deemed subjects but rather 'strangers' (Adomako-Sarfoh 1974; Berry 2001). This is because access to land was provided on the 'customary principle' of usufruct, which vested land ownership in stools and discouraged the alienation of land. Migrant farmers could therefore obtain land from chiefs in return for a share of the annual proceeds from tree crops grown on the land, regardless of how profitable the crops themselves were. For the first time in Asante's economic history, this arrangement resulted in the imposition of a rent on property.[22] The cocoa plant generally took up to 20 years to yield, so for chiefs the rent acted as security for potential losses (Austin 1987). Some writers show that the colonial arrangement of land ownership as an immemorial custom was, in fact, a departure from precolonial practices, wherein authority over land and people changed hands frequently (McCaskie 1995; Berry 2001). This arrangement led to confusion over land control and its use, as it did not guarantee clear rights over subjects or define terms of usufruct and citizenship, particularly for stranger farmers. But often spiralled into disputes among chiefs and between chiefs and their subjects *cum* strangers (Berry 2001: 6-20).

What's more, Adomako-Sarfoh (1974) observes that with the ban on domestic slavery and pawnship following the proclamation of 1908, farmers increasingly relied on the labour of their wives and children for cocoa cultivation instead of their matrilineage.[23] The shift in the

[22] Before 1910 this was roughly amounting to a third of the proceeds. The colonial government eventually cut the rate to a tenth of the proceeds and in I9I3 to one penny per bearing tree (Austin 1987: 262)
[23] Also see Allman (1994)

economic and social relations of production resulted in conflicts between wives, children, and the husband's family over inheritance upon his death (Allman and Tashjian, 2000). In the Akan custom of matrilineal inheritance, the deceased brother or his sisters' sons (*wɔfase*) stood in as trustees of the deceased estate based on the expectation that his successor would maintain the upkeep and well-being of the widowed wife and children (Adomako-Sarfoh 1974: 137). To safeguard the welfare of the immediate family, farmers during their lifetime sometimes transferred part of their land or property to their conjugal base (141). The changing socio-economic dynamics between kinship and property in Asante gave rise to concerns about fathers' obligations to their children, especially as formal schooling took off (Allman and Tashjian, 2000). Who should pay for children's education was intricately bound up with what was accepted to be 'customary' where kinship is concerned (see Chapter 4).

The role that customs played in fostering tensions and disruption over the changing dynamics of power and wealth deserves some attention. Examining organized opposition against established authority in Ghana, Owusu (1989) explains that just as customs exacerbate conflict between groups it also restrains conflict from destroying the social order. He draws parallels between the removal of chiefs by the reorganized *Asafo* in the colonial period and military takeovers in the post-independence period, considering them as 'rituals of rebellion'.[24] These acts of insurrection, he argues, aimed to reaffirm collective interests, and redefine the critical moral order on which group life depends (71).

From the foregoing, the underlying issue of customary authority and the forms of resistance that it engenders raises further questions about the legitimacy of chiefs' power in the 20th century. Hitherto, scholars have framed their understanding of chiefly exercises of power in Asante around the material (wealth, physical force, etc.) and ideological (cognitive and spiritual) bases of society. McCaskie (1986; 1998) analyses state power in the precolonial period, highlighting the formation of hegemonic consent through cognitive structures (*aman*

[24] Asafo refers to the reorganised social institution of the 'young men' or nkwankwaa in Akan tradition (Owusu 1989: 71)
Rituals of Rebellion as used by Owusu (1989) relates to 'politico -symbolic' relations of trust sanctioned by the values of customary high standards of behaviour surrounding the legitimacy and exercise of power shared by both the rulers and ruled (71-84)

mu) and jural precepts (*aman bre*) that shaped belief and knowledge in Asante.[25] Akyeampong and Obeng (1995) find McCaskie's postulation to be 'state-oriented, muting the complex negotiations that surrounded power relations in Asante society' (483). All the same, they expand on this to emphasize the spiritual dimensions of power (*tumi:* 'the ability to bring about change') - in the precolonial and colonial eras – as accessible to all and originating from the cosmos. Berry (2001) traces shifts in customary expressions of power in Asante, emphasizing the active (re)production of history in chiefly (re)assertions of authority within the colonial bureaucratic administration. A synthesis of these works suggests that power in Asante during both periods was not fixed or solely based on customary prerogatives but interactive, relational, and subject to contestations based on the rights, obligations, and expectations of rulers and the ruled. However, the implicit or causal reference to customs as explanatory categories can be misleading and tends to confound understandings of power and its complex justificatory systems. Turning the focus on elite formation in the colonial period within the educational context offers rich insight into the relational dynamics of power and legitimacy in Asante, that reconciles analytical limitations imposed by references to custom.

Joining Power

Lauterbach (2016) provides a good starting point. She examines the recent phenomenon of pastorship in Ghana as an avenue to social mobility that allows ambitious young men in Asante to 'join power' and attain the status of 'small-big man' by making references to and drawing on ideas associated with the *ɔbirɛmpɔn* (4-10). The production of commercial crops such as cocoa and previously rubber opened new avenues of social mobility and wealth accumulation. As a corollary, some of the newly affluent individuals sought to solidify their influence by vying for positions of chiefship. In the following sections, I argue that for the established ruling class in Asante, the issue was maintaining power rather than joining power. Maintaining power requires the ability of powerholders to appropriate and to adapt the shifting registers of success by articulating a compelling vision around social change. Asante

[25] McCaskie's (1998) distinction of *aman mu* and *aman bre* is more encompassing than how it has been used here, but more or less categorize fundamental differences in the mechanism of state authority: *Aman mu* is immemorial custom that ordered a community and *Aman bre* refers to jural custom that might be changed or adjusted by act of legislation.

kings through their engagement in education mobilised recognisable norms and values of power and status to maintain legitimacy and enlarge their influence. And to legitimize their relevance and influence in Asante society they had to be seen to respond to present realities. To that end, chiefs reimagined their role as agents of *anibue,* aiming to channel social progress and prosperity to their subjects in specific ways. And with the view to catch up with the rest of the country and maintain Asante's prominence amid the changing political and economic environment. It is important to clarify here that maintaining power for chiefs in the colonial context does not merely involve preserving the *status quo* or a return to an older order. Instead, it signifies their active manipulation of colonial governance structures to ensure their continued influence and relevance. In simple terms maintaining power can be seen as a strategic effort to stabilize and reinforce their authority within the changing colonial framework.

By the turn of the 20th century and beginning with Prempeh I, Asante monarchs had embraced formal education as a moral obligation that indexed Akan notions of social progress or civilisation - *anibue.* Thus, *anibue* acted as a self-technology of power, that is, something that one becomes and does through their engagement with issues of communal development 'to open the eyes of others' (Peel 1978: 150; see quote: Skinner 2009: 480-2). Today, it is quite common to hear chiefs describing their role as development leaders (*me de anibue aba kuro no mu*) in the sense of bringing *anibue* to their communities (see chapter six).[26]

Prempe and Education in Asante

The tragic reign of Asantehene Agyeman Prempe I (1888-1931) has gained a lot of traction amongst historians as his time in office coincided with the civil war in the 1880s and the British colonization of Asante in 1896 (Fuller, 1921; Tordoff, 1965; Lewin, 1978; Boahen, 1987; Adjaye 1989, 1990). He was forcibly removed from office by the British and exiled along with his family and senior officials of the Asante government; first in the Gold Coast (1896), then Sierra Leone (1897) and finally in Seychelles (1900-1924) and only allowed to return in 1924 (Adjaye 1960). His life after his return to Asante has received insufficient attention, except for

[26] The expression loosely translates as 'I have brought [enlightenment] or [progress] to the town'.

a few outstanding representations of Prempe's life during and after exile (Adjaye 1990; Akyeampong et al 2003; Akyeampong 1999; Owusu 2009). Consequently, the lack of available studies on Prempe's administrative functions makes it difficult to assess his impact on promoting education in Asante. Furthermore, demand for education in Asante unlike communities in the coastal region (i.e., Cape Coast) seemed to have only taken off during the 1930s following the expansion of cocoa in the region (Foster 1964:126). According to Foster (1964) there was 'no real evidence of mass education in Ashanti until the thirties, when cocoa became firmly established' (126). That said, from the available sources on Prempe's life after exile we can speculate on his vision for Asante and the central role that Western education played in shaping notions of modernity embraced and promoted by the traditional elites. One such representation of Prempe's life that offers fruitful insight into his changing attitude towards Western education is the historical amanuenses of his life in exile, the first of its kind by an African ruler titled '*The History of Ashanti Kings and the Whole Country Itself' and Other Writings* (2003).[27]

After 24 years in Seychelles, Prempe was allowed to return to the Gold Coast. He arrived at Sekondi on 11 November 1924, to make his way to Kumasi on the following day where he was greeted by a jubilant crowd (ibid: 41). Prempe spent his early days as a private citizen, as agreed in the terms of his repatriation, but was later restored to office as 'Kumasihene' in 1926 (Tordoff 1965: 212). This was a much-diminished office compared to the one he previously occupied (ibid). He held this office for just five years until his death in 1931.

Akyeampong (1999) claims that Agyeman Prempe's major means of coming to terms with modernisation was education (290). As such 'Education and entrepreneurship were central to Prempe's vision of the new Asante' (299). Prempe's attitude towards education marks a distinct change from his predecessors. The development of education in Asante seriously lagged behind the Gold Coast (Aboagye 2021). As mentioned previously, the missionaries by the 1830s had established schools in the coastal region, however in Asante, missionary

[27] See 'The History of Ashanti Kings and the Whole Country Itself' and Otumfuo, Nana Agyeman Prempeh I.(ed). Boahen, Akyeampong, Lawler, McCaskie and Wilks. Oxford: British Academy 2003.
Although difficult to know for certain the level of his involvement, he is on record to have advocated for the establishment of night schools in Kumasi at board meetings with colonial officials (Manhyia: Minutes of Kumasi Public Health Board, 10 November 1925) (also see Adjaye 1990)

presence was treated with some ambivalence (Foster 1965: 52). In fact, early educational experiments in the castles on the coast go as far back as the 16th century (Odamtten 1978; Ward 1948; Graham 1971; Foster 1965). Asante suspicion and reluctance to embrace education were deeply baked into the state's policy. During the reign of the Asantehene Kwaku Dua I (1834-1867), Asante's refusal to select children for education was explained to the Wesleyans by the king in the following terms: Asante children 'had better work to do than to sit down all day long idly to learn "hoy, hoy, hoy"' (Graham 1971: 101; Foster 1965: 52). McCaskie (1972) describes state policy towards European ideas, literacy, and technology before 1874 as 'innovational eclecticism'. That is, the adoption of new ideas, practices and technology was based on two fundamental criteria: 'obvious utility,' and the notion that anything introduced should not rock the status quo of Asante society (McCaskie, 1972: 44-5).

With the understanding that education symbolised the new lever of power and status in the Gold Coast, upon his return 'he was disappointed to find that the *adehyeɛ* (members of royal families) were not taking up the opportunity of education as fully as they should' (Akyeampong 1999: 299). Prempe's disappointment was likely fuelled by the realization that commoners and potentially rebellious or disloyal subjects were taking advantage of the new opportunities presented by education and economic transformation. This may have also intensified the fear of Asante elites losing their influence and position in society to upstarts (Adjaye 1989). Akyeampong (1999) further explains that 'Prempe, a product of an age when birth defined access to power and wealth, viewed Asante *adehyeɛ* (members of royal families) as his instruments of modernity' (ibid). In this sense, Prempe was following his predecessors in his desire to have the hereditary class and those recognized by the Asante administration as the springboard to command and promote *anibue* - through Western education - to the general society, without upsetting the social hierarchical order of Asante society. This would have also ensured that the established elites were able to take advantage of the emerging opportunities, albeit limited, in the formal and prestigious sectors of the colonial economy (Foster 1965: 66), and thereby augment their prospective wealth and status to guarantee their place in a rapidly changing Asante.

For his efforts to reconcile traditional norms and values with emerging patterns of social change, Akyeampong styles Prempe as the last 'traditional king' and its 'first modern' one

(Akyeampong et al 2003: 55). Summing up the achievements of Prempe he concludes: 'He fumbled, he made mistakes, but he ushered in modernity with an Asante imprint' (Akyeampong 1999: 308). On his sickbed in 1931, Prempe would have been deeply disheartened to see his vision of traditional elites leading the way to bring *anibue* to Asante not come to fruition. But perhaps the sight of his Wesleyan-educated nephew Barima Kwame Kyeretwie - the next king - at his bedside would have brought some consolation.

Before turning to Prempe II's role in education, it is important that we understand the governance and policy landscape in which the king's initiative took form. The discussion below sketches the impact of early government intervention in the field of education and the role it envisaged for native authority participation.

Colonial Education Policy

The literature shows that British education policies in the Gold Coast (1850-1900) in the initial phase lacked a coherent framework and failed to align with the expectations and occupational needs of the population (Foster 1965; Graham 1971). Demand for education was primarily driven by local factors and missionary efforts, leading to regional disparities and gender inequalities (Aboagye 2021: 372).[28] Furthermore, regional disparities in the demand for schools closely mirrored the trends in economic development (Foster 1965: 86). By the late 1920s the government provided financial support - also termed as grants-in-aid - to two major categories: government schools and assisted schools established by missions, private individuals, or native authorities (Foster 1965: 82). Government schools and assisted schools received financial support, while non-assisted schools operated independently and received no support from government (Foster 1965: 81). This allowed for some coordination between education providers through government grants. Grants were awarded based on 'general efficiency,' evaluated against the proficiency of pupils and teachers' salaries.[29] The grant-in-aid system was monitored by a central Board of Education, supported by a series of local boards. Together, they reported to the Education Department (Foster 1965: 81).

[28] For analysis of educational ordinances (1852, 1882, 1887, 1890, 1902, 1907, 1908) see (Graham 1971:115 and Foster 1965) and subsequently *The Memorandum of Education Policy of Tropical Africa 1925* (Yamada 2008; Whitehead 1996)

[29] Annual Report of the Colonies, Gold Coast, 1938-1939

The late 1930s marked a discernible change in Asante's attitude towards education, which was evident in the representation of educated Asante elites in the decision-making structures of the newly reconstituted ACC (Triulzi 1972). In some cases, chiefs were determined to put up the entire cost for the building of schools, even where government and mission support seemed uncertain.[30] Despite this, issues of cost, lack of adequate facilities and poor quality of teachers pervaded early educational experiments in Asante.[31] From official figures there were only nineteen government primary schools, fifteen in the colony and four in Asante during this period. At the secondary level, apart from Achimota (Accra), there were only three assisted secondary schools, namely Mfantsipim (Methodist Mission, Cape Coast), Adisadel College (English Church Mission, Cape Coast) and St Augustine (Roman Catholic Mission, Cape Coast), and two unaided secondary schools.[32] None of the secondary schools were in Asante.

Between the 1930s and 1940s the school system experienced rapid growth, mainly outside the grant-aided system, 'but the greatest need' in many areas was for secondary schools (Nketia 1953: 6). Non-assisted secondary schools in the southern part of the country grew from two to twelve, with an enrolment figure of 1,436, outnumbering those in assisted schools: government and missions together 1,199.[33] Nketia claims that for the government the growth of uncontrolled non-assisted schools raised the issue of the quality of education and skilled teachers to meet the growing demand (1953:6). The Education Committee also outlined in their report that the lack of a consistent government policy towards the financing of schools meant that the cost of education was relatively high since missions and private bodies retained the right to set their own fees 'which differed from one another to a considerable extent' (19).[34]

[30] MAG 1/15/2 See petition letter from Anantahene Chief Kwasi Awuah to the Chairman of the Methodist Church, 18th January 1944

[31] MAG 1/15/2 see Asante Collegiate School Report (1936-1937) on challenges facing the development of the school: The Asante Collegiate School currently known as Osei Kyeretwire Senior High School (1937) and Osei Tutu Senior High School (1940) were established through a collaboration between the Asantehene and the Wesleyan missions to provide education for the sons of chiefs and royal members of Asante (Rev M.B. Taylor correspondence to the Asantehene Prempeh II dated 12 March 1943)

[32] Annual Report of the Colonies, Gold Coast, 1938-1939

[33] Report of the Education Committee 1937-1941

[34] Ibid

In the 1940s, the Colonial Development and Welfare (CD&W) policy introduced a coherent education framework in the Gold Coast. Grants were provided to develop a 'large cadre of highly trained Africans,' with a focus on improving facilities and teachers, including promoting girls' education.[35] The government was to 'cover part of the cost of training teachers with the expectation that Native Authorities would meet the difference in the form of scholarships to their students.' [36] For teacher training, a per capita grant was directly paid to assisted schools, students were 'required to enter into a bond with the government' and upon completing their training 'satisfactorily,' they were expected to teach for five years in a government-assisted school or approved school.[37] It has been implied that the CD&W did not result 'in any immediate or spectacular expansion of schooling', however, it signalled a landmark moment in education in the sense of the formal role it gave to chiefs in administering and shaping the agenda of education policy on the ground (Whitehead 1989: 272).

The central role of local actors in the development of colonial educational policy in Africa has been mainly explored in connection to the content and type of education provided rather than the very direction of funding priorities and the demographic that stood to benefit from education and why (Foster 1965, Whitehead 1981; 1989; Khamsi 2000; Yamada 2008). Aboagye (2021) argues that 'conventional' views on the expansion of educational opportunities in colonial Africa have lessened the role of 'colonized people' and 'ascribed a dominant role to European policymakers and missionary societies' (387). We shall now return to Prempe II's role in education, beginning our story from the restoration of the ACC, its scholarship scheme, structure, and membership.

The Restoration of the Asante Confederacy Council (ACC)

In January 1935 the British government agreed to the restoration of the Asante Confederacy with Prempe II installed as the first Asantehene under British rule (Tordoff 1968; Triulzi 1972). Existing studies have outlined in some detail the circumstances of the restoration, its formal

[35] RG 3/5/384/19 file on Colonial Development and Welfare Act- Grant of Assistance (1946-7)
[36] RG 3/1/333/2 Letter from Acting Principal Charles Morrisey of the Presbyterian Training College, Akropon, Akuapim, to the Director of Education on Award of Scholarships by Native administrations dated 26th September 1947
[37] RG 3/2/333/32 letter from the Director of Education to the Acting Principal of the Presbyterian Training college on Akim Abuakwa Scholarships for teacher training dated 7th February 1948

structure and functions under British indirect rule and the role and growing power of the Asantehene as exercised through the administrative mechanism of the confederacy (Busia 1951; Tordoff 1968; Triulzi 1972). The incoming Asantehene Prempe II placed a great interest in education, lobbying and providing financial and in-kind support (i.e., land, labour) to missions to establish schools. There were also considerable efforts to foster an encouraging environment to attract missions by guaranteeing their safety in the country.[38] In a letter by the Asantehene to the District Commissioner on 21st February 1939, he stressed the 'abnormally' growing cost of education which in his view 'was becoming a financial burden on parents and guardians.'[39] Foster (1965) infers that native authority administration of schools had a negligible impact on the growth of education, at less than 1% of the total number of institutions (948). The evidence, however, suggests that from the late 1930s scholarships accounted for a large proportion of the government expenditure.[40] Indeed, scholarships as we shall see by the 1940s had become a primary instrument through which the restored ACC sought to bring the levels of education in line with the rest of the Gold Coast. According to Busia (1951), Asante's growing interest in Western education was to 'compete with literate coast people and no longer remain at the mercy of alien clerks' (132). There was a strong need for literate personnel to work as native authority clerks and in other administrative roles, and when these were not available within Asante, they had to be sourced from the Gold Coast.

Ashanti Confederacy Council Scholarships (1945- 1960)

At the seventh session of the Asante Confederacy Council sitting on 13 March 1945, a standing committee was appointed to constitute the selection board for choosing candidates for scholarship.[41] To ensure that scholarship awards were consistent with national policy, District Advisory Education Committees were set up at the behest of the District Commissioner and reported to the Department for Education. Members of the Ashanti Advisory Education Committee were co-opted into the ACC selection board and vice versa. The District

[38] MAG 1/15/2 see letter to the Asantehene by the Catholic mission on the attempted murder of Fr. G. Fischer (re. Sam Sarah vs. Teacher Amoah), 20 September 1937
[39] MAG 1/15/2Asantehene's letter to the District Commissioner
[40] Gold Coast Colony, Annual Reports on the Education Department 1935-50.
[41] ARG 1/13/34/31Minutes of meeting of the selection board of the Asante Confederacy Council on 3rd January 1947

Commissioner of Kumasi, the Asantehene and some prominent members of the ACC Standing Committee such as Dr I.B. Asafu Adjaye, held joint membership.[42]

Through the Advisory Committee on Education, the Department for Education maintained oversight of scholarship programmes. Under the guidelines of the Department for Education, scholarships were classified under four main categories: i) Class I- secondary school education; ii) Class II- teacher training iii) Class III- post-secondary education; iv) Class IV- university and training abroad.[43] From available records on ACC scholarships Class II and Class IV made up most of the awards offered. Eligibility for ACC scholarships was initially limited to students of Asante birth or ancestry; however, this decision was revised in 1948 to account for children from the growing 'stranger' settlement in cocoa areas of Asante such as Bekwai. Thus, as decided by the ACC, 'dependants' of payers of levy to the 'Ashanti National Fund, who are themselves residents of Asante should be eligible for these scholarships.'[44]

Berry (2001) observes that returns from cocoa production concomitant with land disputes, in the colonial period provoked a rethinking of Asante 'citizenship' and the notion of a 'stranger' (15). Chiefs seeking to benefit from tributes from migrant farmers invoked customary law to press for a broader definition of 'stranger', which saw anyone - including fellow Asantes - farming on their lands who were not their subjects as a stranger (19). Yet tensions over citizenship continued as the colonial administration on several occasions upheld different interpretations put forward by litigants. Citizenship and strangers came to rest on neither fixed nor stable definitions (i.e., descent/geography) but instead derived through debates on 'historical precedent'. A consequence of this was that 'citizenship could be redefined at the stroke of an administrator's pen' (20).

The centrality of cocoa to chiefs' exercise of authority and the development of education in Asante is further borne by the fact that between 1954/55 more than 50% of the cocoa

[42] ARG 1/13/2/13/173 on Membership of Ashanti Advisory Committee on Education
ARG 1/13/34/18 on ACC Sub-committee composition
[43] ARG 1/13/34/181Colonial Directive on the grant of Ashanti Native Authority Scholarship dated 26 September 1946
[44] ARG1/13/42/263 Letter from Asantehene to Chief Commissioner on Bekwai's eligibility date 29th December 1948

exported from the Gold Coast was produced in Asante.[45] Assibey-Mensah is mentioned in the brilliant study *The Quills of the Porcupine* (1993) to have expressed to the author that 'the Asanteman Council used cocoa money to send our intellectuals to study in Britain' (38).[46] Scholarships for teacher training were only tenable in the following institutions: Achimota College, Mfantsipim School, St Augustine's College, Presbyterian Secondary School, Adisadel College, Wesley Girls High School, Holy Child, St Monica, Mmofraturo (Kumasi, Asante) and Academy Accra.[47] Though girls' education received some attention in ACC scholarship allocation, this followed a general pattern seen nationally. For every 10 scholarships offered to boys, 3 were reserved for girls.[48] *The Gold Coast Report of the Education Committee 1937-41* showed that there was a 'serious lack of facilities for general secondary education for girls which impacted their enrolment on advance professional training', especially in nursing, teaching, and the medical professions (13). Studies have indicated that throughout the colonial period, girls' education seriously fell behind that of boys (Graham 1971; Aboagye 2021:376; Robertson 1984:139). That consideration was made for scholarships for girls shows not only that the ACC was in accord with national policy but displayed the king's progressive outlook in extending *anibue* to all his subjects irrespective of their gender.

Yet modernisation of traditional systems through education and as directed by the Asantehene's office had to be carefully choreographed so as not to upset the hierarchical order of Asante society. Forms of modernity through education, albeit impossible to restrain, had to be tried and tested or at the very least its wide-reaching effects filtered through reliable (i.e., traditional elites) channels to limit 'commoner' defiance towards chiefs. Where scholarships for teacher training were technically opened to Asante children (and stranger residents) if they had passed their school leaving certificate (standard VII) and entrance examinations, scholarships for overseas education were limited to those with strong ties to the Palace or the Asante traditional elite.[49] The king's attempt to influence the spread and

[45] See Joseph, G. Amamoo. *The New Ghana* (London: Pan Books 195), pg. 80.
[46]Assibey- Mensah was a leading figure in the Asante Youth Association (AYA), a splinter group from the CPP formed in 1947 as an organ of commoner mobilisation in politics (Allman 1993: 32).
[47] Ashanti Confederacy Council Scholarships 1946/47 mentioned in the *Ashanti Pioneer* (29 October 1946). Mmofraturo was established in the 1930s in Kumasi and provided education primarily for girls (see Allman 1994)
[48] ARG 1/13/37/70 Circular on Asante Confederacy Council Scholarships Secondary & Teacher Training Courses dated 3rd December 1947
[49] RG 3/1/560/30 letter from Director of Education to the Ashanti Education Officer on Ashanti Confederacy Council Scholarship for Teacher Training dated 6th October 1947

access to education raised questions about who had access to education and what form of education and for what purpose. The next section looks at the native authorities' interest in awarding scholarships by examining the type or demographic of students that received support based on the social position of recipients within colonial Asante.

Young men and education in Asante

The social background of ACC scholarship recipients broadly reflects the *nkwankwaa.* Rendered in English as 'youngmen', the term does not necessarily mean young in the literal/biological sense. Instead, it refers to the social position of males in Asante society, without title or rank, who existed in an uneasy subordination to the authority of the chiefs or elders (Arhin 1983: 4; Allman 1990: 268; Austin 1996: 24). According to Rathbone (2000), the term *nkwankwaa* 'signifies something more wide-ranging than age' and usually referred to 'commoners' or 'non-royals' (23). *Nkwankwaa* is best thought of as a social or explanatory category that specifies historical relations of power and status in Asante. The history and political significance of the *nkwankwaa* in the precolonial and colonial period have been well documented (Wilks 1975; McCaskie 1995, Allman 1990;1993, Rathbone 2000). What has been sketched below is therefore a brief interpretation of a very rich and well-known history.

The *nkwankwaa* represented 'a group of young aspiring Asante that sought economic and political power not through traditional trajectories (chiefly offices), but through education and work' (Lauterbach 2016: 44). And whilst many of them were from established or well-to-do families with relatively low expectations of succeeding into chiefly office, they could be persuaded to align themselves with the ideals and values associated with chiefship as a means of reinforcing their newfound position within Asante society (Lauterbach 2016: 44-5). Considered a fluid and dynamic 'petit bourgeoisie' their attitude, allegiance and loyalty toward established authority was not always straightforward, their 'relationship with Asante's traditional authorities remained uneasy at best' (Allman 1990: 269).

Allman (1993) recounts the political history of Asante nationalism in the 1950s and shows the important role played by the *nkwankwaa* in forming the National Liberation Movement (NLM). The NLM strongly opposed the socialist ambitions of Kwame Nkrumah's Convention

People's Party (CPP), in defence of Asante individualism, as inscribed in the *ɔbirɛmpɔn* tradition. The *nkwankwaa* in the NLM due to their education and social status held an impressive sway over the anger and passions of the commoners and were therefore able to galvanise violent protests and popular hostilities against the CPP, albeit, failing to successfully capitalise on their political influence. After two tense years of political violence on both sides, constitutional crisis and diplomatic stand-off, the CPP finally defeated the NLM in the 1956 general elections to establish a government for Ghana's independence.[50] The election victory was partly aided by the Asantehene's decision to cooperate with the CPP government by abandoning the NLM's initial bid to secede from the Gold Coast, at the chagrin of the party's youngmen or *nkwankwaa* (173-84).[51]

McCaskie explains that the NLM used the Asantehene and the idea of the Asante nation to further the interest 'of the new model of *ɔbirɛmpɔn* and the business class against the presumed "socialism" of Nkrumah' (1986:17-18). However, their very reliance on chiefs as an ideological necessity to legitimate their cause in the end seems to have compromised their chances of success by pitting them against the ruling class on 'the very definition of Asante self-determination' (Allman 1990: 209). Hence, it is implied that the Asantehene and chiefs by working their interest of chiefly representation and to a lesser degree their economic concerns within the new constitutional arrangement of 1956 transformed a popular national struggle for self-determination into a battle to retain their own 'hegemony' (ibid: 190). In this respect, Allman correctly observes that the *nkwankwaa* could not pursue Asante nationalism without chiefs and were finally robbed of control of the NLM. Indeed, the Asantehene represented the paramount symbol of Asante political authority and unity, without whose support Asante's self-determination and ability to effect political change in the country remained futile (184).

[50] The CPP won a majority of 71 seats out of 104, with the NLM taking just 12 seats. The crossing of the carpet happened on both sides. For instance, J.E. Juantah, a former ACC scholar, became a staunch supporter of the CPP. In contrast, Victor Owusu, also an ACC scholar and former C.P.P member joined the NLM (see Allman 1993:152; Miliar 2014: 313)

[51] See Allman 1993 for a detailed discussion on the rift that formed between the Asante ruling elites and *youngmen*, resulting in the Asantehene's final disavowal of the movement in 1961. Along with the abolishment of Baffour Akoto's family stool, whom the young men looked to for leadership (189).

Discussions between Rathbone and Allman in the *Journal of African History* (1991) further underscore the *nkwankwaa's* lack of success in effecting a dramatic change in Asante politics, which is attributed to their weakness as a political class with disparate interests.[52] The debate, as interesting as it is mainly considers the *nkwankwaa* as a political force in the 1950s. Whilst this is true, we suggest that the *nkwankwaa*, when viewed as an ideological force seemed to have had a lasting impact on the cultural and social life of Asante society. This dynamic is borne out in the education and careers of Asante youngmen. Lauterbach (2016) shows that the *nkwankwaa* were united by one thing, their aspiration to 'join power' by mobilizing ideas and norms formerly associated with chiefship - *ɔbirɛmpɔn* - especially the idea that 'status and wealth defined moral citizenship (ɔkaniba)' (4-10). In other words, the appointment to chiefly offices offered enterprising and successful individuals avenues to join power.

McCaskie (2015) reminds us that the *ɔbirɛmpɔn* was conceived first as the yardstick and measure of accumulation and production (ibid: 75) and then as 'the primary referent that defined the conceptualisation of the "good" or "admirable" citizen (*ɔkaniba).*' (174). And since the traditional elites of Asante no longer controlled the levers of wealth in the colonial state, the most successful *nkwankwaa* used their education and access to private accumulation to (re)articulate an adapted model of *ɔbirɛmpɔn* - one that 'combined features of nineteenth century and twentieth century big men' (ibid: 45). In this way the politically 'weak' but educated *nkwankwaa* sought to escape 'positions of subordination' by using their status acquired through education to formulate new ideas of moral citizenship that drew on both the established (chiefship) and new order (education) (ibid).

As a corollary, their aspiration to join power by carving out avenues of social mobility outside of the control of the Asante traditional elites, in addition to their ability to galvanize popular dissent, would have presented the Asante king with a difficult decision. That is either to extinguish the growing influence of the *nkwankwaa* or to recognise them, as a measure of containment. The former seemed highly unlikely and was attempted in 1936 with the abolishment of the *nkwankwaahene* (loosely translates as chief of the youngmen) that

[52] See Rathbone, Richard. "'The Youngmen and the Porcupine.'" *Journal of African History*, vol. 32 no. 2, 1991, pp. 333–38.

followed a failed plot by the youngmen and prominent Asante chiefs to overthrow the king (Allman 1990: 270). But this yielded moderate success (ibid). This notwithstanding, the fact that the *nkwankwaa* were able to enlist the support of prominent chiefs shows the divisive nature of elite politics in Asante (Rathbone 2000:78).[53] What follows is that the Asantehene co-opted the *nkwankwaa* through the promotion of education as a process of *anibue* (social progress) to be acquired through the 'aggregated effect' of successful individuals (Peel 1978: 150). By harnessing the growing power of education within Asante society through the ACC, the Asantehene strived to align the effects of education with the hegemonic interest of Asante kingship. It could also be surmised that by incorporating the *nkwankwaa* the Asantehene Prempe II, like his great ancestor Opoku Ware I (1718-1722), had hoped to dissolve any attempt by the *nkwankwaa* to become a unified force against traditional rule. Nevertheless, the monarch's attempt to influence the spread of and access to particular forms of education in Asante for his own hegemonic purposes had paradoxical effects. This is evident from students' exploitation of scholarship bonds to further their own professional advancement and enhance their social mobility.

Teacher training

The first allocation of ACC awards for teacher training scholarships was valued at £50/per annum for four years. With the announcement that the Education Department would provide part of the fund (£20) in the following year, the ACC reduced its support per head to £20/ per annum. It was felt that the total amount of £40 was generous enough to 'cover fees, cost of essential textbooks, stationery, train or lorry fares to and from College for vacations [...] and pocket money.'[54] And more importantly the reduction would 'make it possible to award more scholarships.'[55] The ACC stipulated that the scholarship committee 'will not approve the award of scholarships' for teacher training if [..] 'Candidate parents or guardians can afford to bear the expense'.[56] Furthermore, students for teacher training were either put forward for ACC scholarships by the headteachers of their respective schools or through open

[53] (Rathbone 2000) shows that the fault lines between the C.P.P and NLM did not only cut across *nkwankwaa* and chiefs respectively, but just as some *nkwankwaa* cross both sides so did chiefs. For, example, Bechem and Attebubu pledged support to the CPP and threatened to secede from Ashanti (69-77)
[54]MAG 21/15/2 A.A. Y Kyeremanten letter to Principal of Wesley College, 11 December 1945
[55] Ibid, 3 January 1946
[56] ARG 1/13/37/185 Colonial directive on Ashanti Native Authority Scholarships dated 26th September 1947

applications advertised in the Gazette. Gaps in ACC records make it difficult to state exactly the number of students supported and their distribution across the specified classification. Yet issues arising from scholarship awards were deemed critical to the expansion of education by the colonial government, and mainly concerned teacher training and overseas education. This suggests a growing demand for these types of education in Asante. At the very onset of scholarship allocation, the system of bondship threw up issues around the lack of clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the ACC spearheaded by the Asantehene and the Ashanti Advisory Education Committee chaired by the District Commissioner. In her book *The Fruits of Freedom,* Skinner (2015) discusses in rich detail the tensions between missionaries and African students surrounding educational bonds in British Togoland. A few cases concerning Asante have been sketched below.

Scholarship bonds

In October 1946, Mr F.E. Boaten resigned from his post as a second division teacher (pupil teacher) at Juaso Government School to take up an ACC scholarship to further his education at Achimota College.[57] This caused some consternation to the colonial administration. Mr Boaten's decision was deemed to be at variance with standard procedure. According to the Director of Education in a letter to the Chief Commissioner of Asante, Mr Boaten failed to obtain permission before resigning 'as required by Government order 158' and 'moreover was under bond to the government for five years, of which he has served only two years and nine months.'[58] Part of the problem was that the teaching staff for government schools was under establishment, and therefore practices of this kind had the potential to undermine the government's efforts. The seriousness of the issue was such that it warranted the disapproval of the Colonial Secretary in Accra: 'we must surely take a serious view of discourtesy of this nature by a political body such as the [ACC]'. And went on to suggest 'enforcing the terms of his [Boaten] bond under which he is liable to a penalty of £40.'[59] In a rather measured and contrite response to the Chief Commissioner, the Asantehene explained that the 'unfortunate

[57] ARG 1/13/37/16 Letter from Mr. F.E. Boaten to the Provincial Education Officer, dated 7th October 1946
[58]ARG 1/13/37/15 Letter from Director of Education, Gold Coast to the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti, Kumasi dated 6 November 1946
[59] ARG 1/13/37/19 Letter from the Secretariat to the Chief Commissioner of Ashanti. Kumasi dated 18 November 1946

circumstance was one of an oversight from his clerk', as Mr Boaten had failed to 'supply information about the status of his employment with the Department of Education.'[60] The ACC would even go as far as to consider cancelling the offer. However, a sympathetic Chief Commissioner would advise against this action and explain to the Colonial Secretary that he has asked for a full report from the Asantehene, whilst commiserating 'with the difficulties with which the Asantehene has to contend as regards his staff.'[61] Mr Boaten's decision to take up the ACC scholarship to pursue a higher teacher training qualification should be understood within the context of his social mobility. Ladouceur (1979) looking at the northern context suggests that teacher training and service in the native administration became common career paths. Consequently, Boaten's profession as a pupil teacher in the government school, would not only have limited his salary expectation but also the ability to take up clerical employment opportunities within the colonial administration. The matter may have been resolved but only for a brief period.

Not long after, the ACC's attempt to bond two students at the Presbyterian Training College, Akropong (C.K Badu and G.A Takyi) raised concern about the lack of clarity around the policy. As the Principal of the School put it in a letter to the Director of Education, the ACC 's 'method of trying to get our bonded students to sign a second bond is [...] of very doubtful legality.' [62] G.A Takyi was thus advised to refuse to sign a second bond since the ACC had failed to approach the college first. But unlike Takyi who was approached by the ACC, Badu a 'second year student' had previously written a petition to the ACC for support due to the sudden death of his mother who 'paid half of his fees.'[63] Petition letters for assistance from Asante students seeking support abound in the ACC records. In the face of strong opposition from the Presbyterian Training College, the ACC 'withdrew' the scholarship, and the matter was declared as having come to a 'satisfactorily close.' The mission stepped in to aid Badu but with some dissatisfaction about the bond policy. The principal would suggest to the office of the

[60] ARG 1/13/3722 Letter from the Asante Confederacy Council to the Chief commissioner of Ashanti dated 4th December 1946

[61] ARG 1/13/37/20 Letter from Chief Commissioner, Ashanti to the Acting Colonial Secretary, Accra dated 26 November 1946

[62] ARG 1/13/37/40 correspondence between Acting principal of the Presbyterian Training College, Akropong and Chief Commissioner, Ashanti, 23rd September 1947

[63] ARG 1/13/37/58 Correspondence between the Asante Confederacy Council and Presbyterian Training College, Akropong, 8th July 1947

Education Department that a better approach in future would be for Asante to give 'bursaries-in-aid' to many Asante scholars rather than supporting 'a few favored ones wholly'. In his view, 'Mission schools can serve Asante as truly State schools.'[64]

Placing the government as the central authority with whom the student enters an agreement, was to ensure that 'a place in a heavily grant-aided institution is not wasted by idleness or other misconduct' and to protect students from 'oppression' in their teaching career by their Educational units without redress.[65] In principle this was a sound approach but in practice, it showed a regrettable oversight in the very design of the bond policy, which throughout its operation was mired in confusion and stirred tensions between the educational units, government, native authorities, students and missions. Yet the lack of clarity was fortuitous to some. It meant that the ACC could poach brilliant Asante students from other educational units into the service of the native administration and potentially earn their loyalty to the Golden Stool. Whereas some students were able to choose a suitable patron to advance their social mobility. Ultimately, it seemed that the policy in seeking to protect students, whilst making good on government investment, failed to seriously account for native authorities' interest in supporting students and the difficult financial circumstances that prompted students' decision to take up a native authority bond.

Furthermore, hardly any sanction was brought to bear on the practice of poaching except for the encouragement that native authorities and missions 'must not impugn upon the rights' of each other but adopt a more 'friendly' approach. In general, colonial policy at times deviated slightly from its initial design and yielded to political realities on the ground. All things considered; the widespread practice of poaching could not only be put down to the failure of the policy but also the motivation behind the development of education among the different actors played a part. This becomes much clearer when we look at those 'favored ones' sent overseas for higher education.

[64] ARG 1/13/37/49 letter from the Acting Principal of the Presbyterian College to the Ashanti Confederacy council, 26th September 1947

[65] RG 3/1/333/32 Letter from Acting Principal Charles Morrisey of the Presbyterian Training College, Akropong, Akuapim, to the Director of Education on Award of Scholarships by Native administrations dated 26th September 1947

The favoured ones and overseas education

The emergence of World War II may have delayed the implementation of the CD&W Act, but it also intensified debates and hastened efforts towards self-government in the colonies (Whitehead 1989; Pearce 1984). As schemes for teacher training got underway, the desire to develop a corps of senior civil servants for the administration of the country was also being hatched.[66] In 1947 the incoming Secretary of State for the colonies Arthur Creech Jones and his undersecretary announced plans to prepare the colonies for self-government. The circular despatch to administrators in the colony envisaged a gradual shift from indirect rule to the development of representative government.[67] This was to integrate elected local councillors, alongside chiefs and elders as a progressive step towards modernizing local government. It appears that the Colonial Office was not the only player that considered the development of a qualified administration to be central to self-government. In the autumn of 1945, the District Commissioner acknowledged in a letter to the ACC that 'we are giving a good deal of consideration to your suggestion for training for local Government work.'[68] The letter goes on to say that students are more likely to benefit from such training if they are placed 'under the supervision of some tutor who organizes the course and points out the important points.'

Immediately after WWII, the colonial administration agreed to the ACC proposal to send Asante students to the United Kingdom for training in public administration by enlisting the support of the famous anthropologist Meyer Fortes.[69] ACC Scholars were placed under the supervision of the Director of Colonial Scholars. The Department was also tasked with managing and allocating financial support provided by ACC to its scholars. As explained in a speech given by the Asantehene in 1940, the investment in education for Asante was to ensure that 'when the time comes for them to take their rightful place in the Church and

[66] RG 3/5/384 see Colonial Development and Welfare Act 1946-1947, Circular by George London acting Governor of the Gold Coast to colonial officials on 19th May 1944

[67] See Skinner 2015

Pearce (1984) warns that the Colonial Office's emphasis on development and self-government in post-1947 Africa was not a deliberate decolonization policy, but rather a strategy of co-optation to align African elite interests with the former ruling power. It is well documented that self-government in the Gold Coast was compelled by the Accra riots in 1948, which brought Nkrumah to prominence in national politics.

