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From Scattered Data to Ideological Education: Economics, Statistics and the State in Ghana, 1948-1966

Gerardo Serra

A thesis submitted to the Department of Economic History of the London School of Economics for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

London, January 2015.

Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the contribution of economics and statistics in the transformation of Ghana from colonial dependency to socialist one-party state. The narrative begins in 1948, extending through the years of decolonization, and ends in 1966, when the first postcolonial government led by Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown by a military coup d'état.

Drawing on insights from political economy, the history of economics and the sociology of science, the study is constructed as a series of microhistories of public institutions, social scientists, statistical enquiries and development plans. In the period under consideration economics and statistics underwent a radical transformation in their political use. This transformation is epitomised by the two extremes mentioned in the title: the 'scattered data' of 1950s household budget surveys were expression of the limited will and capacity of the colonial state to exercise control over different areas of the country. In contrast, the 1960s dream of a monolithic one-party state led the political rulers to use Marxist-Leninist political economy as a cornerstone of the ideological education aiming at creating the ideal citizen of the socialist regime. Based on research in British and Ghanaian archives, the study claims that economists and statisticians provided important cognitive tools to imagine competing alternatives to the postcolonial nation state, finding its most extreme version in the attempt to fashion a new type of economics supporting Nkrumah's dream of a Pan-African political and economic union.

At a more general level, the thesis provides a step towards a deeper incorporation of Sub-Saharan Africa in the history of economics and statistics, by depicting it not simply as an importer of ideas and scientific practices, but as a site in which the interaction of local and foreign political and scientific visions turned economics and statistics into powerful tools of social engineering. These tools created new spaces for political support and dissent, and shifted the boundaries between the possible and the utopian.

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Abbreviations

7YP Seven-Year Plan for National Reconstruction and Development

BAA Bureau of African Affairs

BLPES British Library of Political and Economic Science, London School of Economics and Political Science

CBS Central Bureau of Statistics

CEAC Colonial Economic Advisory Council

CPP Convention People's Party

FAO Food and Agriculture Organization

ECA Economic Commission for Africa

ECLA Economic Commission for Latin America

GCOGS Gold Coast Office of the Government Statistician

GOGS Ghana Office of the Government Statistician

GOPC Ghana Office of the Planning Commission

GPRL George Padmore Research Library on African Affairs, Accra

ISSER Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research

KNII Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute

NLC National Liberation Council

NPC National Planning Commission

OAU Organisation of African Unity

OGS Office of the Government Statistician

OPC Office of the Planning Commission

PES Post-enumeration survey

PRAAD Public Records and Archives Administration Department, Accra branch

PRO Public Records Office, London

PST Prebisch-Singer thesis

SDC Standing Development Committee

SSDC Special Socialist Development Committee

UGCC United Gold Coast Convention

UN United Nations

1. Introduction

The canvas of the twentieth century is filled with dreams of progress, 'dense violent dreams/dreamed with soul and body' (Levi [1979] 2004, 185). This study is about the reification of these dreams in a specific African country, where 'progress' meant breaking free from the burden imposed by colonial domination, creating a Pan-African political union, establishing a 'modern' nation state capable of gathering accurate statistical knowledge about its territory, designing its march to modernity through planning, and eventually giving birth to a new socialist humanity.

The intellectual construction and political implications of these goals are observed through the trajectory of a group of people and institutions that produced economic and statistical knowledge. Specifically the thesis addresses the question 'how did economics and statistics contribute to state building in Ghana between 1948 and 1966?' The narrative begins in 1948, the year of the foundation of the Office of the Government Statistician, and ends in 1966, when the first postcolonial government led by Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown by a military coup d'état. The transformation undertaken by Ghana in the period under consideration is epitomised by the two extremes mentioned in the title of this study: the 'scattered data' of colonial statistics were expression of the state's limited will and capacity to acquire knowledge and exercise control over different areas of the country. In contrast, the 1960s postcolonial ambition of constructing a monolithic one-party state led the political rulers to use Marxist-Leninist political economy as a lynchpin of ideological education aiming to create the ideal citizen of the socialist regime. In the eventful decades between these two extremes, there was the achievement of independence from British rule on the 6th March 1957, the rise of the idea of 'development' as something that economists and statisticians could understand and employ to remake the developing world, the escalation of the Cold War and the rise of the new transnational governance of the international organizations. All these changes and many others, usually less visible, deeply shaped the interaction between economics, statistics and the building of the Ghanaian nation-state which is the subject of the following pages. This chapter explains the reasons behind this choice, and place it in the context of the existing academic literature.

1.1 The choice of Ghana

A bird's view of African history shows that the evolution of what is today's Ghana fits into an historical trajectory shared by many other countries in the continent. Colonised by Britain at the turn of the nineteenth century, in the immediate aftermath of the Berlin Congress and the Scramble for Africa, the colonial rulers developed an economy largely based on agriculture and mining. Following the rise of nationalist movements and the achievement of independence Ghana, as the new state was called after a medieval West African empire, embarked in a struggle to achieve economic prosperity through planning, industrialization and authoritarian rule. Even in this sense Ghana was typical, as one-party states were the norm rather than the exception in the aftermath of African independence.[1]

However, a closer look reveals several striking historical particularities that justify more directly the scope of this inquiry. Through the development of what became by the late 1920s the most successful cocoa exporting economy in the world, the Gold Coast (as Ghana was called before independence), compared with other British colonies in Sub-Saharan Africa, had already achieved by the 1940s relatively high levels of education, per capita income, and political maturity (Austin 1970, 2). Secondly in 1957 Ghana was, following India with a gap of ten years, the second colony of the British Empire, and the first in Sub-Saharan Africa, to obtain independence. Admittedly 'what was done in Ghana was repeated in other African states as they won their independence', but 'Ghana came first, and generally led the field, and thus she came to be seen by many as a test case, where Africa's "readiness for independence" could be assessed' (Killick 1978, 1-2). The dismal performance of the economy between the late 1950s and 1966, when the first postcolonial government was overthrown by a military coup d'état, became paradigmatic for economic historians and development scholars of 'how not to develop'.[2] What is more

[1] A classic work in political science dealing with this is Zolberg (1966).

[2] Nor has the 'paradigmatic' nature of Ghana been limited to the years discussed here: the wave of military governments which ruled the country for most of the years between 1966 and 1982, and the adoption of free-market structural adjustment policies promoted by the World Bank have also contributed to make Ghana an exemplary case study for development scholars. For further discussion on this, see Austin (1996).

interesting from the point of view of this study, concerned with the history of economics and statistics in a new state, is that

> Until the fall of Nkrumah in 1966, economic strategy in Ghana was inspired by a vision of economic modernization similar to, and influenced by, that of many professional economists who were concerning themselves with the problems of under-developed countries: a 'big push' primarily involving a major investment effort, a strategy centered around an industrialization drive, emphasizing import-substitution, structural change and a less open economy, to be achieved largely through the instrumentalities of the state. A study of the dominant ideas of development economics thus illuminates much of what happened in Ghana in the sixties and, by the same token, what happened there constitutes a case study of development economics in action (Killick 1978, 2).

While Tony Killick's classic study has represented an important source of inspiration for this thesis, its aims and methods differ substantially. A first divergence is in chronology: while Killick's book focuses on the years between 1960 and 1966, this study takes a step back and interrogates the relevance of statistics in characterising the last years of colonial rule. More importantly, rather than focusing on the country's performance to disprove the validity of the economic ideas inspiring Ghana's policy, this study aims at understanding their political relevance and implications in the context of a young nation embarking on a radical transformation. Secondly, given the importance of quantification as a set of tools for 'forming states', the discussion of economic ideas is complemented with a detailed historical analysis of statistical practices. Thirdly, while admitting that much development economics in the 1950s and 1960s shared certain common features, this study adopts a microscopic view, rescuing from oblivion the lives and ideas of the people and institutions that defined the intellectual identity and the realm and modalities of action of the Ghanaian state. In this sense it is important to note that, while sharing with other contemporary African states an authoritarian government Nkrumah's Ghana was the first attempt in Anglophone Africa to construct a socialist state and a planned economy.[3] This fits uncomfortably with Killick's account, who is content to reduce Ghanaian socialism to a series of inconsistent ideological pronouncements, and reduces the complex intellectual constellations emerging in those years to 'mainstream development economics'.

[3] Although similar experiments were being undertaken in the Francophone West African states of Mali under Modibo Keita (1960-1968) and Guinea under Ahmed Sékou Touré (1958-1994).

1.2 Aims and argument

The thesis has two main goals. The first is to rescue from oblivion the multiple voices and layers shaping the interaction between economics, statistics and representations of the nation-state in late colonial and postcolonial Ghana. In contrast with existing literature, reducing the intellectual landscape of Nkrumah's Ghana to the embodiment of the consensus emerged in 1950s and 1960s development economics (Killick 1978, 2), the thesis presents a much more complex and nuanced picture. This is achieved by reconstructing on the basis of new archival evidence the competing visions and political implications of the economic ideas and statistical practices that shaped the transformation of Ghana state from colonial economy to socialist party-state. It is shown that the Polish 'market socialists', the European Marxist-Leninist, American institutionalists, the international United Nations statistical experts and the Ghanaian technocrats who staffed the statistical machinery, government departments, planning bodies and universities presented radically different perspectives on the means and ends required to put an end to Ghana's underdevelopment. This serves two distinct purposes. The first is to integrate the trajectory of individual economists and statisticians, as well as institutions like the University of Ghana and the statistical office, into the broader political trajectory of the country. Indeed it is argued that economists and statisticians not only played a distinctive role in shaping the realm of intervention of the government in economic affairs, but more broadly were responsible for a series of radical redefinitions of the intellectual identity and the political ideology of the Ghanaian state.

The second purpose is to reconstruct the ways in which economic ideas and statistical templates and practices circulated and were institutionalised in Ghana. With reference to this, the thesis aims at replacing Killick's notion of Ghana as a case of 'development economics in action' (Killick 1978), where the general consensus of mainstream development economics was reflected in policy choices, with the idea that Ghana was what Helen Tilley (2011) called a 'living laboratory'. In contrast with existing top-down narratives of development thinking and practice, treating Sub-

Saharan Africa merely as an importer of ideas and practices, the thesis shows with a variety of historical case studies that 'foreign' and in many cases highly standardised ideas, methods and conceptual templates acquired new meanings in light of the specificities of the Ghanaian political context.

Although primarily so, this study is not merely an exploration in the intellectual and political history of economics and statistics in a West Africa polity (and of its global connections). The second main goal of the thesis is to show, by focusing on a circumscribed time and place, the actual complexity and the multiplicity of the ways in which the work of economists and statisticians contributed to forge a new state. The main argument of the thesis is that the employment of the cognitive tools offered by economics and statistics contributed to Ghanaian state-building in three main ways: by *reconfiguring political identities*, by *shaping links with the external world*, and by *inspiring change in administrative structures and processes*. While the actual meaning of this emerges more precisely by looking at the content of each chapter, the overall point of this exercise in 'truffle-hunting'[4] is to escape the excessive simplification inherent in contemporary discussions of the capacity of economics and statistics to 'form' states. Indeed, in contrast with existing literature on the 'performative character'[5] and the 'disciplinary power' of economics and statistics (reviewed in later sections), I argue that the contribution of economics and statistics to state building was multi-layered, and has to be understood as a rich set of interactions and political processes taking place at the micro-level. This study abandons then the monolithic notion of the state as an all-powerful *panopticon*, deriving from Foucault and so common in influential discussions of the relationship between economics, statistics and the state, and stresses instead the unintended consequences of action, contingencies and tensions existing within the state apparatus. Where the focus of the chapters is not so much a set of individuals or institutions, but rather specific statistical inquiries or development plans, I tried to be very cautious about how I invested these artefacts with the 'agency' necessary to shape the Ghanaian state. Rather than rushing to invoke the concept of 'performativity', I chose to

[4] Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie has often been credited with famously distinguishing historians into two categories: 'parachutists', who make sense of a vast historical landscape by surveying from above, and 'truffle-hunters', concerned with uncovering of archival treasures, and reconstruct on the basis of these detailed accounts of a micro-context. Given its focus on unearthing the details of the historical evolution, there is no doubt that the present study falls much more into the latter category.
[5] See MacKenzie, Muniesa and Su (2007).

reconstruct as closely as possible the actual processes by which data were collected and aggregated, and new economic visions articulated in specific institutional sites. [6] Certainly this complicates considerably the analysis. The reader is left with a narrative that is messier, but hopefully also more accurate in its grasping of the multiple and contradictory modalities by which the mutual construction of economics, statistics and the state occurred at a particular time and place. The overall contribution of the thesis can be appraised more precisely by looking at relevant debates in the existing literatures on the political and economic history of Ghana, the history of economics in the developing world, and the history of statistics.