[68] ARG 1/13/40/38 see the Chief Commissioner letter to the Asante Confederacy Council Standing Committee on 1st October 1945

[69] ARG 1/13/40/10 Meyer Fortes letter to the Chief Commissioner, dated 13th May 1946

State, they might not be found wanting.'[70] Scholarships for Class IV- university and training abroad scholarships were valued at £400 per annum.[71] The ACC was responsible for its scholars 'upkeep and maintenance,' during their stay in the United Kingdom and even committed to grant allowance to 'dependants' of scholars in hardship, 'who need not necessarily be wives and children of scholars.'[72]

Furthermore, the growing support for self-government, as deduced from the Asantehene's statement earlier, deepened concerns around Asante's share of the supply of personnel to succeed the colonial administration. Indeed, the fear of Asante falling behind the Gold Coast was pressed by the Essumajahene in a petition to the Director of Education that 'Asante was getting a small portion of scholarships and jobs in the civil service.'[73]

Unlike scholarships for teacher training which were closely aligned with the expansion of education in Asante, ACC scholarships for higher education seemed to have been based on investments in individuals rather than the wholesale development of education as a form of promoting *anibue* (social progress). For one, the number of students supported was comparatively lower, even though the cost per capita was relatively high. It is fair to assume that the ACC's rationale for supporting students was based on political calculation. And, as indicated in the Asantehene's statement above, the desire for Asante to catch up with the rest of the Gold Coast by producing its own class of educated elites sympathetic to the Asantehene's interest. This is further borne out in the selection of a particular demographic of Asante men for the Class IV overseas scholarships.

A.A.Y. Kyeremanten

Alexander Atta Yaw Kyeremanten is now well known for his scholarly work on Asante culture and regalia. Notably, as the first Director of the Centre for National Culture, Kumasi, he was

[70] MAG 1/15/2 see Prempeh II Address of Welcome by the Asantehene to His Grace Archbishop A. Riberio Apostolic Delegates, their Lordships and Rev. Fathers on the dedication of St. Peter's Cathedral, Kumasi, 20 January 1940.
[71] ARG 1/13/40/39 letter from ACC secretary J.K. Mensah to the Cashier on18 March 1947
[72] ARG 1/13/40/23 see Asantehene's letter to the Superintendent of Police, Ashanti, 28 September 1946
ARG 1/13/40/38 see Asantehene's letter to the Chief Commissioner on Separation Allowance, 20 March 1947
[73] RG 3/1/557/201 Director of Education handwritten directive to the Education Department on the membership of Essumengyahene to the Scholarship Selection Board, 9th September 1949

appointed the Mayor of Kumasi and a Commissioner of Local Government between 1966 and 1969.[74] His educational life and experience illustrate the strong tie between ACC scholars for higher education and the golden stool. He was born on 29 April 1916 to one Emmanuel Kwesi Kyeremanten and Maame Akosua Asogya. His paternal family hailed from the Kumasi Patase family who occupied the Abenase office within the *Gyaase* (functionaries of the royal household). The Kumasi Patase family were originally members of the Takyiman royal family that migrated to Asante after the Takyiman-Asante War of 1720. The Abenase office is responsible for the wardrobe of the Asantehene. His maternal uncle was the *kyidomhene* Kwame Boaten who was exiled along with King Prempe in Seychelles. With both offices being of agnatic succession, *mmamadwa* (awarded to the sons and patrilineal grandsons of the Asantehene), his chances of succeeding into chiefly office were low, thus education offered a likely path to join power.[75]

Kyeremanten attended the government boys' school in Kumasi followed by secondary school on the coast, at Adisadel College. After his education in the Gold Coast, he was engaged as secretary of the Asante Confederacy Council (1940-1946). Kyeremanten was offered a scholarship and signed a bond with the ACC agreeing to not change or 'modify' his course 'either in content or duration without the permission of the Asantehene.'[76] And that, after his course he would return immediately to Asante to 'engage himself in the service of the Ashanti Native Administration or any educational institution approved by the Asantehene for a period of five years.'[77] Kyeremanten was enrolled on a specialized four-year course in Public Administration with a focus on Local Government and Administration. He spent the first year at Durham completing a degree in General Arts (1947); followed by three years at Oxford University, beginning with a post-graduate diploma in Anthropology (1948) and then a Bachelor of Letters (1950).

Personal correspondence between ACC scholars and the Asantehene's office offers insight into the close but asymmetrical relationship between ACC scholars and their overlord, the

[74] Alex for Local Govt. (20 August 1967). *Sunday Mirror*
[75] See McCaskie discussion of Owusu Sekyere Agyeman patrilineal descent of Kyidomhene Kwame Boaten in *Akwankwaa: Owusu Sekyere Agyeman in His Life and Times.* Ghana Studies 1, no. 1 (1998).
[76] MAG 21/9/1 Alexander Atta Yaw Kyeremanten signed a bond form dated 2 February 1947
[77] ibid

Asantehene. Kyeremanten arrived in the United Kingdom on 19 April 1946. He wrote frequently to the ACC, whilst staying at the Colonial Centre, Earls Court where he claimed to have received a 'warm welcome.'[78] In a letter to J.W.K Appiah, the father of the prominent Ghanaian politician and 'roving ambassador extraordinaire' Joseph Emmanuel Appiah, he congratulated the older Appiah for his new appointment as chief secretary of the Asanteman council (a revised form of the ACC). The appointment was a promotion from Appiah's former role as private secretary to the Asantehene.[79] In a subdued tone he lamented 'the biting and depressing' British winter but looked forward to Otumfuo's visit to England that year. We also learn of his longing for home and news from Manhyia.[80]

The general closeness and congeniality between ACC scholars and Manhyia do not obscure the degree of personal authority and close surveillance that the Asantehene exercised over ACC scholars. Writing through the Director of Colonial Scholars, the academic supervisor, Meyer Fortes, would suggest a different course for Kyeremanten's educational training. In his estimation, upon completing his degree in general arts, Kyeremanten should spend two years at Oxford with a view to undertaking a certificate in Social Anthropology in the first year. In his second year, to focus on writing a thesis for the Degree of Bachelor of Science in Social Anthropology. The Asantehene strongly rejected this position insisting that 'Mr Kyeremanten has been sent to England for a specific line of study, and the committee wishes he continues in it.' Kyeremanten was therefore instructed to do his 'Masters of Arts degree' or its [equivalence] in the first year to be 'followed by a course in colonial administration at the council's expense.'[81] After his four-year sojourn in the UK, Kyeremanten returned to Kumasi to continue serving the Asante Confederacy Council then known as the Asanteman Council. From then on, the Asantehene acted as a patron to Kyeremanten, with the latter constantly seeking his overlord's approval in taking up further important roles in public administration

[78] Note Appiah was appointed by Colonel Ignatius Kutu Acheampong as 'roving ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary' following the removal of K.A Busia government from office in 1972.
MAG 21/9/ 1/20-3 Kyeremanten letter to ACC confirming his arrival in the UK dated 24th April 1946
[79] MAG 21/9/1/46 A.A.Y Kyeremanten letter to J.W.K Appiah (acting Private secretary of the Asantehene) dated 1st March 1946
Asante Confederacy Council resolved at an Emergency Session in 1946 to change its name to the Asanteman Council with a view to remove the colonial imposed label 'Confederacy' (also see Triulzi 1972)
[80] ibid
[81] MAG 21/9/1/58 Minutes of the Confederacy Education Committee held on 5th September 1947 regarding A.A.Y. Kyeremanten Direction about Course of Study

(i.e., University of Ghana or University College).[82] According to Allman, 'Asanteman Council symbolized, in no uncertain terms, the solidification of Asante's ruling class. Its members were bound together by a system of economic patronage probably as old as the Asante system itself' (Allman 1993: 140).

Joseph Emmanuel Appiah

Joe Appiah as he is commonly known in the records was born on 16 November 1918 at Kumasi, Adum. Despite not being an ACC scholar, his family's professional and social closeness to the Asantehene's office- which has survived up to the present -and support for the NLM's cause, strongly supports the process of joining power by Asante *nkwankwaa* during the tumultuous period of decolonization. His autobiography published on 28 August 1990, not long after his death, weaves together an extraordinary life that spans the arc of Ghana's political journey from decolonization (1950s); to independence (1960) amid military takeovers to the return to democracy (1990s). Appiah's political and social life has been well documented and of little interest here, except for his background and connection to the golden stool.[83]

It is often claimed that Joe Appiah had strong connections to 'Ashanti royalty' from both his paternal and maternal sides, but the nature of these connections requires further clarification, as it is central to our argument about the career trajectories of *nkwankwaa*'s advancement to power (xiv). On his maternal side, his granduncle Yao Antori (corrupted as Yaw Anthony) was believed to be descended from a famous ancestor and war general, Akroma Ampim, to whom it is claimed founded the village of Nyaduom after acquiring a thousand slaves as a gift for his 'valor in various wars' in the eighteenth century. [84] However, the hereditary property of Nyaduom was of a lesser lineage stool (elder-chief/headship). [85] Yao Antori like many *asikafo* of his generation gained significant wealth from various

[82] MAG 21/9/ 1/113 Asantehene's letter to Professor A.W. Lawrence about A.AY. Kyeremanten appointment as Research lecturer at the university college dated 18th February 1952

[83] He married Peggy Cripps (1921–2006) the youngest daughter of Sir Stafford Cripps (post-war British chancellor of the exchequer) in 1953, which caused a stir in society and generated huge media sensation within Britain and the colony (Appiah 1990:217).

[84] Akroma Ampim means "the hawk is never impeded in its flight".

[85] Henry Louis Gates Jnr refers to the lineage office of Nyaduom as a family headship (xiv)

commercial activities in the 1930s and 1940s, including import and export, timber and gold mining concessions, and real estate (Appiah 1990: 104).

On his paternal side, Joe Appiah's connection to Asante royalty was more professional than hereditary. His father James Appiah was the personal secretary to both Prempes and was later promoted to chief secretary of the Asanteman council in 1946. James Appiah, a highly educated Asante served as the headmaster of the Wesleyan Primary and Middle School of the Methodist church in Kumasi (xiv). He was also a scion of a notable a*konkoni* (sing*., private entrepreneurs)* who returned to Kumasi from Cape Coast during British rule (106). His sister, Maame Mra, married Asantehene Prempe II. Another of Joe Appiah's maternal cousins, Victoria Akua Afriyie was married to Asantehene Opoku Ware II (xv). These marriages have created an impression of strong kinship ties between the Appiah family and the golden stool, but it is uncertain if any of them were based on the jural practice of *ayite* (stool wives). *Ayite* is whereby occupants of the golden stool by custom are expected to choose 'stool wives' from specific royal households. And in so doing forges 'an elaborate social network with *mmamma dwa* [patrilineal service stools] to constitute a sort of administrative machinery' (Akyeampong 1999: 304). Whatever the case may be, it is fair to say that Joe Appiah's connection to the golden stool was not hereditary *stricto sensu.*

Joe Appiah's rise to prominence seemed to have been directly influenced by his family's emphasis on formal education and hard work. Undoubtedly, his grandfather's decision to provide education for his father, James, laid the foundation for Joe's educational journey. Joe attended Wesley College in Kumasi and later Mfantsipim in 1932. Afterwards, he joined the United Africa Company (UAC) in 1938 and worked in various locations, witnessing (Sierra Leone and Gold Coast) first-hand the corruption within the colonial system (Appiah 1990: 114-5). As World War II approached, Appiah travelled to Britain to study law in 1944. During this time, he became involved in the West African Students Union (WASU) and joined the ranks of anti-imperialists and luminaries of Pan-Africanism.[86] It was whilst in England that he met Nkrumah, Ghana's first premiere. They quickly became comrades on the same side of the political struggle working for Africa's independence through the WASU. Both men would

[86] To name a few: Jomo Kenyatta, George Padmore CLR James, Seretse Khama, Ras Makonnen, Dr. Kamuzu Banda, Mrs Garvey, W.E.B. Dubois

return to their country of birth at different stages to carry on the fight for freedom under the Convention People's Party (CPP) founded by Nkrumah. By the mid to late 1950s, their budding friendship had grown sour. Appiah resigned from the CPP in 1955 to stand on an NLM ticket in the parliamentary elections the following year, representing the district of Atwima-Amansie in Asante (Appiah 1990: 246). The political hostilities between CPP and NLM and Appiah's fallout with Nkrumah are well-known.[87] However, it is still worth reflecting on the question of why Appiah a self-avowed 'communist' decided to join the NLM, a party of cocoa 'capitalists' with open disdain for socialism.[88]

In his autobiography, the earliest sign of Appiah's contemplation to leave the CPP comes in the form of a visit from Baffour Akoto, senior linguist (*Akyeame*) of the Asantehene and a leading figure in the NLM. Akoto seems to have made a good impression on him: 'I was grateful to this busy leader for finding time to state his movement's as so fully and frankly' (237). Further to Akoto's visit, the reasons offered for Appiah's resignation highlight a litany of wrongdoings alongside the apparent threat that the CPP was to the 'institution of chieftaincy, the very symbol of our culture, tradition and democracy' (240). Ironically a central tenet of the NLM was to abolish communism, a political philosophy which Appiah had once espoused or at the very least closely identified with (Allman 1993: 17). These seemingly contradictions in Appiah's stance must not be taken as duplicitous or opportunistic but must be understood in the broader context of his personal belief and social identity. In the chapter titled *Political Philosophy,* he offers a retrospective apologia wherein he characterised his evolved blend of politics as 'Christian socialism,' that draws from Christian values and the Akan tradition of communalism expressed in the idea of *nnoboa* (340-42).[89] Thus, he offers some kind of rationale as to why he stood with the Asante ruling elites in defence of chiefship. Additionally, the Asantehene and chiefs were the link between the ancestors and presided over a moral community that fostered a stronger sense of belonging, security, and a reliable avenue to power during such a volatile period of decolonisation. By heeding the call for

[87] See Austin 1964; Allman 1993; Agyeman Duah 1999; Rathbone 2000

[88] This phrase is used by Henry Louis Gates Jnr, in his description of chiefs' membership of the NLM. Allman also refers to the chief in the NLM as cocoa *asikafo* (rich men) (1993:29)

[89] Nnoboa is the Akan system of 'cooperative farming' and communal support (e.g., fundraising) based on relations of trust and reciprocity (White and Dzor, 2019: 229)

Asante self-determination, Appiah was therefore fulfilling his obligation as a good Asante citizen- *ɔkaniba.*

J.K.B. Asafu Adjaye

While some ACC scholars returned to play an important role in the country's political and cultural life (i.e., Victor Owusu, J.E. Jantuah, Kyeremanten, A.S.Y Andoh. J.H. Mensah) others took a different path. John Kwame Boaten Asafu Adjaye was the son of the renowned Dr I. B. Asafu Adjaye and nephew of the famous politician and diplomat Edward Asafu Adjaye. Allman characterized these men as members of the 'old guard intelligentsia - the relatively sparse though politically significant Asante professionals - who had been trained to inherit the government upon the British departure' (271). Dr Asafu Adjaye was also a member of the Ashanti Advisory Committee on Education and the selection board of the ACC.

The younger Asafu Adjaye took out a bond with the ACC in 1948 to read Bachelor of Commerce degree (2 years) which was to be followed by an articleship in Accountancy (3 years) at the University of Hull.[90] Asafu Adjaye was supposed to have completed his studies by June 1953, however upon failing his B. Com final examination he requested an extension of his scholarship to allow him to resit the exams and progress onto his articleship if successful. A report from the Professor of Economics at Hull describes the young Asafu Adjaye 'as a sound student who is considerably handicapped by his background and perhaps language difficulties' and that perhaps 'he would not have done justice to himself if he had taken finals this year.'[91] The one-year extension to take his B. Com final exams was granted and Asafu Adjaye completed his degree with second class honors in 1954. However, the extension of support for his articleship was denied.

The Permanent Secretary in a letter to the ACC raised the question 'as to what Mr. Asafu-Adjaye should do after graduation [..] he cannot be articled unless there is a guarantee that he is going to remain for the full period of three years.'[92] In a response to the Colonial Office,

[90] RG 3/1/7/52 file on Mr.J.K.B. Asafu Ajaye (Asanteman Council Scholar)
[91] RG 3/1/7/52/24 Letter from Colonial office to Dr. Howard of University College, Hull dated 28th May 1952
[92] RG 3/1/7/52/48 Letter from Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare to the Asanteman Council dated 30th November 1953

the ACC made its position clear, stating that 'based on Asafu-Adjaye's previous performance it is not safe to assume that Asafu-Adjaye will do well in his postgraduate.'[93] Furthermore, 'the council's financial position is not sound enough to justify any new commitments of uncertain results.' The council would demand the immediate return of Asafu Adjaye. Correspondence between the Supervisor of Colonial Students and Asafu Adjaye revealed that the latter refused to give in to the demands of the ACC. Not even the decision to withhold his allowance by the Colonial Office would force a change of mind: 'I do not see what the acceptance of the passage you have booked for has got to do with the August allowance you have withheld.'[94] He stayed on and finally acquired a traineeship with Messrs Midgley, Snelling, Barnes and Company as an article clerk for an accountancy course in the hope that the ACC would reverse their decision. The ACC would not budge and affirmed its initial position in a telegram to the Permanent Secretary, 'the Executive Committee of the Asanteman council resolved that [Asafu Adjaye] may retain the right of a return at the expense of the council.'

J.K.B Asafu Adjaye's opposition to his former patron could be viewed as a form of *nkwankwaa* talk which resisted attempts by the ACC to put constraints on his individual choice and thus ultimately limit his aspirations and access to power and status in Asante society. Thus, what the *nkwankwaa* may have failed to achieve in the political theatres of Asante nationalism, they seemed to have accomplished through education on the cultural and ideological landscape of social change. The ruling classes may have set the terms for Asante nationalism and potentially could manipulate the interpretive boundaries of Asante citizenship, but they did not always or completely determine who could be a 'good' and 'admirable citizen.' Instead by the twentieth century and with the *nkwankwaa* shaping a new ideal of the *ɔbirɛmpɔn* generated through 'hard work' and 'education', albeit resonant with established notions of success, the conceptualisation of *ɔkaniba* (good citizen) underwent significant changes. That is, understood as one's contribution to the realisation of *anibue*- a form of aggregated effect by successful individuals. Through the emerging social classes, the underlying values of

[93] RG 3/1/7/52/49 Letter from Asanteman Council to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Accra dated 3rd December 1953
[94] RG 3/1/7/52/54 Letter from M.A. Ribeiro (supervisor of students, Gold Coast Office, London) to Ministry of Education, Accra, Gold Coast

ɔbirɛmpɔn -big man- as a measure of individual success was wedded to the notion of *anibue* as a prerequisite of social progress to redefine what constitutes a 'good' citizen (*ɔkaniba*) in Asante.

Closing remarks

With education increasingly becoming a powerful tool for social mobility, it became crucial for Asante kings in the colonial period to influence and determine who had access to education and what form of education to maintain their power and status. Prempe saw the *adehyeɛ* as the springboard to command and promote education, and thus through whom social progress (*anibue*) was to be channelled to the rest of society. This was to ensure that traditional elites could perpetuate their influence and dominance within the formal and prestigious sectors of the colonial economy (Foster 1965: 66). But Prempe's vision was cut short as a result of his limited authority and short reign as Kumasihene.

Under his successor Prempe II, concerns around education centred on the role of Asante as a political force within colonial society. The restored Asante Confederacy Council generated broad consent for its work – and Western education – through scholarship opportunities, but also sought to perpetuate the status of traditional Asante elites. Teacher training scholarships were distributed widely as a means of maximising return on education, with the effect of enlarging the Asantehene's personage as a progressive leader that distributes *anibue* (opening the eye) to his subjects based on inclusive citizenship (stranger community and including gender). Against this background, the bond system acted as a form of patronage through which the Asantehene was to influence the spread and access to particular forms of education, whilst forging ties with resident communities of non-Asante origins.

Scholarships to attend universities overseas tended to be restricted to politically important or aristocratic family members. Here also, we found that political realities in connection to the growing influence of the young men amongst whom access to political office was somewhat limited saw to the Asantehene co-opting some members of the group within the administration of the ACC and further awarding them scholarships to Oxbridge and generally universities in the UK. This group was expected to inherit the British upon their departure. In

this way, the Asantehene had hoped to contain the rising influence of the *nkwankwaa* and perpetuate the influence and status of the traditional Asante elite by aligning the interest of the youngmen with that of the golden stool.

Based on their ability to open up the definition of moral citizenhood in Asante's experience beyond the narrow structures of chiefship, we claim that the *nkwankwaa* impact on society transcended political and economic life. With this in mind, we assert that suggestions of the *nkwankwaa's* alleged political weakness *ala* NLM must also consider the complex psychosocial relation between the ruling class and the ruled in Asante society (Allman 1993). Taking Owusu's analysis of customs and politics in Asante, an open challenge by the *nkwankwaa* against the Asantehene and chiefs would have been considered an attack on the very moral fabric of Asante identity and risked further reprisals from the ruling class. The Asante youngmen in the NLM like Appiah knew that too well as the abolishment of the *nkwankwaahene* in 1936 would have been fresh in their minds. In that respect, rebellion against chiefs could only be deemed legitimate and more likely to succeed if it refrained from destroying the social order. In short, the Asante youngmen brought into full circle what their *akonkofoɔ* fathers and grandfathers began but could not complete- the opening of society's eye to emerging avenues of power beyond chiefship. And for the Asantehene and chiefs, education in the hands of the youngmen and commoners was a powerful weapon which their neglect of would have been at their own peril.

Chapter 3. A Modern King and the Bank

Introduction

'The chief of today cannot act in the way his predecessors behaved. […], he has no judicial functions or executive powers […] But this does not mean that the chief has no meaningful role in the modern era. On the contrary, he has a vital role to play not just in his own domain, but also at the national level' (Asantehene Osei Tutu II, 2007)[95]

In the previous chapter, we saw how the Prempes established a pattern in which successive Asantehenes maintained their influence by reimagining their offices as vectors of *anibue*. For the Prempes, this entailed a heavy focus on formal education. Formal education came to be seen as integral to fostering social progress and individual success. Fast forward to the late 90s, an incoming King (Osei Tutu II) similarly would explain his engagement in education as bringing social progress and material advancement to the 'second world' of 'rural farmers and peasants' untouched by modernity (Tutu II 2007). The circumstances then, were rather different; formal political power was largely in the hands of an indigenous government, yet education remained a source of deep concern for ordinary Ghanaians beset with issues of soaring cost and poor quality of provision. In this respect, *anibue* remained a powerful motif within local understandings of development that holds hopeful promises of a better future. The establishment of the OEF through a partnership between the Asantehene Osei Tutu II and the World Bank (WB): Promoting Partnership with Traditional Authority Projects (2001-2007) PPTAP (hereafter) could be seen as a continuation of the past. But as I demonstrate in this chapter, this explanation does not sufficiently answer why the Fund was formed and why the focus on education considering other development opportunities established by the partnership (i.e., Health, Cultural Heritage). Furthermore, it misses the specific context and dynamics that shaped the development of the OEF. I therefore argue that through their engagement in education chiefs since the colonial period have striven to exert influence over the ideological components of power by mobilizing the ideational and affective impulses underpinning the lived experience and social circumstances of their subjects. With some

[95] Tutu O. "Traditional Systems of Governance and the Modern State." Keynote Address at the Fourth Development Forum, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Oct 12, 2004, In Economic Commission of Africa (2007). Relevance of African Traditional Institutions of Governance. Keynote address, pp 35-8

chiefs being more successful than others. However, this success arguably was contingent on historical circumstances but to a larger extent also on their legitimating strategies. In this way, the Asantehene appropriates the identity of civil society to bypass the state and interpolate his authority within the Bank's development discourses and practices of grassroot democracy and good governance to claim a strong moral stake in the development and promotion of education in their communities. This process, however, entailed the reframing of older forms of hegemonic manoeuvres within new claims to legitimacy, thereby enhancing the status of his own office.

During the reign of his predecessor Otumfuo Opoku Ware II (1970-1990), education was not a marked priority amid the absence of favourable conditions. It can be said that not all Asante kings in the post-colonial period were equally interested in education. Our point is that the OEF took on specific forms which distinguishes it in some key respects from initiatives taken under the Prempes. Also, since Ghana's independence education reforms have largely been driven by the government/ ministry of education, which placed stronger emphasis on issues of economic growth, skills and manpower needs of the country. As Nkrumah puts it "We need to do in ten years what has taken others a hundred years to do."[96] Hitherto, the opening of the political space and the growing influence of international organisations within national politics in the 1990s paved the way for educational reforms that centred on the rights of the child. Thus, shifting the focus on education from a purely economic issue to a basic right enshrined within the law (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992, Art 25(1)). This notwithstanding, the World Bank (WB) for the first time in its history decided to support traditional authorities in delivering development projects in their communities, under the PPTAP scheme (World Bank 2007). Against this backdrop we asked the question, why did the WB want to support 'non-state' actors in education and development generally in the 1990s / early 2000s? Why were further educational interventions still deemed necessary, even though there had been many before (Nkrumah and Acheampong, but more recently under Rawlings)? Taken together, what implication does this hold for understanding chiefly repositioning of authority and legitimacy through their engagement in development projects?

[96] quoted in (Killick 1978)

Taking these questions as a guide to examine the emergence of the OEF in the early 2000s and why it took the form that it did, the chapter enquires into the king's rationale for engaging in education. Evidence of this would be gleaned from a keynote speech delivered by the Asantehene Osei Tutu II at the Fourth African Development Forum held in Addis Ababa in 2007, where he explains his reason for setting up the OEF and the role of the chief in a 'modern democracy.' Our analysis of the partnership between the Bank and OEF draws on the Bank's operational and project materials and Otumfuo Osei Tutu II's speech and public statements, supported by evidence from the literature. In the general sense, this chapter acts as a background to the formation of the OEF and helps us generate deeper insight into chiefs' repositioning of authority within the post-colonial state (Comaroff and Comaroff 2018). Along with, placing in context the ground-swelling support that the Fund enjoyed in its active years of operation (2003-2017). As we shall see, in the case of the OEF, seemingly universal forms of knowledge and practices of 'good governance' and 'civil society' were mobilised by the king and reconfigured to legitimate his influence beyond the state and in turn to renegotiate his personal authority within the state (Yarrow 2011: 124).

Structure

The chapter is structured as follows: it opens with an introduction to the OEF and its development as part of a partnership project between the WB and Asantehene. The next section establishes our theoretical position from recent discussions on the engagement of chiefs in development. It is followed by an excursion into shifts in the Bank's practices and ideas that underpin its operation in the 1960s and 1970s. The subsequent section closely relates significant shifts in the WB partnership framework, which by the 1980s heavily emphasized the language of civil society as a key feature and its relation to education reforms in Ghana since independence. This part also provides a better understanding of how the issues of quality and the rising cost of education facing the education system in the 1980s and 1990s developed out of reforms under previous administrations (Afoakwah et al 2020). This is followed by a closer examination of the poor conditions and falling standards of Ghana's education system in the 1980s and 1990s, which provided the basis for WB dominance and increased emphasis on civil society participation in the country's education development. This brings us to the penultimate section of the chapter which delves into the Bank's and

Asantehene's adoption of the concept of civil society as a common frame of reference to coalesce around, albeit mobilising the term for different purposes. Civil society as employed in this study is limited to its articulations in the partnership between the Asantehene and the World Bank. Therefore, we view civil society as a discursive category with polyvalent usage and contested meaning mobilized by actors for different purposes (Whitfield 2003). The concluding section argues that the king's relative success in intervening in the education sector is bound up with the desires, ambitions and hopes of his subjects. While this echoes the longer history of royal engagement with formal education, it is not necessarily a direct continuation of the past.

The Asantehene and the making of the OEF

In the summer of April 1999, at his enstoolment as king of Asante (Ghana) Otumfuo Osei Tutu II used his ceremonial address to announce the core priorities of his office. Amongst other development objectives, education was singled out as an immediate concern.[97] After just six months in office, the Asantehene launched the Otumfuo Education Fund (OEF). Not long after, the OEF was incorporated into a partnership scheme between traditional institutions in Ghana and the World Bank: Promoting Partnerships with Traditional Authorities Project (PPTAP) (2003-2007), with IDA funding for allocated projects channelled through the Ministry of Finance (World Bank 2007 and Knierzinger 2011). As outlined in a project report, the PPTAP was conceived as an innovative pilot that sought to 'test approaches to integrate and improve TA [Traditional Authority] involvement and help focus their contributions to socio-economic development in their communities.' This, it hoped to do by enhancing Traditional Authorities' role within the following areas:

(i) the decentralization efforts of the central government.
(ii) the control of the spread of diseases such as HIV/AIDS.
(iii) closing the gap in the provision of, among other things, improved health, and equitable and quality basic education (including the rehabilitation of existing classrooms) in deprived rural and remote areas; and

[97] (Asare 1999)

(iv) determining the role of cultural heritage preservation in the socio-economic development of a community.[98]

The project aims and funding was spread across four main thematic areas: Education, Health, Capacity Building and Cultural Heritage. A total budget of US$4.5 million was allocated to the Asante Council, with more than half of the budget earmarked for education US$2.5 (World Bank 2007:3).[99] Project interventions across the four thematic areas were to be delivered to 40 communities in 35 paramountcies and 18 districts in the Asanteman Council (World Bank 2007: 39). However, at the end of the PPTAP, an independent evaluation raised doubt about the sustainability of the various strands of the project and found the partnership between chiefs and government to be weak. It attributed this structural weakness to the lack of technical capacity of chiefs (i.e., financial management and budgeting) and laxity in the formal organization and practices of 'oral culture' systems:

'The partnership approach was learned and disseminated at the request of a number of TAs through other projects but otherwise, the experience of partnership formation was achieved through demonstration. While this is consistent with the approach of the existing oral culture, it puts at some risk the project's sustainability, because of the lack of a solid base of lessons of experience that can be disseminated widely to assist future partnership' (World Bank 2007: 12).

Nevertheless, in the Project Appraisal document, the rationale given for the partnership pilot was that Traditional Authorities as 'custodians of community land,' 'repositories of the communities' cultural heritage' and as well as 'key stakeholders' of development are central to efforts to develop communities with minimal reliance on government budget (World Bank 2003). Within the same document, the view that TAs could offer a viable approach to delivering development was also linked to the Bank's understanding of TAs as 'resourceful civil society' who can be relied upon to provide sustainable changes in the state's role in

[98] (World Bank, 2007) also see PPTAP Appraisal Project Report (World Bank 2003)

[99] The Akyem Abuakwa Council was also included in the scheme receiving US$ 0.5 million (ibid). An informant pointed out that the decision to include Akyem Abuakwa was largely political and came at the behest of the King as a conciliatory act aimed at repairing the longstanding feud between the two royal kingdoms (Asanteman and Okyeman respectively).

development (ibid). In this way, the partnership was framed as an innovative approach to strengthen the decentralization of the state in Ghana by capitalizing on the chiefs' position as leaders of their communities for development (World Bank 2007:1-3). The donor-driven perspective of decentralization held states to empower civil society participation in local development agendas to enhance local 'ownership', 'commitment', and 'sustainability' of projects (World Bank 2007)

Overall, the PPTAP had a modest impact across the project's thematic areas (Education, Health, Capacity Building and Cultural Heritage). Despite the challenges and moderately satisfactory rating by the Bank's evaluation of the PPTAP, nowhere has the project generated such sustained interest and public enthusiasm as in Education, through the expansion of the OEF. The OEF continued its operations for almost another 10 years following the end of the PPTAP pilot (2007-2017), prior to the merger with the Otumfuo Charity Foundation OTCF (currently known as Otumfuo Osei Tutu II Charity Foundation OOTCF) (see chapters 5 and 7). Education has been the only thematic area that evolved its administration equipped with an independent board of trustees and management team.

Understanding the OEF

Explaining his reason for partnering with the World Bank to further his engagement in education through the OEF, the Asantehene conceptualizes his role as a moral obligation not intended to replace the role of central and regional governments, but rather to supplement them:

> These days, a chief is expected to lead his people in organizing self-help activities and projects and take the initiative in establishing institutions and programmes to improve the welfare of his people in areas such as health, education, trade and economic or social development (Asantehene Osei Tutu II, 2007).

At the same time, he links his interventions to the chief's limited function and ambiguous position within the state:

> The modern chief, stripped of political and executive power and formal financial support, has to address these basic needs for his people using his ingenuity, diplomacy, power of motivation and sometimes his own personal resources. (ibid)

Ironically, he goes on to recognize the chief's entrenched status under the 1992 constitution to point out that chiefs have an important role to play in local and national arenas, the social and moral lives of Ghanian citizens:

> On the contrary, he has a vital role to play not just in his own domain, but also at the national level. This fact is recognized in the governmental system of Ghana, where the institution of chieftaincy is given an entrenched status in the 1992 Constitution [….] Apart from these constitutional functions, chiefs have the moral obligation to contribute to the lives of their individual citizens in particular, and to the nationals of their country at large (ibid).

To this end, he evokes the imagery and language of civil society to stress that

> chiefs can and do play a vital role in development which at once enhances democracy and sustains good governance (ibid).

And thus, the Asantehene gestures towards stronger involvement of chiefs in development projects at the local and national levels:

> No concept of governance or development in Africa will be complete without acknowledging the role of traditional authorities. We, therefore, appeal to this forum, all African governments and all international organizations to place the role of traditional authorities firmly on their agenda for development and governance (ibid).

This view is replayed in some sections of the scholarly literature on chiefs and the state in Ghana that labels chiefs as leaders of 'grassroot governance' (Ray et al 2003). Following from this is the idea that chiefs' authority derives from a combination of factors: their endorsement by the state set out in the Constitution of Ghana (1992) and through public support for their

role as 'natural' development leaders. However, this view oversimplifies the complex ways in which chiefs have utilised their engagement in development to renegotiate their influence in the post-colonial state.

A recent collection (Comaroff and Comaroff 2018) on chiefship and development in Ghana, called attention to the emerging 'economic geography' of neoliberal governance in the 1980s and 1990s, which animated chiefs' repositioning and rebranding of their authority *within the state* with varied effects (20). By the term 'economic geography' the Comaroffs point to chiefs' historical relation with the market as facilitated by the state (colonial and post-colonial) and global forces (e.g., neoliberalism) (ibid). Therefore, they stressed that fundamentally chiefs' authority emanates from their control of, and allocation of material resources and the different modalities of political rule mediated by historical process (93). That said, the authors of the collection present a far more sophisticated argument that provides a detailed analysis of local inflections to chiefly exercises of authority, rather than the general summary sketched here. Nevertheless, their treatment of chiefs' authority within an overt materialist paradigm- 'economic geography' – places the accent on the rational mechanics of economic power and political coercion. Unfortunately, their analysis fails to develop our understanding of chiefs beyond the paradigm of neopatrimonialism and gives the underlying impression that chiefs exploit development projects and resources that flow from it to enrich themselves and manipulate local support.

Yarrow (2011) warns against viewing development as externally oriented towards a set of global practices and discourses detached from the 'local' and cultural context (Yarrow 2011:7). Instead, development should be seen 'as a way of assembling the world through geographically and historically particular actions' (14). Building upon Yarrow (2011), this chapter argues that chiefs' exercise of authority within the postcolonial state does not simply rest on their ability to reposition their offices as fungible resources to mount specific political projects. A closer look at the Asantehene's engagement in development helps us to understand that kings/chiefs have also striven to exert influence over the ideological components of power. They do this by drawing on the cognitive and affective impulses underpinning local knowledge and belief systems. In the case of the OEF, this is accomplished by reinterpreting locally situated meanings and practices of development (i.e., *anibue*) -

within international discourses of 'civil society', grassroot 'democracy' and 'good governance'- to their objectives (OEF) (Whitfield 2003). It is perhaps in this sense that some subtle semblances in chiefly practices of authority can be established between the Prempes and Osei Tutu II. Still, one might insist that the Bank's partnership with the Asantehene was an opportunity for the latter to access resources for his community, and by doing so aggrandize his image and prestige in the eyes of his people (Knierzinger 2011). Even so, this perfunctory reasoning may explain why the Asantehene sought the Bank's interest but not so much the other way around, nor does it explain the level of support that Asantes and Ghanaian citizens broadly gave to the initiative (see Chapter 4). The question, therefore, remains, why did the Bank decide to partner with the Asantehene? And despite other development avenues why focus on education? Are we to take the Asantehene at his word that the chief is a 'natural development partner'? Or that 'The involvement of traditional leaders [...]is therefore a logical extension of the Bank's own evaluation of actors other than its conventional partners and a recognition of [...] the development endeavours of its clients'?

Note that the king refers to the OEF as a client of the Bank and implicitly signals the possibility that his wider objectives might differ from those of the Bank. What then was the nature of the alliance between the king and the Bank and how did it come about? And what can we learn about the chief's repositioning of authority within the post-colonial state? The next section seeks to understand the emergence of the OEF by tracing its footsteps back to the Bank's expansion into education governance in Ghana between the 1960s and 1980s. Followed by a closer examination of its partnership framework and its implication on chiefs' engagement in education.

The Global Education Complex

'The Bank and IDA should be prepared to consider financing a part of the capital requirements of priority education projects designed to produce, or serve as a necessary step in producing, trained manpower of the kinds and in numbers needed to forward economic development [...] In applying this criterion the Bank should concentrate on (a) vocational and technical

education and training at various levels and (b) general secondary education. Other kinds of education projects would be considered only in exceptional cases' (World Bank 1971: 13).[100]

Starting operations in education in the 1960s the Bank's education funding priorities in the developing world centred on technical and vocational education at the secondary and post-secondary level (Psacharopoulos 2006; World Bank 1971). Education was generally considered by the Bank's leadership as a soft sector and did not feature extensively in the Bank's funding portfolio (Psacharopoulos 2006; Heyneman 2003; Mundy 2006). Funding for education in developing countries was mainly channelled through the International Development Association (IDA). The International Development Association (IDA) is part of the World Bank Groups and serves as one of the main platforms through which the Bank provide support to low-income countries to combat poverty and raise living conditions (World Bank 2001:18; 2002). Through contributions from the governments of its member countries, the IDA provides concessional grants with no interest rate payments to poorer nations (Alexander 2001). Observers point out that the creation of the IDA and the WB's general involvement in financing education within the developing world was based on concern from the West - particularly the United States - over the advancement of communism into newly independent post-colonial nations (Mundy and Verger 2015, Vetterlein 2012). In this way, the geopolitical atmosphere of Cold War politics added to the tenor of donor competition for influence within the global south, resulting in a 'diffused regime' of 'educational aid programmes' led by a handful of multilateral organizations (UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank) and bilateral aid organizations (Mundy 2007 and Samoff 1999). In essence, the WB's policy reflected some of the fundamental features and trends of world polity of the 1960s. Embracing fashionable economic thinking of the time, it held strong state interventions to be central to economic growth and development in recipient countries based on the principle of redistributive multilateralism. In the Bank's approach, Keynesian ideology was hitched to post-war notions of development multilateralism- i.e., redistributive multilateralism (Mundy 1998; Escobar 1994). Redistributive multilateralism refers to the formulation of international consensus amongst multilateral organizations to coordinate the transfer of development resources from developed nations to lesser developed regions of the World (ibid).

[100] The quote first appeared in a memorandum from the President to the Executive Directors of the Bank on *Proposed Bank/ IDA Policies in the Field of Education of October* 1963.

Despite the global commitment to the universal right to education, in reality, the flow of education development funding and expertise within developing countries was less coordinated and 'highly fragmented,' based on 'geopolitical' or 'economic interest of the bilateral donors' and approaches of specific multilateral organizations (Mundy 2007:28). 'Almost all OECD countries had opened bilateral development assistance programs and increased their funding for multilateral institutions' (Mundy 1998: 457).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, WB loans for education rapidly expanded making the Bank 'the largest single provider of finance for educational development' (Mundy and Verger 2015:9). The Bank ascended into a position of complete dominance in the governance of global education, supplanting the erstwhile leadership of UNESCO: '75% of UNESCO's cooperative program was financed by the Bank, hence often placing UNESCO in a position of compromise' (Heyneman 2003:328-9 also see Elfert 2016:15). According to Psacharopoulos (2006) in practice, the Bank considered education as an investment in human capital and manpower for economic productivity (330). By the 1980s, it was the Bank's view that 'Educated workers are more achievement-oriented, more self-reliant, more adaptive to new situations, and, above all, more trainable.' (World Bank 1980:44). Funding for education came to be based on the 'rate of return' of education (RORE) at the different levels of schooling. RORE is founded on human capital theory which proposes that investments in education lead to enhanced future productivity (Psachropoulos 2018). It measures the value of individual earnings based on their levels of education- for instance, university graduates compared to secondary school leavers - against the net value cost of education (e.g., fees, incidental expenses, forgone earnings) (Bennell 1996; Psacharopoulos, 1995; 2018). This method of assessing the comparative viability of funding gave priority to primary education (World Bank 1980).[101]

[101] *The Education Sector Policy Paper* 1980, reported that a study of 20 countries showed a higher return of education for 'primary education (26.2 per cent) than on secondary education (13.5 per cent) and higher education (11.3 per cent).' From this position, the paper goes on to say that 'Arguments of economic efficiency, along with arguments of equity, support continued investment in primary education.' (44).

For the most part, recipient nations in the developing world were seen more as clients than partners and treated as "targets" within the Bank's schemes, with a limited role in the formulation of policies and practices on education policy and financing (Mundy 2006: 28). Moreover, hardly were non-governmental actors (NGOs) involved or recognized within the official regime. Mundy and Murphy (2001) imply that up until the 1980s international non-governmental actors were kept out of international forums, conferences, and conventions on education (96-7). The economic conditions of the 1980s ushered in a change in circumstances that saw the Bank deepening its influence in the political economy of the global South through the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). Ironically, so did NGO participation and activities on the global education landscape flourish (Mundy and Murphy 2001). The Bank for the first time broadened its partnership beyond states and governments to accommodate civil society, which included an array of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) (World Bank 1995).

Later, we will look in more detail at the shift in the Bank's partnership framework in the 1990s. First, we examine the factors that led to the change in the Bank's approach and that ultimately facilitated the emergence of the Otumfuo Education Fund at the turn of the century. This question requires some unpacking and to do that we would first have to understand the economic conditions in Ghana during the 1980s and its impact on the education system. There is good evidence in the literature to suggest that many of the problems that came to haunt the education system in the 1980s seemed to have carried over from earlier education reforms under previous administrations (Afoakwah et al 2020). We therefore take a quick detour into educational reforms since the country's independence, focusing on the most pertinent issues to the discussion. This by no means offers a detailed account but an attempt to provide the reader with a better sense of the relationship between the World Bank and the state in terms of education reforms and governance and how this changed by the 1980s and 1990s.

Education as Development 1960 and 1970s

'We need to do in ten years what has taken others a hundred years to do' (Kwame Nkrumah)[102]

At the time of independence (1956) Ghana was endowed with a financial reserve of US$ 190 million. Upon his forced removal from office in the 1966 coup, Ghana's external debt stood at US$ 250 million, which was further exacerbated by the falling price of cocoa (Williams 1966:476). The situation exacerbated over the years, with one military takeover after the other, interspersed with brief periods of democratically elected civilian governments (Adu Gyamfi et al 2016). Within the two decades following the country's independence, Ghana experienced three military regimes (NLC 1966-1969, NRC/SMC 1972-1978 and PNDC 1981-1992); three periods of elected civilian governments (CPP 1951- 1966, PPP 1979-1982 and NDC 1992).

Despite the frequent changeover of governments, especially in the 1960s and 1970s, one thing that rang true was the belief in the importance of education as a tool for economic growth under the different regimes (Afoakwah et al 2022). Government borrowing from the World Bank and IMF (1966-68, 1971-72 and 1978-79) at the start of its economic misfortunes in the 1960s remained consistent with the Bank's lending criteria (Hutchful 1985:122). The government's education spending prioritized primary education based on the rate of return calculations. And was also geared towards the development of a skilled workforce through vocational and technical education (Bennell 1996; Psacharopoulos, 1994). For the most part, the design of the policies themselves was heavily top-down and state-driven (Little 2020; Finlay 1968, McCain 1979). That said, as seen in the previous chapter the growth of education in the country was largely driven by local initiatives which sought to fill the gaps in state provision, leaving a legacy of robust 'private sector' engagement (Foster 1965). This combined with the existence of formidable local pressure groups capable of influencing discussions around education policies throughout the 1960s and 1980s strongly supports the view that

[102] quoted in (Killick 1978)

the central government could make policy, but it did not have complete control over educational provision and outcome.[103]

According to Adu-Gyamfi et al (2016: 163) Nkrumah's approach towards education was to address Ghana's socio-economic potential by producing an educated and skilled population to foster productivity through advances in science and technology. A cornerstone of the Nkrumah's CPP Accelerated Plan for Education in 1951 was the concept of Universal Primary Education (UPE), to be achieved by 1966, which abolished tuition fees but not charges on books, stationery, and educational equipment (Akyeampong 2009: 180). This was followed by the Education Act of 1961 which established the legal basis for compulsory primary and middle school education for all children of school-going age (Amidah and Chandramohan 2009: 9). Education interventions also entailed schemes for adult education provision (Skinner 2009).

Nkrumah's policies, though not achieving UPE by the said date, had a dramatic effect on the expansion of schools and education facilities and generated a surge in enrolment numbers. By the fall of the CPP government in 1966, primary school enrolment levels had maintained an upward incline from 441,117 children in 3,514 public primary in 1960 to a soaring figure of 1,137,494 children attending 8,144 schools (McWilliam & Kwamina-Poh, 1978). Critiques show that the rapid expansion of education and educational facilities stemmed from the government's understanding of education as a catalyst of development (Amedahe and Chandramohan 2009: 9; Prosperetti 2020: 12)

Nevertheless, Nkrumah's expansionist policies came at a huge cost and overlooked issues of quality of education provision (Little 2010, Dzobo 1974). The government policies to improve access to education were more felt in southern Ghana than in the north, leaving a gap in the geographic distribution of education access (Akyeampong 2006). Regional disparities in education provision between the north and south were a continuing legacy of colonial policies

[103] National Union of Ghanaian Students (NUGS) formed in 1958 successively protested against proposed government policies on education in Ghana under Nkrumah's despotic rule, Acheampong's military takeover, and JJ Rawlings populist tyranny (Finlay 1968, McCain 1979; Adedeli 2001; Ninsin 1987).

which systematically restricted the rapid expansion of schooling in the northern territories (Prosperetti 2020; Skinner 2010; McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh 1975). Subsequent governments sought to curtail the cost burden of education to the public purse and hoped to align education outcomes with the economic needs of the country.

The Kwapong committee (1967), initiated under the watch of the National Liberation Council (led by A.A. Afrifa and General E.K. Kotoka), focused on slowing down the rate of primary school expansion and cut government subsidy per student to help alleviate the burden on public finances (Adu- Gyamfi et al: 167). Unlike the previous regime, the government focused more on rehabilitating existing schools instead of building new schools to expand access across the country (Gyedu 2014). Boakye (2019) notes that besides the government's emphasis on cost sharing and the role of private providers in the provision of education, the recommendation of the Education Review in 1967 'did not deviate very much from the educational system instituted by Nkrumah and his administration under the 1961 Education Act' (84). At the same time, the NLC unlike Nkurmah's government saw the provision of education and other social services as a shared responsibility between the state and the private sector (ibid 85). Thus, the government returned to the churches and religious bodies, control over the management of their basic schools (Ampadu & Mohammed 2004; Martin, 1976).[104] This decision was taken in a period when Ghana's economy 'suffered a protracted decline' with output growing at a modest rate of 2.2 per cent a year between 1960 and 1970 (Osei 2000: 58).

The incoming military government of Kutu Acheampong passed the New Structure and Content of Education (NSCE), which gave primacy to vocational and technical education based on the findings of the Dzobo Committee in 1973. Similarly, the policy promoted a more practical curriculum with new subjects such as Tailoring, Woodwork, Catering, Dressmaking, Metalwork, Technical Drawing, Masonry and Automobile Practice throughout elementary to secondary education (Gyamfi et al 2016: 167). Here also it appears that the lack of 'political will' in the implementation, and mismanagement of the Ghanaian economy, jeopardized the success of reforms (Owusu et al 2016). Acheampong is said to have 'presided over a period of

[104] See Pobee (1987) for detail discussion on the role of the Christian churches and Muslim leadership in the formation of General Acheampong's Union Government (Unigov) in 1977

economic hardship and governmental corruption unparalleled in Ghanaian history' (Matthews 1988: 111). In addition, his repudiation policy- *Yentua (Twi,* we shall not pay)- of debts contracted by previous administrations suspected to be tainted by corruption, followed by a unilateral debt rescheduling in 1974, seemed to have worsened the country's creditworthiness (Osei 2000: 61). Economists argued that the country's reliance on agriculture and export commodities exposed it to global shocks in prices and placed severe constraints on foreign exchange earnings, undermining its creditworthiness and long-term growth (Osei 2000; Hutchful 1985). According to Herbst by 1981 Ghana had transitioned from a 'prospering middle-income country' to a nation suffering from Fourth World poverty.' (1993: 27)

"Fourth World Poverty": A recipe for intervention 1980s and 1990s

The failing economic conditions stimulated a mass exodus of qualified teachers to neighbouring countries, which adversely impacted the ratio of trained to untrained teachers (National Education Forum 1999: 9). According to the World Bank, Ghana's per capita income in 1982 was 30% below their 1970s level and import volumes were one third less and export earnings were just half (World Bank, 1989). The education budget accounted for 1.7% of GDP, a drop from 6.4% in 1976 (Kadingdi 2004). Almost 40%-50% of the urban population and 63-73% of the rural population lived below the poverty line in 1983 (World Bank 1989). The poor economic circumstances severely affected educational quality and outcomes as infrastructure and facilities deteriorated due to lack of funding, and school enrolment levels dipped (World Bank 2004). Records on enrolment levels show that in a single year between 1985 (1,464,624) to 1986 (1,325,485) primary enrolment fell by more than 100,000 and stagnated until 1987/88 (1,535,505) and only brought total primary enrolments to 1981/82 levels (1,533, 859) (World Bank 1989). It is estimated that in the 1980s, an additional year of schooling only produced an annual rate of return of just 4% to 6% (Glewwe 1996).

Failing to arrest the plunge and with public discontent soaring, the government turned to the WB and IMF for support. This resulted in the Economic Recovery Programme and the

adoption of structural adjustment policies in 1983 (Osei 2000: 58-61).[105] Under the SAP programmes, the government embarked on ambitious reforms, with the hope of salvaging the education system. Unlike state interventionist approaches of previous decades, under the SAPs the Bank advocated for a reduction in the state's role in providing public services to address the growing national debt. The Bank emphasized the principles of privatization, deregulation, and decentralization of state provision of public services. In practice, the Bank introduced cost recovery mechanisms and encouraged cuts to student subsidies, loan schemes were introduced in place of grants as well as taxes on graduates. Subsidies were redirected from higher education to basic primary education in consonant with the logic of rate of return (Alexander 2001). This also entailed parental contributions to recurrent costs such as buildings, books, and materials (Mundy and Verger 2015). Vetterlein claims that 'poverty was not mentioned anymore in the Annual Reports from 1983 until 1986' (2012: 39). Commentators maintain that this approach centred on structural adjustment lending, instead of poverty alleviation in times of economic hardship (Verger and Bonal 2012 and Alexander 2001).

In Ghana, the government announced the New Education Reform Programme (NERP) in 1987, which aimed 'to make education more relevant in meeting the needs and aspirations of the individuals and the socio-economic conditions of the country' (Kadingdi 2004: 7). In many ways, the reforms resounded elements of the Acceleration Plan in 1951 and the NSCE in 1974. Seven years into implementation, studies from the World Bank and the Ministry of Education, highlighted technical and political defects. Amongst others, some of the issues highlighted were that the curriculum was overloaded in content; teachers were not provided with adequate training and time to respond effectively to the changes; and lack of materials and equipment to properly facilitate vocational and technical education. To make matters worse, academic attainment was low: '6% of the pupils at grade six in public schools tested nationwide, achieved a criterion score of 60% and above in English. Whilst 3% achieved a criterion score of 55% and above in Mathematics' (MOE/PREP 1994).

[105] The ERP (1983-1990) was initiated to reverse the decline in the economy, stabilize prices, and maintain a favourable balance of payments position by adjusting the structural basis of the economy to promote growth (Osei 2000: 68)

Education as a right -FCUBE and EFA (1990)

'All persons shall have the right to equal educational opportunities and facilities and with a view to achieving the full realisation of that right, basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all' (Constitution of the Republic of Ghana, 1992, Art 25(1)).

In 1992 the country transitioned from military rule to a democratically elected government under the Flt. Lt. J.J. Rawling's newly reorganized party the National Democratic Congress (NDC). Policy discourses on education were more attuned than ever to issues of quality, and on the principle that basic education is a universal right for all children (World Bank 1989; Akyeampong 2009). The coming of the FCUBE (Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education) in 1995 was not new (see Nkrumah's UPE), nor was the international community's recognition of primary education as a universal right – this was first pronounced under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) 1948: Art (26) and underpinned by the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959). What seemed different was; a) the growing dominance of civil society activism within international education forums and policy; b) the World Bank's recognition for the first time of civil society as partners and more importantly its adoption of children's rights in its education funding scheme; c) Ghana's influence in reinforcing and ratifying the international agenda towards the recognition of education as right at the Jomtien Conference, later enshrined in its constitution of 1992 (Little 2010).

Research shows that the FCUBE dovetailed with international movements on expanding education access to poor communities (Little 2010). FCUBE was a comprehensive programme designed to provide quality basic education to all school-aged children in Ghana by the year 2005 (Amedahe and Chandramohan 2009:13). At the heart of the policy was the government's commitment 'to make schooling from Basic Stage 1 through 9 free and compulsory for all school-age children by the year 2005 . . . [and] to improve the quality of the education services offered' (MOE 1996: 1). Concerns around the quality of provision although not new was given a renewed impetus.

In 1989, an international forum held in New York established the Conventions on the Rights of the Child, which amongst others explicitly recognized that 'primary education compulsory

and available free to all' (Little 2010). This was followed by another international conference held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 where the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) and a Framework for Action were adopted. Studies show that Ghana played a key role in the conference discussions that resulted in the Declaration of Education for All (EFA) (Little 2010). In addition, the NDC government embraced EFA in its election manifesto (NDC Manifesto 1992). Buchert (1995) claims that EFA placed poverty back on the agenda of education reforms and renewed international commitment towards expanding educational access for the poor (538).

Subsequently, Ghana convened a National Education Forum in 1994, attended by 150 stakeholder groups, many of whom were representatives of international organizations and donor agencies (MOE 1994). From these discussions, the FCUBE programme was given legal backing and mandated by the 1992 constitution: Art 38(2), taking into effect in 1995. With a financial package of US$ 45 million from the WB, the government pledged to remove fees at the primary level of education, and to increase the demand for schooling (Amedahe and Chandramohan 2009:13). The FCUBE programme focused on the expansion of infrastructural facilities and services to enhance access for all children of school-going age, as well as emphasizing girls' education.

To this end the policy aimed: i) to improve the Quality of Teaching and Learning; (ii) to improve Management Efficiency and Sustainability; (iii) to increase Access and Partnership; and (iv) to decentralize the Management of the Education Sector (MOE 1996: 15). The policy bore strong resemblance to previous reforms. Nevertheless, it aimed at enhancing the entire production chain of the education system in Ghana, from input to output. As a corollary, the government of Ghana through the implementation of FCUBE endorsed international commitment towards Education for All (EFA) (Kadingdi 2004). Studies of FCUBE show that the reforms had mixed results (Afoakwah et al 2020; Akyeampong 2009; Amedahe and Chandramohan 2009). Research, based on the Gross Enrolment Rate of children for the first 10 years following the implementation of FCUBE reported steady and consistent growth in school enrolment (World Bank 2004).

Some positive gains were recorded for gender participation in education showing a narrowing of the gender gap in educational outcome from 7% in 1992/93 to 3.4% in 2006 (Afoakwah et al 2020: 11). This is consistent with the improving primary gender parity index (0.83 in 2005 to 0.96 in 2007) (MOESS 2008). Nevertheless, according to Afoakwah et al (2020) gender inequality in education 'remains a significant component of education inequality in the northern part of the country even after the introduction of the FCUBE policy' (12).

Akyeampong (2009) analysing primary attendance rates claims that children from the poorest households (boys and girls) fared less well under FCUBE, showing high dropout and non-completion rates. He found that the attendance gap between the poorest household and wealthiest households rose from 21 percentage points in 1998/99 to 32 percentage points in 2005 (183). Rural attendance of primary school children remained in the '80% region against a high urban attendance of about 97%' (ibid). He argues that FCUBE did not go far enough to offset the opportunity costs of schooling such as child labour for the poorest households, by failing to abolish all forms of ancillary costs, fees and compulsory levies associated with attending schools, which hit the poorest the most (190-3). This in his view affected the demand for education and caused dropouts and non-completion amongst the poorest (ibid). A wealth of evidence in the literature shows that reducing the costs of education to parents from poor households significantly increases access to primary schooling (Mehrotra 1998; Watkins 2003; UNESCO 2007; de Kemp 2008).

It has also been observed that the Bank's approach towards EFA was to simply reorient funding from secondary and vocational to primary education (World Bank 1995, Unesco 2015, Psacharopoulos 2015). This is corroborated by the Bank's own assessment, which found an increase in basic school enrolment by 10 per cent since the beginning of the reforms in the late 1980s (World Bank, 2004). However, these appreciable gains were difficult to sustain beyond the 9-year of basic education (Akyeampong et al 2007: 11). As a result, gains made in primary education were often offset by declines in secondary and tertiary education (Unesco 2015, Jones 1992).

Besides the economic effects, the FCUBE/ EFA also had significant political implications locally. Its close alignment with international practices and consensus of education as a

universal right opened the education policy arena to participation from an array of pressure groups and non-state actors (locally and internationally). As we shall see, the Bank's adoption of civil society in its partnership framework provided the Asantehene with the platform to interpolate his authority within the Bank's development discourses and practices. Bridging the issue of quality and rights-based approaches to education, the Asantehene appropriated the identity of civil society to claim a strong moral stake in the development and promotion of education in the community. There has been a substantial debate both about the origins of the term 'civil society' and its applicability across time and space; and about how the language of civil society has been mobilised by international institutions, national governments, politicians, social movements, and non-governmental organisations in Africa since the 1980s. (Bratton 1998; Diamond 1994; Boadi 1996; Cox 1995; Drah 1996; Whitfield 2003; Kaldor 2003). Here, my particular focus is the mobilisation of the language of civil society both by the Asantehene and by the World Bank in the specific context of Ghana in the late 1990s.

Civil Society, Asantehene and the World Bank Partnership

The term civil society reintroduced into political thinking and social movements of the 1990s in Africa has gained strong purchase among academics, policymakers, social organizations, and activists (Comaroff 1999; Yarrow 2011; Hutchful 1995; Drah 1996). Scholars have debated the analytical and empirical utility of the concept (Comaroff 1999; Whitfield 2003; Yarrow 2011; Hearn 1995). The general impression offered is that civil society is an elusive term with manifold articulations and contested meanings. Whitfield (2003) in her study on civil society in Ghana demonstrates that 'Civil society is not a thing nor […] a fixed, static set of institutions and organizations' (385). It is rather a discursive category used by actors to legitimate their actions:

'Civil society is the outcome of the process in which the idea of civil society is discursively constructed and used by donor agencies, international NGOs, the Ghanaian government, and Ghanaian social organizations to legitimate their actions' (Whitfield 2003: 379)

Whitfield's conceptual framework on the dialectic of civil society as an idea and civil society as a process is useful for understanding the different ways in which the Bank and Asantehene deployed the term.

As already implied the Bank's adoption of EFA was set within a broad framework that -for the first time- interpreted development partnership beyond the state to include global networks (multilateral and bilateral donors) and civil society groups such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) (World Bank 1995).

In a 1995 operational document, the WB explicitly recognised civil society groups as partners describing them as 'private organizations that pursue activities to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development.' This included 'Northern-based charities such as CARE, Oxfam, and World Vision to community-based self-help groups in the South. In addition to research institutes, churches, professional associations, and lobby groups.' Nevertheless, the Bank's adoption of the principles of EFA under the label 'civil society' was framed within 'co-financing and consultation processes (i.e., project design, delivery and feedback)' to embed good governance principles in economic and social reforms (World Bank 1995). Studies demonstrate that by the mid-1990s aid institutions and donor organizations strongly linked the idea of civil society to frameworks of governance in their funding regimes to promote their political and economic objective in recipient countries (Williams & Young 1994; Hearn 1999).

The expansion of the Bank's partnership to include civil society opened up new discursive spaces to social actors like the Asantehene to reinterpret locally situated meanings and practices of development (i.e., *anibue*)- within international discourses of democracy and good governance. Thereby the Asantehene successfully emotes the growing concerns of many poor parents' hopes and dreams about their children's future- 'brilliant but needy'- whilst furthering his own hegemonic interests:

> Five years ago, I took an oath before my people on 6 May 1999 to rule with honesty and truth. [..] Our economy was not in the best of shape as a nation. In the Asante

> community itself, educational standards were failing, children were dropping out of school at an alarming rate to chase jobs for a living, and some children were attending school under trees [...]. I indicated to my chiefs and people that the central government alone could not solve all the problems of society. I argued that leaving conditions to deteriorate would amount to abandoning our social and moral functions. [...] The next thing I did was to set up the Otumfuo Education Fund, under an independent body, in order to harness contributions from all sectors of society and support bright but needy children in our communities (Osei Tutu II 2007).

For the cultural outsider, the Asantehene's claim that 'some children were attending school under trees', may seem hyperbolic. However, it relates to a popular legend that conjures rustic and crude imagery of rural terrain as a fitting metaphor for the poor conditions of education. Speaking to the chief of Jejeti whose village was a beneficiary of OEF projects a similar remark is made, 'for the longest, our children have been studying under trees' (Nana Darkwah II, interview, 6 May 2020) For how long is not known and neither could the chief verify the exact dates of the current school buildings. Rather it was the parents who alluded that some of the school buildings built in the 1990s were currently in disrepair and the villages in recent times have struggled to keep up with the cost of maintenance.

The depiction of the education system offered by the king stressed the falling standard and severe decline in the quality of education in Asante upon his ascension in the late 1990s. Donkoh (2011) claims that 'Between 1990 and 2000, the standard of pre-tertiary education in Ghana as a whole seemed to be declining.' And the decline was more dramatic in Asante, with the region recording some of the poorest Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results (71). The Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) is the mandatory examination to qualify students for admission into secondary and vocational schools, taken in the third year of Junior High School (JHS). Reasons given for the depressing results are 1) poor and inadequate facilities 2) lack of qualified teachers, especially within the rural areas, 3) inadequate pay for teachers 4) poor parents' inability to meet the rising cost of education and user fees, 5) government budgetary constraints (Donkoh 2011: 71). These observations are

also consistent with the findings on the progress of Education for All.[106] From the foregoing, then, it seems that the issue of quality provided the Asantehene with a 'hook' on which to hang his interventions and laid an avenue to reposition his office as a viable mechanism of democracy, good governance and 'citizen voice participation.' Setting chiefs apart from the state he positions them as members of civil society:

> These institutions and programmes are not intended to replace those that must be provided by the central and regional government, but rather to supplement them, [...] The chiefs can and do play a vital role in development which at once enhances democracy and sustains good governance [...]. Modern African States have not all succeeded in establishing viable insurance schemes, comprehensive health and educational systems, facilities for counselling the youth or role models in all fields of endeavour. The modern chief, stripped of political and executive power and formal financial support, has to address these basic needs for his people using his ingenuity, diplomacy, power of motivation and sometimes his own personal resources. In recent years, the Bank has [...] embraced mechanisms that promote citizen voice participation and allow non-governmental entities and other groups of citizens an effective say in the design and implementation of projects. Projects are not seen as viable unless they are owned by the people most directly affected by them (Osei Tutu II 2007).

Taking a closer reading of the Asantehene's invocation of civil society lends it a double meaning. Paradoxically, the king's usage of civil society rejects the state's exclusion of chiefs within development projects by holding chiefs as custodians representing the collective interest of a community of citizens, making them viable 'natural leaders of development' closer to the people (Osei Tutu II 2007). Thus, the Asantehene's emphasis on civil society simultaneously reaffirms chiefly jurisdictions as capable of providing public services such as 'health' and 'educational systems', and the development of 'proper infrastructure for the

[106] The Education for All (EFA 2000): assessment of progress; Ghana country report (1999) concluded that 'Disappointing results have also been achieved on the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) during the 1990s' (ix)

growth of democracy and good governance' albeit recast as complementary and not a substitute to the state. The underlying implication is that chiefs are / (should be) part of the state but not of the state, and without whom 'No concept of governance or development in Africa will be complete' (Osei Tutu II 2007). This notion of civil society also invokes 'donor-driven'/ international discourses of decentralisation to conveniently sidestep state influence and reposition chiefs as more reliable partners of international development. According to Whitfield (2003), the idea of civil society is also associated with activities that challenge the government's monopoly on development and the exclusion of sections of society (384).

In sum, both the Bank and the Asantehene mobilised the idea of civil society for different purposes. This process, however, entailed the reframing of older forms of hegemonic manoeuvres within new claims to legitimacy. The Bank utilized the notion of civil society as a means to generate consensus around structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) and to legitimate its political and economic liberalization objectives. Whereas the king's appropriation of the identity of civil society aimed at bypassing the state to legitimate chiefly participation in the planning, design, and implementation of development projects either by the Bank or the Ghanaian State.

Closing remarks

The chapter set out to interrogate the World Bank's partnership with the Asantehene (PPTAP), which resulted in the development of the OEF. It aimed to understand why the World Bank by the mid-1990s had broadened its partnership framework to include Traditional Authority in its conception of civil society. On a more general level, it also sought to illuminate chiefs' repositioning of authority in the post-colonial period beyond materialist assumptions. By so doing, it pushes at the boundaries of the existing literature on chiefs and development and the postcolonial state, which overwhelmingly features chiefs within development narratives of neopatrimonialism as brokers and gatekeepers. The intricate position of chiefs, straddling both civil society and the state without fully being part of either has been broadly overlooked.

Examining the changes in the global and national landscape of education policy, we found that the World Bank's adoption of civil society as a partner opened up new discursive spaces to social actors such as the Asantehene to reinterpret locally situated meanings and practices of development (i.e., *anibue*)- within international discourses. The positioning of chiefs as part of civil society via the OEF enabled the Asantehene to legitimate chiefly participation in educational development, and thereby enhance the legitimacy of his own office.

This certainly placed the king in the emerging donor exchange network of financial resources, and expertise funnelled through global aid institutions and development assistance to recipient countries and "clients". However, taking a closer look at the Asantehene's speech we found that his hegemonic interest surpassed the immediate concerns of self-aggrandizement and personal enrichment but speaks to broader political projects. As he cautioned the Bank and donor community, 'Remember that as traditional leaders, our social contract with our people is forever and not for the next election.' (Osei Tutu II 2007).

In this way, the Asantehene appropriated the identity of civil society to interpolate his authority within the Bank's development discourses and practices of grassroot democracy and good governance to claim a strong moral stake in educational development. This process was not only facilitated by the WB expansion of its partnership framework but also aided by the issues of quality and poor educational standards in Asante (i.e., B.E.C.E results), which provided the king with a hook on which to hang his interventions. Hence, Asante kings since the colonial period have striven to exert influence over the ideological components of power by mobilizing the ideational and affective impulses underpinning the lived experience and social circumstances of their subjects. Following from this, we maintain that the idea of civil society provided a common frame of reference for donors, WB and Asantehene to coalesce around, albeit their underlying motivations and objectives were different (Whitfield 2003: 390).

To conclude we hint that the king's relative success in intervening in the education sector was bound up with the desires, ambitions, and hopes of his subjects, which although echoes the longer history of royal engagement with formal education, is not in itself a direct continuation of what had come before. We partly agree with Yarrow (2011) that 'Development practice is

configured through historically specific social and cultural realities' (13). But it is not enough to chart the 'hopes' and 'despair' of those in whose name development projects are done (ibid 2). It is important to interrogate how such hopes and despair sustain the *legitimacy* of development projects and of those who design, lead, fund and implement development: technology interventions, managerial schemes, the position of actors and its cadre of experts (see Chapter 4). The subsequent chapters (4 and 5) pick up these themes to illuminate how the OEF functioned as a charitable organization, its relationship with beneficiaries and the practices and technologies that aided its daily operations.

Chapter 4. 'Brilliant but needy'- OEF Scholarship Application

Introduction

'Here in Ghana when you go for an interview, they don't ask what you know but who sent you!' (Student, personal communication, 10, July 2020)

The quote above reflects a former applicant's perception of how the OEF administered scholarship claims. It also speaks to the centrality of interpersonal relationships in providing charitable services and educational support. This chapter examines how the OEF functioned as a charitable organization and its relationship with beneficiaries. It interrogates the role of personal relations in the allocation of educational support and advocates for a closer reading of how personal relations are enacted and what they are invoked to do within specific development situations.

An economy of corruption in Africa

Critiques of development in Africa have largely explained this dynamic through the language of corruption (Ekeh 1975; Bayart 1989). Corruption is often thought to occur within bureaucracies when (officeholders, politicians, and officials) misuse public office for private gain. As mentioned earlier, Ekeh (1975) relates the emergence of corruption to patron and client relations in Africa: It [corruption] arises 'directly from the amorality of the civic public and the legitimation of the need to seize largesse from the civic public in order to benefit the primordial public' (110). From this perspective, several writers have viewed development as constituting new resources that perpetuate patron and client relations in Africa. Bayart (1989; 1993) propounded the term extraversion to describe Africa's marginalisation within the global system as a feature of African elite politics. This takes the form of African leaders or political classes invoking development to exploit their country's unequal relationship with other states such as the donor community or former colonial powers. They do this to assert control over the interfaces between their people and the transfer of resources both within and outside their countries, thereby enhancing their own power and influence. While Bayart's concept of extraversion focuses to a large extent on state domination, it underscores brokerage tactics that promote informal power networks through practices of manipulation and appropriation in the form of rent-seeking, prebendalism, clientelism, neopatrimonialism,

etc. Bayart also points to a range of social actors that facilitate the process (e.g., politicians, chiefs, civil service, officer class, managerial class). Applying the logic of extraversion to how the state works in Africa, Chabal and Daloz (1999) view the ubiquity of informal interactions in the development context in Africa as conduits for rent-seeking practices by African elites. From a positivist position, Hyden (2005) holds the durability of social ties and affective bonds to be responsible for the weakening of formal institutions in Africa by promoting 'an economy of affection' (72). The economy of affection, 'not unique to' but 'particularly noticeable in Africa', relates to a social logic 'constituted by personal investments in reciprocal relations with other individuals as a means of achieving goals that are seen as otherwise impossible to attain' (73). According to Hyden, this has led to the institutionalisation of informal structures to the point where it subverts the way formal institutions are supposed to operate on the continent (72). Besides the teleological explanation of an affective economy as a 'pragmatic' solution for achieving the 'common good,' the reification of social relations in Africa as a feature of collective logic neglects the historical and cultural nuances that give rise to context-specific patterns. The underlying premise that informal networks in African society and institutions can have a dynamic and positive effect like fostering the 'civic good' has also gained traction in the literature (Karlstrom1999; MacGaffey 1994).

By and large, Africa's social connectedness, commingled with stereotypes of venal elites is frequently offered as the basis for corruption in state and public institutions (Lemarchand and Legg 1972; Bratton and Van de Walle 1997; Medard 1982). In this vein, the presence of NGOs and charities is said to be a façade that 'serve[s] the strategic interests of "big men"' (Yarrow 2011: 8). Hence, chiefs' engagement in development continues to draw suspicion, as evident by references to the Asantehene and his partnership with the WB in the academic literature.

OEF and Patronage

In recent academic discussions, the Asantehene and his development initiatives have come under scrutiny. Knierzinger (2011) refers to the partnership between the World Bank and the Asantehene Otumfuo Osei Tutu II as a form of entrepreneurial 'strategy of retaining power and earning a living' by traditional authorities (2). Speaking of the same partnership, Yarrow (2011) indicates that the idea of extraversion might have some 'descriptive purchase' (145).

This he explains is because '[chiefs and elites] seek to pursue personal and political projects by repositioning themselves as brokers of development 'to exploit the discursive and financial resources associated with development projects' (ibid). He presents the PPTAP initiative as an instance of extraversion, in the sense that it enabled the Asantehene to exploit international discourses of 'participatory development' to acquire external resources. This, in turn, furthered his political agenda to bolster his authority and personal influence by building legitimacy among the public through redistributive patronage structures and thereby reinforcing his utility to the government (143-5). Donkoh (2011) implies that under the management of the OEF, scholarship allocations served patrimonial and personal ends. She claims that the effectiveness of the Fund was hampered through the use of 'excessive patronage', or *dwantoa*, which came in two main forms: 'People in authority sponsor applicants who do not satisfy the Fund's criteria for beneficiaries. Others also use the Otumfuo's name to swell the number of beneficiaries by adding to applicants that have already been selected.' (76) *Dwantoa,* which literally means 'run to seek refuge,' is an offstage system of petitioning that invokes informal relations by appealing to big men, chiefs, and solidarity networks to intercede on behalf of applicants (76). She views these factors as the primary reason why an unspecified, albeit significant number of ineligible applicants received support.

Beyond corruption

Undoubtedly, the vocabulary of corruption has been useful in enriching our understanding of patron/ client relations against a milieu of public institutions: charities, government ministries, corporations, etc. (Lemarchand and Legg 1972: 167; Bratton and Van de Walle 1997; Medard 1982; Chabal and Daloz 1999). However, the language of corruption tends to oversimplify the intricate ways in which informal networks are mobilised and manifest within the development context (Mkandawire 2015). This is not to say that claims of corruption in connection to the OEF are without justification. But the term corruption as an analytic device is too 'blunt' and too 'formulaic' an 'instrument' that fails to provide adequate understanding of specific situations, particularly regarding 'the contradictory interests, ideologies, and motivations of social actors' (Mkandawire 2013: 8 and 40).

I argue that the notion of corruption does not explain how the OEF operates or why applicants without access to big men were successful in their claims for support. Rather, my findings suggest that the invocation of personal relations did not always impose a reliance on or an entrenchment of embedded patronage systems. Sometimes, it allowed the OEF to diversify its networks. This fostered the creation of institutional alliances or links between the OEF, and other education providers based on horizontal relations of reciprocity and mutual interdependence. As a result, the Fund was able to bypass Manhyia/ the king, where necessary, to align its decision-making with its formal policy on eligibility: 'brilliant but needy'. Furthermore, the eligibility criteria, brilliant but needy though intended to offer a fair and equitable process for the allocation of scholarship and education support, was unremittingly elusive (Brenya, interview, 25 March 2019). This is partly because the implementation of the policy heavily relied on interpretations that functionaries of the Fund brought with them, but these interpretations were also influenced by the compelling nature of applicants' heartfelt 'petitions' for support.

Donors, Development programmers and practitioners frequently emphasise written applications, criteria, and records of decisions as tools to enhance objectivity and impartiality in the distribution of scarce resources. Examining application letters, I argue that contrary to what formal interaction may generally suggest, applicants often come loaded with personal and emotional stories of the human condition. The fervent accounts of applicants' personal woes and misfortunes, and how some of these accounts provoked displays of social empathy, reveal the dynamic network of affection that the literacy practices of both applicants and decision-makers are embedded in.

By the phrase network of affection, I refer to ideological and moral expressions that resonate with a set of social norms, values, and established beliefs. This should not be mistaken for the general sense of the word affection, which often connotes an emotional attachment to a person, a thing, or an idea. Our emphasis on the 'affective' rejects the singular and essentialist undertones of African logic implied in the seductive idea of a noticeable economy of affection, or the opportunistic predations of public resources by 'big men' associated with the 'civic amorality' of the post-colonial condition (Ekeh 1975; Hyden 2005). Both approaches draw on the assumed universal distinctions between formal and informal interactions in bureaucratic

practices (Pitcher et al 2009). Our understanding of a network of affection is set against the analysis of OEF application processes as deeply embedded within social relations that further shape and engender specific administrative practices, literary registers, and forms of documentation (Felten and von Oertzen 2020). And thereby, dispenses with normative notions of African social logic and divergent practices of bureaucracy.

Applying the analysis of Barber (2007) and Street (2013) to OEF applicants, we argue that literacy is not merely a neutral vehicle or technology with predictable cognitive and social effects, nor one that automatically serves bureaucratic goals. Quite on the contrary, it is an embedded social practice deployed by applicants to compensate for their weak positioning within the sociocultural networks of patronage (Barber 2007). Understanding local literacy practices helps us to better appreciate how affective ties are invoked and what kinds of resources they help to secure. Development bureaucracies should therefore take seriously the literacy practices of local communities, which are embedded in affective dynamics.

Overall, the chapter argues that development does not operate outside of the personalised structures of sensibility, sentimentality, and feelings, but through them. After all, irrespective of the kind of intervention or the target group, development projects generally seek to alleviate the suffering of a community or group believed to be in need of assistance. In the case of the OEF, those who qualified for support often depended on the nature of their appeal. Hence successful applicants without powerful networks mobilised shared norms and values to enact socially acceptable forms of supplication. In other words, the nature of their begging was delicately crafted to make it worthy of pity and support on the reader's part. Framing our discussion within allegations of corruption, I do not intend to adjudicate on the extent to which this is true, but instead examine the invocation of personalised relations and structures within the formal practices of scholarship administration. Implicitly, this brings up the issue of how we should interpret the terms formal/ informal in connection with the personal and impersonal, which are commonly used in critiques of corruption.

Prickly terms and vague boundaries

Formal/ informal as popularly used in the literature constitutes the classification of institutional (laws, written rules, official protocols) (North 1990: 83) and social orders (kinship, social networks, customs, coping strategies, traditions) respectively (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999; Bayart 1999; Lund 2007). The personal/ impersonal distinction mostly relates to self-serving *vis-a-vis* impartial rules and criteria of behaviour or logic that inform formal/ informal arrangements respectively (Meagher 2007). Consequently, we treat the terms formal/informal and personal/ impersonal as analytical references as opposed to normative concepts with intrinsic differences, and although they are related, they are not synonymous. Meagher (2007) argues that these terms, in the true sense, are fraught with conceptual difficulties, as their boundaries are often unclear and intertwined to such an extent that making meaningful distinctions becomes irrelevant. She stresses the 'need for caution in reassessments of the role of informal institutions in contemporary state-building and service delivery' (4).

Structure

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section reflects on the particular context of the current Asante king Osei Tutu II's engagement with development through the OEF and explores how the OEF worked as a charity: who ran it, why these people were chosen, how it worked, how they decided on their objectives and selected beneficiaries. It examines the norms that shape OEF's approach towards development administration, and it closely interrogates and problematises the assumed universal distinction between 'personalised' and 'impersonalised' interactions against the complex realities in which the OEF had to operate. The second section looks at the Akan system of *dwantoa*, an offstage system of petitioning that uses big men, chiefs, and solidarity networks to intercede on behalf of applicants (Donkoh 2011). Following this, the third section examines how those without powerful networks utilised literacy in the form of application letters to appeal to the heartstrings of the funder. [107]

[107] "I beg" is a common expression in Ghana for people who speak English, and that it has equivalents in Twi and other Ghanaian languages.

Chiefs and Development

In the heart of the business district of Kumasi, Adum, the OEF has its office located on the third floor of the SSNIT building. The office is partitioned into two rooms: a reception area where the secretary and project manager's desk are located and a larger room which belongs to the director. When I visited, the rooms felt unperturbed by the passage of time. A stockpile of papers and documents had gathered over the years, collecting dust, and spilling out of the filing cabinets onto the office floors. The shelves were disorderly. The computers, a throwback from the early 2000s, were in complete disuse, possessing all the hallmarks of a bygone era. The prevailing state of inertia, however, was often interrupted by the irregular flow of deferential visitors looking for the director. Many of these visitors had come to seek support for their child, younger relative or sibling. On occasion, individual students, mostly in higher education, also turned up in person to request support. During my placement at the office, it was an open secret to members of the Kumasi public that the OEF was not what it once used to be. Some regarded it to be defunct (OEF, interview, 2 April 2019) and even quipped that it had become a 'toothless bulldog' (OEF, interview, 25, March 2019). However, this did not deter everyone; some people still believed that the OEF could come to their aid.

Who is a big man?

Lentz (1998) claims that in Ghana the term 'big men' colloquially refers to a person of substance (man/woman) (52-3). In this vein, the big man label covers a wide range of personalities: successful businessmen, politicians, chiefs, religious leaders, academics, journalists, landlords, local leaders, warlords, etc.

Regarding the OEF, these persons of 'substance' could be said to be those with a considerable degree of influence over decision-making structures, namely, the Asantehene, politicians, paramount chiefs, and board members. Applicants as we come to learn usually utilised established practices i.e., *dwantoa* (run to seek refuge) to guarantee a higher chance of success. The Akan system of *dwantoa* is an offstage system of petitioning that invokes informal relations by appealing to big men, chiefs, and solidarity networks to intercede on behalf of applicants (Donkoh 2011). In this vein, it has been suggested that the Fund came to

serve the personal interest of patrons since beneficiaries were more likely to direct their gratitude towards their patrons who made it possible for them to access the Fund (ibid). This also meant that often than not scholarships and assistance went to those that had powerful connections and not necessarily those that the Fund was initially set up to help. But to avoid an overly simplistic perspective of patron/ client relations, development, and resource distribution, it is worth examining the extent to which the OEF's use of personal relations translates into corruption. This challenge raises two main concerns: a) how did the OEF avail themselves of patronage systems, and b) what was the specific nature of the interaction between the OEF and applicants? Taking these questions as a general guide, the ongoing enquiry reflects how the OEF was constituted and operated as a charity.