1.3 Perspectives from the history and political economy of Africa

1.3.1 Writing the political history of Ghana, 1940s-1966

The literature on Ghana in the years under consideration remains one of the richest in the existing historiography about Africa. Rather than embarking on the impossible task of offering an exhaustive literature survey, it might suffice here to discuss a few representative works and lines of analysis that have been developed with reference to the country's history in the period between the 1940s and 1966. This is done in a way that provides a clear departure point to capture the standing and contribution of this work to the existing historiography.

Given the heated political context in which the history of Africa acquired academic status around 1960, and the high hopes associated with Ghanaian independence, it is not surprising that much writing on Ghana's history has focused on the political evolution of the country. A first wave of historical writings, culminating in Dennis Austin's (1970) *Politics in Ghana, 1946-1960* was dominated by concerns about the nature of Ghanaian nationalism, the rise of the Convention People's Party (CPP hereafter) as a 'mass party', and the actual impact of the leaders in promoting the creation of new states and institutions. Already in the immediate aftermath of Nkrumah's fall in 1966, the experience of Ghana since independence became the object of historical inquiry and discussion. Scholars in the 1960s and 1970s

[6] For a critique of performativity along similar lines from the point of view of the history of American agricultural statistics, see Didier (2007).

were mainly concerned with explaining the causes for the country's evolution from colonial dependency to postcolonial authoritarian state.

As it is often the case in the historiographies of dictatorships, and even more so when, like in the case of Nkrumah, a pervasive cult of the leader was institutionalised, a vibrant debate took place among historians on the role of the political leader in imagining, planning and supervising this transformation. While not diametrically opposed, two distinct positions have emerged: the first, taking Max Weber's notion of 'charisma' as its departure point, has tended to reduce the evolution of Ghanaian politics to the greed, vanity and over-ambition of Nkrumah himself. This tendency is exemplified in some of David Apter's work who, commenting on the trajectory of postcolonial Ghana wrote in 1968:

> Perhaps the most important failure was Nkrumah. He understood neither charisma nor his native obligations. He did not realize that charisma in a voluntaristic environment is based on populism, and that when it declined, the same populism was likely to turn the leader and his government into enemies of the people. He never confronted this problem. He tried to deflect his confirmation with the people... Nkrumah lacked the imagination and skill to develop a country. He was a revolutionary without a plan - a visionary but not a builder (Apter 1968, 782).[7]

A second stream of historiography has adopted a more nuanced perspective. While Nkrumah remains a central character, contributions like Trevor Jones' (1976) *Ghana's First Republic (1960-1966): The Pursuit of the Political Kingdom*, places the mismanagement of the economy, the rampant corruption and the volatile political climate in a much more intricate set of purposeful choices made by a wide set of characters (politicians, bureaucrats, enterpreneurs, farmers). More importantly, this work provides a more precise account of the dramatic extent to which in a few years power relations changed in the political and economic sphere, and identifies those who gained and lost from the Nkrumaist experiment.

This does not change the fact that Kwame Nkrumah, in which the attributes of a romantic visionary, a shrewd politician, a ruthless dictator and a naïve idealist coexisted, has been object of a vast number of biographies, spanning from quasi- hagiographies to acritical condemnations. Thus, if P. T. Omari ([1970] 2009) unconditionally describes Nkrumah as a vainglorious tyrant, Davidson (1973)

[7] However, Apter's reputation is especially associated with his seminal *The Gold Coast in Transition* (Apter 1955).

acknowledges his importance and his pioneer role in the making of African nationalism, and Rooney (2007) depicts him as a visionary and a dreamer who ultimately lost touch with the reality surrounding him.[8] An overall more positive assessment comes from the Ghanaian scholars who gathered in 1985 for a conference on 'The Life and Work of Kwame Nkrumah'. This is how conference organiser Kwame Arhin summarised his assessment of this controversial figure:

> Kwame Nkrumah […] stirred the consciousness of ordinary men and women and awakened them to the real evils of colonialism which he considered at the root of their economic, social and political discontent. He made himself their spokesman and their leader […] He was a pre-eminent founder of the movement of African Unity; more than any other African leader of his time, he symbolised the Blackman's self-identity and the pride of his race. His name shall endure as the leading emancipator of Ghana, the leading protagonist of African independence and unity, and a statesman of world status in the twentieth century (Ahrin 2001, vii-viii).

Similarly discordant are the appraisals of Nkrumah's intellectual legacy. There is no doubt that Kwame Nkrumah wanted to be perceived as *the* intellectual spokesman of postcolonial Africa, as well as a great politician. Perhaps over-ambitiously, in a letter to his friend, close collaborator and literary executor June Milne, Nkrumah described his thought in the following way:

> You see my whole thinking and action is derived from a synthesis of the materialism of Feuerbach, the dialectical idealism of Hegel, Darwin's theory of evolution, and the dialectical materialism of Marx. Out of these I have tried to evolve a philosophy of my own (quoted in Birmingham 1998, 124-125).

Even conceding that this statement was more the expression of how Nkrumah wanted to be perceived, rather than being consistent with any careful appraisal of what he actually wrote, he certainly was a complex, if not openly contradictory, figure. If, perhaps not surprisingly, Soviet Yuri Smertin (1987) pointed out the inconsistencies in his interpretation of his Marxism-Leninism, Rhoda Elizabeth McKenzie Rennie (1977) defined Nkrumah 'The Greatest of Modern Philosophers'. In contrast Tibor Szamuely, a Hungarian historian and polemist who became part of Nkrumah's ideological apparatus before turning into one of his detractors, stated that Nkrumah's ideas 'should be studied geologically, for they consist of a number of successive layers

[8] Other biographical works include Davidson (1973); Bankole (1981); Smertin (1987); Sherwood (1996).

of thought, almost hermetically sealed one from another, and completely inconsonant both in style and matter' (quoted in T. Jones 1976, 19). A more balanced and nuanced view, and closer to the one adopted here, comes from Immanuel Wallerstein, who in a review of Nkrumah's books acknowledged that his writings presented 'over all a consistent point of view' (Wallerstein 1967, 518-519), although one which served an eminently political purpose, and in which the tenets of Marxism-Leninism were reinterpreted in the face of changing national and international circumstances.

Questions about the ideological consistency of Nkrumah's thought have been extended from the intellectual trajectory of the leader to the overall experience of the country. In this sense Ghana under Nkrumah received much attention as a pioneer example of 'African socialism'. Indeed, as Paul Nugent (2004, 167) claimed in his recent comparative history of postcolonial Africa 'Nkrumah's Ghana is often considered as a textbook example of African socialism'. However this notion is far more controversial than it might appear at first sight.

'African socialism' has been the object of a vibrant academic debate, now largely forgotten, in the 1970s and early 1980s.[9] The main concern of this literature, usually written by political scientists, was to understand how 'Marxist' African socialist regimes actually were. With respect to this debate, the position of Nkrumah's Ghana remains openly ambiguous. David and Marina Ottaway for example stress the importance of distinguishing between 'transitional African socialist' regimes of the 1960s (Ghana, Guinea under Ahmed Sékou Touré, Mali under Modibo Keita, Tanzania under Julius Nyerere) and the 'Afrocommunist' regimes of the 1970s and 1980s (Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia), which were 'more radical in their domestic policies, often more orthodox in their ideological outlook, and more closely aligned with, and dependent on, the Soviet Union' (Ottaway and Ottaway 1981, 213). The 'transitional', rather than 'scientific' nature of Ghanaian socialism was characterised by its rejection of the validity of class and class struggle as useful concepts to understand African reality, and the belief that as a political and economic system socialism needed a significant re-adaptation to be applied to African conditions (Ottaway and Ottaway 1981).[10] Finally, the ideologies of other countries usually

[9] The three classic texts in these debates, which still represent an excellent starting point to think about different ways of classifying 'socialist' experiences in postcolonial Africa, are Friedland and Rosberg (1964), Rosberg and Callaghy (1979), and Ottoway and Ottoway (1981).

[10] For the same reason, Soviet Africanists were sceptical of the correctness of the ideological framework adopted by socialist regimes of the 1960s. For an extensive discussion of this, see Klinghoffer (1969).

included in discussions of 1960s African socialism, while sharing with Ghana what Ottoway and Ottoway (1981) listed as the main features of 'transitional regimes' (rejection of class analysis, need for adaptation of Marxism, etc.) were grounded in what could be described as a more humanistic framework. Léopold Sédar Senghor, who ruled Senegal for most of its postcolonial history and is credited with coining the expression 'African socialism', famously wrote that 'the object of socialism is not the economy, as too many Marxists now believe, but concrete living man, in his totality, body and soul' (Senghor 1964, 108). For Julius Nyerere of Tanzania the essence of African socialism was summarised in the word *ujamaa*, or familyhood. The notion of *ujamaa* captured both the rural essence of Nyerere's vision of Tanzania's socialist future, as well as the idea that African socialism was inspired and informed by pre-colonial values such as 'respect' and communalism.[11] In contrast with both Nyerere and Senghor, in spite of occasional references to the nebulous notion of 'African personality',[12] for Kwame Nkrumah the construction of socialism in Ghana was part of a forward-looking political project intimately connected with Pan-Africanism, nationalism, and industrialization (Nugent 2004, 168).

To complicate the picture, even if Ghana did not share the degree of commitment to the Soviet or Chinese model associated with Afro-communist regimes (for example, it never nationalised land or transferred all ownership of the means of production in the hands of the state, like it happened in 1970s Ethiopia) some of the most distinctive institutions set up in the last years of Nkrumah's rule, aiming at enlightening the masses and ultimately build a new 'socialist' man, like the Young Pioneers, were clearly modelled on the example of the Soviet Union.[13] Focusing on political structures and vested interests, other commentators have provided radically different answers to the question of the authenticity of Ghana's socialism. If Fabian socialist Margaret Roberts (1964) argued that the CPP was in the 1960s Africa the party closest to a Leninist model, American Marxists Bob Fitch and Mary Oppenheimer accused the Nkrumah government of expressing the interests and desires

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On the other hand between the 1966 coup and his death in 1972, Kwame Nkrumah's thought certainly came to be much closer to orthodox Marxism than to a peculiar variety of 'African socialism', as discussed by Biney (2009).

[11] The essays and speeches collected in Nyerere (1968) are an extremely useful departure point to explore the evolution of Nyerere's thinking of such matters.

[12] These are especially frequent in *I Speak of Freedom: A Statement of African Ideology* (Nkrumah 1961).