A bumpy start

The *Trust Deed* of the OEF sets out the governance of the Fund. The king is named the 'Settlor', with his involvement limited to that of an 'advisor', leaving the board of trustees to oversee the management of the Fund. The board is vested with powers of appointment, disbursement of funds, etc, though in consultation with the king. The executive branch consists of the director (Executive Secretary), office managers and project officers, who handle the day-to-day running of the office. The board of trustees at any one time should be composed of 'not less than five or more than nineteen members' (OEF 1999). These members included men of the clergy, national high court judges, academics, educational professionals, accountants, and successful entrepreneurs. Together they represented what is often designated in the literature by the shorthand 'big men'. The board met once every month to discuss the objectives of the organisation and review students' applications in adherence to its working policy of 'brilliant but needy'. Apart from the director and employees of the OEF, who received monthly payments for their roles, appointees to the board contributed their time and expertise on a pro bono basis.

In the initial phase of the OEF, the Fund was closely tied to the Asantehene's Palace (Manhiya) administration, having been built on the existing structures of the Jubilee Foundation (under Otumfuo Opoku Ware II) located at the Kumasi Traditional Council. According to the head archivist at Manhyia Museum and formerly an accountant of the Jubilee Foundation:

> When Otumfuo Osei (II) came in and established the Education Fund, there was more a less a merger. So more or less I became part of the Education Fund in some way. We were more or less pursuing the same agenda, so I offered my assistance to the Otumfuo Education Fund (Brobbey, interview, 10 March 2020).

Brobbey's appointment came about as a result of his close ties to the Palace administration. Manhyia literally means a 'place where the state [oman] meets [hyia]'. It is also where the Asantehene's Palace is located as well as serving as a secretariat that manages the king's estate, commercial, and charitable endeavours. As a 'servant' of the king's royal estate - *asomfo* - Brobbey had spent most of his adult career moving from one department to the other. The historical literature on Ashanti's traditional administration shows that the *asomfo* were the 'pure servants' of the state and were largely recruited from the king's household, including slaves and servants (McCaskie 1995 and Wilks 1975). The extent to which Brobbey's background bore an exact likeness to the functionaries of the precolonial state is not quite certain, as he was circumspect about revealing the nature of his ties to Manhyia. Nonetheless, it is common practice for Asante kings in the 21st century to recruit personnel within the Palace administration from chiefly families and royal households within the Kumasi traditional hierarchy, especially from the *mmamadwa* (reserved for the sons and patrilineal grandsons of the Asantehene).[108] The present Private Secretary of the Asantehene, Lawrence Akwasi Prempeh is a grandson (*ohenenana*) of Prempe II. On the other hand, Dr Brenya, a former beneficiary of the OEF and currently a Sociology lecturer at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology (KNUST), came to occupy his role as administrative manager purely by coincidence. Brenya was then a recent graduate undertaking his national service at the Kumasi Traditional Council when he was assigned to take up clerical functions of the OEF. According to him this involved 'standardising and organising a system of receipts for fund-raising and to ensure better accountability' (Brenya, interview, 25 March 2019). Thus, a mini secretariat was created out of the office of the Kumasi Traditional Council (ibid).

[108] See (Wilks 1974:455) for Mmamadwa (patrilineal stools for sons and grandsons of former occupants) and abusua dwa (family stool inherited matrilineally)

The OEF then came to replace the Jubilee Foundation but still fell under Manhyia's sphere of control.

However, relations between the Fund and Manhyia were not always smooth, and on occasion prompted questions about divergent organisational procedures and practices. A key informant tells of an incident revealing the Palace's lack of understanding of why universities use student identification numbers to avoid impersonation by others. This unfortunate situation resulted in the misallocation and expropriation of funds:

> So we sent the names to Manhyia and they put the names out. The mistake they made was not to put the student ID number. And of course, as Asante names, there are so many. […] So at the time we had a lot of problems with students posing as somebody else. That was the problem we had in the first year. So when the money came, we had final-year students who went and collected money because they had the same names. This was when we had the shock. We checked and realised that Manhyia published the names without their index numbers. So we decided that the following year we would do things differently. (OEF, Interview, 28 March 2020).

However, doing things differently would be a form of a mixed blessing. The appointment of a directorate in 2001/2002 was soon followed by the relocation of the Fund to Adum, SSNIT house. This offered the OEF a semblance of autonomy from Manhyia and accessibility to the public, allowing the board and secretariat to decide on funding priorities. According to a former employee:

> You know Adum was the business hub of Kumasi [...] so if you have the Education Fund in the business hub it presupposes that the people will have access to the fund than drive all the way to the palace, where sometimes when you don't even know whether to go to the king, linguist or to go the king's private secretary (OEF, interview, 7 November 2020).

For the first five years, the OEF primarily concentrated its efforts within pre-tertiary education: Basic (including Junior Secondary JSS) and Senior Secondary Schools (SSS). Between 1997 and 2000, the declining state of education in Asante had become evident (Busia and Adjei 2020). State schools in the region recorded some of the poorest Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) results as compared to previous years (Donkoh 2011; EFA 2000).[109] Furthermore, an evaluation of the regional performance of public schools in English and Mathematics (1992-1997) based on the Criterion-Reference Test (CRT) of year 6 pupils shows the Ashanti region with the lowest mean score of 28.9%, falling behind the rest of the country, except for the Northern region which recorded a mean score of 26.7%.[110] Low performance of literacy and numeracy were recorded nationally, with CRT results for primary schools in the country falling below 35% (MOE 1999).[111] This was due to poor and inadequate educational facilities; very low pay, poor conditions, and lack of qualified teachers; financial difficulties on the part of parents; and central government budgetary constraints (Donkoh 2011, Busia and Adjei 2020). In addressing the problem, the OEF devised two main streams of support: the provision of scholarships and bursaries to 'brilliant but needy' students, and direct assistance to schools by providing school materials and development of school infrastructure. The latter was achieved partly in partnership with government educational agencies (i.e., GETFund and the Ashanti Regional Education Directorate) (OEF 2004; Busia and Adjei 2020).

Another challenge that the OEF faced was the introduction of user fees for public services by the Ghanaian government. The impact of user fees on the education system in Ghana has been well documented, and as such a quick recap would suffice (Little 2010; Akyeampong 2009; MOE 1996; Thompson and Casely-Hayford 2008). User fees became a permanent fixture of national education policy in the 1980s and 1990s, largely as a result of the failing

[109] See The Education for All (EFA 2000): assessment of progress; Ghana country report (1999)
[110] See MOE (1999) Criterion Reference Tests. Performance of Pupils in Basic Schools (1992-1997)
[111] CRT measures students' performance against standardised criteria of learning. The measure instituted in 1992, is based on a randomly chosen subset, a five percent subset of primarily 6 pupils. This sample size provides the MOE with a predetermined level of confidence in extrapolating from the performance of the sample to that of all Primary 6 pupils across the country (EFA 2000).

education system. Notwithstanding that since independence education in Ghana was declared tuition-free from primary to university, by the 1970s non-tuition costs, including student maintenance were passed onto students/ parents/ guardians (Kotey 1992).

Faced with political instability (1966-1981) and a crippling economic crisis in the 1980s and 1990s, Ghana's education system stood on the verge of collapse. With a sharp fall in government revenue as a percentage of GDP from 20% in 1970 to less than 5% in 1983, the percentage of GDP allocated to education dropped from 6.4% in 1976 to 1.7% around the same period (Nowak 1996; Kadingdi 2004). According to Aziabah (2018) the dire economic conditions 'virtually made it impossible for the state to meaningfully meet its social services obligations' (48). From 1980/81 to 1987/88, the average growth rate of primary enrolments stood at 1.59%, well below the 3% growth rate of the school-age population (Akyeampong 2009). Government spending on tertiary education declined by one-fifth of the former proportion of educational expenditure, dropping from 15% of the education budget to 12% between 1993 and 1999 (Girdwood 1999). In 1983, the incoming PNDC regime turned to the IMF and the World Bank for support. The IMF and the World Bank insisted on the adoption of market policies and principles in national education provision under its structural adjustment programmes. This, in simple terms, meant the transfer of the cost of educational services to students and parents through the introduction of user fees and privatisation of ancillary services (Mundy 2006; Vetterlein 2012).

The emergence of user fees in public educational institutions was also concomitant with shifts in the global education agenda and funding priorities of bilateral donors. The Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 and the World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) in 1990 sought to reaffirm education as a human right and expand educational access to the marginalized poor (Acheampong and Kayange 2017). Following the international conference on education in Jomtien, EFA was adopted in national education policy and formed a cornerstone of the country's implementation of free compulsory universal basic education (FCUBE) (Akyeampong 2009). That said it is worth noting that Ghana's education reforms were central to the discussions and texts at the World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien in 1990 (UNESCO 1990 and Little 2010). As pointed out by a former secretary of

education 'Jomtien was a dovetailing of policy, rather a "Western" agenda imposed by donor governments on aid-recipient countries document' (quoted in Little, 2010:36).

With a few exceptions, FCUBE was a continuation of the New Education Reform Programme (NERP) in 1987 (Kadingdi 2004). Set against the backdrop of structural adjustment prescription, the implementation of FCUBE placed more emphasis on improving educational access by abolishing fees for basic education (MOE 1996: 15). The abolition of fees was based on the Bank's calculation that the rate of return to education (RORE) was highest for primary and basic education as compared to vocational and tertiary education (Bennell 1996; Psacharopoulos, 1994). RORE measured the cost and benefit stream associated with a given level of schooling to individual income and state investments in education (ibid). Nonetheless, emphasis on cost sharing meant that parents and communities had to pay for education in the form of indirect charges and user fees (Mundy 2006). This placed a difficult toll on poor parents, forcing them to balance their decision to send their children to school based on gender preference and the opportunity cost of child labour (Mundy 2006). Not surprisingly, drop-out rates at the basic education level remained relatively higher amongst girls than boys (Daddieh 2003; Atuahene and Ansah 2013).

Reforms at the tertiary level also sought to address the prolonged period of under-funding and decline. A new policy framework was initiated by the PNDC government, which was designed to promote participation and access to tertiary education more cost-effectively and sustainably. The White Paper entitled *Reforms to the Tertiary Education System* (1991) set out a series of proposals that promoted cost sharing and cost recovery measures intending to guarantee 'free tuition' for all (Girdwood 1999). Free tuition was to correspond with student loan provision; to supplement the removal of government subvention and subsidies for boarding and lodging, and the privatisation of services (e.g., catering, educational facilities) (World Bank 1994). This included the introduction of user charges to cover recurrent expenditures of public universities and vocational institutions (Dary and James 2019). Analysis of student loans during this period shows that its implementation was hamstrung by the lack of political will, and administrative and technical challenges (Girdwood 1999; Atuahene 2008; Atuahene and Ansah 2013). They point to the exorbitant level of interest rates and the lack of targeted provision for students from low socio-economic backgrounds as creating barriers

to higher education for the poor. Research shows that education reforms in Ghana in the 1990s, whilst stressing demand side factors, failed to adequately address issues of equity (socio-economic, gender, spatial, etc.) (Girdwood 1999; Atuahene 2008; Atuahene and Ansah 2013).

As noted in the previous chapter, chiefs in Africa have utilised development to demonstrate their resourcefulness and reinforce their relevance to the state and at the same time to gain the loyalty of their people, including by stepping in where the state appears to have fallen short (Ray and van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal 1996). It was therefore crucial for the OEF to plug the gap within government policy by responding to the financial needs of students from poor households, hence the emphasis on 'brilliant but needy'. At the king's behest, Manhyia instructed the board to make available a total of 180 million cedis for paying user fees of about 600 students, 200 each in the University of Ghana (Legon), the University of Cape Coast and in KNUST (Kumasi) (OEF, interview, 26 March 2019). The board would however make a U-turn on this decision after having distributed funding to only 100 tertiary students:

> After the crisis of management situation in the year 2000, the Fund has not as a matter of policy been giving scholarships to students as a result of financial constraints. About 100 students have, however, been given some financial assistance over the past four years (OEF 2004)

The decision to discontinue the policy as implied by (Donkoh 2011) seemed to have followed the logic of RORE. It was based on the rationale that basic primary education was more critical for early development and since after the 'second cycle (secondary school) education, one would be in a position to seek employment and fend for themselves' (73). Furthermore, behind the seemingly technical rationale, the 'crisis of management' alluded to continuing tensions between Manhyia and the Secretariat over the mode of application. Formal applications for funds came in two main forms: from institutions or schools and individuals. This allowed the OEF the chance to mean test the application based on its policy of 'brilliant but needy' or conduct a preliminary 'needs analysis' to ascertain the merits of the institution's claim for support with 'basic educational infrastructure'. An employee explained:

> The other side where it also became problematic because people could also really appeal to Manhyia and when those things [applications] come in you accept it. As a matter of fact, I can say that you don't even do a background check. Because there are people that probably came to Otumfuo himself and Otumfuo has promised, I mean, a green pen, signed the letter. You can't question it. (OEF, interview, 25 March 2019).[112]

The board would further streamline its decision processes towards a targeted and coherent system that sought to provide cost-effective but scalable provision. Nonetheless, the decision to reassess the Secretariat's mode of assistance was arrived at in consultation with the king:

> At a point in time, the board asked to reassess the mode of giving assistance. A decision was made by the board that if they support schools instead of individuals, they might be in a position to reach out to more people, so we shifted from giving out more scholarships to individuals to providing furniture and amenities to institutions. It became more of a capital investment […] For many of those things, it was actually Otumfuo identifying the projects. (OEF, interview, 25 March 2019).

Diversifying patronage

By formalising application processes to enhance provision and assistance to pre-tertiary institutions, the OEF was able to help schools in need of critical assistance, especially where state support wasn't forthcoming or seemed uncertain. A case in point was the appeal of the headmistress of St Louis Senior Girls High School to the OEF for assistance when their roofing got ripped off after a torrential downpour in the early 2000s. Attention was also placed on 'gender' education through the development of educational facilities in girls' schools to acceptable standards.[113] Atwiwamam, a mixed secondary in the rural community of the Bosomtwe district, was adopted by the Fund. Through its partnership with the GETFund

[112] Whilst the practice seems to have waned, green pens were usually used by officials and figures of authority to sign of documents, approve or record transactions. The green pen as per convention bears a mark of authority.

[113] The expression gender education was often used by some interviewees in the same sense as the popular terms "girls education" or "girl child education" to emphasise a strong focus on formal schooling and the educational development of girls.

(Ghana Educational Trust Fund), Atwiwamam was transformed into an all-female school. The school was furnished with new building school blocks, renovated dormitories, toilets, and laundry facilities (Busia and Adjei 2020). Arguably, the significance given to girls' education by the OEF was due to the widening gender gap in public education in Ghana (OEF, interview, 26 March 2019). Atuahene and Ansah (2013) observe that despite the modest gains made by FCUBE in expanding educational access, increases in enrolment were offset by high dropout rates and widening gender disparity. Hence, the coming of the millennium development goal at the turn of the century placed girls' education as one of its central focuses in the global push towards education for all (UNESCO 2011).

The Fund also provided facilities and support to schools and students outside of Asante, including Ada Secondary School, Sehwi Wiaso Secondary School, and Wesley Girls' High School (Central Region) (OEF, 2004). Support to students and educational institutions outside of Asante was partly a practical response to the fact that children from the region travel to all parts of the country for secondary and tertiary education. In some cases, as in support for the kingdom of Dagbon in the northern region, the decision entailed political calculations (see Chapter 6). Another promising aspect of the Fund that often goes unmentioned is that it placed considerable emphasis on vocational education (OEF, interview, 26 March 2019). Even at a point where the Fund had cut back financial assistance to students in tertiary institutions, students for vocational and technical education were given preferential assistance.

The policy changes also meant that the Fund could foster close relations with institutions beyond Manhyia's surveillance or control. By so doing, it was able to institute mitigating mechanisms for the reduction of direct financial assistance to tertiary students, in addition to enhancing service provisions for its target group. One particular area of such intervention was the obtainment of admissions for students in tertiary education as part of its ancillary support. The Executive Secretary recounts how personal relations between the Fund and institutions were fostered on the exchanges of goodwill and in-kind support:

> Somebody brought us a machine and we took one to the university hospital. The vice chancellor at that time was so impressed. So anytime we took a student there, provided you qualify he would make sure that you get admission. […]..*hmm*. For

> instance, there was one headmaster with a few students that had to pay for their exams at a certain date. He told me that 17 of his students had not paid and the 17 were some of his best students, about 5 students or so he wanted to know whether we could help, and I said he should bring me the total… So the next day I sent him the check, and the guy got here weeping with joy. So he said Nana every year, if you want admission for students. He did that for three years until he went on retirement (OEF, interview, 26, March 2019).

Generally, admission to the universities is based on a student's performance on the national entrance examination: the West Africa Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) (Atuahene and Ansah 2013). Students who meet the minimum entry but not the universities' competitive admission 'cut off' point are admitted as tuition-paying (ibid:8). Whereas those who meet the competitive requirements are admitted on regular status. Regular students do not pay tuition, except for user fees (ibid). User fees often cover a raft of charges ranging from admissions fees, technology fees, examination fees, academic facility user fees, medical services fees, venture capital fees, and so on. Acheampong (2016) documents several accounts of academically brilliant but poor students who either had to defer offers or turn them down due to their inability to meet the high cost of admissions fees. In some cases, universities keen to fill up spaces made it a requirement that prospective students should be either in full or part-time employment (21). By diversifying and diverting its personal connections away from Manhyia, the OEF was able to maintain some level of support to students in the tertiary sector at a modest cost and without compromising its provision of basic education.

Debating impact

By 2009, it was reported that the OEF had supported over 4,000 students across three levels – primary, secondary, and university (New African 2019; Busia and Adjei 2020). During this period the Fund had successfully expanded its scholarship offers through partnerships with academic institutions in the United States. Fully funded scholarships were provided by Ohio University and Oral Roberts to first-class degree holders selected by the OEF. It is worth noting that out of the six recipients of these scholarships, two had close ties to the OEF as former

employees. Brenya and Asare (2011) view the OEF as a good example of traditional authorities' influence on education policy. They record the success of the OEF and its impact on the shift in the practice of cost sharing in national education policy towards addressing issues of equitable access to education. They also allude to OEF's efforts in championing the idea of public participation in education finance aimed at 'brilliant but needy' students. This, they claim, formed the basis of the National Union of Ghana Students' proposals for education finance reforms to the government, which was ratified by the Ghanaian parliament in the form of the GETFund Act 581 in August 2000. The reform aimed to improve access to tertiary education for students from low socio-economic backgrounds by providing them with financial assistance. It also sought to assist schools with the provision of educational amenities and facilities (Atuahene 2006). The GetFund is a public trust with the mandate to supplement government budgetary allocations to education through a levy of 2.5% Value Added Tax (VAT) on goods and services purchased by the public (GETFund Bill 581).

Notwithstanding OEF's influence on national education policy, it remains difficult to fully assess its impact on equitable access to education for those in dire need or poor. Students' eligibility on the grounds of neediness seemed circumstantial. As one participant described:

> the greatest problem for us was the people that came from the paramountcy [traditional areas]. We had no way of assessing the background […] the needy part became a problem for us […] but the general level of poverty in the paramountcies in Ghana was so high, so they met the needy part (OEF, interview, 25 March 2019).

Atuahene (2009) further points out that since the majority of the adult working population in Ghana works in informal sectors, 'determining neediness using information about family household income and earnings is quite difficult' (52).

Additionally, existing records of the OEF are unreliable, especially concerning support provision to individual students. Donkoh (2011) points to 'the use of excessive patronage by applicants' as a plausible explanation (76-7). *Dwantoa*, a traditional procedure of appeal, is claimed to have allowed those who did not meet the criteria to bypass 'means testing', by soliciting the help of persons of authority or influence to step in and act on their behalf (ibid).

In this way, it is argued that rather than the eligible applicants, it is mostly those with the 'most influential social and political networks - big men - who benefit' (ibid). Implicitly, the emphasis on social and political networks indexes personal connections as parallel but veritable channels of resource distribution in patronage systems. Although this is partly true, the proportion of successful applicants that used this method is unknown and the extent to which it undermined equitable access to OEF scholarships for the brilliant but needy cannot be confidently verified.[114] Taking into account that *dwantoa* was not the only or dominant form of personalised strategies used by applicants, it could also be that the prevalence of informal practices points to factors beyond the forces of patronage. By this, I refer to the notion that beneficiaries due to their proximity to the power structures of the OEF have access to different types of big men (politicians, chiefs, businessmen, headmasters, vice-chancellors, and trustees) that could advance their cause. As our finding suggests, the OEF strategically diversified its patronage relations by forming close connections with heads of recipient institutions, which allowed them to wrest a degree of autonomy in decision-making from the Palace. Even so, the picture remains incomplete, particularly concerning successful beneficiaries who, in light of evidence gathered from interviews with trustees and from application processes, appeared to have had no access to big men.

To understand this better, I first turn to the case of Kofi (pseudonym), a struggling student who came to the office in search of support. Kofi's case does support Donkoh's analysis to a degree, but at the same time goes to show that there are wider social forces at play. To piece together something of a complete picture, I take a closer look at the mode of application by the cohort of students who did not have access to big men to understand the nature of their dealings with the OEF. The aim is to add to the rich and growing body of literature on the dynamic role of personal networks within the development context.

[114] Some of the former beneficiaries spoke about relying on the influence of prominent chiefs and businessmen in the country in applying for OEF support. Whilst the majority hinted that their applications were usually made to the OEF through a 'relative', or personal contact, rather than sending them directly through the official channel.

'Nipa ho yɛ mɔbɔ' (man is pitiable)[115]

Kofi is in a teacher training college and waiting to sit his exams but cannot afford the exam fees. He walks with a pronounced limp that distorts his frame; a condition contracted in childhood due to the polio virus. Against these odds, he has maintained good grades throughout his education. In the past two years, he has had to bury both parents and has been returning to his village to work on the family cocoa farm to meet the funeral debts. But this is not enough to cover expenses for books, outstanding rent, and exam fees. As the eldest sibling of seven, much is expected from him. The cocoa farm was also of a 'modest size' that provided just about enough for the family's upkeep. 'It is a hard job, a very intense "drudge"' (*ɛyɛ adwuma din*), he tells me. Finding paid employment has also not been easy for him, due to his frail appearance. I asked him how the meeting went with the director. He responds, "He's a good man you know, it's just a shame, but let's see what God can do." The OEF sadly cannot help Kofi but provided him with a reference to the OTCF, an alternative educational fund (see following chapter). The director also offered him a generous token of 50 Ghana cedis as transportation fare. The secretary, in dismay, expressed profound regret at the thought of the OEF not being able to help, "*nipa ho yɛ mɔbɔ*" (man is pitiable).

Heart-wrenching stories like that of Kofi's are not uncommon. Students who did not have any person to intercede on their behalf seemed to rely heavily on the emotional effects of their personal narratives. This was largely executed through application letters. Keeping in mind Donkoh's claim that the excessive use of patronage was the reason why deserving students like Kofi lost out, we now turn to applicants' use of the mode of written communication (i.e., letters) to anchor their claims of eligibility.

Before we examine application letters, it is important to point out that development debates, especially post-structuralist critiques, have drawn overwhelming attention to the role of discourse and subject positions in shaping development outcomes (Ferguson 1994; Escobar 1995; Rahnema 1992; Sachs 1992; Greenstein 2009). However, they seem to show only a

[115] As it is with most twi expressions the term '*[m]mɔbɔ'* encompasses a broader idea depending on the context. In the general sense, it describes the wretched state of the human condition that often arouses pity. In other words, *Nipa ho yɛ mɔbɔ* captures the miserable condition of wo/mankind deserving of sympathy.

vague interest in the systems of communication that facilitate the production of discourses in specific local contexts. Though inadvertent, the emphasis placed on discourse as indicative of distinct logics implicitly evokes a written and oral divide that further alludes to the existence of opposing realms of communicative action (Ferguson 1994; Sardan 2005; Grillo and Stirrat 1997). On the one hand, there is a formal bureaucratic domain ordered by written rules and techno-managerial systems (policies, best practices, project design), which claim independence from and power over social structures and cultural systems (Ferguson 1994). On the other hand, there is an informal sphere: a prodigiously oral universe that expresses communal bonds and socio-cultural values of traditional structures, local people, and kinship networks (Cooke and Kothari 2001).

By taking a closer look at the OEF's interaction with applicants, however, it becomes clear that some oral communication is quite formalised, whilst written communication can be innovative and draws on registers outside of formal convention. Applicants draw on a repertoire of social values and norms in their use of literacy to compensate for their weak positioning within the networks of patronage. Ostensibly, the binary-spatial distinction between writing *cum* bureaucracy to oral *cum* sociocultural values, when examined more closely in everyday contexts of the OEF, seems artificial and quickly dissolves. This is not to say that local practices of literacy have not been amply captured elsewhere (sociology, anthropology, psychology, and history) or even received no mention in the development literature. But they usually fade into the background of the rich and detailed accounts of the discursive regimes of development bureaucracies and planners (ibid). Thus, I maintain that bringing local literacy practices into the main of development ethnography can enrich our understanding of the intricate ways in which less powerful actors negotiate their interests in specific development contexts. Therefore, critiques of development should take seriously the literacy practices of local communities, rather than only that of development organisations, institutions, and agencies. From this position, I advance the view that literacy is not merely a neutral technology, nor one that automatically serves bureaucratic goals. That said, my meaning and usage of the term would be developed in close connection with an anthropological and historical analysis of the impact and role of the written word in oral cultures. The following section does not attempt an exhaustive or chronological discussion

but highlights flashpoints in the debate on the effects of literacy; the different disciplinary traditions that inform them and the changes that they have undergone in recent years.

Literacy as Social Action

Since the 1960s there has been a significant interest in the role of literacy in shaping human civilisations. Literacy is a complex and contested concept, which can be defined in several ways (Gee 1990: 27). For the present discussion the term broadly implies practices associated with reading and writing techniques usually prescribed by an authority or institution (e.g., schools, churches, mosques, business etc). Literacy practices, as defined by Street (1984) refer to 'social practices and conceptions of reading and writing that people draw upon in a literacy event,' whereas the term literacy event describes 'the particular activities in which literacy has a role' (Barton 1991: 5)

In the essay titled *The Consequences of Literacy* (1963), the anthropologist Jack Goody and literary critic Ian Watts related discernible changes in human societies to modes of communication - written or spoken. Literacy in their view produced distinct transformations in literate cultures: 'logical, specialized, cumulative intellectual tradition'; and an epistemological shift from myth to history (344). In contrast, they saw non-literate/oral cultures as blighted by a 'homeostatic tendency' to knowledge, logic and remembering (310). Based on inferences of supposed differences between the developed and underdeveloped world, they theorized that literacy is an autonomous and decontextualised technology that makes possible new cognitive operations (Barber 2007:69). Scribner and Cole (1978) sought to test the cognitive claims of literacy through an intensive psychological and anthropological study of the literacy practices amongst Vai peoples of Liberia. Vai, a Mande language, was a remarkable example of indigenous African literacy which developed relatively independently of Western and Arabic influences, and formal schooling. To their surprise, they found 'no evidence that writing promotes general mental abilities' (16).

Furthermore, Finnegan's (1999) pioneering work on African oral traditions raises doubts about the rigid designation of the term literacy to the written word. She observed that the

'etymological connection' between literature and writing does not exist in all languages and cultures. That is the relationship between literature and writing is heavily influenced by specific historical and cultural circumstances and is not always congruent. This argument advances our understanding of literacy to encompass oral traditions and alternative modes of expression that may not adhere to the conventional written-word-centric definition. Citing Finnegan, Olson (1977) an advocate of the autonomous model, nevertheless admitted that '[T]he uses of literacy skills as a metric against which personal and social competence can be assessed is vastly oversimplified' (12). And further went on to question: 'Is it possible that literacy is over-rated?' (ibid). Others (Heath, 198: 344) also warned that the 'oral-literate dichotomy' does not fully capture the way other cultural patterns in each community affect the uses of oral and written language. And that written language takes on features of oral languages. Nor does the claim of an oral/literacy divide pay much attention to how oral cultural systems facilitate literacy practices.

Another landmark in the debate is the emphasis on informal settings and everyday uses of literacy rather than formal school settings. In the 1980s, Brian Street and his associates from the New Literacy Studies railed against the autonomous model. From different perspectives, they viewed literacy as a cultural and social construction (Scribner 1983; Gee 1990; Street 1995, 1984) 'implicated in power relations and embedded in specific cultural meaning and practices' (Street 2013: 1). They called attention to the variety of uses of literacy and orality in a particular context. In his research in the Iranian mountain village of Cheshmeh, Street found that existing practices of 'local literacies' were rooted in village institutions and informal relations of commerce (Street 1984). This model of literacy as he explained, though emanating from *Maktab* (Quranic schools), did not develop a formal pedagogy but rather was constructed for collective practice in specific situations. He argued that local uses of literacy conveyed ideological representations, evocative of the socio-cultural values and norms of a specific community of practice (ibid). He also indicated that the oral and literacy boundaries have been set up in a way that 'gives insufficient credit to the reality of mixed and interacting modes of communication' (ibid: 5). This further underscored the fluid relation between speech and written discourse as communicative fields of action. Street and his acolytes have been criticised as offering a locally deterministic view of literacy, which overstates 'the power of local contexts to define the meaning and forms that literacy takes' (Brandt and Clinton

2002: 337). This as critics claim precludes understanding of how the material mode of communication/ 'technology of literacy' (i.e., letters, computers, etc) also affords new meaning and possibilities beyond the specific context of the literacy event (ibid).

For this reason, Brandt and Clinton in an influential article (2002) refined the term to account for literacy as both an agent and a technology. Drawing on the work of Latour (1993, 1996), they argued that literacy is not only an outcome of social practices but 'an actant' or 'participant in them' and constitutes the social (338). They claimed to rehabilitate certain 'autonomous' aspects of literacy without appealing to repudiated 'autonomous models' of literacy (339). This approach brought into sharp relief, literacy's material dimension and 'transcontextualize' dynamics. Its durability, capacity to travel, connect, disrupt, mediate, and be visible and 'animate outside the interactions of immediate literacy events' (344). From this tradition, Vieira (2013) in a recent study of undocumented immigrants in the United States, observed that 'literacy is a potent object that enters their lives, that makes things happen' (30). These perspectives have provided a more inclusive framework beyond the autonomous/ ideological binary to understanding local and global dynamics of literacy, particularly regarding electronic media. But at the same time, the idea of literacy objects as self-constituting systems that impose meaning independent of actors confounds the issue of agency by assigning responsibility to impersonal 'actants' or 'apparatus.'

Barber (2007) perhaps (at least in my view) raised the most poignant point which cogently captures the substance of our enquiry. In *The Anthropology of Texts, Persons and Publics* she adopted the term text for its 'more neutral and more encompassing' sense when speaking of literacy in both written and oral forms. She posed the simple question what are texts constituted to do? She astutely observed that texts have a double existence, 'both as "context-dependent speech act" and as an autonomous entity "out there" in social space' (3). Texts, though 'locally-produced'- oral or written- transmitted according to one's own conventions enjoyed a kind of independent and privileged existence as spoken from within, and at 'the same time is embedded in the context of their emission and reception' (ibid). From this position, Barber provides a compelling and digestible explanation of how literacy is constituted as a text and for what purpose.

From the foregoing discussion, I analyse OEF applicant letters as texts in the same sense as outlined by Barber (2007; 2006), locating them in their social and cultural contexts of production. I also take into account Brandt and Clinton's (2002) transcontextualised notion of the capacity of literacy, to move in and through people's lives, capable of instigating renegotiations of power relations within specific situations. That said, social norms and values are to be understood not as immutable or fixed. They should be viewed as existing in a state of constant flux, though incessantly contested, and involving adaptation and permutation of familiar historical and cultural references and inferences. Consequently, the proceeding discussion looks at how literacy facilitates interpersonal relations across temporal and spatial landscapes to establish and affirm bonds of human connections. What then does, 'the world on paper' or if you like the legible "interface," tell us about the lifeworld of the OEF and applicants?[116]

OEF application letters and the networks of affection

'Texts are social facts. Texts are used to do things: they are forms of action' (Barber 2007:3).

In an untitled document on the OEF application policy procedure, Step 3 states: 'The secretariat decides on guidelines for selecting the candidates, in a way that suits them best.' An employee elaborates, 'We look at the grades first, you have to get a distinction or upper second and then we consider your personal circumstances' (OEF, personal interview, 7 November 2020). In reality, this was not always the case. A close reading of the available records of the OEF shows that applicants who either did not meet the grade criteria or possess important networks heavily utilised 'application letters' as a means to stake their claim or improve their chances of being successful. And in these letters, they poured their hearts out with the hope of effecting a favourable outcome. Reflecting on letter-writing in eighteenth-century Europe, Habermas likened letters to the 'outpourings of the heart,' that formed an 'imprint of the soul' (quoted in Habermas 1992: 49). The genre of personal writing, according to Barber (2009) 'provides extraordinary access to the way personal writing was involved in

[116] Olson (1994) uses the term 'the World on Paper' to describe the social world that written systems shapes and engenders. Also see Hawkins (2002) use of the phrase in relation to the British colonial rule in Northern Ghana, (LoDagaa) to inscribe particular subjectivities through the written text.

the constitution of new kinds of self-representation and personhood' (7). Writing therefore allows for one's private thoughts to exist independently from the writer; to move through time and space and connect with others in concrete and profound ways (ibid). Its independent existence also renders it a powerful technology of the self, that reveals the individual in his subjectivity (Foucault 1988).

In what follows, I argue that letter writing fostered a kind of legible mobilisation of personalised interactions that actuated embedded networks of affection to enhance claims for support. Keeping firmly in mind the claim that letters are central to producing and affecting socially acceptable forms of self: 'literary text does not depict or disclose existing social relations and subjectivities; rather it is part of the "technology" by which they are produced' (Barber 2007:106). The five examples of successful applicants below have been chosen because they capture the dominant types of applicant letters, rather than based on the intensity of tone or aesthetic effect.

A farmer from Bekwai with the help of a notary wrote a letter to the OEF, in which he explained why he requires support from the 'Otumfuo Education Fund scholarship for my ward,'

> I have encountered financial difficulties and cannot pay the admissions fees at this material time to honour the admission due to the recent motor accident my wife had and was seriously injured.

As the letter further reveals, his son attained a modest pass mark of aggregate 06 in his junior high school exams and was offered a placement at Opoku Ware Secondary School. The letter goes on to elaborate how the father has spent '12,000,000' cedis on his wife's hospital debts in the past 4 months and that 'at moment have nothing on me.'

Certainly, one cannot argue with a concerned father's supplication for support on behalf of his son. Nor was the practice of a guardian acting or speaking on behalf of one's child unusual. This practice was quite prevalent under Manhyia's administration of the Asante Confederacy Council Scholarship during the colonial period, as discussed in chapter 2. The social

anthropological literature on Asante shows that the advent of mission schools, and the introduction of school fees during the colonial period, transformed ideas and social attitudes about the father's role and responsibility to his child (Manuh 1995; Allman 1997; Tashjian 1995).

Formerly, the premise of kinship underlined parental obligations and responsibilities to the child, which granted the mother moral ownership over the child (Clark 1999 and Allman 1997). In this regard, the child is believed to take up membership in Akan society through his matriclan (*abusua*) from his mother: 'a mother passes on the *mogya* or blood kinship' (Clark 1999:71). The father, on the other hand, passes on his (*ntoro*) spirit through his sperm, which is considered to provide the child protection (ibid). As a result, the father's parental rights and obligations were mediated by complex but fluid social transactions between the husband and his wife's abusua (e.g., *ntamoba*, *mpena awade*) (Allman 1997; Boni 2001). This meant that the child's material welfare was often entrusted to his maternal uncle, whereas the father retained the responsibility to train his children, especially sons, thus giving him some 'rights of use over his children' (Danquah 1928:189).

The advent of mission schools and the introduction of school fees under colonialism transformed the nature of paternal obligation to and 'ownership' of the child (Allman 1997; Clark 1997). This is because, as Allman (1999: 308) explains, 'a father's cash expenditure on education […] brought with it an assumption of greater rights of use in, and perhaps even ownership of child'. By the twentieth century, the father's role was generally understood to be that of a provider especially when it concerned the provision of maintenance and financial support or the child's education (Boni 2001; Allman 1997; Clark 1997). Those fathers who could not meet these demands risked public condemnation and worst affront to their manhood (Mikell 1997:112). We can catch glimpses of the father's central role in their child's education in exchanges between Asante fathers and Manhyia (i.e., Asante Confederacy Council Scholarship). Thus, the formal expression 'ward' appeared frequently in reference to the child to signal the father's fidelity and commitment to the child's education.

The Bekwai farmer's appeal for support from OEF stresses the unfortunate but uncontrollable circumstances that have befallen him and perhaps stave off suspicions of irresponsibility. This

juxtaposed with the reference to his son as his 'ward', re-enacts his filial obligation and commitment to his son as a formal responsibility, as opposed to a social obligation. Barber (2007) explains that literacy, 'holds up models of what a person should be' through reproducing conceptions of acceptable social norms (109). By so doing, it consolidates forms of 'social being, achieved and precipitated through networks of social relations' (ibid). Potentially, this also triggers a kind of gendered approval of the father's efforts to seek alternative sources of support for his child. The pitiful nature of the situation also deflects the interpretation of him as a "bad father" and instead opens up an avenue for OEF to help him to be a "good father" despite his troubles.

The accentuation and amplification of the father's personal misfortunes in the dramatization of personal narratives seems to mute the fact that the applicant did not meet the criteria of 'brilliant', but only that of the 'needy'.[117] Rather it calls on decision-makers to look to the moral basis of the claim and reorient supporting evidence towards a deeply emotional field of human connections. Perhaps, what matters then is not so much whether the applicant meets the criteria but the ability to make the reader feel and care for the applicant's condition. What then comes to be fixed in the hearts and minds of decision-makers is the tragic motor accident of a wife and the staggering financial burden faced by a poor farmer who is trying his best to honour his responsibilities. Needless to say, decisions were not always mediated by patronage relations or rational gains but also gave way to ideological and psychological factors.

Likewise, a policeman writing on behalf of his younger brother evoked his family's royal status to advance his claim. The letter bore the stamp of the Asantehene's office, giving it a seal of approval even before it arrived at the OEF's office.

> Dear Nana
>
> Nana, I was the elder son of the late Nana Kwesi Buabeng II of Adansi Dompoasi. Due to this death, financial crises for his children have torn the family apart. We were on

[117] Grade (06) is considered a Low Average falling between 50–54-point mark o GRADE Cvin the grading system.

> my mother's side. In 1947 I joined the Ghana police service and through my efforts, I am able to take care of the 2nd on to the polytechnic. My mother and I manage to bring the 3rd boy up to the Secondary level. He just completed last year and has qualify to university. As a police constable, my strength cannot afford such a huge amount.

According to Yarrow, personal narratives are socially significant acts that not only lend what is being said or in this case written a degree of stability but 'place[s] others in relation to themselves and the broader ideological and institutional landscape' (47). By invoking the name of the late king, his father, the correspondent reveals that he is a royal (*dehyeɛ*) of Dompoasi to affirm his membership within the larger network of chieftaincy. According to historical records the office of Dompoasehene owes direct allegiance to Kumase, and therefore serves Kumaseman as Otumfuo *ɑbirɛmpɔn (pl)* (Wilks 1966). The *ɔbirɛmpɔn* was the highest distinction of traditional office (McCaskie 2015). The destitution of the estate of an *ɔbirɛmpɔn,* therefore*,* prompts the worry that when royals cannot take care of their family members, this reflects poorly on Asante chieftaincy more generally. Hence, the letter is personally addressed to the Otumfuo - 'Dear Nana' - rather than the OEF. The term Nana is used both as a title for monarchs to signify high status and also denotes hierarchical relations of kinship based on age. In this letter, it is affectionately deployed to consolidate the writer's position not simply as a royal but in fact as the customary grandson of the king. In this way, the writer seeks to generate a sort of institutional kinship of spirit between the management of the Fund (*ɑsomfo)* and the correspondent. And simultaneously invokes the king's obligation to the maintenance of the nobility of the institution of chieftaincy. Consequently, the letter gains the king's seal of approval.

A 16-year-old boy attending Apam secondary school recounted his struggles as an orphan. His letter is carefully handwritten on a ruled paper.

> I hope after telling you my story you would believe and sponsor me. I lost my father at the age of only one month and my mother also kicked the bucket at the age of 10 in Kumasi. Since then, life became a struggle, and it was my siblings' task of seeing me through. But now I can see their soul is willing, but their body is weak, and I am afraid of my education ending somewhere in the middle of the sea.

Bringing up the issue of applications from orphans, a board member shared her personal story of taking on financial responsibility for two orphan siblings from her village. She explained that she feels immense sympathy for orphaned children (***"w****ɔn ho yɛ [m]mɔbɔ") (they are pitiable)* and as a result during her period at the OEF, she prioritised such applicants (OEF, Interview, 28, March 2020). Her response suggests the existence of an intricate nexus of sociality around death and the observation of acceptable conventions towards the bereaved in Akan society. Yet the question remains, why the need to help orphans in particular? As we reflect on the letter, the pathos and tragedy of death are undeniably replayed in the 'world of paper' evoking temporal and spatial structures of feelings associated with orphanhood in Ghanaian society. The writer exteriorized his internal grief over the loss of his mother as an object of shared social values and expected behaviour towards orphanhood to affect a public domain of empathy and support. The orphan in the Akan imagination signifies the social tragedy of death *par excellence*. Across the different genres: folklore, highlife, proverbs and fables, the figure of the orphan repeatedly appears as an allegory of suffering and pity (DeWitt 2001, Van der Geest 1984). For example, according to Appiah and Appiah (2000), a common Akan proverb says:

'Kwaku whose parents lie in the cemetery says: "If you have no mother, you don't eat the snail's liver." *Nsamampô mu Kwaku: wo nni ni a, wonwe nwa kobi.*'
(This is the best part of the snail. Hence: If you are without parents, the rest of the family does not treat you well)

Moreover, Yankah (1991) shows that 'the skilful control of words is highly valued among the Akan of Ghana.' Eloquence in speech is equated with dryness of the lips, *nano awo* (his lips are dried up) implying 'crisp, smooth, concise and controlled speech'. In contrast to ineloquence, associated with wet lips - nano *nwoe* (his lips are not dried up, he is not linguistically weaned). Ergo, when addressing sensitive issues of death, a series of discursive canons (indirection, obliques, ornate expressions) are employed rather than direct speech. The expression 'kick the bucket' an indirect and delicate reference to the loss of a mother, might seem almost comical or even unsophisticated by the standards of Akan oratory. On second thought, it makes up for what it lacks in the splendour of 'dry speech', with the display

of ‘school talk’ or Big English. In this way, the letter opens onto this delicate world of ‘speech-making’, adapting its conventions to practices of literacy amongst the sections of society that have completed formal schooling. It brings into view the cultural practices and local conventions of speech that cut across the oral and written.

Big English remains an enduring feature in public schools in Ghana. In the genre of letter writing, teachers normally instruct students to commit to memory a stock of ornate and adorned expressions to demonstrate their eloquence of the written word. Big English, thence, conveys a sense of mastery over the English language and suggests intelligence and good character attained through formal schooling (i.e., *anibue*). A schoolboy’s attempt to demonstrate the command of Big English whilst observing the delicate conventions of formal speech in oral settings is bound to elicit positive appraisal from the board. In a conversation with the director, he approvingly remarks, ‘Some of the letters were so good, nicely written.’ He further goes on to imply that where students' transcripts only show that they are ‘book smart’, the letters provide a reliable demonstration of their ‘intelligence’ (OEF, interview, 26 March 2019). More to the point, such socially attuned literacy practices allow the applicant to project himself on the page as a ‘brilliant’ student with potential, and worthy of support, but whose hope and ambition stand threatened by his orphaned condition.

A young girl of 17 years ‘abandoned’ by her father lamented:

> Unfortunately, my father has abandoned us since my first year in Junior High School. My mother has been taking care of us since. Due to the fact that she is a petty trader, she is finding it difficult to take care of us. We are struggling to get square meals a day not even to talk of money that will be used to pay for my school fees. I want to learn hard, to become a lawyer so that I can also contribute to the development of my community and the nation as whole.

Identity as McCaskie (2000) puts it, ‘needs to be seen as a horizontal axis that opens into connectives’ (117). In a hierarchically stratified society like Asante, there are numerous risks (ignored, sent away, dismissed, patronised) associated with direct interaction within formal settings (Yankah 1989; 1995), and especially between groups of unequal power relations

(Wiredu and Gyekye 1992). Consequently, children in Ghanaian society are often inhibited from speaking for themselves in formal adult settings. Instead, their feelings and thoughts are mostly translated by a third party: an adult (parent, older relative, neighbour, etc), whose interventions hold the threat of dulling or sterilising the emotional consequences of self-expression. In this letter, the pangs of a young girl 'abandoned' by her father are allowed to move freely, to affect the other – the OEF official.

That said, the absence of an "irresponsible" father at best may provoke condemnation but does not provide enough grounds for support. Note that the student links her desire to continue studying with ideals of future citizenship. Ethnographic studies of children in Ghana reveal that central to the debate on the rights of the child is the idea of the child becoming a future citizen who will contribute to the development of his or her country (Þóra Björnsdóttir and Jónína Einarsdóttir 2018). The OEF's refusal to support could then be interpreted as a kind of complicity in preventing this girl from "becoming somebody" and serving her country. It is an appeal that places the OEF in a position akin to *loco parentis*.

Literacy is thought of as a technology of the self. Through literacy, a subject actively constitutes itself, in relation to the established registers of cultural norms and social practices that he/she may draw on. Combined with a Latourian perspective, literacy as an apparatus of social identification permits an immediacy of direct human connections and identification, capable of renegotiating asymmetrical power relations across different fields (local, global, transnational) (Latour 1993). To reiterate Vieira (2013), 'Literacy is a potent object that enters their lives, that makes things happen' (30).

Examining the OEF application letters unveiled the dynamic network of affection embedded within formal administrative practices of literacy. This framework allowed us to move beyond simplistic accusations of administrative shortcomings to better appreciate how affective ties are invoked and what kinds of resources they help to secure. As we have seen through application letters, OEF applicants who lacked access to influential figures mobilized personalized interactions to enhance claims for support.

Closing remarks

To recap, in this part of the discussion on the OEF, I primarily sought to understand the relationship between the OEF, the king and applicants. It is a chapter with three sections. The aim was to understand if indeed and as it is indicated by some commentators, the OEF primarily served the material and political interest of either the king or the management of the Fund (Kneirzinger 2011). The first half of the analysis shows that at the very outset of the OEF, a complex situation arose, whereby the king's (and Palace's/ Manhyia's) decisions and those of the Fund were not always aligned. Manhyia at times got its way, but ultimately the OEF management, under the guise of enhancing efficiency, introduced policy changes that gave it more autonomy in decision-making.

In the second half we learnt that when changes in national education policies introduced barriers to entry for poor students at the tertiary level, personal relationships between the Fund and heads of institutions became crucial for securing students' admission. However, it is unfortunate that the Fund could not provide full assistance or scholarships to these students due to financial limitations and the reality of better maximizing existing resources. Personal relations at times were oriented towards patron and client interactions. This as Donkoh (2011) spotted diverted scholarships to students who did not meet the criteria, due to their access to big men and patrons.

However, the third half demonstrates that the issue of criteria was inherent to the vague nature of the policy 'brilliant but needy'. It relied on interpretations that members of the Fund brought with them. And partly on how well an applicant can demonstrate how they satisfied the requirement. Indeed, for those without powerful networks, our findings suggest that they utilised application letters to mobilise shared norms and values and thereby enact socially acceptable forms of supplication. The nature of their begging was delicately positioned to make their appeal worthy of pity- *"nipa ho yɛ mɔbɔ"* (man is pitiable).

Chapter 5. Documents, Record-making, and Photographic Transparency

Introduction

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore—
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over—
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode?

Langston Hughes (1902–1967)

On the eve of the incarnation of the OEF in November 1999, its founder King Osei Tutu II called on Asantes to join in the 'modern war against ignorance.' Heeding the war cry, many rallied to the cause, with in-kind donations, and regular and intermittent financial contributions from churches and associations. Farmers, local traders, and market women also made contributions to the Fund. The creation of the OEF instilled many in the community with a positive sense of pride and attracted broad support. As set out in the previous chapters, the OEF reflected a widespread understanding of education as a key to success and also helped propagate the notion of the current Asantehene as a modern ruler. A staff member reflected on the early years of the OEF: 'It was very popular; it helped a lot of people. It is the OEF that elevated the king's stature to that of the [biblical] king Solomon.' During my field research in 2018-2020, the image of a benevolent wise king paled against public suspicion around the Palace's alleged interference in the management of the Fund. Any mention of the

OEF, at best, stimulated nostalgia about its unmet potential but could also evoke intense displeasure at how it has failed Asante citizens, both personally and collectively. In the words of the African American poet Langston Hughes, the OEF to many stands as a 'dream deferred' that has 'dried up like a raisin in the sun.' How did it all come to this? When or where did all go wrong?

Sounding the alarm

In June 2004, a scathing article appeared on the web page of the *Ghanaian Chronicle*, entitled 'The Otumfuo Education Fund - Lack of Transparency?' The writers Aaron Kumah and John Tetteli sounded a warning note that 'For the past three years, Ghanaians have been kept in the dark about the state of affairs of the OTEFund.' They went further to imply that the O(T)EF 'may soon face public vilification and displeasure.' Around the same period, a new charity thought to have royal assent was set up by the king's wife - Lady Julia. The Otumfuo Charity Foundation (OTCF) was initially tasked with issues of sanitation and health, however by 2009, they had begun activities on education (OTCF, interview, 3 May 2019). This action was perceived as an attempt by either the king or his close circle to sideline OEF's involvement in promoting education in Asante and Ghana generally (OEF, interview, 26 March 2019). Amongst the Kumasi public, however, frequently overheard grumblings of suspicion towards the OEF were gaining ground. As public confidence plummeted, regular contributions from the public rapidly declined. The Fund was left with little choice but to announce that it could no longer actively support students and institutions due to its dwindling finances. These factors invariably cast strong doubts on the OEF's credibility.

During my first scoping visit in 2018, members of the public in Kumasi were cagey about the subject. Most of the people that I spoke to either redirected me to Manhyia or feigned ignorance. By my second visit in 2019, the mood had generally improved. This in part was largely because Asantes were readying themselves to celebrate King Osei Tutu II's twenty-year reign on the Golden Stool. As the lavish and grand preparation of the king's 20-year tenure got underway, many began to deliberate on the king's achievements. Much of what passed in the media seems to have been stage-managed. The well-orchestrated narratives of the king's enlightened leadership (*no ani abue*) drowned out all criticism of his leadership.

Central to this process was the mass circulation of varied images of the king in newspapers, billboards, posters, and flyers, captured in different settings that distinguished the king as the father of the nation. However, in an ironic twist, the noise about the OEF's staggering success of supporting 309,000 students since its inception, refocused minds on the king's wider image within the public imagination. Speaking directly to the credibility of these figures, participants were keen to offer additional comments, a reflection or even spun elaborate accounts. Sometimes these accounts had no connection to the OEF, except for implicating the king in various rumours of misconduct. The consensus (for want of a better word) amongst members of the public was that the Fund was 'doing really well' when it first started but had since 'fallen from grace.' The phrase 'fallen from grace' often held a double ring: it implied that the Fund had lost its former prestige and status, and simultaneously alluded to its management's loss of favour with the king.

Allegations of corruption against the OEF frequently crept up, at times in emphatic detail, though largely based on impressions of contingent factors, often surrounding Lady Julia or the management of OTCF. At other times, such claims were tacitly expressed or even tactfully deployed, with indirect references made to isolated instances of misconduct concerning the king (OEF interview, 26 March 2019). Almost to suggest that the Fund came to be tainted by association with its founder. In hindsight, the writers of the article in the *Ghanaian Chronicle* had rightfully presaged that the OEF's 'lack of transparency' would result in public condemnation. Underlying much of the criticism of corruption was the idea that the OEF failed to ensure good record keeping, to be able to attest to its 'candour' and integrity in the face of 'public vilification and displeasure'. How claims of corruption are assembled and mobilised raises questions about the extent to which the OEF practices of record keeping, or their absence, corroborate these allegations. In the first place are these claims really about the OEF and its officials or rather an airing out of broader grievances and dissatisfaction held by sections of the Asante community towards their king? Even so, the question remains, why did accusations converge around the issue of corruption?

Why Corruption?

The previous chapter began our exploration into the relationship between corruption and bureaucracy as it concerns the OEF. The point was not to exonerate or sit in judgment on whether the OEF was corrupt or not, but rather to examine the justificatory logic of such claims. The chapter sought to dispel the unhelpful dichotomy between formal and informal logics, which according to some authors implicates administrators in corruption through patronage relations. It demonstrated how bureaucratic practices are deeply embedded within historical and social relations. And thus, in the case of the OEF, behind the legible matrix of standard practice, flowed complex negotiations of eligibility and culturally acceptable forms of supplication enacted through the literary and record-keeping practices of OEF, yet irreducible to formal logic. This however mainly answered the question of how the language of corruption tends to oversimplify the intricate ways in which informal networks are mobilised and manifest within the development context (Mkandawire 2015). The previous chapter did not focus in detail on how bureaucratic practices are constituted by and integral to sustaining existing networks of power, which sometimes produces unintended outcomes (Ferguson 1994). In that respect, it is not surprising that at times there exists a discrepancy between the theoretical concept of bureaucracy and its practical application (Bierschenk and Sardan et al., 2014). Similarly, it is not uncommon for bureaucracy to take on varying forms, whether in Africa or elsewhere (ibid). What remains interesting is how this phenomenon in the context of Africa is usually interpreted as a form of dysfunction enacted by functionaries (Mkandawire 2015). Building from the previous chapter, I take claims of corruption against the OEF as an entry point to examine their wider connections and what they can potentially reveal about bureaucracy generally. I look at how claims of corruption about the OEF are assembled and mobilised and what they seek to do in the context of bureaucratic performances.

Exploring claims of corruption related to bureaucratic practices draws attention to the commonly held belief that good practices of record keeping and adherence to procedures deemed ‘formal’ and ‘standard’ can act as a deterrent to corruption. Thus, where records of dealings with the public by an organisation are thought to be lacking or sparse, bureaucratic processes are often seen as dysfunctional, conveyed through allegations of corruption against

officials. As seen in the case of the OEF, the lack of a reliable paper trail for donations raised doubt and suspicion amongst the public and to a lesser extent scholars (Donkoh 2011; Yarrow 2011; Kneirzinger 2011) about the dealings of the charity and the intent of its functionaries and even its founder. Sadly, such suspicions have been upheld in the absence of proper examination into the kinds of documents that the OEF actively invoked as evidence. What therefore could be learnt from the OEF's practices of record keeping?

Documentary verisimilitude

Fig 1.



Courtesy of [the OEF]: Nobewam, a beneficiary community of the PPTAP

Taking up the issue of transparency and its link to record-keeping and corruption, I ask the question of what documents – their benign presence, low visibility and even absence – conceal or disclose? And what can the genre in which they take up form reveal about the events they hold? By documents, I refer to photographic objects, whose ubiquity and prevalence in bureaucratic practices make them appear as though they were visual props or accessories to documentation as opposed to powerful evidentiary techniques. Eisenlohr (2011: 44) claims that 'there is a tendency of media to disappear in the act of mediation (…) to direct attention to what is being mediated.' According to Riles (2006), documents encompass a broad range of representation techniques as 'artifacts of particular genre or form' and as 'modern knowledge practices' (19). Much of the discussions on documents within the context of bureaucracy privileges written and printed text as veritable expressions of discourse (Hull 2012). That said, there is an existing body of literature within the

anthropological field that has sought to place photographs back into the frame of bureaucratic discourses (Edwards 2012; Dussel & Priem 2017). Here the interest in photographs tends to lie with the discursive 'politics of representation' (Edwards 1992, 2011; Pinney 1997, 2011); and its disciplinary power as a system of surveillance (Tagg 2009).

While the disciplinary power of photographs and the subjectivities they engender cannot be underestimated, in this chapter I turn my attention to a more mundane aspect of photographs, namely their perceived verisimilitude to an external reality. To help us understand the complex relationship between photographs and the external world that they purport to hold in the frame, I view photographs as documentary artifacts. Hull (2012) primarily focuses on various textual and graphic representations such as 'files', 'visiting cards', 'memos', 'maps' etc, when discussing documents. I broadened the scope of the term to encompass not only textual but also non-textual forms of representation (Riles 2006). Although Hull implies that 'artifactual events' might have little to do with the semiotic process they mediate, he notes that these events also shape 'discursive possibilities' (Hull 2012: 23). From this position, I offer the OEF's photo albums as documentary artifacts that mediate and shape the significance of the signs and meaning inscribed on them.

The focus on photographs in this chapter is to a large extent prompted by the (re)discovery of the OEF's photo albums. In these albums, project officers had meticulously compiled pictures of projects from inception to completion; of stakeholders; project materials; project inspections; project consultants, and even social/fundraising events. I say rediscovery because I had initially browsed through the albums during my first visit to the Fund, thinking of their value to my research as nothing short of providing an aesthetic feel to the context of the study, and hardly as an object of analysis. But this notion quickly changed upon encountering copies of similar images, sometimes modified in other forms and media (newspapers, project reports, t-shirts, handkerchiefs, flyers, billboards), often with the permission of or selected by the OEF (OEF, interview 7 March 2019). This prompts the question of why these very images were chosen and what the OEF was aiming to convey. On several occasions, I also observed that visitors to the office studied the images carefully; remarked about places where the OEF had undertaken projects; queried about the subject or spun fascinating tales involving the persons in the picture. To these individuals, the project

albums “mattered” not least because they projected a kind of visibility and openness of OEF activities. Edwards (2012) explains that thinking of photographs as things that matter to people as opposed to what they ‘signify’ allows ‘space for the subjective and, […] the consideration of the huge social and cultural investment made in the possibilities of photographs’ (224)

Structure: Mapping the Argument

The chapter is organised around widely held assumptions about the visibility of documentary artifacts. It looks at how the OEF’s practices of photographic documentation afforded administrators the ability to enact forms of evidentiary claims, which at times produced paradoxical effects. Hence, I argue that the circulation of project photographs and their material effects shaped and mediated public perception of the OEF’s activities, and the actors involved. This generated far-reaching ramifications beyond the intention or expectations of administrators.

The first section sets out the conceptual framework: it develops our working definition of photography as documentary practice in close connection with discussions on the role of photography in Ghana and beyond (Wendl 2001; Gilbert 2019). It then looks at how documents generally have been conceptualised within a series of dynamic interactions (non-formal and semi-formal) and what they generally reveal about bureaucracy- its apparatus and practice. The second section narrows on photographs' artifactual mediation of discourse. I specifically speak of the utilisation of photo albums as documentary evidence of projects and activities by OEF administrators. Hence, it looks at the discursive possibilities that artifactual registers afford the network of actors that gather around. Drawing on Edwards’s notion of ‘placing’ and Hull’s concept of artifacts as ‘mediators’, photographs are viewed as documentary artifacts that are constitutive of and entangled within wider networks of relations, engendering specific material consequences. I specifically use the operative verb entangled to draw a distinction away from the banal notion of photographs' inherent social embeddedness. And to convey the idea that photographs' social career is not a given but derived from their ‘placing’ and the uses they are put to.

The third section follows the circulation of project photos in their 'placing' and 'mediation' beyond the bureaucratic arena. It looks at how OEF project albums invigorate claims of corruption by animating speech acts against established ideas of enlightened leadership in the service of *anibue*. I demonstrate that project albums in their careers as mediators reinscribe particular kinds of self, associated with the Asantehene as a 'modern king' through the instantiation of strategic performances. In these documentary performances, old and new ideas of *anibue* are assembled to legitimate the king's intervention in the education sector. Hence the king's image comes to be tied to the failure or success of the project, in ways quite unexpected.

In conclusion, taking photographs as the object of analysis, I argue that documentary practices are more than just providing transparency or immediate access to what organisations do. Nor are documents simply instruments of governance and control that conceal their users' intentions (Tagg 2009). Besides this, documents, as demonstrated here, can also act as powerful techniques that afford its authors and participants in its production, circulation, and consumption, new possibilities for action (Edwards 2012). At times, with far greater implications than what was initially intended. Looking back on the issue of corruption initially raised in chapter 4, claims of corruption as demonstrated here become less about dysfunction in bureaucratic practices. Instead, such claims are deployed as strategic manoeuvres that afford claimants room to act on others, in the hope of instigating change. I close the chapter by claiming that artifactual events bequeath to claims of corruption a sense of palpable truth, no matter how transient, that further emboldens expressions of dissent.

Bureaucracy and Documents

Classical approaches to studying documents tend to view them as instruments of bureaucracy that fix and stabilize meanings and relations between discourse and the external world (Bolt 2017). Consequently, documents *vis-à-vis* bureaucracy have strongly featured in the wider literature, in one way or another as constituting a technology of power: a hegemonic system of control and surveillance (Sharma and Gupta 2006); a discursive regime that coordinates and validates particular forms of knowledge (Stoler 2009; Harper 1998); a principal agent of modernity that engenders subjectivities and forms of sociality (Riles 2006). They have

provided rich insight into how bureaucracy as a technology works through documents. Much of this work generally highlights the semiotic and representational functions of documents and has enriched our understanding of how they map onto existing dynamics and relations of power (Hull 2012). Documents' representational effects have also sustained the notion that paperwork foregrounds or inverts transparency in bureaucratic operations (Riles 2006). As such, many have looked to documentary practices in Africa to ascertain the extent to which their divergence from what they document constitutes corrupt practices by officials (Bierschenk and Sardan et al 2014).

In recent years, anthropologists of bureaucracy have raised the point that bureaucratic documents must be approached beyond a purely discursive or textual framework that mainly emphasizes social and cultural factors (Hull 2012). Strathern (2000) in her study on auditing practices in British higher education questions the supposed link between documentary practices and normative notions of transparency. She poses the question 'What does visibility conceal?' She claims that documentary practices of auditing, quality assurance and accountability in making knowledge visible, knowingly eclipse one kind of reality: 'everyone knows that what is being tested is how amenable to auditing their activities are or how performance matches up to performance indicators' (310). In this vein she argues that the 'appeal to a benevolent or moral visibility is all too easily shown to have a tyrannous side—there is nothing innocent about making the invisible visible' (309). She finds that the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE, later Research Excellence Framework or REF), introduced by the British government in the late 1980s to evaluate the quality of research undertaken by HEIs, engineers' outputs based on constructed assumptions taken as rules of action or indicators.[118] Yet 'the "real" workings of the institution, its social structure, cultural values, modes of organisation are ignored' (314). Reflecting on the evaluation of teaching through the QAA, she presents the example of assessments of quality teaching and learning, which are often 'based on a particular kind of transparency routinely advocated through evaluation (audit) practices' (318). Consequently, the transparency of teaching and learning is to be tested

[118] The RAE was replaced by the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in 2014 to assess the research impact of HEIS in the UK. Formerly, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) established in 1997 also set out a benchmark for assessing academic quality and standards of teaching and learning as the Designated Quality Body (DQB) in the UK. But relinquished its role in England in 2022 to focus on assessing academic quality provision in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, Europe and further afield.

against the clarity of communication by the teacher and the subsequent assimilation of information by the student. Notwithstanding that clarity, is based on assumptions that have the 'character of a timeless proposition: if what I say is clear, then it is understandable, and if it is understandable, it is reproducible' (318). Meanwhile, exactly when the student would sufficiently absorb and digest learning largely depends on oscillating, but indirect factors concealed from evaluation -i.e. - personal experiences, 'self-doubt', 'ignorance', 'hesitation', and 'confusion'.

If documents manufacture transparency by producing a certain kind of knowing while rendering the real workings of an organisation and indirect processes invisible, how then are we to understand documents as bureaucratic objects? In other words, what are documents, what do they do and what do they afford organisations and people involved in their production and circulation? Recent academic critiques of the archive – a monumental repository of documents – have coincided with a rethinking of documents as particular forms of knowledge production and knowing. In the words of Bruno Latour (1988: 54), documents are 'the most despised of ethnographic objects.' For Hodder (1994: 398) and Riles (2006: 12), the epistemological suspicion towards documents stems from the fact that they 'do not readily talk back to the ethnographer.' From a historical perspective, Stoler (2009) claims that colonial archives were both 'transparencies on which power relations were inscribed' as well as intricate technologies of rule in themselves (20). Consequently, what matters is not the trustworthiness or authenticity of documents but the moral and political projects out of which they were produced and stored in archives. By this, she refers to the politics of knowledge and regimes of credibility that shaped the conditions of specific regularities of what narratives are privileged, remained resilient, ignored, or demoted (271). From this position, her observation of archives as 'cultural artifacts of fact production' can also apply to documents. Hence, Riles (2006) describes documents as artifacts of modern knowledge practices, particularly knowledge practices that define ethnography itself. Riles may have been primarily concerned with 'How ethnographers conceive documents,' but the term artifacts bequeath to the discourse of documents is a suitable vocabulary to capture the dynamic role of documentary practices and their wider effects (Stoler 2009). Enriching our understanding of the term artifacts, Strathern explains in several of her writings on Melanesian society that in ethnography artifacts are 'habitually' treated as objects found in the world (1988, 1990). As

a corollary, they are often decontextualised from the 'events' of their production and vested with new interpretations about the wider external structures or systems of society (via the politico-religious system, kinship, gender relations, etc).[119] In reflection on this, she pushes for an understanding of artifacts that does not solely place meanings on the social and cultural context of their production. But rather insists on thinking of them as 'performances' and 'events' whose effects generate meaning. Her notion of artifacts rejects fixed definition and location, but more importantly restores a sense of mutability, 'innovation' and 'improvisation' of social action across time and space.

Building on the analogy of artifacts, Hull defines documents as 'graphic artifacts' whose 'circulation [...] creates associations among people that often differ from formal organizational structures' (Hull 2012a:18). Graphic artifacts in his view are not just neutral purveyors of discourse, but 'mediators' that shape the significance of the linguistic signs inscribed on them (ibid 13). The mediating function of documents takes on different careers, acting as agents that 'transform', 'translate', 'distort', and alter the significance of the components they are meant to convey (Latour 2005: 39). In response to the semiotic and non-discursive uses of documents, Hull goes on to explain that they are shaped by specific ideas about graphic artifacts held by their users. This includes 'what material qualities about an artifact are to count as signs, what sorts of agents are involved (or should be) in them, and what the roles of human intention and material causation are' (2012a:14). In this way, documents are thought to 'provide a different handle for interventions in the bureaucratic arena' as it draws together broader associations of 'people, places, things, times, norms, and forms of sociality' (2012:255-8). Therefore, documents are at times 'different from and more than' what they seemingly give immediate access to (253). Hull's definition of documents as mediators of semiotic and non-discursive signs seems apt for our discussion on OEF's project albums.

What can documents then tell us about the wider architecture of the organisation? In other words, where exactly should we locate the OEF and how do we conceptualize the OEF as a

[119] By events she refers to 'the inevitable and thus "natural" outcomes of social arrangements, or even more poignant, the chance encounter that has not been anticipated by those arrangements' (Strathern1990:159)

bureaucracy? Let us take a moment to consider these questions. Bolt (2017) explores how migrant workers on citrus farms situated along the Zimbabwean-South African border, experience bureaucratic control of their lives, dreams, and ambitions through documents. He asks us to think of bureaucracy as 'regulatory spotlights' that pull together a patchwork of social relations into fluid formal arrangements. What unfolds is that Zimbabwean migrants with diverse qualifications, aspirations and objectives are constituted as farm workers through a range of documents (passports, ID cards, departure permits, etc), whose meaning and authority are often locally negotiated, contested and (re)produced. In this way, documents promise stability and meaning to migrant fragmentary lives whilst acting as 'stepping-stones' to broker conversions toward more durable forms of worker identity. By following the 'social life' or 'circulation' of documents, he shows that the artificial boundaries (formal and informal) are established internally (within bureaucratic offices) and projected through documents. This means that the 'legitimation that comes with established symbols of formality needs to be constantly negotiated' (314). Consequently, Bolt demonstrates that people tend to negotiate documentary dominance in their lives in a variety of ways, 'acquiesce to, contest, or use this emblem of bureaucratic governance' as "stepping-stones" for other projects (309).

Guyer (1993) takes a historical sweep at the evolution of bureaucratic governance of food regulation in Britain, followed by the subsequent but selective replication of British regulatory repertoires against local interpretations in Nigeria. From this position, she reveals that bureaucratic practices, particularly concerning policy formation, are not always technical but constitute gradual 'accretion' of ideas through time and space (798). As a result, bureaucracy can be viewed as assemblages of both older forms of knowledge and new ones, readily available to be mobilised in new eras and different contexts. Consequently, she maintains that bureaucratic decisions are usually underlain with differential power dynamics that 'allows some intentions and definitions to prevail over others, some boundaries to hold strong and others to open up' (798).

Bureaucracy as social practice

Based on the foregoing discussion, this thesis views bureaucracy as an ideological technology constituted by and simultaneously constitutive of the wider social order. In simple terms, bureaucracy is a social practice, which through documentary artifacts pulls together a repertoire of ideas and practices built around regulatory 'spotlights' of divergent and conflicting interests into a coherent network. The foregoing analysis provides a useful framework for understanding documents as bureaucratic techniques. Be that as it may, the works adumbrated above mainly hold up relatively legible types of documents and hardly engage the material form that documents take, and how that also shapes their significance. To be fair, Bolt (2017) mentions identification cards (ID), but their material form dissolves against the saturating analysis of their social reverberations. Holding firmly in view the issue of 'form', I shall now turn to the genre of photography.

Photography

Photographs are usually treated as a kind of evidential category other than a form of document. To reiterate, Riles (2006) reminds us that documents encompass a broad range of representation techniques as 'artifacts of particular genre or form' and as 'modern knowledge practices' (19). Photography, therefore, can be said to be a form of document. Strathern's (1988, 1990) notion of artifacts as 'something one treats as if it were simply a found object in the world' aptly reflects how photographs are generally viewed and handled in the bureaucratic arena (quote see Riles 2006: 16). Photography as a form of media, an aesthetic representation and 'technology of the self', has stimulated interesting discussions within the social sciences (Barthes 1981; Edwards et al 2006). However, its role as a bureaucratic document within the African context has been understudied. Much of its appreciation within the African context overemphasizes the politics of representation. This is usually featured in narratives of cultural and social conflicts along asymmetrical relations of power, between the centre/global and periphery/local that also highlight local subversive practices (Vokes 2019; Edwards et al 2006). Another tradition considers photographs as a social practice embedded within the social milieu and integral to various 'projects of the self', largely framed through its social biography and affective networks (Gilbert 2019). Others have turned to the role of

photography in anthropology's own history and ethnographic practice (Edwards 1992, 2011; Pinney 1997, 2011). This has prompted new kinds of engagements, responses and contestations over knowledge production and anthropology's claim to authority. The analytical shift towards a "material turn" in the 1970s and 1980s in the social sciences and humanities marked new thinking on photographs' embodied qualities. But hardly have photographs been studied in much detail, in connection to their daily undertakings in African bureaucracies and especially as part of its documentary practices.

As a corollary, the presence of photographs in the bureaucratic arena in Africa is generally treated as a prosaic expression of organisational memory or as part of an active archive that serves to animate or reinforce "real" documentary evidence. In most cases, photos are discussed as accessories to complement or substantiate paper trails and written records. This oversight might ironically be partly inherent to photographs' material effects; including the spatial and temporal immediacy of the object held in the frame (Barthes 1981). It is widely accepted that photographs possess the capacity to capture, preserve and secrete away fleeting moments, to be endlessly savoured and recalled at a later point in time (ibid). Images and photos also have a transcendental quality about them; time travel if you like. They do not simply evoke strong feelings or store memories but also transport us across and between time and space; to new senses of being and (re)imagining the world around us (ibid). Therefore, as a visual form with particular effects on the evidentiary, how then are we to understand photographs? The French philosopher Roland Barthes reflects:

> The photograph possesses an evidential force, and its testimony bears not on the object, but on time. From a phenomenological viewpoint, in the photograph, the power of authentication exceeds the power of representation (Barthes 1993:88-89).

Similarly, Tagg (2009) claims that 'To ask for the genealogy of photograph's evidential force is not, therefore, […] to suggest that "photography" was the transparent reflection of a power outside itself' (xxix). Nor is it merely a vehicle that conveys existing meaning or imposes its own determination. Rather, it is an integral part of a discursive production of a specific and 'novel economy of meaning' that invigorates a new order of truth and turns on a new structure of documentation (xxxi). Tagg's study perhaps brings us closer to understanding

photographs as bureaucratic objects whose effects are locally produced. Still, he seems least interested in the routine and quotidian functions of photographs but rather preoccupied with its political excesses. Explaining his aim for the project, he writes 'I am concerned with a violence that is brutal enough in its own way, though it leaves its imprints on the body in a different manner than fists and boots and the blade of an axe' (xxvi). In this way, he locates his account of photography within historical relations and cultural strategies of governance *à la* Foucault – "surveillance", "record", "evidence", and "truth." Despite his insistence on the power effects of photographic events, he rejects the deterministic notion of photography as a singular and unified 'medium whose meaning and historical consequences were somehow already immanent' (12). In his view, the status, value and meaning of photography had to be produced, which was always a local outcome, an effect of a particular closure of the discursive field. That said, the Foucauldian paradigm as some scholars warn presents a stubborn resistance to application for empirical research (Lentz 2014). Not least, its totalizing concept of power and tendency to essentialize bureaucracy and reduce it to its disciplinary and regulatory effects (ibid).

Moving the conversation beyond the stultifying violence of photography, Wendl (2001) provides a compelling study of the history of photographs in Ghana, which spans the colonial and post-independence periods (2001). Photography in colonial Ghana was considered '"an eye opener" in the true sense of the Akan word anibue' (88). This further indicated a 'modern way of seeing the world and as a means to participate in the expanding sphere of modernity' (ibid). Most interestingly, he illustrates how photography fostered an emerging cosmopolitan imaginary in Ghana that marked new ways of constructing narratives about 'the modern self.' Wendl demonstrates that the sitter's image was often captured against a colourful studio backdrop. These backdrops featured scenes of international airports, fantastic cityscapes, and plush domestic interiors, conveying emerging and new ideas about wealth, consumption, and status. According to Miller (1995), 'to be modern is to be a consumer'. Vokes (2019) also observes similar self-performances of modernity in well-curated personal albums amongst the 'wealthier class' in post-colonial Uganda (216). However, Wendl's observation of photography in Ghana mainly concerns studio portraiture. He also stresses and illuminates the reproduction and continuity of local knowledge and concepts of representations in

Ghanaian practices of photography. Despite this, he faintly engages the circulation of photographs beyond the studio and how they act on the lives of their subjects, except for what they signify.

A look at Gilbert's (2019) exciting research into current practices of photography amongst young people in Calabar offers some insight into how photography extends its jurisdiction into areas of life not seen before. In the digital age of smartphones, amid the obsession with "selfies" driven by social media, she traces the social lives of photographs: 'photograph (…) renders social relations and reignites possibilities for action' (259). Against this background, she claims that practices of photography constitute an active process of self-fashioning that reproduces new subjectivities and promotes new ideas and possibilities of experiencing the world. Through smartphone photography, we learn that young people do not just create narratives about themselves. Rather as she puts it, they come to be embroiled 'in a specific photographic movement in which identities and meaning are constantly being made, a social space in which photographs "make" youth as youth "make" photographs' (249). With the social worlds of photographs firmly in view, she reveals that digital albums of young people are not mainly intended to store and archive the self but to be shared with others: 'to be viewed, appreciated, commented on, saved, and circulated by as many individuals as possible' (254). In this way, through circulation social identities are enlarged. She presents an example of how photographs 'are often not taken with the friend but lifted without consent (of the owner) from social media platforms' (250). They would then later reappear, reframed, and reconceptualised within a different context, giving it new meaning and purpose. Kratz (2012) also points out that photographs are imbued with new meanings not created by those represented as they move into different social settings.

Emphasis on the social world or lives of photography tends to offer an inadvertent subtext, that meanings derived from visual objects are purely a by-product of an external discourse. In other words, like the young hip *Calabarians,* it is what we make of photography, rather than what photography allows us to do. Edwards (2012) and others (Dussel & Priem 2017) ask the same question but pose somewhat differently: 'What do material things make possible?' They stress that the focus on the cultural and phenomenological questions of objects should not preclude analysis of their material efficacy. Photographs or images as

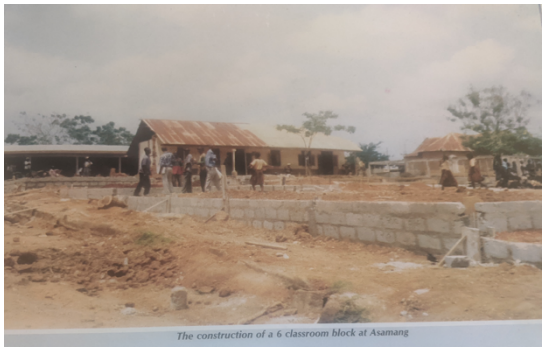
objects that humans interact with, carry affects and possess a particular materiality that conditions their experience. Thus, the 'social saliency' of photographs should be taken with its material significance. In this vein, Edwards presents the concept of 'placing' to mean the 'work of a photographic object in social space through which questions of materiality, adjacency, assemblage, and embodied relations frame the meaning of the image' (226). In other words, 'the sense of appropriateness of particular material forms to particular sets of social expectation and desire within space and time' (226). The act of 'placing' further renders photographs as interlocutors: photographs have the potential for a 'process of enactment and rhetorical assertion' and as 'nodes where various discourses temporarily intersect in particular ways' (Hoskins 1998: 6). As Dussel & Priem (2017) sum up in their work, 'pictures are […] not "bound" objects whose truth is out there to be reached by perfected methodologies, but objects to think with, to problematise as signs or traces of complex entanglements of the past but also of the present' (646). Much has been said about how photographs have been conceptualised and the varied roles they perform. But where exactly should we locate our understanding of OEF's project albums? Taking Edwards's notion of 'placing' with Hull's concept of artifacts as 'mediators', photographs are viewed here as documentary artifacts that are constitutive of and entangled within wider networks of relations, engendering specific material consequences. This, however, is rendered possible through their movements and 'placing' in their different careers. This entails mediation, reframing, redirection, and reproduction of discourse. Moving onto the routine operations of photographs within the activities of OEF, I now examine OEF's record-making and record-keeping practices against the backdrop of corruption allegations pointed out earlier.

OEF and Record-Keeping

'The Photograph is an extended, loaded evidence — as if it caricatured not the figure of what it represents (quite the converse) but its very existence.' (Barthes 1981: 115).

Development of a school classroom at Asamang in OEF project albums (Courtesy of OEF)

Fig 2.



Before

Fig 3.



After

The idea that bureaucracy and its ritual of record-keeping act as a protective mechanism against corruption has gained descriptive purchase (Bayart 1989;1993; Bratton and de Walle 1994; Rachmiatie 2016). In many respects, we tend to think of record-keeping and standardised procedures as pivotal in embedding transparency, openness and accountability in public organisations and institutions (Bierschenk and Sardan et al 2014). A notable feature in the OEF's office is its project albums. The albums catalogue images of projects from their planning to completion, donations of cheques to educational institutions, books, and educational resources to schools.

On the coffee table in the reception area of the OEF office laid three nondescript photo albums, arrayed in bleached cardstock covers stuffed with photographic prints. They were reminiscent of the self-mount albums with laminated-sleeved pockets that adorned the living rooms of 'wealthy Africans' in the late 1970s and early 1980s (Vokes 2019). Like these living room photo journals, they were not hidden in cabinet files along with the rest of other records, but placed in the open, on the coffee table in the reception area for all visitors to browse through as they waited for their appointment. They were both an inventory of the processes involved in undertaking projects and at the same time a directory of the

stakeholders and social connections that made it possible. Indeed, some of the participants in this research only materialised after coming across them in the albums, which jogged the secretary's memory of their involvement and how to get in contact with them. Occasionally, visitors at the office would carefully study the images and ask questions about where a picture was taken or to confirm the identity of the persons in the picture. This was often followed by a remark or reflection from them about individuals in the pictures. Particularly, if it was a government minister, an important chief or a notable businesswoman or man, an anecdote about the observer's connection to them or knowledge of their "status", "integrity" and "benevolence" was always in the offing. This may have seemed like a strategy by applicants to instigate on the spot a favourable reception to their request, by claiming to have personal connections to powerful persons that may or may not influence OEF decision-making processes. At the very least, it allowed for an opportunity to develop a good rapport with the funder. But it could also backfire, especially where the mentioning of the subject in the picture evoked an unpleasant experience (OEF, interview 26 March 2019).

Some of the pictures in the albums also found themselves in newspapers, books, and lifestyle magazines about the OEF and at times in general narratives about the Asantehene's achievements in development. These conscious acts of 'lifting' and (re) 'placing' photographs in different media to rehabilitate the OEF's image seemed partially successful. In the majority of cases, observers seemed reassured or impressed with the fact that the OEF had undertaken numerous projects which were not widely known to the public. In such instances, the OEF representatives felt venerated against allegations of wrongdoing, buoyed by the photographic testimonies of their activities. To buttress her claim that the OEF did not misspent public money or used it for their own benefit, the office secretary pointed to the three large photo albums. She admitted that part of the public dissatisfaction with the OEF was 'our own doing'. Explaining that 'we used to publish annual reports with names of successful applicants, projects and awarded institutions regularly. But we just stopped doing them. So, I understand why people think that we have spent the money or used it on ourselves. But it is not true.' (OEF, interview, 20 March 2019). She pointed to the fact that the Fund observed all the necessary due process and procedures when handling applications for students and allocating scholarships. She insisted that nothing was "done by heart", a common saying in Ghana which often implies that things were not done on a whim but

followed in an orderly manner. But despite the OEF's attempt to deploy project photographs as a form of evidence, this failed to quell criticism or restore public confidence but rather enlivened claims of corruption.

To fully appreciate the implications of OEF photo albums and their centrality in the day-to-day management of the Fund, a look at the Fund's record-keeping practices is in order.

Enticing the King: Big Donors

'I went to the States and when I came back, they haven't been keeping records.' (Brenya, interview, 25 March 2019).

Courtesy of OEF

Fig 4.



Image (left) Director of the OEF, Nana Brefo Boateng (top left) and Edward Brenya Project Officer (top centre) receives donations from a Ghanaian manufacturer (bottom left) (OEF 2004)

Fig 5.