[13] More on this in chapters 5 and 7. In this sense, within the broad set of experiences loosely labelled 'African socialism', Ghana comes the closest to Guinea under Ahmed Sékou Touré (1958-1984).

of the bourgeoisie (Fitch and Oppenheimer 1966).[14] Tibor Szamuely went as far as to say that 'a careful scrutiny of the actual workings of Nkrumaism […] reveals that for all the "progressive" trapping and "socialist" declarations it was basically much nearer to the fascist than the communist pattern' (Szamuely 1966, 15). Instead if one looks back at the economic *policies* implemented in Ghana in the years under consideration, these are broadly consistent with what development economists were advocating on both sides of the Cold War in the 1950s and early 1960s, as rightly noted by Killick (1978). Similar policies were implemented also by countries which rejected socialism as an ideology and professed instead adherence to some varieties of 'African capitalism', like Nigeria and Ghana's neighbour Ivory Coast. It is then possible then, as suggested by John Iliffe (1983), to extract a common trend in the policies implemented in 1960s West Africa. These shared, regardless of their position on the ideological spectrum, 'a commitment to economic modernization, an hostile attitude towards indigenous business and the assumption […] that the state had to play an active role in economic development' (Austin and Serra 2014, 246).

So how socialist was Nkrumah's Ghana? This study is built on the assumption that this question is partly misleading. On one hand the focus on the 'statist' nature of much economic policy in 1960s Africa obscures the intellectual context in which policy choices originated. On the other hand it is not surprising that, obsessed with making the historical experience of Ghana fit into some form of '-ism', choosing Marxism (or rather its Soviet embodiment) as the yardstick against which the country's ideological purity could be judged, and reducing politics to 'the abstract institutional structures of the party' and the 'doing of politics' to 'successive policy shifts' (Lampland 2000, 209), much of the political science literature underplays the complex processes by which different notions of 'socialism' were constructed and articulated in the Ghanaian political sphere by different actors, with different rhetorical strategies and goals in mind. Liberating the actual historical trajectory of Ghana from the cage of both a rigid ideological yardstick (but still taking seriously the intentions of the actors discussed) and the over-encompassing idea of 'state intervention' in the economy, the question becomes: what did 'socialism' mean in Ghana at a given time? How did this idea evolve, and what were the different ways of thinking about it? If we accept these questions as our premise, the ambiguities and unsolved contradictions of

[14] Of course, the two positions are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

Nkrumah's Ghana become a fascinating departure point to construct a narrative of intellectual pluralism, in which we find both largely shared intellectual platforms cutting across the political spectrum, as well as several attempts to institutionalise specific notions of socialism to serve the tasks of state building.

In the past few years 1960s Ghana has become again object of a vibrant historiographical debate, as illustrated by a series of excellent articles and PhD theses. With the current study, these works share a deep interest in rescuing the many sides and facets of the postcolonial state's attempt to 'construct' modernity. Fuller (2010) represents one of the most comprehensive examples, tracing and analysing the construction of the Ghanian nation-state in sites as different as postal stamps, museums, currency. Other interesting contributions include accounts of the building of the 'futuristic city' in proximity of the Akosombo dam (Miescher 2012), the mobilisation of the youth in the Builders Brigades (Alhman 2012), and discussions of the relationship between Ghanaian football, nationalism and Pan-Africanism (Darby 2013). Yet, in spite of their extreme usefulness in pointing out the specific tools by which Nkrumah's regime defined its political and social identity and its reach, these accounts have so far ignored the role of economics and statistics in shaping the broader political project of Ghanaian modernization. Considering that Nkrumah's Ghana was indeed, although not necessarily in the way in which Killick meant it, a case of 'development economics in action', and that economic development was as important as the politics of state-building for the first generation of African leaders (Cooper 2002), this seems like a gap that it is necessary to fill in order to enrich historical discussions of postcolonial Ghana.

1.3.2 Ghana and the African state: perspectives from economic history and political economy

Although circumscribed to its relationship with economics and statistics, the 'state' represents another important object of investigation in this study. Without even attempting to discuss the different definitions advanced through the ages, or propose a new one – a task that is perhaps better left to political philosophers than to historians- the present discussion will be limited to some influential interpretations advanced to

understand the evolution of the colonial and postcolonial Ghanaian and African state in the fields of economic history and political economy.[15]

Ghana certainly occupies a very special place also in the economic history of Africa, and more generally as a case study that has been used to problematize the experience of other parts of the continent. Not surprisingly, given the country's 'economic miracle' and its transformation in the largest cocoa exporter of the world by the 1920s, many crucial writings about the economic history of Ghana discussed the evolution of the cocoa industry, its socio-economic impact, and the institutions on which it was built.[16] In the 1960s rather than colonial and postcolonial states, the polities more frequently discussed by the first generation of economic historians of Africa were mostly precolonial empires and kingdoms.[17] While the 1970s saw the rise of historical accounts of the colonial and postcolonial state drawing heavily on Marxism and dependency theories, the 1980s and 1990s saw the re-writing of the political economy of the colonial and postcolonial Ghanaian state through the lens of public choice and the new institutional economics. In the early 1990s the dismal performance of Nkrumah's Ghana has been reincorporated by economists in a longer tale of postcolonial failure. This became evident in the early 1990s, with the publication of two books with significant titles: *The Vampire State in Africa: The Political Economy of Decline in Ghana* (Frimpong-Ansah 1992) and *Staying Poor: Ghana's Political Economy, 1950-1990* (Rimmer 1992). Both volumes, written by economists with a long experience of the country's conditions and evolution,[18] present

[15] For further discussion of the different tendencies emerged in discussions of African states and state formation, see Southall (1974) and Stark (1986).

[16] Occasionally studies conducted in Ghana were a precious input in broader methodological discussions: The pioneering work of Polly Hill on the migrant cocoa farmers of Southern Ghana (Hill [1963] 1997) for example, openly challenged prevailing views of the lack of rationality of African farmers. By showing that representations of peasants' behaviour prevailing in modernization theories were little more than caricatures, Hill pointed out the relative efficiency of small private owned indigenous business - something which was seen with distrust not only by African politicians but also by many professional economists at the time. In more recent times, the structure and evolution of the cocoa-producing economy has been reassessed with the theoretical tools associated with the new institutional economics by Gareth Austin (2005; 2014) in a series of ground-breaking studies covering both the precolonial and colonial trajectory of the country, with a focus on the Asante region. A concise, if outdated, introduction to the country's economic history is Agbodeka (1992).

[17] Sometimes this served a precise political purpose: colonial regimes were still too recent to be subject to careful historical inquiry, and the first generation of nationalist African historians in the 1960s (especially those associated with the University of Ibadan in Nigeria) wanted to prove that Africa had an history of strong polities and economic development well before the arrival of the Europeans. A classic example of this approach is Dike (1956).

[18] Douglas Rimmer was lecturer in economics at the University of Ghana during the Nkrumah years while J.H. Frimpong-Ansah was a Ghanaian economist who occupied many top places in the economic machinery of the country, starting to work at the statistical office in 1954 and making his way into the

the tale of Ghana's underdevelopment by putting the blame not on the international capitalist system and varieties of neo-colonialism (as it has been the case with the 1970s Marxists), but rather as one dominated by the rational choices of political elites in the struggle for the distribution of scarce resources. In the face of some differences in method and approach, this form of rational-choice political economy, institutionalised by the now classic works of the economically minded political scientist Robert H. Bates (especially Bates [1981] 2005), has been since the 1980s the most influential paradigm to explain the joint evolution of African states as system of political governance *and* as national economies.

In spite of the many differences existing between the Marxist and the rational choice paradigm, they share several elements against which the current study sets itself. The first is related to discussions of *agency* and the role of time and place specific beliefs in determining public choices. Grounded in a teleological grand narrative (in the case of Marxist and dependency writers) and in a-historical view of 'rationality' (in the case of public choice political economists), they both tend to neglect the importance and contextual emergence of specific beliefs. An influential study of Ghana's political economy explaining the choice of structural adjustment policies in the early 1980s, building on the framework of Bates ([1981] 2005), identifies three factors to explain why policies which had a detrimental impact on growth were adopted by Nkrumah's government: the 'urban bias', 'transactions and agency costs' and what the authors label the 'dominant development ethos' (Leith and Lofchie 1993, 240-245).[19] If with reference to the latter the main departure point is, once again, Killick (1978) and his attempt to use Ghana as an test-case to show how much wrong there was in 1960s development theory, Leigh and Lofchie not only impose an historically inaccurate uniformity on the economic ideas circulating in Ghana at the time, but rush to the conclusion that widespread acceptance of contemporary 'mainstream development economics' shaped the formulation of an industrialization strategy which 'then generated a network of urban constituencies whose political influence contributed to a continuation of the strategy' (Leith and Lofchie 1993, 243). Although for different reasons and in different ways, the Marxist

top posts of the Bank of Ghana. He was Deputy Governor of the Bank of Ghana under Nkrumah, and became Governor shortly after Nkrumah's fall in 1968.

[19] These three elements represented also the departure point for Aryeetey and Fosu's discussion of political economy in the context of their assessment of Ghana's postcolonial growth experience (2008).

treatment of beliefs about the economic and social world is no less simplistic. For example Nigerian Marxist Claude Ake (1976) argued that in the African context economic ideologies were the direct reflection of material conditions: in this perspective the ideological pronouncements of African postcolonial governments were treated as mere 'divertive strategies'.

Another feature shared by both Marxist and rational political economy accounts is the imposition of a straightforward continuity between the colonial and postcolonial state. In Marxist accounts, merely replacing colonialism with varieties of 'neo-colonialism' (a concept that Nkrumah himself did much to popularize),[20] the achievement of political independence is a façade, and the new African states puppets in the hands of foreign capital and domestic bourgeoisie.[21] Even in more nuanced leftist accounts, such as Ake's *A Political Economy of Africa* (1981, 88-89), 'the failure of postcolonial African states to modernise was explained by the inheritance of the "extractive features" characterising colonial economies' (Austin and Serra 2014, 251). Similarly, Bates' ([1981] 2005) choice to build his political economy on institutions like the Ghanaian Cocoa Marketing Board, created in the late colonial period but survived to this day as both colonial and postcolonial devices of capital accumulation, taxation, redistribution and political patronage, hides the complex and multiple processes by which African states were made and remade in the transition from colonial dependencies to torch-bearers of a new era.

Nor is the imposition of this continuity limited to the realm of political economy; in different ways it has found expression also in more historically minded political accounts. Jeffrey Herbst for example argued that in the face of 'scarcely populated areas' and 'unforgiving physical conditions', Africa's 'pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial leaders adopted remarkably similar strategies: gaining clear control over a core political area, defined as either the capital or the critical urban areas and those rural areas with critical economic assets (e.g., mines and plantations), and then ruling over outlying areas in a varied manner depending on the degree to which infrastructures could be developed' (Herbst 2000, 252). While this remains a useful analytical departure point that captures some important aspects of Ghana's experience,

[20] See especially Nkrumah ([1965] 1970).
[21] For many West African Marxists the solution to this state of affairs was the 'structural disentanglement from the international capitalist system' (Onimode 1982, 240).

it tends to oversimplify the concrete processes through which African states (and Ghana in particular) were 'made' at a specific point in time. This is especially problematic when it comes to understanding the historical significance of the brief but intense phase linking the end of colonial rule and the dawn of postcolonial Africa. Even without assuming that the path to state formation in Africa strictly followed the one experienced in Europe, there is much truth in the argument that 'decolonisation had led to the hasty transfer of power to Africans, but with the job of creating functioning states left essentially unfinished' (Dorman, Hammett and Nugent 2007, 5). Looking at the colonial and postcolonial period Crawford Young (1994) saw 'a direct relationship between a ruthlessly extractive colonial state […] and the authoritarian nature of the postcolonial state' (Cooper 2008, 170). Similarly, Mamhood Mamdani (1996) conceptualised the continuity between colonial and postcolonial African state in terms of ethnic centred 'decentralised despotism'. In the atmosphere of 'Afro-pessimism' that prevailed since the late 1980s in African studies across different disciplines, African states came to be generally seen as 'neo-patrimonial', synonymous with inefficiency, corruption and nepotism. The ideological context in which many of these influential works has developed typically projected backward the dismal economic and political performance of postcolonial states. Although this expression has been used to describe long-run economic history, when contrasted with the actual complexity of Ghana's historical experience, these works also represent a 'compression of history' (Austin 2008).