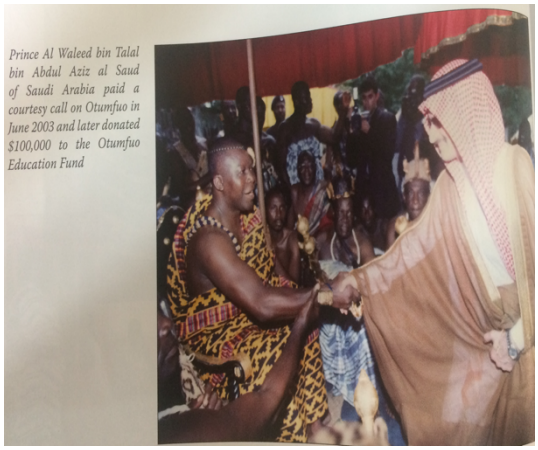


Image (right)Saudi Prince Al Waleed bin Talal Abdul Aziz al Saud pays a courtesy call on Otumfuo Osei Tutu II. This image taken from the OEF report 2004 also appeared in the Daily Graphic on 27 June 2003.

From its inception, the Fund struggled with developing a reliable system for the collection of donations. Donations did not always come through bureaucratic channels, and when they did, the sporadic and volatile environment of social networks that facilitated donation management thwarted the Fund's ability to properly account for monies received (Brenya, interview, 25 March 2019). This situation was further aggravated by the lack of reliable processes and systems of accounting. OEF's donations came from several sources, which have

been loosely categorised here as big donors: foreign dignitaries on state visits, corporations in Ghana (Guinness Ghana Ltd, Coca-Cola, Unilever, Ashanti Gold, Ghana Telecom, Saudi Prince Al Waleed Bin Tala Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud, etc), and small donors: chiefs, Ghanaian entrepreneurs, local organisations, workers and market unions and trading associations. The designation "big" and "small" to donors does not indicate the size of donations but instead reflects the manner of their contribution and the level of publicity generated. It was common practice for large donors to present their donations to the king, at the palace, in the hope of gaining his recognition and potentially earning his favour in other ventures. This was the preferred method of most big men in Ghana. Donations from foreign dignitaries and corporations were often reported in newspapers or recorded in OEF's annual reports, appended to images of donors standing next to the king (see image above top right). For this group the significance of their donations demanded publicity. In contrast, donations from big men shied away from public attention. A well-known Asante big man and major manufacturer in the country recounts how he came to acquire the land on which his factory currently stands by donating to the OEF:

> It happened roughly around 2000. We all know that when we talk of Ashanti, Otumfuo is the king, and where we are even belongs to him. Previously there was a wholesale here, Cocoa Marketing Board, a former corporative that had no lease and if you have no lease the place returns to Otumfuo. We also wanted to use the place, but CMB wanted to take the place. So, I had to go to Otumfuo myself and looking at the story all he had to do was help somebody who was in manufacturing and from there we became friends. If you want to entice somebody […] at the time the educational fund was new, so I had to contribute. Though money was scarce those days, I contributed about 20,000 cedis ($4,000) (Kumasi, interview, 5 May 2020)

It is customary practice for callers on the king or those seeking his audience to offer money along with some gifts or bottle(s) of gin, preferably schnapps, as a show of deference to his leadership. In such instances the caller might express that his offering is a small token for the king's own personal use or a contribution to the royal household: *fa som wo ahɔhoɔ* (to serve your guests). However, where favour is sought, a sizeable "enticement" in support of projects considered dear to the king is more fitting. By all accounts donations from Ghanaian

entrepreneurs constituted some of the frequent forms of giving that often went unrecorded, and even in some cases without the full knowledge of the OEF (OEF, interview, 26 March 2019). A member of the OEF explains:

> When people want to do things, they want the recognition of the Otumfuo, so they come to the palace to donate. But when you're at SNITT, Adum you become removed from what happens at Manhyia. When we were at Manhyia, whenever anybody came to donate before the Otumfuo is aware I'm there to receive the cheque.

It was admitted that at times donations were handed over to the OEF by Manhyia, albeit irregularly and at the wish of the king *'ohene no pɛ a'* (when he likes). As observed in the previous chapter, the distance from Manhyia provided the OEF autonomy to make decisions, but it also presented several challenges. This led to the perception amongst some members of staff that the Otumfuo was channelling donations for the OEF to other projects that had won his favour (OEF, interview, 4 March 2020). This idea seemed to have strongly taken hold with the emergence of the Otumfuo Charity Foundation (OTCF), run by his wife, Lady Julia. Speaking of why chiefs stopped contributing to the OEF, an informant relates this decision to the emergence of the OTCF:

> Some of the chiefs are very smart when they heard and realised that money which should have come to us was going to other places [OTCF], they said if that's the case we didn't contribute to help Charity Foundation [OTCF] we contributed to helping Education Fund. We had to go around begging them to pay us or our banks. (OEF, interview, 26 March 2019).

Yet claims of the king's direct involvement in redistributing Funds are highly contested. Brenya explains that the emergence of the Charity Foundation (i.e., OTCF) was due to the 'lack of proactiveness on the part of the OEF':

> One of the things that was very problematic for the Secretariat was communication […] In the early 2000s, nothing went on that we would not communicate. We never let any donation go unrecognised. Every money that came to the Secretariat no matter

> how small the money we publicised it because we had reporters who we used as Manhyia correspondents. [….] We were able to get this on the twelve o'clock news on Kapital radio. All that they did was report on activities in Manhyia. They called it Manhyia News at that time. So, we were really vibrant, people heard about what we were doing, people heard about who was donating and it sort of enticed people to come in, but later on, when there was this culture of silence people started questioning. […] It was the responsibility of the Secretariat to equally let the people know what they were doing, but the Secretariat was not communicating. So there came a lot of questions about how essentially the funds that they were receiving were disbursed and as people started questioning, and people started to know about how things are going, it dampened their spirit about donating to the Fund (Brenya, interview, 25 March 2019).

Similarly, a former Manhyia correspondent and journalist of Kapital Radio alluded to the culture of silence and rejected claims that the king 'cut off' the OEF from donations. He pointed out that the Fund, like other charitable initiatives set up by the king, was 'a subset of the palatial set up' but with its own independent structures and had to compete with other ventures for the king's largesse and relevance to the public:

> Donations to the office of the king predate the foundation of the OEF. And as you know, *ohene* (the king) has set up several initiatives, at any point in time the goals might overlap. He and his wife had Serwaa Ampem Aids Foundation even though it looks at children with aids it also focuses on providing quality education for them. Several of the king's initiative has education as a central theme [sic]. So, if you have an organisation that wants to donate to the king's educational cause, would they want to donate to the Serwaa Ampem Foundation or Education Fund? When the Fund started it was very exciting, it got to five or six years and people were not hearing much about it as they should. It was just a lack of initiative of the OEF to bring back the focus or excitement. If you talk about traffic or traction; new initiatives are more likely to garner more attention. It is just the natural lifecycle of initiatives […] there will come a point where there will be a lull in activities when it comes to donations.

> Like marketing, that's the time when the fund managers need to kick up their PR activities and promotions (Antwi, interview, 7 November 2020).

Indeed, whilst the 'culture of silence' can be attributed to the OEF's 'lack of proactiveness' and 'initiative', this was but half the story. In Donkoh's research (2011: 76) she comments that in her discussions with the administrators, it appears that institutions that promised to contribute over a period failed to honour their pledge, and 'the administrators of the OEF made no effort to follow up.' In the records of the OEF, there are numerous instances of unanswered correspondences between the Fund and organisations who had pledged large sums of money, which however never materialised. Why this was the case could not be satisfactorily explained, except for the director's admission that 'look it used to happen a lot, people will promise, we will write it down but when it came to collecting the money, we don't hear from them, it was really bad' (OEF, interview, 26 March 2019). It could be implied that large donations often followed new initiatives (e.g., OTCF) by the king and were mostly made in person directly to Manhyia. That said, donations from farmers, market women associations, transport unions, teachers and local traders and associations shed a different light on the discussion.

Small Donors' dissatisfaction

Where large donations sometimes came in through indirect channels, small donations were based on arrangements made between the OEF and donors. This form of contribution proved to be an important lifeline for the organisation and its suspension 'adversely' impacted the Funds' ability to sustain its activities in the long run (OEF 2014). It developed in response to the king's appeal that every Asante adult should contribute 20 Ghana cedis (roughly less than US $4) each month (OEF, 2004). The Kumasi Market Women Association, CSRI (Council for Scientific Research Institute), GNAT (Ghana National Association of Teachers) and several local traders and religious groups took an active role in collecting monthly contributions from their members and entered them in receipts books which were then returned to the OEF's office along with the monies collected (OEF 2004).

Receipt books were issued by the OEF to organisations after the latter had expressed a commitment to contribute. Besides being a more efficient way of collection, this system was preferred because it rested ownership and accountability in the hands of the organisations and reduced the risks associated with collection through a third party or even an employee of the OEF. But what often works, in theory, may not always translate smoothly into practice. The system was heavily prone to human error and opportunism. At times funds were handed in without accompanying receipts. When receipt books went missing, collectors devised their own logbooks to record contributions, which ultimately undermined OEF's accounting systems, e.g., the serialisation of receipts. Delayed submission of accounts and unreturned receipts were also a common occurrence (OEF, interview, 25 March 2019). As early as 2003, the then administrative assistant Mr Osei Akoto Amoateng expressed to journalists on Kapital radio that the OEF was unable to finance 80 per cent of its projects in 2002, because of defaulters and delayed return of receipts.[120] Not long after the *Pioneer* ran the headline: 'Expected cash from Education Fund Locked Up: Defaulting Chiefs, Groups to be Summoned to Appear before Asantehene and Board.'[121] Attempts to hold donors to their obligation through appeals, exhortation, the extension of deadlines and the threat of royal summons failed to reap dividends (Donkoh 2011: 75).

Eventually, the OEF even sought to encourage contributions by prioritizing support for children of those who had donated to the Fund if donors could prove that they had indeed contributed to the OEF. This was often done in two main ways: the claimant produced a payment slip issued by the collector or the administrator traces the donor's name in their payment records (OEF, interview 26 March 2019). Further attempts to shore up contributions entailed an agreement with chiefs to 'keep thirty per cent (30%) of the monies collected for educational purposes in their area.' But 'once again the response was not encouraging' (OEF 2014). Why such methods failed to remedy the situation was based on the very fact that donations from this category relied heavily on trust. Trust, in turn, was certainly difficult to sustain in an environment where donor contributions were subject to divergent interpretations and practices. For instance, the director recounted the case of a chief who

[120] Kapital Radio News Report, February 2000
[121] The Pioneer, Kumasi, 2 April 2003

despite having contributed a large sum to the OEF was refused support because he could not produce documentary evidence:

> One chief called me and said, what about me? I contributed US $4,000 when they launched in the UK. I said, Nana with all due respect, this money hasn't come to us. But for all the money that I have received I've made sure that I have recorded it. So, he was angry and said you ask Juabenhene. I phoned Juabenhene and he said, oh yes, he contributed. So, I said, Nana, it's not my fault because if I write it, I will have to account for it. The money is not here (OEF, interview, 26 March 2019).

Courtesy of OEF

Fig 6.



Nana Otuo Sriboe II (Juabenhene) at the launch of the Otumfuo Education Fund in Washington DC, Sept. 2002 (OEF project album)

Fig 7.



Ashanti delegates and traditional authority leaders at the launch of Otumfuo Education Fund, in the Netherlands, 2002 (OEF project album)

How often such situations occurred was difficult to establish, nonetheless, its impact as a justification for the loss of trust cannot be underestimated. A considerable number of chiefs and small donors engaged in the research spoke of discontinuing their contributions to the OEF. This, as they explained, was because the organisation failed to recognise their contribution and honour their promise to support a relative in need. This is a very poignant point because as mentioned in Chapter 6, donations or support from chiefs and particular regions were an important factor for the success of applications seeking long-term support for students.

Aside from chiefs, donations also came in from the diasporas (OEF 2004). The role of the Ghanaian diasporas in promoting economic development in the country is well documented (Kleist 2011). Between 2000 and 2012, the Asante diasporas Committee (Asantefuokuo) and Manhyia Palace organised fundraising campaigns with the king in attendance to raise money for educational purposes (OEF 2004; 2014). For instance, it was reported that at the king's request, the Asante diasporas provided 1 million Ghana cedis, (currently valued at US $18,000) for the renovation of the Kumasi Library.[122] Diaspora's contributions came from Asante communities in the United Kingdom, Canada, France, and the Netherlands (OEF report 2004; 2014). Such contributions were presented during the king's cultural and diplomatic tours overseas, as part of fundraising campaigns.

OEF's elaborate fundraising architecture gained huge coverage in local newspapers (and to a lesser extent international media), with images of fundraising events and Otumfuo's visits also featured in several public documents: brochures, flyers, lifestyle magazines, and OEF reports. This according to the Fund, generated a lot of awareness and visibility of the Fund's activities but also gave Asante residents the 'impression that the Fund has a lot of money.' (OEF, interview, 26 March 2019). With that impression, suspicion about the Fund's management, particularly concerning financial donations, began to take hold. As the sustainability of donations depended on a delicate network of trust, the need to document and showcase evidence of the use of funds became more imperative. What is more, fund-generation practices had been built around the image and prestige of the king. Images of fundraising events and school visits which later would appear in other public media and carefully stored in OEF's photo albums became a perfect opportunity to utilise the king's presence and royal personage for public support and affection to its cause towards education.

But the photographic reproduction of such occasions was also an opportunity for the king to project his benevolence to his subjects and relevance to the community globally. Gilbert (2019) claims that photographs are 'mobile objects and generators of affect' and 'social objects that have relational qualities' (248-9). Consequently, as the OEF embraced photography in the main of its documentary practices for evidentiary purposes, the

[122] *Otumfuo Education Fund, UK to assist in rehabilitation of library* (2004). Modern Ghana.

photographic reproduction, consumption, and circulation of such events through various public media enlarged the monarch's image and framed his person with new and conflicting meaning. Scanning through 40 different public literature on the OEF's education campaigns between 2002-2016, the image of the king was placed alongside the phrase 'Modern King' either as a heading or in the body of the text 32 times. A local shopkeeper notes: 'In those days…Hmm…Our "King Solomon." There were pictures of him everywhere, in the newspapers both local and foreign.' He takes out a worn-out handkerchief from his pocket and points to an imprinted fading image of the king. The inscription of the Otumfuo Education Fund is barely perceptible, 'look, look, …The Education Fund is what made the Otumfuo, Otumfuo' (Kwesi, interview, 11 July 2020).

Fig 8.



A cover image of the King from a book by Kwadwo Nyantakyi III (Asantehene Sanaahene) and Kwasi Ampene (2014)

Fig 9.



A cover image of a news magazine: Business Time Africa 31 July 2019

The view that the OEF was central to the documentary phenomenon that established the Asantehene's image as an enlightened king repeatedly came up in my conversation with Asante residents. Some went as far as claiming that this is the reason why the king cannot dissolve the OEF, despite the Fund being 'dried out of funds' (*kwataakwataa)* (OEF, interview 7 March 2020). In Chapter 4, it was discussed that the moniker King Solomon and its parallel sobriquet 'modern king' as interchangeable references to the Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, indexes the Akan notion of *anibue* which denotes enlightenment and modernity (Skinner 2009). By the 1950s, the term *anibue*, despite having a long historical antecedent in Asante thought and history had generally come to be strongly associated with development and education in Ghana (ibid). *Anibue* in Akan thinking assumes strong value judgment and can be explained

by its antithetical relation to the metonym *nani ate*/ ani teɛ (he is shrewd, literally his eyes are widened).[123] *Anibue* through referential inversion *ani te*ɛ takes on a double meaning that inversely conveys crafty or cunning intent. As in the proverb, *nani ate akosi nani nton* (his eyes extend beyond his eyebrow) often used as a word of caution against savviness, or trickery. In Akan folklore, the "wise" spider, Ananse stands as an archetypical embodiment of *ani te*ɛ for his deceitful nature.

Coming back to photography, Wendl (2001) claims that in Ghana, local and emerging practices of photographic portraiture recast local interpretations of '*anibue'* within existing and changing forms of representation. These cultural reproductions draw on a repertory of signs and codes associated with wider techniques (e.g., textile practices), though they remain in a constant state of flux. For example, this is illustrated by the noticeable shift in the 1950s within studio portraiture, from sitters dressed in Western clothes and costumes to the predominance of "traditional cloth" as a suitable expression of post-colonial modernity. This change is credited to Kwame Nkrumah's appearance in public in traditional cloth or 'kente' (ibid:87). Additionally, the practice of reinforcing traditional norms and values in contemporary society in Akan cultural expression is encapsulated by the idea of Sankofa in Akan philosophical tradition (Temple 2010). The tradition of Sankofa has multiple meanings and is linked to divergent practices (Temple 2010). Symbolised by the conceptual bird with its head turned backwards while facing forward, Sankofa conventionally translates as 'go back and fetch', or 'return and pick it up' (ibid:127). According to Quarcoo (1972:17), it means 'learn from or build on the past. Pick up the gems of the past.' Kwarteng (2005) in his study on chiefs and development relates Sankofa to the principles guiding traditional authorities' engagement in development in contemporary Ghana. In the age of neoliberal globalisation, the idea of Sankofa has been reinvested with new meaning and purpose, acting as a powerful but protean expression of cultural identity and practice. It is usually invoked to mobilise the Akan community (including diasporas) for social action (Temple 2010; Kwarteng 2005). Following this, the OEF's strategic 'placing' of the image of the king in kente cloth within a development and education context, indexes the ideological symbolisms of *anibue* and

[123] McCaskie (1998) in the discussion of the Life and Times of Owusu Sekyere Agyeman (1887-1957) suggests that 'anite[ɛ] has a strong connotation to anibue yet implies a more 'shrewd knowingness or guile in seizing the opportunities presented by evolving conditions (103)

Sankofa within Akan cultural practice. This seems to have the effect of reordering and manifesting the person of the king as embodying a form of modern and enlightened leadership that moves with the times but carries 'forward' 'the gems of the past'- the King Solomon of the times (Quarcoo 1972: 17).

The (un)making of a king

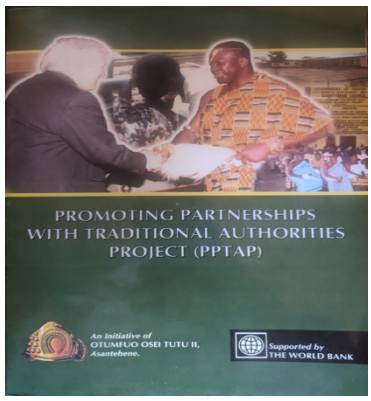
Courtesy of OEF

Fig 10.



James Wolfensohn former President of the World Bank visits the Otumfuo (2000) (OEF 2004)

Fig 11.



Cover of PPTAP publication (2006)

The circulation of the king's image as displayed in OEF's project literature and paraphernalia (e.g., handkerchiefs, t-shirts, fans, car banners), given out to dignitaries at events but also sold to members of the public, has had far-reaching consequences. Especially, given that images of the king within the development context have come against contrasting characterisations that implicate him in allegations of corruption, albeit unrelated to his role in education or the OEF. Ergo, images of the king on everyday items, along with development-related inscriptions, serve a purpose beyond event souvenirs and merchandise. They are intentionally designed and strategically distributed to enlist the public in OEF activities. On the face of it, OEF's reproductions of images of the king functioned as an effective technique in externalising the cultural registers of modern kingship to build legitimacy for the raising of funds. Latour maintains that it is the material qualities of visual artifacts- their ability to 'transform, translate, distort and modify the elements they are supposed to carry'- that make them useful as palpable sedimentation of a projected reality (Latour 2005: 39). But this ability to lend

verisimilitude to project activities was largely down to their role of mediation, which shaped the significance and meaning of their registers (Hull 2012). As such, reproductions of the king's image within the development setting irrespective of the actual context in which the picture was taken followed an established pattern; adorned in kente and royal regalia.

An image of the king and the then president of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn (1995-2005), would later resurface, cropped out of its former environment, and repurposed as the cover image of an early publication on the partnership between (OEF and World Bank: PPTAP). This picture was taken in late 1999 at the king's residence, during a private visit by Wolfensohn (Karlson, interview, 14 February 2019). The arrival of the publication on the other hand was seven years after the visit. It displayed an assemblage of images of projects, throughout their lifecycle (planning, scoping, and implementation) undertaken under the partnership. It must be remembered that under the PPTAP, the OEF had very little influence, if any at all, with projects and funding decisions exercised by the World Bank (Brenya, interview, 25 March 2019). In response to an enquiry about the evolution of the OEF, the director took out the publication and advised, 'read this it will tell you all you need to know, and the projects we carried out with the World Bank' (OEF, interview, 26 March 2019). In such re-enactments that invoke project documentation, the OEF mobilises visual artifacts as mediators to generate contiguous proximity with the referents of the images. In this manner, it repositions itself as a key player and bona fide successor of the PPTAP.

Edwards claims that 'through placing, the photograph becomes a statement of its social importance and efficacy because it carries too a sense of the placing of the image within social relations' (2012: 226). Similarly, the careful placing of the king's image in artifactual association with the OEF and its projects through documentary practices frames how the public interprets the material events of the photographs and in this way ties the king's image to the success and failure of the Fund. Photographs as put to work by the OEF could be then said to function 'within a material world of consequences' where they mediate the materiality of the signs interpreted by the reader and therefore give rise to possibilities for action (Keane 2005: 183). Hull emphasises that this is done through circulation, which enjoins together 'shifting networks and groups of officials and non-official, people and things outside the bureaucracy into the bureaucratic practices' (2012: 21). This meant that, as the well-

orchestrated image of the king's 'modern' leadership in education converged with wider critiques that implicated him in allegations of wrongdoing, widespread dissatisfaction towards the OEF deepened. Ironically, public disaffection was less about how the OEF managed its funds and resources but instead followed the arc of criticism surrounding the king's royal persona.

'In a way, it is the king that spoilt what he started' (OEF, interview, 26 March 2019)

Courtesy of OEF

Fig 12.



The headmaster of Tetrem Secondary School (left) receives a cheque from Mr S.K. Obeng (right), a member of OEF for infrastructural development (OEF 2004).

In October 2012, suspicion surrounding missing crown jewels during a fundraising trip to Norway became a source of much humiliation for the king. A certain Dr. Nana Obiri Yeboah, 'a traditional culture expert' is said to have gone on record to claim that the loss 'was a legitimate basis to destool the Asantehene' (Modern Ghana, 2012). This view seems to have found support amongst the Ghanaian public, many of whom took to the airwaves to express their disappointment and implicate the king. In some quarters of the Kumasi public, rumour had it that the king had organised the supposed racket (Kwesi, interview, 11 July 2020). The real culprits of the crime, one Luis Angel Acosta Barrios, 44, and his accomplice Jaime Benigno Valverde Figueroa, 42, were soon to be arrested and face justice in an Oslo city court, sentenced to an imprisonment of two years.[124] Though the Norwegian authorities had taken

[124] *Two in court for stealing Otumfuo's gold-MyJoyOnline.com* (2013) *Myjoyonline*.

swift action to bring the criminals to justice, the damage to the king's reputation seemed irrevocable.

Not long after, the king's close relationship with the then-leader of the ruling National Democratic Congress party (NDC), John Dramani Mahama sparked another string of unfortunate allegations. This time, it involved the king in judicial bribery over the Supreme Court's decision to rule in favour of the NDC in a presidential election petition. The opposition party the New Patriotic Party (NPP) had challenged the national election results of December 2012 in the Supreme Court, which saw the then incumbent John Dramani Mahama leading by a slight majority of 50.7% votes against the opposition leader Nana Akuffo Addo's 47.7%. The Accra-based newspaper The New Free Press, reported that the king acted as a conduit through which 'some $ 5 Million (USD) was paid to the presiding judge William Atuguba.' The nature and extent of the Otumfuo's involvement remained a mystery, with some denouncing it as a political stunt to deface the king (Ghana News 2013). Nonetheless, the charges levelled at the king had grave implications, prompting the administration of the Palace to issue the strongly worded public statement, 'Manhyia Palace is disgusted by the writer's false accusations and malicious allegations of Otumfuo's complicity in the whole article and the subsequent comments thereof from individuals who can be best described as reprehensible and insulting.'[125] What is more, the Ashanti region is predominantly an NPP stronghold; as a result, it is plausible that accusations of bribery involving the king were motivated by public perception of the king's supposed allegiance to the NDC. In recent years, the king's highly public and close relationship with former president John Mahama stimulated a strong backlash from Asante citizens.[126]

The intensity of accusations enveloping the personage of the king is further illustrated in the famous case of alleged money laundering involving the king and a Bank executive, Mr Mark Arthur. In October 2017, a deposit of £350,000 to UK Banks by a Ghanaian bank official on behalf of the Otumfuo triggered a money laundering alert by British authorities.[127] Mr Mark

[125] *I never bribed any judge-Otumfuo*, *Modern Ghana* (2013). Modern Ghana. .
[126] *NDC Denies Leaking Otumfuo Video* (2015). *Modern Ghana*..
[127] *Ghanaian King gave me £350,000 and I took it to the bank in taxi, sacked bank official* claims (2017) Sunday Telegraph.

Arthur, a former executive at the Ghana International Bank in the United Kingdom is reported to have deposited on behalf of the king £200,000 to an account at the Bank and transferred $200,000 to another account at Standard Bank in Jersey. The news first broke in the British Newspaper, The Daily Telegraph, and was subsequently picked up by the Ghanaian media. Investigations by the UK financial regulators would clear the king of any wrongdoing, putting the issue down to the failure and negligence of the executive trusted with the money in following proper protocols. However, the perception that the Asantehene was involved in suspicious behaviour and potentially running a 'ponzi'-like scheme loomed large (Legon, personal communication, 19 February 2020).

Whether based on unsubstantiated rumours, hearsays, or conspiracies, claims of corruption surrounding the king cast strong doubt amongst the public over the monarch's association and role within the OEF, as its founder. Scholars commenting on the Akan mode of communication claim that in Akan speech performances, orators engage in criticism of powerful persons by employing indirection (*akutia*) as a surrogate to mitigate face threat in formal interactions (McCaskie 2018; Yankah 1995). Likewise, the strategic use of newspapers can be viewed as surrogates that juxtapose normative representations of the king's enlightened status against public dissatisfaction, imbricated in charges of corruption. Concomitantly, the veracity of claims is not as important as the desire to instigate change by acting upon the king's personage whilst avoiding direct conflict. To this end, rather than the volatile social architecture of public donations outlined above, the king's alleged wrongdoings were alluded to as justification for the decline of the OEF. As such, small donor dissatisfaction never culminated in rejection of the OEF, quite the contrary, the OEF seemed to have continued to enjoy the approval of the Asante community. In addition, chiefs' displeasure and rejection of a rival organisation set up by the king, OTCF, as having no legitimacy to collect donations for educational development gives support to the level of popular acknowledgement given to the OEF (Nana Edusa, interview, 2 July 2020). Not to mention the widespread notion that the OEF elevated the Asantehene's status and prestige nationally and internationally (OEF, interview, 7 March 2020)

Considering the lack of reliable systems of transparency and accountability, the legitimacy enjoyed by the OEF could be attributed to its use of photographic documentation as vital

evidentiary technology, especially, where donations are concerned. Not only did audiences gathered around photographic evidence of projects in project albums but also copies of these photos with the permission of the OEF found themselves lifted and placed in different forms of media. Following this, the OEF thus actively mobilised project photos as visual testimonies that mediated and redirected claims of corruption away from the nerve centres of bureaucratic activity onto wider social theatres of grievances. But whilst this seemed to have drawn the king's image into the fray of public discontent, it failed to restore public confidence in the OEF. Rather, criticism of the OEF came to be concentrated around the image of the king as a proxy and vice versa. As a corollary, people gathered around circulations of well-orchestrated images of the king in project reports and across the media, commending and associating him with the works of the OEF - *nani abue*. Just as they quickly turn against the inscribed referents of the projected persona of the king- *nani ate*- as the OEF failed to develop a sustainable and effective system of fundraising.

Closing remarks

The OEF represented a shared dream that captured the imagination of the nation, or at least the Asante community. It signalled a widespread understanding of education as a key to success in the modern world. It also propped the image of the current Asantehene king Osei Tutu II as a modern ruler whose enlightened leadership was to be exemplified in his vision to wage a 'modern war against ignorance'. This was to be achieved through educating Ashanti children: 'the brilliant but needy'. Almost a decade in operation, the OEF seemed to have 'fallen from grace,' issuing a public announcement that it could no longer actively support students and institutions due to its dwindling finances. And without a reliable system of balancing the books, all money donated, and expenditures were not accurately recorded. In these circumstances, complaints of donors, and the general lack of documentation undermined public trust in the organisation. As pointed out, reasons for this include the Asantehene's growing focus on the rival institution OTCF, amid a sense of being politically side-lined according to the director of the OEF (to be discussed in the following chapter).

Aspects of public discourses alluded to the Asantehene's undue interventions, however, no formal evidence was found to support this except for rumours of circumstantial and unrelated

events. Moreover, sensitivities around documentation further generated potential misunderstandings about the contributions of certain chiefs or other individuals involved with the Palace. Faced with public distrust, the OEF turned to photographs to record evidence of projects seemingly undertaken with the support of donations, and thereby render their activities transparent and visible to the public. For people already involved in the organisation, photographic evidence – project albums – addressed some of the fears surrounding the rumours of corruption which arose from the lack of regular and consistent record-keeping. This move became more noticeable and elaborate, reaching its acme during the king's 20th anniversary.

However, the use of photographs as documentary evidence that sought to grant immediacy to the OEF activities failed to bring closure to public dissatisfaction and claims of corruption. Nor did it recover the OEF's reputation fully. This is because documents, as critiques of administrative sciences have shown, fail to guarantee veridical authenticity but rather possess a verisimilitude to external reality (Hull 2012; Tagg 2009). What then follows, is that claims of corruption narrowly linked to the lack of documentation or record-keeping can be misleading. Particularly, when such claims obscure the wider material implication of documents; that is the unique qualities that specific forms of documentation possess and their effects (Edwards 2012 and Dussel & Priem 2017). Following the production, circulation, and consumption of project photos we find that the OEF's photo album gathered around shifting relations of divergent interest that opened on to wider theatres of grievances. Hence, through the strategic 'placing' of photographs, the OEF's mobilisation of project albums as evidence of project activities formed part of a series of complex interactions that bequeath to claims of corruption a projected sense of "truth".

Yet this also emboldened expressions of dissent. As a result, when the public felt disappointed with the shortcomings of the OEF, it was not to its functionaries and administrators that they directed their charges, but instead to the king, its autonomous founder. In this way, the issue of corruption, as viewed in both chapters through broader documentary relations and associations, shows that such claims are not primarily about dysfunction in bureaucratic practices. Instead, they are deployed as strategic manoeuvres that afford claimants room to act on others, in the hope of instigating change. In short, if corruption does not suffice as a

reason for the OEF's decline, what then brought about the collapse of the organisation as augured by the journalists of the Ghanaian Chronicle almost 20 years ago? Let us turn to the next chapter to explore the OEF's descent into inertia and final closure in March 2021.

Chapter 6. Asante Kɔtɔkɔ: Bloodlines and Brothers, the OEF and Beneficiary Communities[128]

Introduction

In this chapter, I return to the issue of eligibility initially discussed in Chapter 4, but with a focus on demonstrating its centrality to donor enthusiasm for, and subsequent withdrawal of support from, the OEF. Chapter 4 approaches eligibility from the point of view of *individual* applicants and shows that the success of claims was not entirely due to patronage relations but was also based on the perceived worthiness of applicants' supplication. But to understand the Fund's gradual descent into inertia, and the whirlwind of discontent that beset the activities of the OEF, one must not underestimate tensions over which *communities* were deemed to be entitled to OEF's support and why. Thus, the focus on eligibility must be broadened to better appreciate its wider implications.

In this chapter, I argue that the decline of the OEF is at least partly attributable to the competing visions of communities' eligibility for OEF support because these disagreements raised questions and doubts about the end goals of the Fund itself. To test out this assertion, I present a comparative case study of two beneficiary communities in the Northern and Volta regions. Both communities lie outside of the current regional boundaries of the Asante region but have had longstanding historical relations with the Asante kingdom, dating back to the 18th and 19th centuries. The Fund's decision to support communities in Dagbaŋ (*eng.* Dagbon) in the Northern region was met with resounding approval from the Asante people, whereas support to Worawora in the Volta region risked donor withdrawal from supporting the OEF. Worawora maintained that they pay allegiance to the Asante kingdom and share a common ancestry. However, this was not enough to assuage donors' (i.e., chiefs') anger that the resources of 'Asanteman' (the Asante nation) were being diverted from its own 'needy' children to those from 'other' communities (Kumasi, interview, 4 May 2020). Placing the focus on relations between communities and educational resources, the chapter deepens our understanding of group entitlement. It widens the lens beyond the emphasis on *stranger* vs.

[128] Kɔtɔkɔ the porcupine is the symbol of Asante nationalism and represents Asante's old age war machine. Like the quills of the porcupine, *'wokum apem a apem bɛ ba'*-'if you kill a thousand, a thousand more will come (Allman 1990).

indigene status in conflicts and contestations over land, which is prevalent in recent debates on ethnicity (Berry 2001; Lentz and Nugent 2001; Greene 1996; Lawrance 2003). Thus, it underscores the complex relationship between identity claims and access to personal resources and assets that are conceived as a 'developmental good' such as education.

Sowing the seeds of discontent: defining eligibility

Since its inception in 1999, OEF's definition of community eligibility underwent three significant shifts, appealing to distinct categories of belonging (these categories included belonging to Asanteman via ancestry *vs.* paying allegiance to the Asante stool, and being a resident of Asante region *vs.* being a citizen of Ghana). Community eligibility was initially defined in terms of the 'educational needs of Asanteman in particular and Ghana as a whole' (OEF 2004). 'Asanteman includes all the districts in the Ashanti Region and those in Brong-Ahafo Region whose chiefs owe allegiance to the Golden Stool' (ibid). Shortly after, community eligibility was hitched to the idea of Asante kinship and/or residency: 'children with Asante parentage, beneficiaries include any child whose parents could trace their ancestry to Ashanti or non-Ashanti who live and work in the region.'[129]

In 2010, following the king's announcement that the OEF is 'not restricted to Asante children alone but open to all Ghanaian children', the Fund extended its support to individuals and communities in the Northern and Volta region.[130] The Best Teachers Award / National Teachers Award recognised 200 exemplary teachers from four regions in the country, namely Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Eastern and Volta region.[131] The Best Teachers Award was initiated by the OEF in partnership with the Ashanti Regional Directorate of the Ghana Education Service in 2001. The Fund released ten million Ghana cedis at the time (roughly USD1,108.156 based on 2003 figures, adjusted for inflation) to serve as an incentive package for 'hard-working and selfless' teachers in deprived communities in the country (OEF 2004).[132] Since 2012, the Best Teachers Award has come under the management of the Otumfuo Charity Foundation (OTCF).

[129] *Otumfuo education fund launched in London* (2000). GhanaWeb, 21 May.
[130] *Education fund is for all Ghanaian children – Asantehene* (2021). Modern Ghana, 13 October.
[131] *Asantehene awards 200 teachers in deprived communities* (2011). Modern Ghana, 26 April.
[132] Anim, K. (2019) *Otumfuo to award 100 teachers across the country on 27th Nov*. Kasapafm online, 24 October.

The Otumfuo Osei Tutu's II initial justification for setting up the OEF as stated in his inaugural speech during his enstoolment ceremony in 1999 was predicated on the falling standards of the quality of education in Asante (Donkoh 2011). As shown in Chapter 4, one of the indicators of the declining standards of education in Ashanti was the Basic Education Certificate Examination (B.E.C.E) results, which were deemed to be unacceptably poor for the Ashanti region as compared to the rest of the country (except for the Northern region) (ibid). If the falling educational standards of Asante were a primary catalyst for the formation of the OEF, how then was community eligibility to be defined as the Fund expanded its activities across the country? And what rationale underpinned the varied definitions taken up by the different constituencies? Hence, the attempt to broaden eligibility within a national framework that appealed to divergent registers (Asanteman/Golden Stool/kinship/domicile, Ghana) raises critical questions around identity and nationhood, and how these were interpreted and mobilised in debates over entitlement to OEF support. To ask the question more simply, what kind of criteria could be used to determine the eligibility or entitlement of communities to OEF support?

This chapter will review some of the Africa-focussed literature on the mobilisation of ethnicity in contests over the allocation of, or access to, resources; and will then work through two detailed examples (that of Dagbaŋ in the Northern region and Worawora in the Volta region). In so doing, it will develop the following argument: eligibility is based on conflicting interpretations of membership in and cultural solidarity with Asante, which hinge on cognitive and historical claims to belonging. Thus, claims to eligibility for OEF support were not necessarily claims to *be* Asante; rather, claims to support mobilised historical narratives that emphasised group *relational connectedness* to the Asante nation. As such, inter-group identification is generated through imaginative and communicative work. This tends to take the form of narrative orderings of the past, which makes a particular type of sense out of the present situation.

However, claims of eligibility could not succeed if they were merely convenient assemblages. To be plausible and meaningful, they had to be at least somewhat consistent with sedimented forms of historical knowledge that circulated in society. To be found interesting and purposeful by present-day interlocutors, claims often had to speak to a present-day dilemma,

need, or problem. This also raises the issue of who gets to decide which claims are deemed valid and which claims are not (i.e., King, OEF board and donors). Against this backdrop, ethnicity is viewed in this chapter, not as a mere effect of discourse or an instrumentalised resource to be taken up and used by actors with specific goals in mind. Rather, ethnicity is viewed here as a relational category (re)constructed out of narratives of sedimented historical knowledge to generate meaningful and useful but contested claims of belonging, entitlement, and citizenship. It is not so much the ethnic *identit*y of particular groups that determines their eligibility, but the compelling nature of their claims.

A framework for analysis: debating ethnicity and nationhood

'The problem started when we gave support to Worawora in the Volta, you must remember that the Worawora are also Akans' (Kumasi, personal communication, 4 May 2020)

Popular and scholarly discussions on group membership and entitlement in Africa are laced with the tacit assumption that ethnicity determines the allocation of resources and socioeconomic and political roles (Claassen 2014; Wrong 2002). From a different viewpoint, Lentz and Nugent (2000) highlight the perceived salience of ethnic identities in Africa: 'Even if today's social scientists and historians would prefer to discard ethnicity as an analytical category, its currency "out there" means that they have no choice other than to confront it' (4). At the same time, they remind us that there is good reason to exercise some caution towards the impulse to narrow group assertions of belonging and citizenship to the analytical idioms of ethnicity. Schildkrout (1978) and Pontzen (2021) can further help us to understand that notions of the past continue to play an active role in the construction of identity within the distinct lifeworlds of communities in Ghana.

Scholarly debates on ethnicity and nationhood in Africa have moved away from 'primordialism' and now tend to converge towards one of two interrelated positions: constructivism and instrumentalism. Primordialism assumes that ethnicity is an intrinsic and foundational basis of cultural identity, in other words, a biological and a cultural given, arising from shared origins, historical memories, language, and myths that generate strong psychological and emotional attachments between members (Smith 1988; Geertz 1963). This

perspective has surfaced in discussions about state formation in Africa, portraying ethnicity as inherently antagonistic and therefore potentially volatile and detrimental to political stability and economic growth (Noyoo 2000; Chabal and Daloz 1999). Critics baulk at the essentialist overtones of primordialism, claiming that ethnicity in and of itself does not produce violence nor threatens the social order, but can do so when it is politicised (Crawford and Lipschutz 1998; Saha 2008).

From this departure, constructivists, and instrumentalists both affirm the importance of viewing ethnicity through a historical lens and tend to agree that ethnicity is neither predetermined nor fixed but rather an ideological construct, simultaneously old and new, grounded in the past and perpetually in a state of flux (Anderson 1983; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; Lonsdale 1994; Illife 1979). Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) popularised the 'invention of tradition' thesis that held identity to be a product of the recreation of versions of history to cement a group's collective identity, which is endowed with a sense of permanence. They argued that all traditions are not derived from antiquity or from a timeless past but are created at some juncture in history and legitimated through processes of validation.[133] In simple terms, they view ethnic identity as purely constructed and contingent on present circumstances.

Taking the argument, a step further, instrumentalists emphasise the selective invocation or mobilisation of both older and new forms of identity by actors in specific situations for their own purposes (Lynch 2006; Lawrance 2003). Where they slightly part with their ideological counterpart was the stress on the deliberate exploitation of traditions by actors with specific goals in mind, be these explicit or concealed. That said, both camps are generally sceptical of the idea that ethnic identity is bounded and homogenous. Instead, they tend to agree that irrespective of how ethnic identity is created it is generally presented by its proponents as if it was 'already there' and thus becoming a powerful axis of mobilisation (Nugent and Lentz 2000). They seem to suggest that ethnic identities are relentlessly malleable and manipulable. Brubaker (2005) points out that recognising that ethnic identities are malleable and in a

[133] Ranger has since conceded that the term 'invention' assumes a greater authorial role on the part of the actor ('inventor'). He opts for the term imagination *ala* Anderson (1983) to speak of traditions as a product of creative work and communication amongst groups shaped by contestations and conflicts over narratives and meaning.

constant state of flux does not entirely solve the analytical problem. He raises the question of if identity is always unstable and in flux, what analytical work does the concept do? And how might this approach risk obscure other patterns of affiliation and differentiation? (83-89)

Tracing the work of Schildkrout (1978) and Pontzen (2021), we can see how the ethnographies of Asante contribute to and reflect the broader scholarly debate on ethnicity in Africa over several decades. These studies are particularly relevant to this chapter because both scholars examine groups of people who lived in Asante (often for several generations), without necessarily becoming fully accepted as Asante by others who claim that identity. Both studies deal with what is known in Ghana as 'stranger communities.' These two works provide insights that can be applied to the eligibility question of the OEF and help us go beyond ethnicity as either a fixed and primordial or an endlessly open marker of identity.

Schildkrout (1978) looks at the 'changing meaning of ethnicity' among generations of distinct migrant communities (Mossi, Hausa, Yoruba, Dagomba, Frafra [Tallensi], Grusi, Kanjaga, Builsa, Kusasi, etc.,) that formed the zongos ('stranger quarters') in urban centres in Ghana. Focusing primarily on the presence of Mossi migrants in Kumasi, she finds that both the first generation to migrate to the zongos and subsequent generations born there (*'yan k'asa),* recognise ethnicity as an important basis of social action. Yet for the latter, ethnic identity does not entail the continuity of traditional cultural systems and symbols (9). Furthermore, the latter generation is shown to be more likely to express membership in the overlapping networks of kinship underpinning the social structures of the zongo (105). Ethnicity, she argues is 'not always an inevitable basis for identity' nor fixed but rather negotiable, and it acts as a 'cognitive construct' that frames people's perceptions of events, relations to others, and membership to a distinct social group (10). Thus, she questions cultural models of ethnicity, whilst demonstrating that ethnic categories are polysemic and contested markers of membership that allocate status and confer eligibility or limit access to and control over political, social, or economic resources (11). This does not imply that ethnicity automatically corresponds to status and access to resources in society or that ethnicity is a matter of individual choice since 'the nature of the social structures in which ethnicity operates determines the parameters within which individual choice, in invoking ethnicity can operate' (12).

That said, we find it problematic her framing of processes of 'exclusion' and 'inclusion' amongst social groups in situations of competition and conflict viewed through the prism of ethnicity. She claims that ethnicity is a 'special sort of identity which may be an asset or a liability in respect to furthering individual or group interests.' In this sense exclusion and inclusion depend on a group's ability to control the changing definition of the boundaries of belonging in a way that 'limits access to power and resources' (277). This we argue exaggerates the role of powerful actors/cultural entrepreneurs (e.g., chiefs, politicians, religious leaders, political dissidents, and intellectuals) in determining membership and exploiting ethnicity for their own purposes. Hence, ethnicity in her analysis expressed in the metaphor of kinship readily lends itself to innovation and manipulation by actors conversant in the social rules that govern its 'ecological niche' (11).[134]

Also writing about the zongo several decades later, Pontzen's (2021) study on Muslim lifeworlds in Asante holds implications for understanding how migrant identities were formed and how they shifted over time (in the precolonial period, during colonial rule, and post-independence). He draws attention to the role of Islam in engendering an overarching form of identity – *nkramo* - amongst heterogeneous settlements in the zongos made up of people from 'the North'. Nevertheless, according to Pontzen the Mande derivative word *nkramo* (from the Mande 'karamɔgɔ' meaning Islamic scholar) evokes a history of migration, religious movements and forms of social inclusion dating as far back as the eighteenth century (65). Thus, we are told that Muslim migration to the zongos in Kumasi was neither linear nor a culturally homogenous movement but was marked by internal differences and distinctions (67). Both writers show that zongo identities are historically contingent and negotiated across overlapping repertoires (Islam, ethnicity, kinship, migration, geography, marriage) of social connectedness and belonging informed by present circumstances and situational context.

In a much earlier discussion *Ethnicity in Ghana* (2000), Lentz and Nugent view constructions of identity as a historical process bound by limitations on what is plausible and meaningful within a given knowledge system. In this regard, some claims can be conceived, made possible

[134] Schildkrout understanding derives from Barthes's (1969) notion of ethnicity as boundary-maintaining units.

and resonate with a wider audience, whereas other claims are actively contested or outright rejected. From a variety of perspectives, the contributors of the volume stress the limitation to invention showing that many identities of present-day Ghana were not simply colonial hangovers or random abstractions that people assign meaning to, but 'drew on older we group process of inclusion and exclusion', repurposed to accommodate new realities (2). Regarding the relation between ethnicity and nationalism, they imply that ethnicity like nationalism forms part of a discursive 'repertoire spanning different registers' (14).

What then follows is that ethnic identities are not bound by fixed rules of ascription but are contingent on historical processes and open to contestations over claims of cultural solidarity and belonging, albeit recast within the needs of the present. Indeed, ethnic identities are constructed out of claims over solidarity and entitlement. These claims are frequently multi-faceted and contested, and usually centred around historical accounts, which makes ethnic identities contingent. This also implies that ethnicity derives much of its salience through/in relation to other forms of identification, affiliation, and status. In this case, ethnic affiliation at times defies the logic of common ancestry and fails to confer perceived privileges and entitlement that come with membership to a particular kinship network. The ambiguity of ethnicity and its fuzzy boundaries is well known and comes as no surprise. Contemplating eligibility for OEF support, it is important to understand why aid to communities in the Northern region received public approval while assistance to the Akan settlement in Worawora faced harsh criticism. It is worth examining the process of *identification* more so than just identity.

Beyond Ethnicity

In *Colonialism in Question* (2005), Frederick Cooper and Roger Brubaker critique the viability of ethnicity as an analytic category claiming that such approaches conceptualize 'all affinities and affiliations, all forms of belonging, all experiences of commonality, connectedness, and cohesion, self-understandings and self-identifications in the idiom of identity' (60). This they argue saddles us with a blunt, flat, undifferentiated vocabulary (ibid). With the resultant effect of blurring the distinction between 'identity and identification', leaving us with

'essentialist connotations, and constructivist qualifiers', which are too ambiguous, open, and fragmented 'to serve well the demands of social analysis' (2005: 60). Emphasis on *identification* they claim 'lacks the reifying connotations of identity and does not presuppose' a prefabricated, and teleological outcome. They, therefore, insist on attention being given to 'commonality' and 'relational connectedness' between groups. They define 'Commonality as the sharing of some common attribute, *connectedness* the relational ties that link people. Neither commonality nor connectedness alone engenders groupness – the sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded, solidary group' (76). But commonality and connectedness together may indeed do so (ibid).

Larmer and Lecocq (2018) claim that the confusion between ethnicity and nationalism stems from how nationalism in Africa came to be historicised as unique from nationalist processes elsewhere, particularly in Europe. They claim that the focus on the political outcome of struggles for decolonisation – that is, the nation-state - distracts and distorts crucial understandings of historical processes of competing and contested nationalisms and has generated an implicit understanding that 'nation-state nationalism' is 'nationalism proper' whilst 'ethnic nationalisms' are suspect and divisive. In simple terms, the nation and state were conflated in most analyses of nationalism particularly in the 1980s and 1990s, which resulted in the independent nation-state in Africa being taken as the measure of 'effective statehood' (912). And by so doing, political imaginaries that fall outside of the ideology of the construct of the nation-state were relabelled as separatist, 'ethnic' and even in some cases 'tribal' (902).

What seems relevant to us is their emphasis on group contestations over 'historical political imaginaries' that form the basis of political identity, culture, moral norms, and a sense of belonging at other scales, as an expression of nationalism. Such 'articulation of aspirations did not cease to be expressed in a nationalistic way' once national independence was won but provided the 'vehicle for expressing criticism of and disillusionment with incumbent rulers' (905). So far, it could be surmised that belonging transcends ethnic ties forged through the communicative processes of *identification* that draw from historical registers of group *commonality* - social *connectedness* and *relational* ties. Applying this insight to claims of community eligibility (OEF), we ask how claims of belonging were enacted and validated; what

strategies, rituals, and symbols mediated their relational efficacy; and to what extent were they deemed believable and why.

Identity knots: social media and active histories

In both cases, Dagbaŋ and Worawora, social media served as an important site of intervention, argumentation, and validation that spun together divergent but meaningful narratives of group belonging and entitlement (Peterson and Macola 2009). Since the 2000s, internet penetration and the increasing availability of digital technologies (mobile technology, laptops, tablets) within Africa have enabled a burgeoning of group participation in the production of historical knowledge and the exchange of ideas and interpretations. Within academia, there seems to be an encouraging albeit gradual shift in research practices that seriously engage the digital medium and social media as foundational to the writing of social history (Gilbert 2019). Ellis's point that the radio trottoir (pavement radio) is an important source for writing social histories in Africa is perhaps even truer today in the case of social media (Ellis 2002: 21). Just as the radio and the histories that it conveyed are 'the product of a social attempt to organize reality', social media and digital technologies have become a site of mobilising and assembling communicative memory (Ellis 2002: 22).

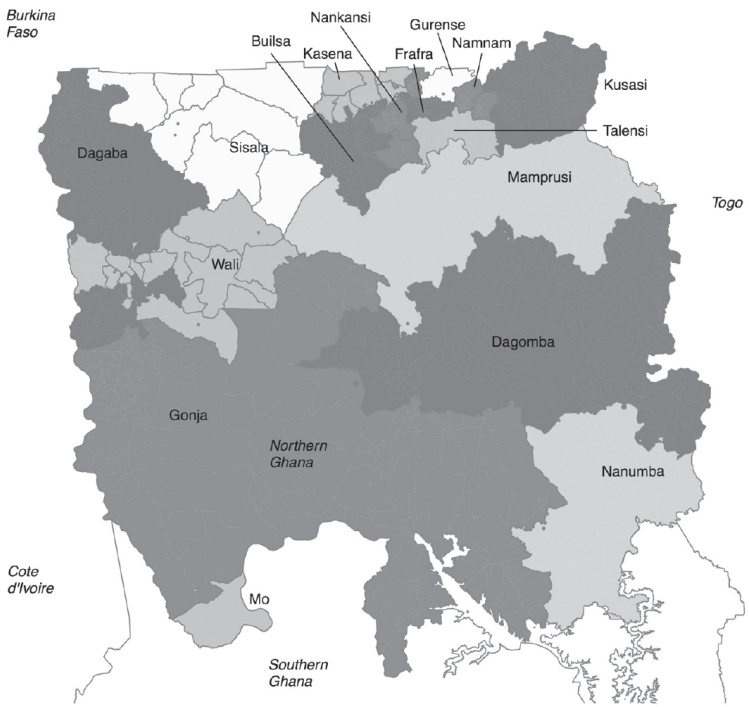
From a methodological viewpoint, the analysis is in the *spirit* of the 'limits of invention' thesis, advanced by Lentz and Nugent (2000). Therefore, I claim that Asante images of Dagombas/ Dagamba (citizens of Dagbaŋ) and to some extent the rest of the Northern region and Worawora can only be properly understood when viewed through 'active histories' of the past (Clifford 2011). I draw from formal writings in dialogue with active histories by members of the Dagamba, Asante, and Worawora communities on social media pages and online newspapers. By formal historical writings, I refer to both academic scholarship and oral narratives taken as authoritative accounts.

The American historian Jim Clifford (2011) defines active history broadly, to encompass a range of practices that seek to utilize the past to bring about change in the present and for the future: 'It is a history that makes an intervention and is transformative to both

practitioners and communities (12). Historians point out that active history takes many forms: digital medium (i.e., online blogging), oral history, participatory research, archiving and community engagement or outreach (Clifford 2011; Kheraj and Peace 2018). The openness of active history has allowed for the wide participation of groups of amateur, *wannabe,* and expert historians to participate in the production of historical knowledge. As Pontzen (2021) maintains in his research, 'people narrate their histories, agree, argue, or debate, and thereby form a 'communicative memory' that is contained within their conversations, addresses, sermons, myths, and remembrances' (234). The idea of sedimented knowledge recalls Peterson and Macola's (2009) apposite metaphor of 'homespun histories', in the sense that bloggers and 'content creators' 'wove out of the threads of discourse that stretched into the distant past' to (re) imagine communities and mobilise distinct constituencies around a particular cause (15). What therefore passes as communicative memory are not simply on-the-spot inventions of stand-alone narratives about the past but form the variegated strands of active histories. Let us now turn to our case studies, starting with the kingdom of Dagbaŋ in the Northern Region.

Dagbaŋ

Fig 14.



Map showing settlements in the northern region of Ghana (source: Nathan 2019)

The kingdom of Dagbaŋ is believed to have originated from the ancient Empire of Mali and was established in present-day Ghana roughly in the 15th and 16th centuries (Staniland 1975, Ibrahim 2018; Wilks 1965). Dagbaŋ is situated along the Volta basin in Northern Ghana, bordered to the east by the Republic of Togo and separated from the south by the newly created Oti region, which was previously the northern section of the Volta Region (see fig 14). (Bolaji and Gariba 2020) The Dagbaŋ kingdom is the largest of the ancient kingdoms in Northern Ghana (Gonja, Moshi, Mamprugu and Nanumba), numbering up to over a million inhabitants (Census 2010) and covering an area of roughly 9,611 square miles (Ahorsu and Gebe 2011). Also known as Dagomba, Dagbani is the first spoken language amongst most people of Dagbaŋ. The kingdom is one of the poorest areas in the North. Its traditional capital, Yendi, is the seat of authority of the Ya-Na (also commonly spelt as Naa) - the title of the king meaning 'absolute power'. Since the 1700s, the spread of Islam within the region through the conversion of Naa Zangina has exerted great influence on the political and social structures of Dagbaŋ (Wilks 1965: 87).[135] Nevertheless, the people of Dagomba still retain many of their former religious beliefs and cultural practices. By tradition, all lands in Dagbaŋ are vested in the Ya-Na, who also preserves the right of officiating the celebration of *Damba* (birthday of Prophet Mohammed) and *Chimsi chuɣu* (the remembrance of God's provision of a lamb to Anabi Ibrahim to be sacrificed in place of Isma'il) or *Eidul-Adha* (commemorates anabi Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice Isma'il) (Ibrahim 2018; Ahorsu and Gebe 2011; Yakubu 2022).[136] The royal lineage or chieftaincy is often referred to as a 'gate' (Ladoucer 1972). Brukum (2001) describes the political system in Dagbaŋ as a 'rotating chieftaincy' in which royal members initially appointed to chieftaincy positions at the settlement and divisional levels aspire to become paramount chiefs, and if luck is on their side, to the topmost position of the Ya-Na.

[135] The emergence of Islam in Dagbaŋ is commonly attributed to the conversion of Naa Zangina, however some evidence shows a much earlier contact with Islam in the region in the C16 and C17 (Shamhuna 2022)

[136] Anabi Ibrahim is biblical Abraham in Islam. In the Qur'an it is Isma'il whom Allah instructed anabi Ibrahim to sacrifice instead of Isaac in the Christian tradition (Yakubu 2022: 81-2)

Dagbaŋ Crisis

Chieftaincy disputes in Dagbaŋ have a long history. The kingdom has been plagued by 200 years of periodic violence and internecine conflict (Ladouceur 1972). The recent iteration of violence associated with chieftaincy disputes reached protracted levels in 2002, culminating in the killing of the former Ya-Na Yakubu Adani II, and 40 other significant advisors and elders in the palace, along with the destruction and burning of properties in Yendi (MacGaffey 2006; Wuaku Commission 2002). The cause and wider implications of the conflict have been well documented (Issifu 2015; Tonah 2012; Ahorsu 2014; Pul 2018; Ibrahim 2018; Awedoba 2009). As such a brief recap of events pertinent to our discussion will suffice.

The government's response to restore peace to the region involved the set-up of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs as part of a truth and reconciliation process (Ibrahim 2018). The Committee of Eminent Chiefs comprised the Asantehene as the chair, the Nayiri (King) of Mamprugu and the Yogbon-Wura of the Gonjaland traditional area; and it was tasked with bringing the two parties together to find a solution to the crisis in Yendi (Ibrahim 2018). This resulted in the formulation of a 'Road map to peace' on Thursday, 30 March 2006. The 'Roadmap to Peace' laid out five major goals in the peace-building process. This includes: 1) the formation of a council of elders comprising each family gate (Andani and Abudu); 2) the burial of the late Ya-Na Andani II; 3) the installation of the regent of the late king, Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II; the performance of the funeral of the deposed Ya- Na, Mahamadu Abdulai IV; and finally; 4) the selection and enskinment of a new Ya -Na for Dagbon' (Ahorsu and Gebe 2011).

By 2018, 'the first two proposals had been implemented, along with the installation of a new Ya-Na for Dagbaŋ, Ya-Na Abubakari Mahama II, with the remaining being shelved due to continuing disagreement between the two factions' (ibid). The Andani family is reported to have pulled out of the mediation and accused the committee of 'open bias.'[137] Analysis of

[137] Allotey, G. (2018) *Dagbon matters: Otumfuo Mediation C'ttee finalizes road-map to peace*. Citi Newsroom, 16 November.

interventions of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs suggests that the efforts to bring long-lasting and sustainable peace in Dagbaŋ have been compromised by the excessive politicisation of the issue by both of Ghana's two main political parties (the NPP and NDC), which has deepened mistrust between the two family gates and undermined the credibility of the peace process (Issifu 2018). Despite this, in February 2020, the Asantehene Osei Tutu II was singled out to be awarded the 'Pillar of Peace Award' by the government 'in recognition of his efforts to restore peace to the kingdom of Dagbaŋ', becoming the first person to be bestowed such an honour by the government.

The Asantehene's active leadership on the committee must be viewed as part of a broader strategy to 'reinvent' traditional authority as an important mechanism for peacebuilding, where the government has lost public trust (E. Adriaan B. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal 1999; Ray 2003). But more importantly, the king's involvement in peacebuilding, diplomatic, and development agendas shored up the legitimacy of his office and extended his personal influence within issues of *national* (that is, Ghana-wide) political concern. Consequently, the OEF soon found itself enrolled in the king's diplomatic intervention. From 2003 onwards the OEF extended its support to communities, students, and schools in Dagbaŋ (OEF 2004). This forced the issue of community eligibility to OEF support as Asante chiefs and donors raised their concerns to members of the OEF board about the king's alleged use of OEF resources for 'political influence' (OEF, interview, 5 May 2020).

In the years to come the king sought to quell all doubt by publicly announcing that the OEF was 'not restricted to Asante children alone but open to all Ghanaian children.' Unfortunately, the king's remark only seemed to have foregrounded the issue of Dagbaŋ's relation to Asante. In the confusion that followed, justification and rejection of group entitlement to support was often coloured by ethnic undertones woven around historical narratives of kinship and belonging. The literature on ethnicity in Ghana argues that distinct and well-known histories of Akan state-building in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are a key reference point that shapes 'the limits of invention' of ethnicity (Lentz and Nugent 2000). In examining donor attitude towards OEF support to Dagbaŋ, a brief look at the kingdom's historical relation to Asante and how it is understood within the public imagination serves as a good starting point.

Historians and the past

The prevalent history of Asante and Dagbaŋ relations within popular discourses tends to fall under two main traditions: the history of the Greater Asante Empire and stranger migration from the North. The former mainly emphasises political relations between the two kingdoms, (Asante and Dagbaŋ) whereas the latter mostly centres around the broader issues of social identity and belonging. Together these traditions translated through new media have inspired revisions and innovative reconstructions of popular memory that tend to foster relational interdependence, which sometimes defies ascriptive membership (ethnicity, religion, descent, provenance). We shall come back to this point later. This, however, prompts a rethinking of fashionable claims by some scholars (Elfert et al 2010; Posner 2005; Chabal and Daloz 1999; Schildkrout 1978; Bayart et al 1999; Berman 2010) that ethnicity is an important factor in the allocation of and access to resources and power. We find that taking ethnicity as an object of analysis confounds our understanding of intergroup relations shaped by competition over resources.

Historians have debated Dagbaŋ's status in its dealing with the Greater Asante Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Arhin 1967; Wilks 1975; Fage 1964; Ferguson 1972). Early historical writings portray Dagbaŋ as an Asante tributary following her invasion by King Opoku Ware I roughly between 1744-5.[138] The capture of the Dagbaŋ leader Ya-Na Gariba by Asante forces during the reign of Asantehene Osei Kwadwo (1764-1777), has also served to substantiate claims of the northern kingdom's vassalage.[139] Iliasu (1971) stresses socio-economic cooperation through trade and views payments made to Asante as a debt rather than a tribute, suggesting a mutually beneficial arrangement (ibid: 54-58). In recent times Haas (2017) also challenged Dagbaŋ's tributary status as 'flawed' and 'unfounded'. Other accounts highlight socio-cultural dynamics pointing to moments of intermarriages between the two kingdoms and processes of acculturation upon their encounter.[140] The framing of the

[138] The writers emphasize that Dagbaŋ recognised Asante's overlordship by submitting annual 'tribute' of slaves, livestock, and commodities.

[139] Also see Joseph Dupuis, Journal of a residence in Ashanti (1824)

[140] Boahen (1997) highlights that the cultural assimilation of Dagomba divisions in Jema, within present-day Bono east region by Akan migrants had occurred prior to Opoku Ware's in 174 This claim is supported by oral traditions of the Akan of Amakom, who settled in the northern section of the Bono- Nkoranza state. This tradition, also

historical relations between Dagbaŋ and Asante around its political status (vassalage) and affinal connections has passed into popular memory a powerful sense of the former's subordinate position to Asante. The impression given of an interpersonal hierarchy is further reinforced within Asante's imagination by the presence of Dagbaŋ migrants mostly in the poorer neighbourhoods of Asante cities and towns, often referred to as 'zongos.'[141]

Stranger Communities in Asante

Writing about a zongo and its residents in the Offinso district of Kokote, Pontzen (2021) intimates, 'In Asante, zongos are distinct parts of town where strangers (*ɔhɔhoɔ)* from the northern regions and the Sahel – the so-called northerners or *ntafoɔ* (the people of the colonial Northern Territories) – have settled over the last three generations' (75).[142]

The term zongo originates from the Hausa word 'zangō,' which referred to the 'camping place of a trading caravan' (Arhin 1979: 6; Schildkrout 1978: 67). These Hausa caravans traversed West Africa during the 18th and 19th centuries, establishing extensive trading networks that extended into Asante after colonial conquest in the early 20th century (ibid: 67,68). In Asante Twi, 'zongo' initially denoted the markets where the traders conducted business (Schildkrout 1970: 255). Over time, it came to describe the neighbourhoods inhabited by these traders (Schildkrout 1974: 1978). Both the residents and these settlements came to be designated in Asante Twi as 'strangers' (*ɔhɔhoɔ)* and at times collectively referred to as 'northerners.' Amongst the Asante, residents of these wards irrespective of their ethnicity, nationality, place of birth, or provenance are perpetually strangers from the north or people from the Savannah (*ɛserɛmfoɔ)*. But who are the people of the zongo that came to settle in mainland Asante following British rule?

believes Ya-Na Gariba to be related to the Asantehene Osei Kwadwo by marriage. By a similar token the institution of *Kambonsi,* a lineage of Dagbamba warriors or drummers is said to have originated from 'the forging of diplomatic relations between the two kingdoms around the middle of the 18th century.' (See Haas 2017)

[141] Studies have cited the collapse of kola trade; anti-immigration policies under Nkrumah's government (1960s) and especially Abrefa Busia's administration (1970s); limited access to land and continuing Akan prejudice towards zongo residence as some of the chief causes of the economic marginalisation of zongo wards (Pontzen 2021; Schildkrout 1974;1978)

[142] Several wards in Kumasi are just as poor as the largely poverty-stricken zongos.

By the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Asante's monopoly over the trade in the northern border (Salaga, Begho, Krachi, Kintampo) was weakened. The booming kola trade led to sprawling *zango* (caravan trading places) settlements within the northern hinterlands comprising Hausa, Mossi, Yoruba, Zabarama, Grusi, and Dagomba. These groups were largely made up of communities with significant Muslim populations, from whom the British recruited troops for its campaigns against Asante (Annual Reports, Northern Territories, 1902, 1903, 1904).[143]

This was not the first time that the presence of Muslims or foreigners from the northern expanse in Asante has been recorded. The literature on precolonial Asante notes the incorporation of captives and slaves from places like Gonja and Dagbaŋ into Asante political and social structures. They were initially brought to serve the emerging Akan states and growing economy.[144] By the nineteenth century, Muslim migrants to Asante had been 'naturalised' or completely integrated into Asante society (Frimpong-Nnuroh and Osei 2021). The influx of migrants from the north to the Asante state in the precolonial period is a complex and multifaceted process that defies simple categorization due to its non-linear and dynamic nature. Nevertheless, the colonial period marked a complete departure (Pontzen 2021).

The British invasion of Asante in 1896 paved the way for the spread of zongos and soldiers from the hinterlands to Kumasi. They established the first zongos in the capital.[145] Throughout colonial rule, a second wave of migration from the north to Kumasi gained pace largely as a response to the growing demand for labour in cocoa production and the growing wage economy (Schildkrout 1978). These relatively new arrivals to the zongos were mostly from

[143] The British in the campaigns against Asante (1869, 1874, 1896 and 1900) recruited soldiers from northern communities (Dagomba, Mossi, Mamprusi, and Grunshi) and Hausas and Yoruba from Nigeria

[144] See (McCaskie 1996; Wilks 1974; Yarak 1990) on the use of enslaved northern groups in the agrarian revolution and the early foundation of polities in Asante. (Schildkrout 1978; Owusu- Ansah 1991) also highlight the presence of Muslims in the capital by the mid-eighteenth century, providing a range of services to the state, as ambassadors, scribes, record keepers, soldiers. Members of this group were broadly drawn from several communities across the western Sahara to the rugged plains of the Savannah along the western Volta. The current Asante *nkramo* (Muslim) community trace their ancestry to these early immigrants (ibid). See Wilks (1961; 1982; 1995) on the presence of Wangara/ Dyula Muslims in the Asante capital of Kumasi by the seventh century. He also claims that the designation Wangara or (French 'Dioula', English 'Dyula') is imprecise as it is often based on linguistical markers (Mande speaking) rather than cultural.

[145] The British in the campaigns against Asante (1869, 1874, 1896 and 1900) recruited soldiers from northern communities (Dagomba, Mossi, Mamprusi, and Grunshi) and Hausas and Yoruba from Nigeria (Schildkrout 1978:69)

non-Muslim communities from the Northern Territories and Upper Volta (Frafra, Grusi, Kanjaga, Kusasi, Lobi, etc), groups often said to be 'destitute and unskilled' (Schildkrout 1978:73).

The Hausa community, through their success in the kola trade, amassed wealth, and property in Asante, which gave them a significant influence in the zongo's economic and political life.[146] They came to define social status and achievement - *maigida* (Hausa for landlords)- in the zongo (Pontzen 2021:43).[147] Their language evolved as the lingua franca of trade and their Imams held prominent positions in religious leadership (Lovejoy 1980: 39–42; Winchester 1976: 21). Over time, most of the migrants in the zongos came to assume the Hausa identity partly as a gradual process of cultural assimilation and due to the perceived economic advantages, that becoming a Hausa conferred on an individual (Schildkrout 1978).

Islam acted as a unifying symbol amongst the dominant groups in the zongo, alongside other symbols and markers of identity (nationality, ethnicity, descent, place of origin). Amongst second generations *('yan k'asa),* and new arrivals, Pontzen (2021) claims that 'They married as Muslims, and thus Islam superseded ethnicity as an endogamous boundary' (81).[148] Quoting Pellow's work, he goes further to speak of the formation of a zongo identity- 'zongoness'- largely shaped by Islam and the inescapable sense of being a stranger. Pellow (2002) describes *Zongowanci* (zongoness) as a 'kind of northern ethos that emerges from Islam and crosscuts ethnicity; *zongowanci* is not kin-based, but it is basic to the ties that bind, to the overarching shared morality, to the attachment that residents feel for their community.' (232)

That Islam played a major role in shaping the social identity of communities in the zongos and how they related to each other is well demonstrated (Pellow 1985; Winchester 1976; Pontzen

[146] The earliest recorded settlement of zongo community in Kumasi consisted of Muslim traders and camp-followers who came to Kumasi with the British forces around 1896. They are known to have settled in Mmoromu, now known as Mbrom, following its first settler a Malam Tuni. *This zongo was destroyed by the* Asante in the uprising of the Yaa- Asantewaa war 1900, but was soon rebuilt by the Muslims in the same place (Schildkrout 1978: 74)

[147] Although the Hausa emerged as the largest and most well-funded group in the trade (kola and cattle), they shared a significant portion of the trade with other groups from the Sahel and Savanah (Pontzen 2021: 43) According to Schildkrout (1978) the term Hausa, 'was itself "a generic term used to refer to all up-country traders"' (67). There were many non-Hausa traders and soldiers in Kumasi early in the century but not many of them seem to have acquired property until after the 1920s (Schildkrout 1978: 83)

[148] The Hausa term *'yan k'asa* literaly or (sg. *'dan k'asa),* means sons of the town (Schildkrout 1978:83)

2021*)*. Nevertheless, other equally potent identifiers based on narratives of origins also informed claims of belonging- i.e., inclusion and exclusion.[149] Therefore, when we employ the term "affective kinship" in the context of Dagbaŋ, we intend to underscore the re-enactment of historical ties and the mobilisation of the poetics of kinship to evoke emotions and strengthen affiliations with the Ashanti public. In the case of Dagbaŋ, the language of kinship is not used with an explicit goal to achieve tangible outcomes, but rather to elicit a powerful emotional response, and to make affinal claims even more compelling.

Looking at a few examples of how these versions of historical narratives passed into popular memory through new media, we also reflect on the specific circumstances that occasioned such creative interpretations, which were sometimes incongruous with established narratives.

Activating history for the present (bloggers and journalists)

As versions of narratives spilt onto social media forums, newspapers, and online articles, following the aftermath of the 2002 conflict, what took precedence was not so much the issue of Asante's dominance - albeit hints of this can be detected - but rather, the reconciled accounts of overlapping and affective kinship between the two kingdoms. A personal blog by one Mohammed Ibn Yazid titled 'Dagbamba history: Asante-Dagbamba relationship', posted on Facebook deployed Haas' critique of Asante's supposed historical dominance over Dagbaŋ to conclude on Dagbaŋ's affinity to Asante through deliberate intermarriages.[150] His claim deserves to be quoted at length,

[149] Pontzen (2021) discusses the struggle for religious hegemony based on doctrinal differences between the Tijaniyya and Sunna. These differences at times culminated in violent clashes amongst their adherents in their peak points in 1970s and 1990s. Both were of the Sunni branch of Islam but shared fundamental differences regarding aspects of the teachings of the Qu'ran and Islamic tenet. Nevertheless, religious fissures and divisions did not always coalesce around these two movements nor hardened into binary opposition, as both movements were marked by internal differences and distinctions, whilst divergent interpretations of locally established conceptions of Islam proliferated.

[150] *Dagamba History: Asante Dagamba relationship* (2019) *Kurumbunani lahabaya* [Facebook].

> One thing that is clear in the oral accounts of the two polities again is how there have been deliberate intermarriages between Dagbamba and Asantes [sic] as far back as 1744. In fact, at the recent presentation of the Roadmap to Peace by the Asantehene, he noted Naa Gariba married an Asante princess. […] Our oral tradition says that Asantes [sic] were referred to as Kpari diba who were not only naturally dark and ugly but also dwarf-like. In order to change complexions and statures, they the Asantes [sic] deliberately caused cross breeding with the Dagbamba, and the result today is highly not only beneficial to Asantes but also to Dagbamba. Thankfully, the recent mediation at Manhyia strengthened the cultural and historical relationship between Asantes and Dagombas as cordial and mutually beneficial one. […] So, like Naa Gariba II, every Yaa Naa of Dagbon have this history of healthy and happy relationship with Asantes [sic] from 1740s to 2019.

The page boasted 1,381 active followers and according to the blogger, it was created 'to educate and enlighten people about the history of the past.'

Similarly, another article on the relationship between Asante and Dagbaŋ featured on the kingdom's official website recounted that,

> Dagbon warriors were sent to Kumasi and stationed at Bantama, where they helped to provide security and also to help fight the insurgents. The Asantes [sic] were physically shorter and smaller in size. This posed a serious disadvantage in the battlefields. So, when they met the Dagbon men, who were much taller and well-built, a commitment was made, where the Dagbon warriors were made to take Asante women as wives (especially from the Royal family). This Union helped to produce babies who were much taller and bigger, like the Dagbon men. It is for this reason that the Asantes [sic] inheritance is purely matrilineal.[151]

[151] According to the author these events occurred during the reign of Naa Gariba (1700-1720)
See: *The Relationship between Asanteman and Dagbon- During the reign of Naa Gariba* (2021) Dagbon Kingdom [Facebook].

The website's account of the origins of matrilineality contradicts much of the published academic scholarship. Some scholars have linked Akan matrilineal descent to the agrarian revolution, which occurred some centuries before the formation of the Asante empire in the seventeenth century (Wilks 1975; McCaskie 1995; Yarak 1995). They also claimed that the Akan system of matriliny was built on the institution of exogamous matriclans (*mmusua kese*) and served as the most efficacious social mechanism for assimilating outsiders (McCaskie 1995: 89; Yarak 1995: 6).

That Dagbaŋ and Asante have had earlier interactions during the precolonial period is not up for debate. There is a wealth of historical evidence that supports this fact, not to mention remnants of Asante tradition and language within Dagbaŋ social institutions (Haas 2017). The exact historical 'nature and terms' of the Asante and Dagbaŋ relation as raised by Haas (2017), is also of little concern here. However, what is most interesting is how such narratives take on deliberate innovations and are repurposed to foreground impressions of longstanding affective kinship - with strong moral connotations of fraternal support - as a justification for Dagbaŋ eligibility for OEF support. Schildkrout (1978) claims that the fact that ethnicity is rooted in familial and kinship relations accounts for the moral imperative associated with ethnicity, particularly in societies where morality and kinship relations have always been intimately connected (17). When questions were raised about why the OEF should support students and schools in Dagbaŋ, selected versions of historical accounts were reassembled and referenced to assert Asante's fraternal obligation to its poorer Northern siblings.

Friends or Vassal

In 2019, the newly enskinned Ya-Na Abubakari Mahama II paid a visit to the Asantehene. It was reported that the Ya-Na congratulated the Asante king for bringing peace to the area in a private sitting with his chiefs and entreated the king to intervene in the looming chieftaincy crisis at Nanton, where opponents had rejected the Ya-Na's choice of a successor.[152] The Ya-Na by Dagbaŋ 'custom' preserves the right to select a chief, with the aid of his elders when a skin under his traditional jurisdiction becomes vacant. The Ya-Na had chosen the former chief of Voggu, Mahama B. Bawa, however, his selection was fiercely rejected by chiefs and people

[152] Donkor, K. (2019) *Yaa-Naa calls on Asantehene.* Graphic Online, 16 November.

in Nanton who preferred the regent of Zoosali, Tia Haruna Sulemana.[153] This incident brought supporters on both sides close to blows, triggering fresh concerns over the fragility of the peace settlement in Dagbaŋ.

The historic visit of the Ya-Na Abubakari Mahama II to Kumasi took place during the *Adaɛ keseɛ,* which also marked the 20th anniversary of the king's reign. Media reports of the occasion struck a jubilant tone redolent with praises of the Asantehene. One writer described the occasion in these words: 'In a scenario only akin to the biblical King Solomon, the event attracted the likes of former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, the Emir of Kano Dtate, Mahammadu Sanusi II, and the vice president of Surinam, Ashwin Adhim.'[154] A member of the OEF further explained that,

> Just as the biblical King Solomon used his godly wisdom to judge cases amongst the Israelites and bring peace to the nation, the Asantehene today is the modern-day King Solomon. When he came on the throne, he quickly settled chieftaincy disputes in his Kingdom that even the government couldn't settle and in the rest of Ghana, thinking of the recent Dagbon case. This is how he came to be known as King Solomon because of his wisdom as a ruler (OEF, interview, 7 March 2020).

Other explanations of the king's image as a visionary King Solomon also points to his general concern for the welfare of his people, often associated with the formation of the OEF to promote education in the region (Bosiako, interview, 7 November 2020).

It is claimed that the Ya-Na's visit was partly a celebration of the longstanding 'friendly' relations between the two ancient kingdoms (Asante and Dagbaŋ) and partly to commemorate the Asantehene's intervention in bringing peace to the North. The Asantehene besides referring to the Ya-Na as a 'brother' in his speech relates his involvement in the Dagbaŋ crisis as a filial duty: 'As a father, you don't repel your children, you bring them

[153] *Nanton chieftaincy dispute chipping away at Dagbon peace – Minority Leader*. Myjoyonline, 24 August.
[154] Boadu, E. (2019) *Asantehene's 20th-anniversary climax: A multi-cultural 'tapestry'*. Ghanaweb, 25 April.

together.'[155] Yet for most Asantes present at the durbar, the Ya-Na's visit is not a meeting of equals, at the very least it signals the seniority of Otumfuo. And not to mention the purported primacy of Asante in the historical relations between the two states, often described in the idioms of fraternity - 'brothers'- albeit subtly appended to a subtext of unequal relations (Haas 2017). An attendee at the durbar explained: 'The Ya- Na and Otumfuo are brothers, just like our brother, "*Y'ɛnua ɛserɛmfoɔ"*, from the North.' *Y'ɛnua ɛserɛmfoɔ* literally translates as our brothers from the savannah. Similarly, the Director of the OEF explained that 'historically' the Asantehene and the Ya-Na are brothers (*annuafoɔ*) but identified the Asantehene as the 'eldest' (*Panyin*) and for this reason, when the Asantehene requests support for his 'sons' the Fund could not refuse (OEF, interview, 5 May 2020).

Members of the Asante community engaged in this research generally expressed their approval of OEF support towards communities in the Northern region, especially Dagbaŋ. This was often perceived as a demonstration of Asante's benevolence and hospitality to its less fortunate (or 'junior') brothers. At times, it was attributed to the wisdom of their modern-day King Solomon. As one shopkeeper in Manhyia puts it: *ɔhɔhoɔ na yɛ de no kyekyere kuro* ('it is the foreigner that founds the town'). Yet, kindness to strangers had its limits, even if the beneficiary community had once been part of Asante and claimed to share blood ties. The term *amanfrafoɔ* (outsiders/émigré) is deliberately deployed to dismiss Worawora's ancestral links to Asante and relegate them as 'Voltarians' based on their geographic location.

[155] 20th year anniversary celebration of Asantehene Otumfuo Osei Tutu II on the golden stool

The OEF and Worawora: 'Woraworaman are truly Ashantis

Fig 15.



Map showing the Volta region before the division to create the Oti region. The red-marked area shows the Biakoye district where the town of Worawora is located (Source: Ministry of Local Government, Ghana)

Worawora is a town within the Buem-Krachi area which lies along the Volta estuary and forms part of the Biakoye administrative district in the newly created Oti region. The Volta region is one of the poorest regions in the country. Before the separation of the Oti region, its economy was largely shaped by rural agriculture, which accounted for 74% of its economically active population (Ghana Statistical Service 2013). The extension of Otumfuo's generosity to Worawora therefore was readily welcomed by the chiefs in the region. From 2003, the OEF offered scholarships to students in communities in Worawora (OEF 2004). Although the OEF would not take on any massive infrastructure development as it has done elsewhere in the country, according to one informant OEF assistance to children in Worawora was enough to 'make some Asantes come to see the OEF as gathering resources from Asante to support other people' (Kumasi, interview, 4 May 2020). A senior member of the OEF team revealed that much of the objection to supporting Worawora and communities in the Volta came from Asante chiefs who felt that their donations to the organisation should be going to Asante children and not redirected to 'Voltarians' (OEF, interview, 5 May 2020). Others also looked upon the king's interest in the region as 'self-seeking' and 'political' which did not further the wider interest of the Asante people. The OEF would reconsider its decision but still try to

balance the king's expectations by approving applications of children from all regions in the country if they were born or lived in the Asante region (OEF, interview, 5 May 2020).

Akan settlements like Worawora were not the only areas of interest to the king but it seemed that the goal was to extend his satellite of influence into the Volta. The Asantehene pledged 1000,000 cedis (roughly $3,000) as seed money to the Asogli education fund.[156] As a member of the OEF explained, 'the donation is made through the fund, as with most of the king's pledges to educational matters to other traditional councils and communities' (see chapter 4). Like the OEF, the Asogli education fund was founded by the king – in this case, Agbogbomefia of the Asogli traditional state, Togbe Afede XIV – and it was intended to support the 'brilliant but needy children' in the Volta region. The fund covers the 'Asogli State and Volta Region as a whole.'[157] Donor dissatisfaction with the king's interest in the Volta and Asogli can potentially be explained on the basis that they are 'Ewes'. The case of Worawora, however, is somewhat different. It is common knowledge that the ancestors of Worawora emigrated to their current location from their homeland in the former Asante empire.

While Worawora is believed to have originated from Asante or one of its main Akan states in the C18th and thus can be considered Asante based on ancestry, its claim to OEF support was implicated in the broader dynamics of migration and identity formation in the Volta. The discontent of donors towards OEF's support for Worawora raises pertinent questions about the effectiveness of ethnicity as a basis for inclusion in resource allocation. The focus of concern was not the ethnicity of the people of Worawora or the historical foundation of their claim, but rather what the Asante public deemed to be the appropriate criteria for inclusion. Additionally, historical assertions of Worawora's Asante identity, as we will later explore, were influenced by contested and divergent narratives of migration and settlement in the Volta, which did not always lead to the same conclusion. The assessment of Worawora's affiliation with Asante, we argue, was contingent on the historically specific and political context of identity mobilization in the Volta. To gain a deeper understanding of the limitations of Worawora's entitlement to OEF support compared to Dagbaŋ, it is crucial to delve into the

[156] *Asogli State initiates education fund* (2005). Ghanaweb, 20 March.
[157] https://asoglistate.com/maincat_select.cfm?ASOGLI%20EDUCATION%20FUND&corpnews_catid=9

history of Akan settlement in the Volta and its implication for notions of ethnic identification, membership, and status. Our primary concern lies in Worawora's historical ties with Asante and its relationship with neighbouring communities in the Volta. The following overview highlights key historical moments to provide context and enhance understanding of the complex processes of identification, claim-making, and claim evaluation. First, we outline a few challenges in studying the identity of Akan minority groups in the Volta.