Given this background, this thesis can be read as an exercise in historical decompression. Rather than following directly in the footsteps of Bates et al., or trying to refine the long-run narratives of Marxist and dependency scholars, this study tries to answer Jean-François Bayart's (1993) call for the 'full historicization of the postcolonial state'. This does not amount to a justification of *any* attempt to write a history of postcolonial Africa, or the a-priori rejection of long-run narratives.[22] It simply involves a scrupulous attempt to retrieve the specificities of new conditions and opportunities, as they were perceived by the relevant agents upon the basis of their contextual beliefs, in their construction of political, social and economic boundaries. The search for changes in the intellectual identity of postcolonial regimes has led

[22] Indeed, Bayart himself could be accused of 'compression of history' for constructing a long run political economy of Africa as a 'history of extraversion' (Bayart 1993; 2000).

Thandika Mkandawire (2001) to stress the importance of a 'developmental ideology' characterising many African regimes of the 1960s. This feature, and the claim that 'developmental states are social constructs consciously brought about by political actors and societies' (Mkwandawire 2001, 310) represent a useful departure point to start inquiring more precisely about the notions of development prevailing in the 1950s and 1960s, and discuss their treatment in existing historical scholarship.

1.4 Perspectives from the history of economics

1.4.1 The historiography of development economics: intellectual genealogies, paradigm shifts, institutions and individuals

The economic ideas circulating in Ghana between the 1940s and the 1960s can be understood as part of a much broader phenomenon, the rise and institutionalization of 'development economics' as a branch of economic knowledge specifically concerned with analysing 'growth, inequality, poverty and institutions in the developing world' (Ray 2008, no page). Most existing historiography on development economics can be assimilated to three main types of narratives.

The first is a quest for the intellectual roots of the discipline. Rather than identifying a single departure point, historians (and in many cases development economists themselves) have shown the wide range of intellectual influences that constituted the background for the rise of development economics.[23] A first important connection is the one linking 1950s and 1960s development economics with the themes and methods of British classic political economy in the 19th century. What the first generation of development economists shared with authors such as Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Thomas Malthus and Karl Marx was a concern with long-run narratives about capital accumulation, technology, and an attempt to answer the eternal question 'why some nations are rich while others are poor?'.[24] A second connection is related to some influential twentieth century changes that contributed to

[23] For example Rist (2008) found necessary to begin his history of the idea of development with Aristotle and St. Augustine.

[24] For example at the beginning of his seminal *The Theory of Economic Growth*, W. Arthur Lewis openly stated that that 'The last great book covering this wide range was John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*' (Lewis 1955, 5). Similarly, on the opposite side of the political spectrum, the conservative Peter T. Bauer wrote that the 'upsurge of interest in the economics of underdeveloped countries' in the postwar world represented 'a resumption of the interest of the classical economists' (Bauer [1957] 1966, 3).

consolidate the concept of a 'national economy' as an object of policy intervention and of the rise of economics as a form of social engineering (Morgan 2003). In this sense development economics can be said to have sprung from the aftermath of the 'Keynesian revolution'. This contributed to carve a new role for the state in economic affairs, but also helped disseminate a new set of statistical tools (most importantly national income accounts) to represent the economy as an object of policy intervention. Thirdly, as provocatively pointed out by Alec Nove (1984, 129), development economics can be said to be born in the 1920s Soviet economic debates. Although both the development of the Keynesian revolution and the 1920s Soviet debates can be properly understood within more localised political and intellectual contexts,[25] from the point of view of the history of development economics

> The belief that emerged out of the Soviet experience and the rise of Keynesianism was that development economics was synonymous with macroeconomic growth, and the public policy implications were that government could design, control and engineer economic growth through various crucial interventions (Boettke and Horwitz 2005, 29).

If these observations point out at the close connection between the idea of development and the rise of the economist as 'social engineer' (Morgan 2003), the intellectual context of late colonial policy represents another important site to observe the origins of what became development economics. Overcoming the fiscal conservatism that characterised much imperial policy in the 1920s, in the aftermath of the Great Depression and the spread of unrest across the British empire in the 1930s, economic policy in colonial dependencies saw an increasing concerns for the living standards of the populace, and a dramatic expansion in the provision of social and welfare services such as health and education (Cooper and Packard 1997).[26]

Regardless of wherever it came from, by the late 1950s there was something like a broad consensus on development, built on the belief that underdevelopment 'was a consequence of weak investment, lack of technology, and shortfalls in the stock of human capital' (Boettke and Horwitz 2005, 30). Within this vision, governments were the agents expected, through a mixture of planning, import substitution policies and industrialization to achieve a 'big push' to break, in Ragnar Nurkse's famous

[25] The relevant literature is, in both cases, extremely vast. As a starting point the reader might want to consult Clarke (1990) and Hoover (2003) for the development of Keynes' ideas in the context of 1920s and 1930s British politics, and Lewin (1975) for the political implications of Soviet economic debates.
[26] This was a significant change in *economic* as well as colonial *political* thought: for an extensive discussion of the latter aspect see the classic study by Lee (1967).

expression, 'the vicious circle of poverty' (Nurkse 1953). Because of both its incorporation of these varied intellectual traditions, and in light of the interest raised in the prospects of economic development in the 'Third World' by the end of Empires and the escalation of the Cold War, in the 1950s and 1960s development economics was 'an exciting, iconoclastic, contentious field' (Ascher 1996, 313).

The second main trend in the existing historiography of development economics has been concerned with analysing, usually in the form of a series of 'paradigm shifts', the evolution of the discipline since its foundational years. A recurring narrative is that since the late 1960s, and especially from the 1970s on, development economists were increasingly attracted to the neoclassical methods that they had considered irrelevant up to that point. Of course, appraisals of this shift have varied considerably. While Dudley Seers wrote in the 1970s that 'The air of much of today's economics is almost as rarefied as in the theological school of the Middle Ages' (Seers 1979, 716), others, like Deepak Lal (1983), saw the neoclassical turn as a welcome retreat from the statist ideology that characterised development thinking in the 1950s and 1960s.[27]

However the *paradigm shifts* experienced by development economics did not take place in a vacuum. Focus on the life and career of the most important theorists of development, and the institutions which contributed to create, challenge or simply embody influential development ideas represents the third main type of narrative in the historiography of development economics. Given their important role as channels of transmission of ideas about development, statistical formats and expertise to the developing world, the intellectual history of international organizations like the United Nations and its Regional Commissions (Toye and Toye 2004, Ward 2004, Berthelot 2004),[28] the World Bank (de Vries 1996, Alacevich 2001) and the International Monetary Fund (Polak 1996), has attracted much attention. Although these studies have led to the inclusion of a meso-level between the ideas presented in long-run

[27] This does not imply that structuralist and radical positions disappeared: as we have seen in the previous section, if anything the study of the developing world by Marxist and neo-Marxist authors intensified in the 1970s and 1980s. But this was increasingly the labour of economic historians, and of economists based in the world periphery. For a discussion of Marxist writings in 1970s and 1980s West Africa see Austin and Serra (2014).

[28] The experience of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America has been especially well covered, since it provided the context for the rise of structuralism and dependency theories, which arguably remain one of the most important contributions to economic thinking to arise from the developing world rather than the global North. For a concise introduction to these issues, which are discussed in more detail in chapter 4, see Toye and Toye (2003) and Rosenthal (2004).

historical surveys of development (or development economics textbooks) and the reception of specific theories and practices of development by the political machineries of the developing world, the latter aspect has remained underexplored. This is a state of affairs that, at least as far as Ghana and the United Nations in the 1950s and the 1960s are concerned, this study tries to rectify.

In recent years biography has become another growing field of research in the history of development economics.[29] Excellent works have been produced on distinguished theorists of development like W. Arthur Lewis (Tignor 2006, Mosley and Ingham 2013), Gunnar Myrdal (Barber 2007), Raúl Prebisch (Dosman 2008), Hans Singer (Shaw 2002) and Albert Hirschman (Adelman 2013). To these should be added biographies of influential economists who, while best remembered for other contributions, devoted a part of their research to development issues, such as Nicholas Kaldor (Targetti 1992; Turner 1993; King 2009) and Joan Robinson (Harcourt and Kerr 2009). While the focus is on the life and career, and especially the theoretical innovations brought by these remarkable individuals,[30] rather than the fate of nations, often these works offer precious insights into the making of economic policy in the developing world, and the political and intellectual context in which economists operated. The case of Ghana is exemplary because in the 1950s and 1960s it saw the employment of some distinguished theorists of development as advisors to Nkrumah's government in different guises. Dudley Seers for example pioneered in 1952 with C.Y. Ross the construction of national income accounts and social accounts for the Ghanaian economy (Seers and Ross 1952), while in 1961 the government employed Nicholas Kaldor as advisor on fiscal policy and tax reform.

The world class development economist whose life and career is most inextricably linked with the history of Ghana in the period under consideration is W. Arthur Lewis. A native of the Caribbean island of St. Lucia, Lewis was the first economist from the developing world to be awarded, in 1979, the Nobel Prize in Economics (and the first economics Laureate for development economics, sharing the prize with Theodore Schultz). In 1953, while still affiliated with the Colonial Office

[29] Besides biographies, one should add also autobiographies and participant histories. The recollections of some of the main development theorists of the 20th century collected in Meier and Seers (1984, eds.) still represent an exceptionally rich source to understand the evolution of development economics.

[30] For example in his biography of Lewis, Tignor (2006) devotes a whole chapter to the genesis and reception of his most famous theoretical contribution: the dual economy model developed in the classic 1954 'Economic Development with Unlimited Supplies of Labour' (Lewis 1954).

(where he had worked with the Colonial Economic Advisory Committee and with its successor Colonial Economic Development Council) he published upon request of the CPP the *Report on Industrialization and the Gold Coast* (Lewis 1953). Following independence in 1957, Lewis moved to Ghana, where through the United Nations he took the post of Economic Advisor. In spite of his initial enthusiasm for advising self-governing Africans rather than colonial officials Lewis, who drafted the first postcolonial plan of Ghana, soon found himself in a difficult position with Nkrumah. Lewis was extremely disappointed to see his careful estimates about feasible expenditures in the development plan completely disregarded by the government, with the ministries pushing for more expenditure and the approval of unproductive prestige projects. Exasperated and disillusioned, Lewis handed in his resignation letter in December 1958 to take another post at the United Nations (Tignor 2006, 179).[31]

Although Lewis' misadventures in Ghana have been discussed in Tignor's (2006) biography in relation to the construction of their professional identity and impact on the economist's understanding of the relationship between economics and political reform and their intellectual development,[32] this type of narrative partly shift the focus from the paradigm-based story of much historiography on development to a 'thicker', more contextual understanding of the uses and abuses of economic ideas in the political arena of the developing world. While Africa is still lamentably absent from the work of historians of economics, several important and inspiring contributions in this regard have been written about the Latin American context.

1.4.2 Economists and economic ideas in the making the developing world: insights from Latin America

A particularly relevant source of inspiration for this thesis is Juan Valdés' (1995) work on Chile under Pinochet. Like this study, Valdés' book problematizes the connections between an authoritarian political project and the role of economists in shaping it, and does so by uncovering a rich wealth of previously unused archival sources. But there

[31] This is a very simplified version of Lewis' involvement in Ghanaian policy-making. For a much more detailed discussion of Lewis and Ghana, see Tignor (2006, chapters 4-6).

[32] This is especially true in the case of Lewis: his deep disappointment with Nkrumah's government found its most significant expression in the vitriolic *Politics in West Africa* (Lewis 1965), a seminal and insightful account of the political economy of policy reform in the developing world. Seers offered his reflections on the relationship between foreign economic experts and governments in the developing world in a perceptive article significantly titled 'Why Visiting Economists Fail' (Seers 1962).

are also important differences. Leaving aside the fact that Nkrumah's government was socialist in orientation and civilian in nature, while Pinochet's Chile was military and 'conservative', the most important differences between these two case studies rely in the intellectual identity of the economists, and their role in constructing the state ideology. Indeed, all the economists discussed by Valdés shared a common ideological outlook and a common training. Certainly, as it has been pointed out by recent historiography, it is misleading to overemphasise the homogeneity of the Chicago School of economics, since people like Frank Knight, Theodore Schultz, Milton Friedman and Gary Becker, and their Chilean students differed in many important respects.[33] Yet, they all had in common, although to different degrees, a deep distrust of state intervention, a commitment to neoclassical methodology, and the vision of a better society as one dominated by free markets. In contrast the case of Ghana is one of multiple voices competing, even under dictatorship, to gain a bigger share in the marketplace of ideas. Many of these ideas can certainly be grouped under the consensus emerging in 1950s and 1960s development economics previously discussed, but the Polish 'market socialists', the European Marxist-Leninist, American institutionalists, the international United Nations experts and the Ghanaian technocrats which staffed the centres in which economic and statistical knowledge about the country was produced presented radically different perspectives on the means and ends required to put an end to Ghana's underdevelopment, and on the best political framework in which this could be done.

Secondly, the cases of Chile and Ghana are extremely different for the overall relationship existing between the work of economists in government and universities and the ideological identity of the regime. Whereas in Chile the Chicago school economists were filling the lack of economic ideology for the 'authoritarians without a project' (Valdés 1995, 16) in power, in 1960s Ghana Kwame Nkrumah was himself a direct source of intellectual change. This leads to a different set of considerations: in order to understand the intellectual and policy landscape of a dictatorship, it is often necessary to inquiry into the ideas and beliefs of the political leader. With reference to

[33] This has been extensively discussed by Valdés (1995, chapter 3). Furthermore, Pinochet's Chile attracted other conservative economists that cannot be entirely incorporated into the neoclassical paradigm of the Chicago School. The most eminent case is Frederick Hayek. A recent appraisal of the relationship between Hayek and the Chicago School is Caldwell (2011). For a detailed assessment of Hayek's involvement in Pinochet's Chile, see Caldwell and Montes (2014).

Stalin for example, Ronald L. Meek (1953-54, 232) wrote that, following 'great changes in economic and social institutions' it happens that 'the political leaders who usher in the changes are themselves men with a taste for theoretical generalisation, in which case both the new order and the theory of the new order may come to be constructed under the guidance of one and the same hand'.[34] More directly relevant for the treatment of Kwame Nkrumah attempted here is Helen Yaffe's (2009) appraisal of Ernesto Che Guevara as an economic thinker and a policy-maker. Indeed what Kwame Nkrumah, Che Guevara (and one might add Mao Zedong and many others) shared, was their attempt to apply the tenets of Marxism to the specific conditions faced by their countries, while at the same time contribute to the construction of an official ideology that could make easier the socialist transformation of their countries. Again, there are important differences: Nkrumah's dialogue with Marxist thought occurred mostly via V.I. Lenin's theory of imperialism, rather than as an engagement with the Marx's *Capital*, or Soviet economic theory as it was for Guevara (Yaffe 2009). Indeed while between 1965 and 1966 Guevara started working on a manual of political economy that he hoped could replace in Cuba the one produced in the Soviet Union on the verge of Stalin's death (and then imposed on satellite countries as the only legitimate source of truth) (Yaffe 2009), Nkrumah in contrast was more concerned with finding in Lenin's writings an analytical framework to interpret Africa's colonial past, and justify his call for a socialist and Pan-African political union.

Leaving aside the case of Chile and Cuba, more generally historians and sociologists of economics have produced excellent work on the professionalization of economics in Latin America, discussing the construction of economic expertise and its relationship with both the national context and the international community.[35] This is also the approach followed in this study, along lines that will be explained in more detail in section 1.6.

1.5 Perspectives from the history of statistics

[34] A similar approach can be found in Birken's (1991) study of Adolf Hitler's political economy.
[35] Montecinos (1996) provides an interesting account of the relationship between economists and policy elites in Latin America. Closer to the core concerns of this thesis, Sarah Babb's (2001) exploration of the economics profession in twentieth century Mexico is more explicitly linked to the fate of national politics.

Nor is this thesis exclusively concerned with economics and political economy: three chapters focus on the production and dissemination of statistical data. In the past decades the historiography of statistics has become a rich genre (Desrosières 2000) encompassing different types of narratives. These, according to Alain Desrosières (2000) comprise 'official' histories produced by statistical institutions, histories of statistical theories, histories of the internationalization of statistics, and histories of national statistics, and histories based on the notion of 'social construction'. In a similar fashion, according to Manfredi Alberti (2013), the historiography of statistics can be divided into four main types of narratives (Alberti 2013, 22-23). The first group comprises works that treat the history of statistics as a mathematical science. The focus here is on the 'internal' aspects of the discipline, on the lives, careers and ideas of mathematical and statistical pioneers, and on the processes leading to new discoveries and theoretical innovations. The second strand of literature describes, usually in considerable detail, the evolution of national and international statistical machineries. In this case the focus is on statistics as part of a political machinery, and as embodied in a set of changing administrative practices. The third stream of literature, usually associated with postmodernism, focus on statistics as a tool of regulatory and disciplinary power. These histories find their main theoretical inspiration in the late work of French philosopher Michel Foucault (2007; 2008), who established a strong connection between the rise of population counting, statecraft, 'governmentality', and what he labels 'biopolitics', i.e. the art and practice of making the individual object of disciplinary power.[36] Finally, for the fourth group the historicization of statistics is not an end in itself, or a way to think about power, but rather a mean to understand the validity and reliability of statistical evidence.

However this classification is a simplification, and the four categories identified by Alberti are not mutually exclusive. For example, in some histories of econometrics as a mathematical science the exploration of the discipline cannot be detached from a discussion of the evolution of specific institutional, administrative and policy-making contexts (Le Gall 2007, Ikeo 2011, Morgan 1990). Many recent works exploring the history of national or international statistical machineries fit loosely into what has been labelled 'social constructivism', sharing with Foucault the

[36] This has found a significant expression not only in the history of economic statistics, but especially in historiography of accounting An early assessment of these new tendencies can be found in Miller, Hopper and Laughlin (1991).

focus on the processes by which statistics create and institutionalise categories, rather than simply describing an objective reality. Going well beyond the boundaries of old administrative history, 'constructivist' studies of national and international statistical machineries have provided several important contributions to our understanding of the relationship between statistics, the state and social knowledge. If some literature on the internationalization of statistics has allowed to turn something which was perceived as boring, like standards, into something crucial for the understanding of the relationship between statistical knowledge and political economies,[37] at the national level instead, Desrosières (2003) went as far as to talk of the 'co-construction of statistics and the state'. But the vast literature on more specific and circumscribed case studies has taught us a great deal about how statistics make states, and the state shapes statistics. Looking at the 1900-1940 period Federico D'Onofrio (2012; 2013) analysed the different ways in which agricultural economists and statisticians observed Italy: far from being necessarily a centralised and rationalized project, the collection of information on rural Italy was embedded in a web of decentralised and local relations, which led D'Onofrio to talk of 'stakeholder statistics'. This is a reminder of the fact that the collection of raw data, that will eventually become numbers in national income accounts, population censuses and development plans, is usually the outcome of a politically loaded interaction between an observer and an observed subject (Maas and Morgan 2012). The emphasis on statistics as the outcome of a strategic interaction between agents with conflicting goals has been advocated by many different positions. Within his discussion of the impossibility to find economic laws from statistical data, Austrian economist Ludwig von Mises noted that 'statistics do not describe anything else than what happened at a definite instant in time in a definite geographical area as the outcome of the actions of a definite number of people' (Mises 2006). Econometrician Robert Bowden has gone as far as to construct a series of game theoretical models to represent the incentives and the strategies involved in the interactions that lead to the creation of statistical information; in his view 'one can think of the statistician as a dominant player having to "defeat" his or her subjects in order to gain the information desired' (Bowden 1989, 12). Although this thesis does

[37] Particularly relevant for this study is the case of the United Nations, which contributed to export and disseminate statistical standards and practices in the developing world (Ward 2004) and which, as we will see in a later chapter, had significant implications for the relationship between statistics and the Ghanaian state.

not attempt the testing of Bowen's models, or the advocacy of Mises' a-prioristic epistemology, their insights are particularly important insight for the history of African statistics, usually collected by weak states with an uneven control over their territory. Sometimes the focus is, rather than on the nature of statistical knowledge itself, on the evolution of specific indicators. Thus, for example the excellent histories of the consumer price index in Britain (Searle 2014) and in the United States (Stapleford 2009), open an important window into the ways in which contemporary political and economic concerns are incorporated into statistical practice, and shape political debates and outcomes. As shown by these two studies, the reconstruction of an epoch through the lens of a statistical indicator can lead to a partial reassessment of the agents' motivations, ambitions, and available knowledge. This is a theme that will recur in the following pages, especially with reference to 1950s household budget surveys and more broadly to the historical significance of decolonization. But given the political features of the Ghanaian state between 1960 and 1966 (to which four chapters are devoted), histories of statistics in authoritarian regimes are particularly relevant.

The works of Adam Tooze on Nazi Germany (Tooze 2001) and Jean-Guy Prévost (2009) on Fascist Italy have important implications for this study. Among the points raised, and discussed in the Ghanaian context, are the active role of dictators in carving new roles for the social sciences,[38] the pervasive implications that the new political climate had in terms of practices of data collection and statistical machineries and, more generally, the extension of 'the epistemological limits of the statistical enterprise' (Prévost 2009, 205). On the other hand it would be simplistic to attribute too much power to the agents concerned, be they dictators or statisticians, in shaping the statistical realm to create revolutionary forms of statistical knowledge which directly incorporated the regime's ideological tenets: as shown by the case of the Nazi population census described by Aly and Roth (2004), sometimes the greatest contribution that statistics can make in serving dictatorships is in putting to a new use internationally accepted standards of impartiality and 'good practice'. As rightly noted by Vincent Barnett (2012, 68) describing the statistical transition from Tsarist to Soviet Russia 'the term *observation* has various nuances of meaning: *study* and

[38] With reference to this, Leti (2003) on Mussolini's personal involvement in shaping Italian statistics is particularly relevant.

inspection can give way to *surveillance* and *judgement* in certain acute circumstances'. Nkrumah's Ghana is certainly an interesting case to observe the new and specific political uses to which widely accepted statistical practices were put.