Writing about Akan minorities

The experience of Akan migrants in the Volta region has received comparatively less attention in the literature compared to Ewe-speaking groups in the area.[158] This can be attributed to the fact that the idea of Akans as a distinct group in the Volta sits uneasily within the broader political discourses of post-colonial Ghana. These narratives tend to portray 'the Akan' as Ghana's single largest group which inhabits the geographical 'heartlands' and has largely supported the NPP (National Patriotic Party) in elections since 1992. This view also envisages the Akan as pitted against a series of smaller groups (Ewe, Dagomba, Tallensi, Dagaare, etc.) living in the 'peripheries' and more sympathetic to the NDC (National Democratic Congress).[159] This perspective might overshadow discussions about Akan communities in other regions. Furthermore, viewing Akans as a minority in the Volta region might appear counterintuitive given the widespread recognition of the Akan people as a major ethnic group in Ghana. Except for some exceptions (Nugent 2002; Lentz and Nugent 2000; Brydon 2008), the scholarly focus on topics like nationalism, borderlands, colonial legacy, and gender, which tends to privilege accounts of Ewe-speaking groups has potentially diverted attention from the complex process of identity formation of Akan minorities in central Volta.

Given these factors, we adopt an interpretive approach drawing from anthropological and historical studies to uncover how the 'Central Togo minorities' in the Ewedome region have

[158] A corpus of highly detailed research has amassed on the history of the Volta, which tangentially touches on minority groups but as part of the broader excursion into the political history of Ewe-speaking peoples (Nugent 2002; 2019, Yayoh 2002, Clapham 1999, Amenumey 1968, Lawrance 2017, Greene 1996, Skinner 2015, Keese 2019, Brydon 2008; Akyeampong 2001)

[159] See Rathbone 2000; Allman 1993; Owusu1996; Chazan 1983)

shaped their identity in relation to others over time.[160] This entails examining pivotal moments of group expressions of cultural differences to gain insight into their specific and context-dependent orientation. This enables us to better understand whether Worawora has consistently identified with Akan/Asante or if particular circumstances provided the impetus to reinforce their (re)identification with Asante. We also aim to elucidate why, in the context of the OEF, there were limitations in generating a sense of belonging, with Worawora being perceived as ethnic outsiders or 'Voltarians.'

Akan minorities in the Volta

The precolonial history of the Volta region has been covered elsewhere; I restrict myself to teasing out some of the principal threads that are important for developing the larger comparative argument (Amenumey 1986; Verdon 1980). Worawora's relationship with Asante is shrouded in ambivalence. Available sources do not affirm claims of Asante citizenship *proper* during the pre-colonial period but instead reflect a community fleeing Asante's aggression in search of refuge. According to Worawora's oral tradition, the inhabitants of Worawora were originally part of the Oyoko clan and moved from their Akan native land Kuntanase in the Lake Bosomtwe region around 1732. This move was sparked by a conflict between Opoku Ware I and the fifth Kuntanese chief, Nana Odwisa (Ampene 2010). After nearly forty years of travel, they settled in Worawora, a name derived from the Akan word "EWAREWARE," signifying a long journey (Otu 2013). They built their settlement amongst the Buems. The Buems are described as belonging to the Guan ethnic group, which also comprised of the Lefana-speaking group of Borada, Guaman, Kadjakrom, Jasikan, and the Lelemi-speaking people of Bagio and Teteman. The Guans were subsequently described as 'autochthonous' to the region but also believed to have originated from the Mossi kingdoms of the upper Volta in present-day Burkina Faso (Nugent 2019)

[160] Ewedome mostly refers to the area occupied by the northern Ewe of the present-day Volta region of Ghana. Besides the Ewe, the area was also inhabited by other non-Ewe communities often described by the shorthand central Togo minorities. Yayoh (2015) claims that although the term is somewhat confusing and problematic, it is sometimes used to draw a distinction between the Ewe in the north that came under German rule and those in the south that formed part of the Gold Coast under British administration from the 1880s onwards (Yayoh 2015). For further discussion of Ewedome and the central Togo minorities see Lentz and Nugent (2000)

Three main observations can be made about Asante's expansion into the region between the 1700s and 1800s in terms of Worawora's allegiance and identity formation in the region. Firstly, Asante's dominance in the region, facilitated by the Anlo and Akwamu alliance in the 1730s, was marked by severe exploitation of communities for the acquisition of slaves, which resulted in significant displacement of populations (Johnson 1965; Kea 1969). Secondly, during the late nineteenth century, as states in Ewedome sought to repel Asante's final bid to maintain control, Worawora aligned itself with Buem chiefdoms (Keese 2019). Thirdly, Asante's violent campaign between 1869 and 1871 to re-establish its diminishing influence was followed by a period of social disorder, as communities settled scores and exacted retribution against those who collaborated with Asante (Nugent 2002:19). Writers observe that the brewing enmity, combined with successive and uneven waves of migration from distinct communities of refugees into the region, reinforced the formation of autonomous chiefdoms, known as *dukɔwo* (Brydon 2008; Nugent 2002). However, this did not pave the way for a centralized polity capable of uniting the different groups under one common identity, be it national, ethnic, or otherwise (Amenumey 1986). Nugent (2002) maintains that throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, communities in the region remained a highly complex hybrid society not easily categorized by fixed ethnic labels, but best described as a 'melting pot' (18). The limited information in the literature makes it challenging to assert Worawora's specific connection to Asante or the basis for such a connection. However, considering Worawora's alliance with Buem in the context of Asante's brutal predations, it is reasonable to assume that Worawora's sense of identity during this period may have been primarily influenced by local considerations rather than overarching ethnic ties. This trend becomes more evident from the literature as we move towards the colonial period.

Colonialism and Nationalism in the Volta

Several studies have offered a rich account of the impact of colonialism on both Akan minorities and their Ewe-speaking neighbours in the Two Togolands (Nugent 2002; 2019, Yayoh 2002, Amenumey 1968, Skinner 2015, Keese 2019, Brydon 2008; Akyeampong 2001). The important thing to note is that colonial rule resulted in the partition of territories, disputes over land and subjects and the rise of nationalism. All of which had a profound impact on the identity formation of Akan groups in Ewedome.

Ewedome initially fell under Germany's jurisdiction at the end of the nineteenth century. However, following Germany's defeat in World War I, her colonial possessions were divided between Britain and France (Skinner 2015). Worawora and much of the Akan-speaking areas in Ewedome came under British administrative control (Yayoh 2002). The French claimed territories more towards the eastern expanse of the Volta encompassing what is now the nation of Togo. The new territorial arrangement was placed under the League of Nations mandate in 1923, based on the principle of colonial trusteeship rather than 'outright territorial acquisition' (Nugent 1991: 34).[161] The new partition once again placed communities in different colonial spheres with severe implications for land ownership and the movement of people.

In Chapters 2 and 4, we observed that the production of cocoa in Asante spurred profound economic and social changes amid heightened political tensions between chiefs, subjects, and the colonial administration. Similarly, the development of cocoa in the Buem areas under British control in the 1930s resulted in a significant increase in their population mostly stemming from 'strangers' from the Gold Coast and French Togoland, who at times constituted the majority in some of the towns (Nugent 2002: 54).[162] This further led to increased demand for land and the need for more precise delineation of boundaries. The British also aimed to consolidate their authority and rationalise structures of local governance through the Native Administration Ordinance, which led to the elevation of states like Buem, Asogli, Avatime, and Akpini and placed other chiefdoms under them. The policy of amalgamation was incompatible with the precolonial order of autonomous chiefdoms-*dukɔwo* -and stirred up tensions between different communities and chiefdoms over lands,

[161] Lome was a disputed territory between Britain and France, which was only resolved on September 30, 1920, through a convention that transferred ownership of the city to France. A delineation of the boundary between Britain and France was achieved following the efforts of the Anglo-French Boundary Commission and the issuance of a Boundary Protocol in 1929 (Yayoh 2002: 71-2).

[162] Nugent (2002) counts in the numbers of Gold Coaster Akans and Ewe speakers from Akuapem, Krobo, Peki, Ada, and Anlo. And from French Togoland Ewe-speaking people of Kotokolis and Kabres (58). Census figures for the 1940s estimates a growth of population in Akan settlement between 1931to the mid 1940s from 4,782 to10,671, with the highest growth recorded for the Akan towns of Ahamansu, Worawora, Kajebi and Borada Gold Coast. Census Office. (1950). *Census of population, 1948. Report and tables*. London: Published on behalf of the Government of the Gold Coast by the Crown Agent for the Colonies

citizenship, and community entitlements. What can the ensuing disputes within the chiefdoms placed under the Buem state tell us about the nature of group identification?

Amalgamation and group identification in Buem 1930s and 1940s

Studies examining chiefly disputes in the Buem region have shown that the symbolic values of identity reflected a catalogue of registers from which actors selected depending on the situation. As a case in point, in 1944 when the Akan section was placed under Lefana chiefs, Worawora objected to forming part of the Buem state, claiming that 'the Lefana wish to destroy their identity as 'Twi speaking people' (Keese 2019: 258). In addition, Worawora claimed that the Lefana treated them as second-class citizens, despite that they constituted half of the population and contributed to most of the stool revenue. Similarly, the eastern Lefana villages of Dzolu, New Ayoma, and Baika also challenged the arrangement claiming to be the original inhabitants and demanding their own divisional chiefs (Nugent 2002:132-6). Lefana oral traditions traced their origins to Asante, but they asserted their claim as the 'real aborigines' (ibid). Migrant cocoa farmers also organised themselves into an interest group called the Buem Strangers Union and demanded divisional chiefs (ibid:137). They highlighted their economic contribution to Buem but lamented their treatment as 'second-class citizens,' despite being the largest group. Interestingly, in some migrant settlements like Papase, Ewes outnumbered Akans (Nugent 2002:136). In their protests of the ordinance, they referred to themselves as 'NATIVES OF WEST AFRICA' and 'NON-NATIVE FARMERS' (ibid:137)

Despite that Worawora and the Buem stranger unions vied for representation of the Akan section, the latter rooted their claim in an inclusive 'minority' identity. This highlights the limits of ethnicity in fostering solidarity among diverse groups and underscores the importance of perceived relational ties in forging social action. Thus, in his analysis, Nugent (2002) suggests that these conflicts tinged with ethnic overtones primarily stemmed from local factors like colonial policies, migration, cocoa production, and borders, rather than a revival or rediscovery of ancient ties. All the same, one could argue that the weakness of ethnicity in forging cultural solidarity amongst communities may have also stemmed from the failure of political entrepreneurs to forge a common sense of identity based on strong ideological attachments rather than to advance specific economic or individual interests. Let

us now test out the assertion against the nationalist movements of Ewe unification from the 1940s onwards to understand its impact on minority identity and political expression.

Group mobilisation and nationalism in Ewedome 1940s and 1970s

The rise of nationalism following the Second World War has also gained traction among scholars (Keese 2019; Amenumey 1969; Browne 1980). They suggest that the landscape of group mobilisation in the Trans-Volta region seemed to have undergone significant changes as 'Ewe nationalism' gained considerable momentum in the 1940s. Furthermore, the currents of nationalism crystallised into political movements calling for the unification of Ewe people in the two Togolands such as the All-Ewe Conference (AEC)/ Comité de l'unite Togolaise (CUT) (French Togoland), Togoland Union (TU) and Togoland Congress (TC). The AEC, which incorporated the CUT in 1946 called for the 'unification of Eweland under a single administering Power.' The TU formed the following year agitated for the reunification of the two Togolands. The TC - a faction of the TU- formed in 1950 campaigned against proposals under the Coussey Committee to unite Southern Togoland with the Gold Coast (Nugent 2002:163-173; Keese 2019:263-5).[163]

At a cursory read, it seems reasonable to suppose that the resurgence of Akan identity amongst the Worawora in the 2000s is a continuation of the legacy of political unification. In the sense that the legacy of Ewe nationalism had a reactionary effect in solidifying other minority ethnic identities. The available sources, however, point to a more complex and not straightforward development, whereby the fault lines that fuelled various factions did not neatly map onto ethnic affiliations.

The push for the reunification of the two Togolands centred concerns around the lack of amenities and poor educational facilities in the Trans-Volta as compared to the Gold Coast. This often became a source of division stimulating a reshuffling of alliances between the Gold Coast's C.P.P party and TC (Nugent 2002:182). Nugent's analysis of the 1956 plebiscite to

[163] The Coussey Committee set up following the 1948 riot to frame a new constitution for the Gold Coast came up with a proposal that had important implications for British Togoland. It 'recommended a single region to unite the southern half of the trust territories with Gold Coast Eweland' (Nugent 2002: 180)

determine the integration or separation of the two Togolands contradicts ethnic-based voting patterns. Instead, in each region, local factors influenced voting preferences. In the Buem areas, there was a slight division between integrationists and separatists. The Akan group tended to support the TC out of the belief that any unification based on 'the Ewes as a whole will be dominated by the Gold Coast Ewe' (as opposed to the Ewe-speakers) (Nugent 1991: 192). Suspicions regarding the 'dominance' of coastal Ewe's were once again not rooted in ethnicity, but partly from their educational advantage, which had placed them in good stead to assume leadership positions and public offices (Nugent 2000).

There is not the space to discuss the aftermath of the 1956 plebiscite, however, it is generally observed that political sentiment for unification changed remarkably following Ghana's independence and the integration of the British Togoland. It has been observed that post-independence attempts to reopen the integration question under TOLIMO (National Liberation Movement for Western Togoland) lacked widespread support among both Ewe and Akan populations in the Volta region (Brown 1980). This analysis suggests that the enduring Ewe/Akan rivalry during the secessionist movement in the 1970s was more influenced by post-colonial state politics and competition for resources rather than being a direct outcome of 'territorial nationalism' in the Trans-Volta (ibid).[164] Recent research also indicates that the Ashanti-Ewe divide persisted in voting patterns between 1990-2000, largely due to political patronage instead of ethnicity per se (Asante and Boadi 2004). These analyses challenge the notion of a reactionary mobilization of Akan ethnicity in response to Ewe nationalism, casting doubt on a direct link between Worawora's assertion of Akan identity in the 2000s and the historical legacy of Ewe nationalism.

Despite the passage of time, local issues such as economic challenges, disputes over stool lands, and border complexities have continued to fuel movements for regional separation. Just as land disputes were a major source of tension during the colonial amalgamation policy, they have resurfaced in the early 21st century. Historical narratives of origin have also played

[164] Skinner (2015) proposes a revaluation of the Togo reunification movement as a form of territorial nationalism. This perspective acknowledges concerns that advocates might not be viewed entirely as 'anti-colonial,' as they aimed to partition a portion of British-administered territory to reinstate the physical borders of a former German colony (13). She affirms that 'The demand for Togoland reunification had as its final objective an independent and multi-ethnic state' (12).

a significant role in debates about regional separation, with claims that the inhabitants of Worawora acquired their lands through conquest while owing allegiance to the Otumfuo. This marks a departure from earlier assertions of autonomy of Akan settlers from Asante and Ewe states, which were based on contributions to native treasuries and population. In recent times, claims of Worawora's historical ties to and cultural affinity with Asante have spurred a renewed sense of nationalism, particularly amongst a younger generation of Woraworans. This sense of Asante membership has been promoted and reinforced through social media, online news outlets, and blogs, shaping selective versions of history. We now delve into the specific circumstances of the 2000s that rekindled Worawora's assertion of Asante identity, which became embroiled in counterclaims of suspicion and controversy about Woraowara's status as a subject of Asantehene and ultimately prompted the OEF to withdraw support for the region.

'Worawora can't be under Asante.'

Fig 16.



Map of the Oti region after its creation in 2018 (Source: Ministry of Local Government, Ghana)

The Otumfuo's decision to pay a historic visit on 29 September 2001 for the Akwantutenten festival, embroiled the OEF in a controversy over Worawora's claim to Asante citizenship and belonging. The festival marks the hazardous journey of the ancestors of Asante who emigrated from Kuntanese to their current abode. An article appeared on the front page of the *Ghanaian Times* in 2002, titled *Worawora can't be under Asante* (*Ghanaian Times,* 9

January 2002). It reported on a meeting between the Volta Region caucus in Parliament and the Standing Committee, where several Volta chiefs expressed their discontent. Togbe Gabusu the president of the House, claimed 'that there was no paramount chief in the region who owed allegiance to any other chief within or outside the region'. Nana Aburam Akpandja IV Omanhene of the Buem traditional area is reported to have 'felt a strong resentment to the visit of the Otumfuo to the Buem traditional area saying it was a violation of the norms of the chieftaincy institution' (Ghanaweb, 16 January 2002). He went on to say that 'Worawora land did not belong to the Akan settlers and for them to pay allegiance to the Asantehene was an act of disrespect to the ancestor of the Buem Traditional Area.' The then MP of Hohoe South Kosi Kedem present at the meeting raised concerns about the significance of the Otumfuo's visit to Worawora.

Equally, the Omanhene of Worawora, Nana Daasebre Asare Baah III, took to the airwaves and fired back in a statement to the press, claiming that Worawora are subjects of the Asantehene and not the Buemhene. He recounted the history of Worawora's migration from the eighteenth century to its present site. And maintained that Worawora came to occupy that land by conquest. On the claim of the Buemhene that Worawora people are his subjects, he dismissed this as an egregious misrepresentation and trenchantly maintained that 'the Buemhene does not own a square metre of land in Worawora Traditional Area or for that matter any Akan areas.' With that said he further affirmed Worawora's Asante origins by reminding the Volta chiefs that during the Yaa Asantewaa War of 1900, Worawora sent men to help Asante. The Nkosuohene of Worawora, Nana Owusu Afari, dressed in the traditional black cloth *kuntunkuni* to signify the severity of the issue, trumpeted that 'We are at war with anybody who tramples on our rights.' The omanhene's response was also rerun on the official cultural website of Manhyia Palace: *Asanteman,* which further indicates the Asantehene's implicit endorsement of Worawora's assertion of being Asante. The Asantehene's visit and endorsement of Worawora's assertion of their Asante ancestry caused an uproar, especially because it coincided with agitation for the creation of a separate region and therefore raised suspicions of an Asante interference. Consequently, as the struggle for regional status waged on, Worawora's claim to Asante citizenship was reinterpreted within the unfolding drama of regional separation. Central to this process was the role of newspapers in generating a forum for public debates where assertions of regional nationalism were coloured by ethnic

sentiment, albeit underpinned by complex ideological motivations and material factors. The *Daily Graphic* of May 24, 2007, ran an article headlined: 'Creating new region from Volta is aggression.' A retired military officer, one. Capt. Von Buckenstein is reported to have said that the creation of another region from the Volta Region would constitute an act of aggression on the people of the region. He claimed that the division of the region might engender confusion since people in the southern part of the region owned land in the north. In 2017, the incoming NPP administration under Akuffo Addo gave a sympathetic ear to the minority cause and allowed for a commission of inquiry into the matter which culminated in the creation of the Oti region (see fig 16). The reason given for the creation of the Oti region according to the commission's report is 'the development challenges imposed by the present spatial configuration of the existing regions.'[165] The creation of the Oti region lies outside the scope of this discussion. Nonetheless, it should be observed that the Asantehene's attempt to extend his influence into the Volta region through the OEF was marred in the wider politics of regional separation, warranting the distaste of some Asante donors as meddling in ethnic politics.

Social media also served as an important vehicle to raise the political consciousness of citizens of Worawora from across the globe, as well as an important site for mobilising and assembling communicative memory (Peterson and Macola 2009: 15; Ellis 2002: 22). Bloggers on Facebook established a community page devoted to promoting Worawora culture and identity. One such and popular community platform is 'Worawora Forever.' The platform has roughly 2,817 followers drawn from local members and those from the diaspora who actively engage with posts shared on the site; comment, disagree, and debate on issues posted on the site.[166] The site was founded in 2011 and engages its members in a broad range of discussions cutting across development, chieftaincy, politics, and cultural issues regarding Worawora. The site also publishes rare photographs and rich artefacts on chieftaincy and politics in Worawora.

[165] Ghana (2018) Report on Commission of Inquiry into the Creation of New Region: Equitable Distribution of National Resources for Balanced Development. Commission of Inquiry
also see: https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/oti-region-creation-buem-chiefs-laud-akufo-addo.html

[166] For a comparison with the Ewe diaspora in contemporary political struggles, see (Skinner 2010).

In 2013, a think piece was published on the page set against the context of the ongoing national debate over the creation of a new Oti region. The author recounted Worawora's popular history of migration from Kuntanese to the northeast of the Volta under the reign of King Opoku Ware I, affirming its Asante origins. Subsequently, another post featured the picture of the Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, with the statement 'History and the culture of the people of Worawora has not been adulterated and this still makes us proud to belong to Asante.' The Asantehene was praised for being the first Asante king to cross the Volta River to visit Worawora. Comments posted on the page commended the author and reinforced the claim that 'Worawora are truly Ashantis.' Worawora's historical claims to Asante's origins were never held in doubt.

But for most OEF donors this was not enough to confer them rights to resources intended for 'Asante children.' Hence Worawora's eligibility based on belonging to Asante has its limits due to the political context of the time, which is further compounded by donors' unease with Asantehene's connection to Worawora. The OEF's report on its activities of the fund (2011 to 2013) shows among its beneficiaries, schools in the northern region: Mamprusi, Dagomba, Maalu (OEF 2014). The Volta region is not included. Likewise, the Volta region no longer benefitted from the Fund's nationwide career guidance and counselling programme for students from communities in regions that once had been part or paid allegiance to 'Greater Asante' (Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Central, Eastern, Western) (OEF 2014). As seen in the previous chapter, by 2017 the OEF had come to a complete grind, due to 'dwindling funds', whilst a new outfit directly under the command of the king had taken over. Let us now reflect on the complex and situational nature of community eligibility whilst bringing the discussion to a close.

Closing remarks: limits to eligibility

This chapter illuminates the importance of analysing ethnicity by considering kinship affinities in their relational interdependence, rather than exclusively from an identarian or teleological perspective. It set out to understand why OEF donors and members of the Asante public expressed a positive reception of support for Dagbaŋ. But Worawora, an Asante-descent migrant group in the Volta, triggered a sharp reaction and even accusations that they are

amanfrafoɔ, Voltarians, taking resources from Asante children. It questions whether ethnic claims alone served as an adequate basis for OEF support. It suggests that the instrumentalization of ethnicity may have limitations. Therefore, the assertion that the success of claims rooted in ethnicity is influenced by those who control or can restrict access to power and resources, may hold in some cases like land disputes (Schildkrout 1978). However, fails to fully explain situations where claims are related to personal resources and assets like education. As we find in the case of Dagbaŋ, the Otumfuo's use of OEF resources as part of his wider diplomatic engagement in peacebuilding in the North was generally welcomed by donors and members of the Asante public as a savvy and generous act to its unfortunate 'brothers'. This projected and magnified the significance of Asante in national politics and Otumfuo's paternal authority as the 'father of the nation.' Since Dagbaŋ is generally perceived to be behind, this did not only generate a sense of 'cultural pride', 'a positive national self-image' or 'feel good' but also affirmed hierarchical relations between Asante, her citizens, and the people of the north.

The same could not hold true for Worawora because the Volta region is perceived by many Asantes as being ahead in education. Even though, this only seems to be the case in some contexts such as the coastal community (e.g., Anlo) where some of its educated populations had assumed leadership roles in Ghana's politics and civil service during the post-independent period (Nugent 2000; Browne 1980). Furthermore, as seen in previous chapters a predominant concern of Asante king's engagement in education since colonialism was the need for Asante to catch up with educational progress in the rest of the country framed around the ethos of *anibue*. The history of Worawora's migration from Asante's heartland to the Volta, although not held in doubt, failed to bring closure and instead stimulated claims and counterclaims about Worawora's identity and status, with different constituencies reaching different conclusions. It was therefore not the validity of Worawora's Asante ancestry that was held in question but rather some claims took precedence over others depending on their political significance and moral implications.

The OEF's support embroiled in the politics of regional separation and contested histories of migration to the Volta took on a more critical evaluation. References to ethnicity evoked scepticism around the Otumfuo's strategic or alleged personal interest - 'self-seeking'- and he

was believed to have marred Asante's reputation in 'tribal politics.' Drawn into the question of Asante's political significance to the Ghanaian nation, the OEF had to be seen as working in the broader interest of the Asante public. Thus, we argue that for claims of OEF support based on kinship to be found interesting and purposeful by present-day interlocutors, they had to speak to current dilemmas, needs or problems. Such claims were more likely to succeed if the assertions of group *relational connectedness* enhanced the image of Asante as a nation, as opposed to furthering the strategic interest of the king or board members of the OEF. Hence, the idea of helping a less fortunate 'fraternal' community was deemed more compelling than merely sharing ancestry. By stressing *affective kinship*, claimants in favour of Dagbaŋ seem to have placed national pride over bloodlines.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

On 15 March 2021, a press release by the Otumfuo Charity Foundation (OTCF) announced that it was changing its name to Otumfuo Osei Tutu II Foundation (OOTIIF).[167] The statement approved by the king stated that 'The Otumfuo Education Fund, the Serwaa Ampem Foundation for Children and the Otumfuo Osei Tutu II Charity Foundation, have together metamorphosed and been consolidated into the Osei Tutu II Foundation with newly constituted Board of Trustees and Management personnel.' Under the newly constituted 'merger', the foundation was to 'consolidate, structure and implement all the Asantehene's social impact initiatives in the specific thematic areas of education, health, culture & heritage, water & sanitation and some special projects.' The closure of the OEF had long been an open secret to the Asante public, however, the king never expressed this in public, making the press statement the first official admission of the takeover by the OTCF. This move seemed to have been hatched a year before the press release during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Educating Asante children during COVID-19, 13th May 2020

In the immediate aftermath of the COVID-19 lockdown in Kumasi, I was informed by one of the project facilitators that the OTCF would be in Kumasi to distribute books to Junior High School Students (JHS) as part of the organisation's attempt to sustain its commitment towards education, and more importantly the king's vision. The king, as the facilitators intimated, was concerned about the potential impact of learning losses to school closures on students from deprived communities. The first community to be chosen was Bohyen, a crowded urban settlement in Kumasi, just half a mile drive from Suame. A public announcement about the visit was made a few days prior, through the community information centre. Students were asked to congregate at Bohyen Primary (a government school), on a dirt field behind the school building. A minimum of 150 students gathered on the field separated into single files standing 2 metres apart from each other. The field offered a sizeable space and seemed to be the community's main public space; also used for funerals and other community functions. Parents seeking to collect books for their children were turned away and told to send their

[167] See: *Otumfuo's charity foundation changes name to Otumfuo Osei Tutu II Foundation* (2021). MyJoyOnline, 19 March.

children instead. In this way, the organisation ensured that the resources went to the targeted groups. The following day a similar outreach was organised in the peri-urban settlement of Heman on the outskirts of Kumasi Santaase. Chiefs from both districts were present ranging from the division chiefs and the various subdivisions, all of whom were dressed in their respective traditional garb in accordance with their rank. The director also took this moment to repeatedly emphasise the king's 'utmost concern' for the disruption that COVID-19 has caused to children's education and his encouragement of students to carry on with their education.

What was particularly notable on that day was not the distribution of books or the students' expressions of gratitude, but rather the conspicuous absence of any mention or reference to the OEF in the conversations and speeches that took place. When I queried the project manager about the OEF, I was met with a slight irritation and simply told that the OTCF and OEF are 'practically the same', since 'the king has merged both charities under the leadership of the former' (OTCF, personal communication, 13 May 2020). This was the first time that the language of a 'merger' had been used publicly and in conversations with the director and facilitators. Interestingly, within popular memory, OEF remained the most well-known initiative commonly associated with the king's engagement in education. Part of the reason for this can be attributed to the legacy of the OEF and its perceived impact on the Asante public. Nevertheless, the lack of proper record-keeping, as outlined in Chapter 5, makes it difficult to provide a reliable evaluation of the OEF's impact. This notwithstanding, available records and the strong sentiment expressed by members of the Asante public suggest that the OEF did not only have a real and tangible impact on the lives of communities but also resonated deeply with the dreams and aspirations of poor Asante parents hoping for a better future for their children (Kumasi, personal communication, 4 May 2020). Hence public suspicions over the king's interference and scrutiny of the extension of entitlement and eligibility to *'émigré'* communities (such as Worawora) provoked a deep sense of discontent and dissatisfaction during the flagging years of the OEF activities. During its active years (2001-2014), the OEF provided extensive coverage across the country, offering support to

impoverished communities in six out of the ten administrative regions in Ghana (Brong Ahafo, Northern Region, Eastern, Central, Ashanti, and Greater Accra Region).[168]

This study has sought to understand a set of problems related to chiefs' engagement in education in Ghana. It also addresses popular assumptions about chiefly engagement in development, often taken as established wisdom. As we bring the discussion to a close, we thread together the component sections and elucidate their contribution to the scholarship on chiefship, education, and development in Ghana specifically and Africa more broadly. The study examined the underlying factors that contributed to the rise of the OEF, its popularity among Asante and its eventual decline, and it explored how the OEF enriches our understanding of the relationship between formal education, bureaucracy, and modernity in Ghana. In wrapping up the analyses we contend that Asantehene Osei Tutu II used his engagement in education to advance his hegemonic aspirations and political ambitions and we assessed the implications of this in the rise and fall of support for the OEF. We argue that the decline of the OEF was down to a combination of factors, which fall under three major themes outlined below.

OEF as a form of hegemony

Firstly, the Asantehene's underlying objectives and the specific historical and political context of the OEF underscore its distinct configuration and inherent challenges. The Otumfuo Education Fund (OEF), established in the 1990s, continued a tradition initiated by previous Asante monarchs, notably Prempe II. Yet it also differed in some key respects, owing to its emergence in the neoliberal age of democratisation and globalisation in the 1990s. Prempe II's (Ashante Confederacy Council Scholarship) scheme aimed to propel Asante's material and social development with the aim of catching up with the Gold Coast, while also curbing the rising influence of educated segments in society. This approach sought to maintain the authority of the traditional Asante elite and uphold Asante's historical prominence within the changing political context of British colonial rule. Similarly, in the 1990s, the Asantehene

[168] In 2018 the referendum for the creation of new regions paved for six administrative regions, namely: North East, Savanah, Bono East, Ahafo, Western North and Oti.
See: *Ghana Now has 16 regions (*2019). *Modern Ghana,* 16 February.

leveraged concerns about the accessibility and quality of education, as well as shifts in global education governance, to reposition his authority within national efforts towards education. Through the OEF, we found that he reinterpreted locally situated meanings and practices of development (especially *anibue*) within international discourses, adopting the identity of civil society to bolster his moral claim to educational development. In Akan thought, *anibue* holds conflicting meanings associated with enlightenment, social progress, and Western education. It reflects deeply rooted norms and values inscribed in ideas of success and achievement. To understand this process and its implications for the OEF we broadened our perspective to incorporate in the analysis the historical trajectory of Asante kings' engagement in education. We posit that the Asantehene used the OEF to promote his hegemonic interests, presenting himself as an enlightened (*anibue*) leader dedicated to the national development of the country through bureaucratic governance. Nevertheless, the OEF's long-term success depended on its alignment with local knowledge and established social norms and practices. We argue that Asante monarchs used education to promote and advance their hegemonic interest by re-enacting locally embedded notions of progress and social change – *anibue* –, as integral to their expressions of power. Examining the repositioning of chiefs' authority in the post-colonial period beyond materialist assumptions the thesis calls attention to the limitation of prevailing perspectives in the literature, which predominantly cast chiefs as intermediaries and gatekeepers within neo-patrimonial development narratives.

Corruption, Big Men, and Record-keeping

Secondly, we find that perceptions around the use of personal connections as dysfunction or malpractice in OEF application processes stimulated accusations of corruption towards the OEF and thereby caused members of the public to lose confidence in the OEF, especially amongst small donor groups. These allegations, as argued in Chapter 4, were inscribed by normative analysis of corruption that has shaped distinct understandings of the post-colonial condition of African institutions. We contend that the application of these insights to the OEF failed to take into account the nuanced and dynamic ways that a considerable number of applicants without powerful connections mobilised personalised networks of affection (Yarrow 2011; Kneirzger 2011; Donkoh 2011). This was largely achieved through their delicately crafted application letters that appealed to shared norms and values and provoked

displays of social empathy rendering their supplications worthy of pity. This as we saw, allowed applicants without powerful connections (*Big Men*) to compensate for their weak positions and receive scholarships. Furthermore, in Chapter 5, it was revealed that suspicions of corruption based on inadequate record-keeping prompted the OEF to utilize photo albums as visual evidence of project activities. This strategy shifted the focus of corruption claims away from the OEF's operational shortcomings to implicate the king in public discontent. Criticism of the OEF came to be centred around the image of the king, extending into other public discussions. This dynamic did not completely restore the OEF's reputation but provided a platform to challenge the king's growing influence and catalysed shifting relationships of divergent interests that emboldened expressions of dissent. In both Chapters 4 and 5, we showed that viewing accusations of corruption against the OEF solely as a bureaucratic dysfunction is inadequate. It obscures the intricate ways in which the network of individuals involved in the OEF's administrative practices used literacy and documentary *artifacts* to enhance their own interests and even contest the king's authority. We, therefore, insist that analysis of bureaucratic practices of record keeping should critically engage the material and discursive possibilities that documents afford their authors and participants in their production, circulation, and consumption.

Belonging and Eligibility

Thirdly, public and donor concerns around eligibility also deepened public dissatisfaction over the allocation of the OEF resources and what sort of persons were deemed eligible for support. Ultimately, this process led to further withdrawal of donations especially from Asante chiefs, which was a huge loss for the OEF. Chiefs' donations implied the endorsement of entire communities or subjects. This as we found was partly inherent to the very nature of the criteria, 'brilliant but needy', which ultimately depended on the interpretations that members of the Fund brought with them. It also partly relied on how well an applicant can demonstrate how they satisfied the requirement. But more crucially, in the case of community eligibility, as seen in Chapter 6, we demonstrate that disagreement over community eligibility ignited debates over claims of affiliation or belonging to Asante. These claims were subject to an intricate process of evaluation, with strong moral significance. Thereby, when support to Worawora was suspected by donors and the Asante public to

advance the king's personal interest, it triggered donor withdrawal based on implications of tribal politics, deemed to spoil Asante's reputation as a benevolent community. In this sense, the decline of the OEF in part stemmed from the competing evaluations of claims over communal eligibility. This also further revealed that sometimes ethnic identity does not define processes of inclusion/ exclusion in the allocation of resources within the development arena. Instead, community eligibility (i.e., Dagbaŋ vs Worawora) was based on historical ties of statehood and relational citizenship woven out of communicative processes of identification and belonging. This underscores the politics of eligibility that draw from historical registers to foster relational interdependence and solidary ties across cognitive and social boundaries of belonging.

Contesting anibue as community development

While the findings point to factors like donor discontent and public distrust contributing to the OEF's decline, they don't fully explain its specific trajectory from donor attrition to resource depletion and the king's withdrawal of endorsement. To truly comprehend this, it is vital to delve into how the king's hegemonic manoeuvres were met with opposition from chiefs and the Asante public. As summed up by a member of the OEF, 'In a way, it is the king that spoilt what he started' (OEF, interview, 26 March 2019). While it may be tempting to interpret this as a reference to the king's misconduct regarding the OEF, we contend that this statement alone does not provide a sufficient explanation for the OEF's failure, nor does it elucidate why the king waited until the Fund was in dire straits before taking action to address it. We argue that part of the issue lay with the conceptualisation of the king's role in education as a form of enlightenment, or *anibue.* This concept emphasized using education to promote communal well-being and individual success for the betterment of the Asante community.

The strategy towards educational access bolstered the king's power and influence but also opened up new discursive arenas for opponents to challenge his authority. This was achieved through the mobilisation of historical conflicts over eligibility and belonging, which utilized digital technologies and new media (such as Facebook, blogs, web forums, etc.,) to (re)imagine communities and reinforce relational ties (Asante-Dagbaŋ). Despite the

Asantehene's successful efforts to associate his office with national development, including in areas such as diplomacy, urban planning, and higher education, the expansion of his influence has also made him vulnerable to public scrutiny, which potentially threatens the legitimacy of his role. Thus, the OEF experienced a decline in public backing when the king's broader political and social engagements came under intense public criticism. These activities were seen as diverging from or undermining the progress and welfare of the Asante community, which in turn affected the legitimacy and public support for the OEF. In general, the thesis argues that Asante kings since the colonial period sought to exert influence over the ideological components of power by mobilizing the ideational and affective impulses underlying the daily experiences and social circumstances of their subjects. What key lessons can be derived from the analysis of the OEF and how does this contribute to ongoing debate on education and development in Ghana?

Elites and Development

The study of the OEF contributes to post-colonial debates on chiefs and development by identifying the limitations of actor-oriented approaches and the theoretical assumptions of brokerage. These two traditions as we have observed have shaped fashionable analysis of development as spurring elite appropriation within the political and development literature. Taken as established wisdom, development projects are said to fail despite the best of intentions because of the oppressive downside of hierarchical power dynamics in development relations (Yarrow 2011). Situating the discussion within the broader historical context, social dynamics and ideological factors that facilitated and sustained the Asantehene's interventions in education allowed us to expand our lens beyond materialist interpretations. We found that the Asantehene's interest surpassed the immediate concerns of self-aggrandizement and personal enrichment but spoke to broader political projects. The analysis does not preclude the possibility that development can and sometimes does foster personal and patrimonial ends. However, a more insightful comprehension of development project failures can be gained by including in the analysis the emotional and interpersonal power relations that cut across hierarchies and shape development practices, conflicts, and expectations. As we found in this study, hierarchy, and positionality, although important, do

not necessarily define or determine who gets support and who doesn't in the allocation of resources within the development arena.

Chiefs and Bureaucracy

The thesis also establishes a crucial link between the historical literature on education and political insights into the chief's role. It does this by offering a nuanced perspective on how chiefs have incorporated bureaucratic governance and techniques into their repertoire of power through their engagement with education since the colonial period. The adoption of bureaucratic strategies has allowed chiefs to adapt and sometimes resist external pressures by rebranding their offices as local agents of development. Examining the OEF's bureaucratic practices, we claim that bureaucracies act as social-material structures, in which power is not exclusively concentrated in the hands of a specialized group of experts or officials but is accessible to those who understand and can manipulate the organization's practices and procedures. Viewing development as a set of empirical and ethnographic problems that give rise to particular subjectivities and strategies of resistance, we urge that Development practitioners and policymakers should take seriously the documentary practices of local communities, which are embedded in affective dynamics rather than treat them as dysfunction in administrative practices.

Chiefs and access to Education

Lastly, the focus on educational scholarship addresses the existing gap in the literature on the growth of formal education in Ghana. Focusing on Asantehene's interventions in education provides rich insight into the chiefs' role in education and how their educational endeavours help sustain their legitimacy, authority, and recognition within the community. Thus, we claim that efforts towards educational access in Ghana would greatly benefit from analysis of the politics of legitimacy that animates chiefly engagement in education. Although the thesis does not set out with an explicit goal to inform policy, the study of the OEF proves relevant to global and national policy discussions on equitable access to education. As the study shows chiefs have played and continue to play a crucial role in national efforts towards expanding access to education for the poor. However, their role must be clearly defined to avoid potential tensions between the chiefs and designated administrative units. Additionally, this approach

can aid in mitigating any potential reputational damage that may arise from the broader activities of chiefs on the education administration, and vice versa.

Throughout its active years, the OEF supported considerable numbers of Ghanaians from poorer communities to pursue secondary and tertiary education in the country and in some cases abroad. Some of the cohorts from the latter category today occupy important positions in the country's professional sectors: law, civil service, academia, corporate and politics. In its simplest sense, we view development as a multifaceted process that mobilises the cognitive and affective forces of social action with the expressed aim of promoting material and social progress. This involves increasing access to education and healthcare, improving infrastructure, and enhancing overall well-being for individuals and communities. As such, development practice is shaped by historically specific, social, and cultural factors, albeit modified and reinterpreted to address present realities. The OEF did not fail simply because of deficiencies in its administrative practices or complete mismanagement of funds, although that did animate public concerns and scrutiny. Its demise was intricately bound up with the failure to foster the dreams and hopes of the Asante public for a better future for their children. The newly rebranded Otumfuo Osei Tutu II Foundation (OOTIIF) may have assumed the helm of the king's educational endeavours but lacks the level of public support and enthusiasm once enjoyed by the OEF. To end on a more positive note, *Traditional Authority, Enlightenment, and Education Bureaucracy in Ghana* is an invitation to the academic community to rekindle interest in studying local initiatives and their significance in enhancing educational access in Ghana. While this falls beyond the scope of our current study, it is worth noting that incorporating local initiatives into national endeavours like the Free Senior High School (SHS) program has the potential to mitigate existing administrative challenges and regional disparities in educational access in Ghana (Afolabi 2020).[169]

[169] In 2017, the Ministry of Education (Ghana) in fulfilment of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs Goal 4) implemented the free Senior High School to ensure that education is made free from basic to secondary to afford more children in Ghana the opportunity to access quality education. The SDG Goal 4 states: 'By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.'
See: https://moe.gov.gh/index.php/education-reform/

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