However most of the historical literature published so far on African statistics belongs to the fourth group, comprising studies which look at the historical evolution of statistics to make inferences about their validity and reliability.[39] Morten Jerven in a series of articles (Jerven 2010a; 2010b; 2011a; 2011b) and in *Poor Numbers: How We Are Misled by African Development Statistics and What To Do About It* (Jerven 2013) provides an insightful exploration of the data quality problems affecting African macroeconomic statistics. In order to do so he combines historical narrative (especially for the beginning of national income accounting), fieldwork and surveys of national statistical offices. Jerven shows how unreliable African macroeconomic statistics are. Jerven's work also crosses the categories defined above: while ultimately aiming at assessing the reliability of data, it conceptualises the poor quality of African numbers as both a 'knowledge and a governance problem' (Jerven 2013, 4). While this does not imply the adherence to a postmodern, relativistic, or Foucaldian position, the nature of power relations shaping the production and dissemination becomes a central concern. This emerges for example in his discussion of the relationship between African national statistical offices and UN agencies: as it was noted in a workshop conducted by the Nigerian statistical office, not only 'the requests for statistics often made by the UN agencies have gone a long way in distorting the statistical programmes' but often they 'are tied to some benefits like loans for projects or other aids for development programmes' (quoted in Jerven 2011a, 188-189). Furthermore, in Jerven's account, the state's capacity to collect reliable information (or in the case of many African countries the lack thereof) allows a further series of reflections on its legitimacy (Jerven 2013).

Like many of the cases reviewed, this study also contains elements that belong especially to the second, third and fourth category. Although in the years under consideration there were many technical developments that had an impact on Ghanaian statistics, the focus is on reconstructing the previous untold story of the

[39] A recent example is Cristopher (2010) who, by looking at the conceptualisation and construction of occupational categories in South African censuses between 1865 and 1951, assessed the difficulties of comparing these data and using them 'as a statistical framework for theoretical work or the determination of trends' (Cristopher 2010, 911).

statistical administrative machinery, and analyse its contribution to state-building. While power is indeed a fundamental issue, the perspective adopted here differs from that to be found in Foucaldian studies, or in accounts that follow directly in James Scott's (1998) footsteps. Indeed Foucault's and Scott's almost exclusive focus on the coercive nature of statistical practices obscures the more complex and subtle ways in which agents participate into the construction of statistical knowledge, and eventually benefit from its results (Szreter and Breckenridge 2012, 10). Sometimes, as shown by Mark Harrison (2011) in his study of the political economy of accounting fraud in Soviet Russia, the falsification of information to deceive central state authorities emerged as a viable and rational economic strategy for the actors involved. Nor is agency to be found only in the contraposition of state vs. non-state agents: this study abandons the monolithic notion of the state as an all-powerful *panopticon*, and stresses instead the unintended consequences of action, contingencies and tensions existing within the state apparatus. Ideally this type of analysis should have been pushed even further, but this was partly prevented from the limitations of the sources used in this study, mostly coming from state and public archives. Keeping in mind these limitations, hopefully in its joint discussion of economics *and* statistics, the thesis contributes to rectify the lamentable state of affairs described by Desrosières (2003, 553) who noted that 'these two histories, that of statistics and that of political economy are rarely presented, much less problematized, together'.

1.6 How it is done

The literature review presented so far suggests that the historiographies of economics and statistics have followed divergent paths. In contrast, this thesis provides a joint discussion of economics *and* statistics. In this sense the study explicitly contributes to rectify the lamentable state of affairs described by Desrosières (2003, 553) who noted that 'these two histories, that of statistics and that of political economy are rarely presented, much less problematized, together'. In order to analyse the political significance of economics and statistics for Ghanaian state-building, the study is constructed as a series of microhistories of statistical enquiries, social scientists, development plans and educational institutions. But what does 'microhistory' actually mean? This label can be traced back to around 1975, when it started being used to describe works of social and cultural history, usually written by Italian and French

historians, characterised by their focus on a microscopic unit of analysis, the primacy of detailed narratives of specific events over structural explanations, and more generally the attempt to relocate from the footnotes to the core of historical inquiry the life, thought and life experience of historical actors that were previously marginalised.[40]

This historiographical practice, built on the assumption that 'the reduction of the scale of observation', combined with an 'intensive study of the documentary material' 'will reveal factors previously unobserved' (Levi 2000, 101), has successfully migrated from social and cultural history to the history of science.[41] It is indeed the historiography of science broadly construed, rather than the historiography of economics,[42] which provides a template for the way in which this thesis is built. Not only have historians of other sciences (especially anthropology, biology, and life sciences) started fully integrating Africa in their narratives,[43] but as rightly pointed out by Roy Weintraub, many histories of economics are based on a 'meta-narrative of progress' (Weintraub 1999, 145), showing how 'Error is weeded out, truths are uncovered, and knowledge claims are stabilized through the application of particular and specific methods' (Weintraub 1999, 145).[44] In contrast, this thesis shares with many histories of science the rejection of this 'Whig' view of history, and the lack of interest in digging into the past to look for 'correct ideas' to shed light on the present. Rather, and partly as a reaction against much philosophy of science, historians and sociologists have shown much interest in how science was and is actually done, rather than its conformity to some normative ideal. In a manner which resonates with the historiographical practice of microhistory, this led them to start looking systematically

[40] The most famous example of microhistory remains Ginzburg (1980). On the methodology of microhistory see Muir (1991), Levi (2001), Peltonen (2001).

[41] Historian of statistics Theodore Porter (1995, ix-x) claimed that 'some of the best and most fashionable recent work in science studies has aimed to understand science as a thoroughly local phenomenon' and that microhistory constitutes a 'superb point of departure for studies of science'.

[42] Although as we have seen in previous sections much historiography on development economics and on economics in Latin America offer an invaluable departure point for this enquiry.

[43] In the famous expression of Helen Tilley (2011), Africa was a 'living laboratory', where imperial knowledge was not simply transplanted, but rather co-constructed by the interaction of foreign ideas and local contexts and practices. Nkrumah's Ghana has already been object of study by historians of science, but limitedly to the construction of 'science centres' where children had to be educated in experimental sciences (Osseo-Adare 2013).

[44] On the other hand, since Weintraub published this article, histories of economics have increasingly incorporated methods and themes from the history of science. For a positive appraisal of this transformation see Schabas (2002).

at the actual ways in which scientific theories and practices developed in specific geographical and temporal sites.[45]

Given the dictatorial tendencies and the proclaimed adherence to socialism characterising the last years of Nkrumah's rule, this approach can be discussed fruitfully in connection with the historiography of science under repressive regimes, and specifically with reference to Soviet Russia. Much early historiography of Soviet science has tended to present a simplistic narrative about the total and unconditional subordination of science to politics, by viewing 'science and the state as two opposing entities locked in an uneven conflict, with the state as the role of dictator and oppressor, and the scientists as victims' (Kremenstov 1997, 4). Of course, this does not imply that the Soviet political system did not present scientists with a brutal and repressive environment, or that this state of affairs did not have any impact on the scientists' behaviour. The point is, rather, that nor the 'Soviet state' nor the 'scientific community' were monoliths speaking and acting with one mind. Kremenstov convincingly argued that the nature and evolution of Stalinist science can be fully grasped only when understood as a series of local interactions which determined the *actual* content and methods of what, at a given time and place, came to be considered 'science'. These local interactions invested the personal trajectory of the scientists, their role within the party apparatus, and the rhetorical choices made in order to gain the support of political patrons (Kremenstov 1997, 5).

It is by looking at the evolution of these debates (and the institutional structures in which they were embodied), regardless of their 'scientific' contribution, that we can gain an accurate picture of the shifting and porous boundaries separating the political realm and processes underlying the production and dissemination of knowledge.[46] Similarly, the criteria which guided me in the selection of theories,

[45] This very generic description could be applied to a huge variety of approaches in the history, sociology and anthropology of science. Since this literature is by now extremely vast, the reader is invited to consult the essays collected in Biagioli (1999) to get a sense of some of the different approaches and problems in science and technology studies.

[46] Although Kremenstov (1997) focuses on the case of genetics, this microhistorical approach characterises much recent fascinating scholarship on the history of science in the Soviet Union. See for example Bazhanov (2003) on the impact of the political context on the life and career of logician Ivan E. Orlov, Josephson's (2010) biography of physicist and Nobel Laureate Zhores Alferov, Kojevnikov's (1998) parallel account of the construction of ideological consensus in philosophy, biology, linguistics, physiology and political economy. This does not imply that historians of economics have completely neglected the possibilities of presenting microhistories of economists under dictatorships with the aim of reconstructing the political and ideological context in which they operated, rather than assessing the righteousness or wrongness of their ideas. Moshe Lewin (1975) remains a classic work, unconvering the political realities of economic debates in the Soviet Union. Caldwell's (2000) account of the

methods and practices discussed have nothing to do with their validity or truth content; instead it was a careful and detailed study of the country's political history to influence my selection of case studies, in a way that could accommodate both the many different ways in which the work of economists and statisticians shaped Ghana's political imagination, and simultaneously adopt a scale of observation small enough to capture the deep repercussions that political vicissitudes had on the construction of economic and statistical knowledge.

On the other hand an understanding of the relationship between science and state-building as a series of more or less local phenomena does not imply that the tale of economics, statistics and Ghanaian state formation is a purely national one. A recurring theme in the next chapters is the notion that many of the cognitive tools and practices that shaped the trajectory of the Ghanaian state in its evolution from colonial dependency to socialist party-state had their roots in a global evolution in economics and statistics. For example Daniel Speich (2008) rightly pointed out that the dissemination of national income accounts since the 1940s created a 'global epistemic space' in which information about national economies could travel more easily across epistemic and policy domains. Yet, although the contribution of economics and statistics to state-building could be instantiated by the adoption of highly standardised templates and theoretical tools, their ultimate meaning and impact on political transformation can be fully understood only as the outcome of a series of continuous processes of negotiation specific to the Ghanaian cultural, social and political context.

In order to fully grasp the multiple modes by which economics and statistics made the Ghanaian state, the analysis needs to be based on a clear choice of the sites of observation. Following Fourcade's (2010, 21) sociological study of economists and societies in Britain, France and United States, this analysis is built on the assumption that a national 'constellation' of economic (and statistical) knowledge comprises two main dimensions: the 'order of learning' and the 'administrative

relationship between 'dissenter' Fritz Behrens and the party in the German Democratic Republic has been an important source of inspiration for this work. Nor has the production of these narratives in history of economics been limited to left-wing dictatorships: through his analysis of the life and thought of Luigi Amoroso Keppler (1994) provided an excellent analysis of the ways in which economists adapted to the changing political circumstances of Fascist Italy. Notable for the richness of archival materials used and its analytical depth is the recent study by Ottonelli (2013) on the ironic trajectory of Jewish economist Gino Arias, one of the main theorists of Fascist corporativism who was then forced to leave the country to avoid being prosecuted under the racial laws.

order'.[47] The first refers to the place and nature of teaching and research in economics and statistics in the academic system (Fourcade 2010, 22). In the case under discussion, the University of Ghana (formerly University College of the Gold Coast) is a recurring site of analysis to build a narrative about professionalization, expertise and the patterns of interaction between academic research and the visions of political leaders. The 'administrative order' refers to the political and administrative institutions, treated as sites in which knowledge about the economic world is created and renegotiated, and directly impacts the intellectual identity and the reach of the political rulers. The statistical office plays a prominent role in our narrative: while completely absent from all existing histories of the Ghanaian state, it is shown that the evolution of Office of the Government Statistician (later Central Bureau of Statistics) was simultaneously deeply reflective of broader political and intellectual tendencies, and at the same time a powerful catalyst of change in shaping the identity and the reach of the political elites over the territory.

It should be noted that the notion of 'orders' and the continuous references to 'economics' and 'statistics' in the title and in the main text of this study should not be understood as stable, abstract and rigid analytical categories. Indeed, the focus of my analysis is, consistently with the microhistorical tradition, the lives, ideas, debates and practices of concrete economists, statisticians, planners and politicians in a rapidly changing environment and, occasionally, of the people whose lives were affected by their work. Where the focus of the chapters is not so much a set of individuals or institutions, but rather specific statistical inquiries or development plans, I tried to be very cautious about how I invested these artefacts with the 'agency' necessary to shape the Ghanaian state. Rather than rushing to invoke the concept of 'performativity', the notion around which much fruitful discussion has taken place in recent years about the capacity of economics (and statistics) to 'make', and not simply describe, the world,[48] I chose to reconstruct as closely as possible the actual processes by which data were

[47] Fourcade (2010, 26-28) also discusses the notion of 'economic order', as the extent to which prevailing economic ideas (in her case, free markets in the United States and bureaucratic hierarchy in France) are incorporated into the legislative framework disciplining the economics profession, but this is not a major concern in this analysis, less concerned with the 'professionalization' of economics profession and more interested in understanding the political implications of economic and statistical work for state formation.

[48] See MacKenzie, Muniesa and Su (2007).

collected and aggregated, and new economic visions articulated in specific institutional sites. [49]

Certainly this complicates considerably the analysis, shifting the discussion from the 'performative character' and the 'disciplinary power' of economics and statistics to a rich set of interactions and political processes taking place at the micro-level. The reader is left with a narrative that is messier, but hopefully also more accurate in its grasping of the multiple and contradictory modalities by which the mutual construction of economics, statistics and the state occurred.

1.7 Sources

The thesis relies on a wide range of published and unpublished sources. Amongst published sources, particular attention is paid to the writings of the main characters of this narrative. These include, besides Kwame Nkrumah, the economists and statisticians active in Ghana in the years under consideration. Rather than providing yet another account of the history of development thinking, the point is to understand the ideas constructed and circulating in the *local* academic and political community. In this sense a detailed exploration of the articles published in the *Economic Bulletin of Ghana* allows us to observe at close distance what were the theoretical concerns, rhetorical strategies and practical considerations employed by those involved in making the Ghanaian state. Other published sources which have been used extensively in this study include planning documents, statistical studies and other government publications. These have been supplemented when necessary with material published by international organizations, especially the United Nations and its regional commission for Africa. The focus is, rather than on the numbers themselves (which as the reader will notice are quite scant in the following pages), on the textual elements in these publications, very useful in tackling changes in official perceptions and methodology, as well as being particularly enlightening on the practical problems faced by social scientists on the ground.

Although some of the unpublished sources used come from the Public Records Office in London (PRO hereafter) and the Economists' Paper Project at Duke

[49] For a critique of performativity along similar lines from the point of view of the history of American agricultural statistics, see Didier (2007).

University, most of the archival evidence employed has been collected in the Accra branch of the national archives of Ghana, the Public Records Archives and Administration Department (PRAAD hereafter) in a single trip from November 2011 to April 2012. Records kept at the PRO have proven particularly useful in reconstructing the context in which colonial statistics were made. These records have been integrated with the Colonial Science collection of the LSE British Library of Political Science and Economics, holding the records of the Colonial Economic Advisory Council, the Colonial Economic Committee, and the Colonial Committee on the Social Sciences.

The records collected at the PRAAD come mostly from the administrative collection (comprising many official publications of the Ghanaian government which is difficult to find elsewhere),[50] and the unpublished records of the Ministries of Finance, of Industry, of Education, and of Higher Learning. Many of these sources have never, to the best of the author's knowledge, been used before in writing the history of Ghana. What they allow is a firm grounding of the interaction between economic ideas, statistical practice and the state in the contingencies of political life.

The PRAAD records have been supplemented with unpublished material from the library of the Department of Economics of the University of Ghana, Legon and the George Padmore Research Library of African Affairs in Accra. Regarding the library of the Department of Economics, the author can state confidently that almost nothing has survived, in terms of unpublished material, from the years discussed in this study excerpt a copy of a single paper discussed at a departmental seminar in 1965. As it will be shown in chapter 3, this paper (Green 1965a) has represented an important piece of evidence to rethink about the role of economists in articulating a Pan-African vision. The records consulted at the George Padmore Research Library (GPRL hereafter) in Accra, and especially the collection of the Bureau of African Affairs (BAA), the organ responsible for the Pan-African propaganda of the regime, have greatly enriched the proposed reconstruction of the content of Marxist-Leninist ideological education. Overall it is hoped the archival evidence collected allows a first step towards opening the black box of Ghanaian universities, planning commissions

[50] Regardless of the fact that copies of these works were retrieved in the Ghanaian national archives, they are included in the references as published material.

and statistical institutions, and rescuing from oblivion the hopes and the challenges faced by those who wanted to 'make' a new Ghana.

On the other hand, it is important to think honestly about the extent to which the questions that can be addressed are constrained by the available evidence. Given that the possibility of analysing the impact of economics and statistics on state formation depends so heavily on the preservation of texts - regardless if we are talking about unpublished university seminar papers, correspondence relative to the preparation of statistical inquiries, minutes of meetings of the planning commission, drafts of unpublished statistical surveys – the question of written evidence should be taken seriously. There is little doubt that many of the archival sources that could have potentially contributed to shape this research project are no longer available due to the historical trajectory of the PRAAD, which constitutes the repository of most of the archival evidence used in this thesis. Already in 1988, commenting on a previous inventory of the archives (Henige 1973), Adam Jones (1988, 385) noted that in the previous fifteen years 'several of the inventories […] have disappeared or disintegrated, and others are rapidly heading in the same direction'. Although these remarks were specifically referring to some of the 19th century holdings of the PRAAD, one is left to speculate as to the extent to which holdings from different periods shared the same fate. Furthermore, the years covered in this study present additional challenges. Indeed, as I had a chance to learn during my fieldwork from conversations with Ghanaian historians based at the University of Ghana in Legon, and as noted by Jean Allman (2013, 127), in the aftermath of the 1966 coup 'many official state records, through wilful destruction or as a result of negligence or deterioration, have been lost forever'.

Taking as a starting point the specific historical trajectories of postcolonial African archives, it is certainly time to develop a more systematic reflection on the relationship between the politics of record-keeping in postcolonial Africa and the types of African history that we can legitimately write.[51] Allman is an extremely insightful departure point. She is indeed right when she claims, by using the case of the PRAAD and the controversial connection between Nkrumah and former Nazi

[51] In this, historians of South-East Asia have paved the way. See for example Stoler (2010). More general and classic texts offering reflections on the relationship between states, the politics of archive-keeping and their implications for history-writing are Foucault (1989) and Derreda, .

airplane pilot Hannah Reitsch, that the inadequacies of the postcolonial archives force historians of Africa's recent past to think outside the box and look for evidence in unusual places. Specifically, Allman (2013) invites to integrate the narrative that can be constructed on the basis of national archives with many other transnational layers leading to a more accurate, complex and human representations of the multiple and contradictory connections between Africa and the rest of the world. There is indeed a real sense in which Allman's suggestion resonates with the concerns of this study. As it will become apparent over the course of the thesis, in order to provide an exhaustive and comprehensive account of the intellectual and political trajectories of the economists and statisticians discussed, archival research should have been undertaken in places as disparate as Russia, Poland, the United States, and Israel.

While hopefully at least some of this work will be undertaken in the future, the most important implication of this state of affairs for the present study does not have to do so much with the transnational prism through which the postcolonial state can be understood. Rather, it arises from the lack of evidence conducive to a fuller appreciation of the impact of economic and statistical ideas on the ground, and with the implementation of the policies described. Overall, this has somehow partly shifted the focus of the analysis from the *consequences* of decisions inspired by economics and statistics to a stronger focus on the *intentions* of the main characters of this study, which in contrast are richly documented in the archives. The more specific ways in which sources limitations might have shaped the content and analytical outlook of the different parts of this study are specified in the single chapters.

1.8 Thesis plan

The thesis is divided into four parts. Part I, titled 'Statistics and the late colonial state' (chapter 2) explores the construction of statistical knowledge and its political implications from 1948, year of the establishment of the Office of the Government Statistician, until independence in 1957. The focus is on household budget surveys, which emerged in the years of decolonization as the most frequent and significant type of statistical enquiry. These inquiries were embodied in what I label an 'uneven statistical topography'. This comprised a spatial and a conceptual dimension. The former refers to the choice of the sampling locations, closely mirroring the uneven will

of the state to exercise control over different parts of the country, rather than any notion of statistical 'typicality'. The latter refers to the fact that household budget surveys incorporated different cognitive tools and served different aims depending on what the government envisaged as its political and economic agenda in the surveyed areas. These findings stand in contrast with much existing literature on statistics and state building in the developing world in the 1940s and 1950s, emphasising the capacity of statistics to 'make' states through the imposition of standardised statistical templates providing a macroeconomic picture, and thus instantiating the 'national economy' as an object of policy intervention.

Part II, 'Beyond the State: The Economics and Statistics of Pan-Africanism' (chapters 3 and 4) discusses the role played by economics and statistics in articulating alternatives to the nation-state and paths of economic integration in the aftermath of independence. In contrast with existing literature of Pan-Africanism, confining the intellectual history of this notion to politicians and activists, part II of the thesis shows that Pan-African ideas had a significant impact on economic theorising and on the political economy of statistics. Chapter 3 explores the economic component of Kwame Nkrumah's vision of Pan-Africanism, and how it shaped economic research conducted at the University of Ghana. This is shown with reference to the work of Reginald H. Green and Ann Seidman, two American economists who employed some of Nkrumah's ideas to reconstruct economic theory. The chapter argues that Green and Seidman's support for Pan-Africanism resulted in a radical questioning of the applicability of mainstream economic theory to African conditions, and in the attempt to find an alternative framework to conceptualise African trade, institutions and economic integration. While these are features that Green and Seidman shared with many other development economists of the time, their intellectual trajectory is a useful case-study to observe at close distance the impact of local political conditions and cultures on the making of development economics.

In spite of the failure of this version of Pan-Africanism to gain wide acceptance at the political level, the trajectory of Green and Seidman is helpful as a case study to re-think about the sources of intellectual change in development economics in the Ghanaian context, and represent a first step in mapping the intellectual landscape of Nkrumah's Ghana (further developed in chapter 7). Chapter 4 discusses how, in contrast with these tenets, the United Nations Economic

Commission for Africa proposed what I label a 'milder shade of Pan-Africanism', focusing on statistical standardization across countries as a prerequisite for supranational economic planning, and supporting regional (rather than continental) economic integration (as opposed to economic *and* political union). The chapter is focused on the political economy of the statistics produced by the Commission. This is explored in connection with two main aspects. Firstly, it is shown with reference to the failed attempt to establish an iron and steel plant serving the whole West African market that the Commission's commitment to make policy decisions informed on a wide range of newly produced statistical evidence was manipulated by African policy-makers. Indeed, from the point of view of African governments, asking the Commission to produce more inclusive and detailed studies became a viable strategies to oppose policy proposals that run against national interests. The second aspect is related to the political implications of the focus on statistical improvements and standardization from the Commission's point of view. It is shown that this statistical focus was a way of presenting an alternative to the radical brand of Pan-Africanism represented by Nkrumah, deferring the discussion about continental economic planning to an indefinite future in which the quality and the quantity of statistics produced would have made it possible.

The last years of Nkrumah's rule (1960-1966) saw an attempt to build a socialist party-state. Part III, 'Towards Socialism: Statistics, Planning and Political Economy in the One-Party State' (chapters 5, 6 and 7) turns back to the national arena and analyses the contribution of statistics, planning and political economy to the ways in which this transformation was envisaged and attempted. Chapter 5 discusses the *1960 Population Census of Ghana* and the early 1960s reform of the statistical machinery. Much existing literature discussing how statistics contribute to the creation of nation-states tends to limit its scope of observation to statistical offices, documenting how by choosing specific cognitive tools they can create new statistical representations of the nation and the national economy. However, this approach underestimates the potential of activities taking place in the field, where the data is collected. The chapter shows that in the context of the *1960 Population Census of Ghana* preparations relative to procedures of data collection were an important part of the envisaged contribution of the census to the consolidation of the postcolonial state. The point is made with special reference to the Census Education and Enlightenment

Campaign. Incorporating the advice of the United Nations statistical experts, the census education campaign aimed at building people's trust and cooperation with the census from the bottom-up. Targeting school children, who for the first time in the history of Ghanaian statistics were expected to become key actors in the dissemination of a new image of the state as a benevolent measurer, the Census Education Campaign simultaneously incarnated both a more pronounced awareness of the importance of obtaining people's trust in order to obtain accurate statistical representation, and the will to experiment with new ways of disseminating representations of the postcolonial state.

Chapter 6 reconstructs the history of the *Seven-Year Plan for National Reconstruction and Development*, the template of the economic transformation necessary to lay the foundations of an industrialised economy. The chapter analyses the plan's intellectual genealogy, placing it both in the context of Ghanaian colonial planning and contemporary planning experiments in 1960s West Africa. It is argued that the Ghanaian plan, incorporating many of the tenets prevailing in 1950s and 1960s development economics, allows to observe the new expectations placed on economists as experts in charge for transforming a country's fate. Yet, by the end of the plan's implementation period, corresponding with the fall of the regime in 1966, the change envisaged in the plan had not occurred, and the country's economic conditions had considerably worsened. In contrast with existing assessments of the plan, using Ghana's worsening economic performance to point out the plan's incapacity to shape the economy, it is suggested that although the plan failed to transform the national economy according to its own design, it mobilised and institutionalised new power relations at the micro-level.

Chapter 7 analyses the role of economists in shaping the intellectual identity of the socialist regime and the creation and consolidation of 'Nkrumaism' as its official ideology. This is done by reconstructing the ambivalent relationship between economists and the regime in the trajectories of two pivotal institutions for research and teaching in economics and political economy: the University of Ghana and the newly founded Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute. In contrast with existing literature, content with dismissing the inconsistencies of the regime's official doctrine and ignoring the role played by social scientists in its formation, the chapter uncovers the multiple voices, intellectual genealogies and interpretations of 'socialism' co-

existing among economists working in Nkrumah's Ghana. Furthermore, the chapter analyses the political implications and rhetorical strategies of contemporary economists' debates about the 'right' socialism for Ghana. It is argued that the volatile political climate of the 1960s, in which the struggle for the soul of an official ideology was accompanied by increasing repression, forced economists to find new ways of articulating their support for the regime as well as deploy novel rhetorical strategies to voice their dissent. The chapter ends with an epilogue discussing the trajectory of some of the characters and institutions presented in other chapters following the 1966 coup.

Part IV (Conclusions) is formed by chapter 8. The final chapter summarises the main findings of the study, and places its contribution in the context of the academic literatures presented in this introduction.

Part I. Scattered Data: Statistics and the Late Colonial State

2. An Uneven Statistical Topography: Household Budget Surveys in the Gold Coast, 1948-1957

The chapter documents the evolution of the Gold Coast economic statistics in the last years of British colonial rule. Firstly, it explores the origins of the Office of the Government Statistician in 1948, discussing on the basis of new archival evidence the intentions behind the creation of a centralised statistical service and the many problems encountered in the collection of economic data. Secondly, it argues that household budget surveys emerged as the most important tool for gathering statistical knowledge in late colonial Ghana.

The focus is on household budget surveys, which emerged in the years of decolonization as the most frequent and significant type of statistical enquiry. These inquiries were embodied in what I label, building on the notion of 'uneven institutional topography' employed by Catherine Boone (2003), an 'uneven statistical topography'. This comprised a spatial and a conceptual dimension. The former refers to the choice of the sampling locations, closely mirroring the uneven will of the state to exercise control over different parts of the country, rather than any notion of statistical 'typicality'. The latter refers to the fact that household budget surveys incorporated different cognitive tools and served different aims depending on what the government envisaged as its political and economic agenda in the surveyed areas. These findings stand in contrast with much existing literature on statistics and state building in the developing world in the 1940s and 1950s, emphasising the capacity of statistics to 'make' states through the imposition of standardised statistical templates providing a macroeconomic picture, and thus instantiating the 'national economy' as an object of policy intervention.

Admittedly the lack of archival evidence relative to the design and preparation of the surveys makes it difficult to unpack precisely the agency of politicians, statisticians and other potentially relevant actors in shaping the statistical unevenness characterising these inquiries and their place in Ghanaian state-building. Yet, the analysis of the 'uneven statistical topography' in the years of decolonization offers a counterpoint to much existing literature, emphasising the capacity of statistics to contribute to state-building through the imposition of uniform statistical grids.

2.1 Decolonization and statistics: history and historiography

The historian interested in African decolonization, the set of 'historical circumstances which led certain European governments to transfer […] the political authority which they exercised into African hands' (Hargreaves 1996, 2), finds himself overwhelmed by thorny questions: when did decolonization actually begin? Was it part of a broad historical trend, or can it be understood only by accounting for specific local factors? Was it the outcome of rational calculations of the costs and benefits of Empire, or was it made possible by the contingent emergence of new political and intellectual forces? The historical trajectory of the African state occupies a central, if ambiguous, role in addressing these issues.[52] If some historians and political scientists have acknowledged the long-lasting impact of institutions established in the decolonization years, it is not uncommon for scholars to embrace rough generalizations and teleological narratives.[53] When seen through this lens the decades of decolonization, filled with nationalistic rhetoric and dreams of political freedom and economic progress, seem like a short-lived deviation from a path leading inexorably to the failure of the postcolonial state. For those adopting a long-run perspective on African state-building, the uncertainty and open-endedness surrounding decolonization seems to disappear altogether, crushed under a bridge linking the world of colonial empires and the imbroglio of nation-states that followed it.

As the first African colony in the British Empire to embark on this process, the Gold Coast has attracted lots of attention from historians and political scientists of different persuasion. Without attempting to discuss in detail this transition, it might suffice to provide a few key dates and events to place the content of this chapter in the right framework.[54] By the end of the Second World War the Gold Coast 'had a thriving African-led economy based on cocoa, and the best Western educated population in British Africa' (Hyam 2006, 146). Since due to these reasons the Gold Coast was considered a model colony in the British African Empire, the eruption of violent riots in Accra in 1948, resulting in 29 deaths and 237 people injured (Hyam 2006, 146), was perceived as a great shock by colonial authorities. The commission of inquiry in

[52] Useful and concise introductions to the history of decolonization include Birmingham (1995), Wilson (1994), Hargreaves (1996) and, not limitedly to the African context, Springhall (2001).
[53] For a review of this approach, see Cooper (2008).
[54] Probably the most informative account of Ghanaian politics in the era of decolonization remains the classic Austin (1970).

charge of shedding light on the causes of the riots noted that these were many and extremely varied. For urban consumers these included rising prices and shortages of retail goods, the denial of the possibility to establish a university in the colony,[55] and the limited concession made to African political representation.[56] The mobilization of cocoa farmers instead was largely a consequence of the swollen shoot, leading the colonial administration to cut down cocoa trees to prevent the spread of the disease.[57] The political landscape of the country changed dramatically in 1947 with the establishment of the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC hereafter), a nationalist party close to the interests of the educated elites, the traditional chiefs and business interests. Headed by lawyer J.B. Danquah, the UGCC called for the extension of African political representation. In order to strengthen the party Danquah recruited Kwame Nkrumah, at the time studying philosophy in London.[58] However shortly after the Accra riots Nkrumah grew tired of what he saw as conservative instances, and established the Convention People's Party (CPP), closer to the urban unemployed and uneducated classes of the coastal areas. Although in 1950 Nkrumah was arrested by the colonial authorities for organising a massive strike (the so-called 'Positive Action Campaign') in support of immediate self-government, given the heated political climate in 1951 the colonial administration was forced to allow the first 'modern' elections for the Legislative Assembly in the history of the country.[59] The striking victory of Nkrumah (who at the time of the election was still in jail) and the CPP in the 1951 election, marked *de facto* the beginning of the end of colonial rule, with Nkrumah serving as Leader of the Government Business. In the face of the escalation in the political confrontation between the CPP and the UGCC, the former won two more general elections in 1954 and 1956.

Although a great deal is known about these eventful years of Ghanaian history,[60] like the 'statistical topography' discussed in this chapter, the historiography

[55] It was thought that one university, located in Ibadan (Nigeria) could serve the whole of British West Africa. For further discussion on this, see Agbodeka (1998).
[56] It should be noted that in 1946 the colonial administration passed a new constitution,
[57] For further discussion on the evolution of scientific knowledge and public policies dealing with the swollen shoot disease, see Danquah (2003).
[58] More on Nkrumah's education in the next chapter.
[59] The Gold Coast had a Legislative Assembly with an African majority since 1946, first among the British African dependencies, but the members of the chambers were not elected with universal suffrage.
[60] Concise treatments of these events can be found in historical surveys of African decolonization: see Hargreaves (1996, 122-131), Wilson (1994, 138-146) and Hyam (2006, 146-150).

on African decolonization remains uneven. As rightly lamented by Toyin Falola in his seminal study of Nigerian colonial planning, historians have paid much attention to 'the more dramatic issues of constitution-making, political party formation, emergence of the first generation of leaders' and, more generally, have focused on 'the politics of decolonization' (Falola 1996, xx).[61] While this chapter is yet another attempt to discuss politics in late colonial Ghana, it does so by choosing a very specific (and so far neglected) focus: the establishment of a centralised statistical service and the construction of household budget surveys.[62] This unglamorous choice, apparently very distant from the 'dramatic issues' mentioned by Falola, is justified not only because the construction of families' income and expenditures data became a pervasive statistical practice in the terminal phase of British colonial domination, but also because it sheds light on the cognitive practices of the late colonial state, the extent to which these reflected broader political concerns, and the practical difficulties encountered in attempting to construct a reliable picture of economic life.

My departure point is the assumption that statistics are not necessarily the 'neutral reflection of social and economic reality'; rather they 'are produced by particular social actors in an effort to make sense of the complex and unmanageable reality that surrounds them' (Tooze 2001, 3). However, rather than understanding the construction of statistical knowledge as a by-product of the ideology of high modernism (Scott 1998), or as a Foucauldian discourse, this chapter looks more closely at the practical problems faced by statisticians on the ground, and the impact of the political and economic context in which statistics are produced on their design and use.[63] The focus is on statistics as a territorial enterprise, and on its political implications.

The chapter is structured as follows. Section 2.2 analyses the institutional context in which the Gold Coast Office of the Government Statistician was established. Section 2.3 discusses the new types of statistics produced in 1950s Gold Coast, and explores some of the practical problems encountered in the process of data collection. Section 2.4 explores the notion of 'uneven statistical topography' with

[61] On the other hand it should be noted that in recent years historical research on decolonization has become much more inclusive, dealing with issues as different as sexuality, sport and culture. For a broad overview, see the essays collected in Le Sueur (2003).
[62] Stapleford (2007) has convincingly used the construction of expenditure surveys to problematize the relationship between statistics and the making of economic and political ideologies in the United States during the New Deal.
[63] This is part of what Jerven (2013, ch. 6; 2014) calls the 'political economy of statistics'.

reference to household budget studies in both urban and rural areas, while section 2.5 presents some concluding remarks.

2.2 The establishment of the Office of the Government Statistician

Regular collection of statistical data in Sub-Saharan Africa is as old as colonial rule itself: from the late nineteenth century British colonial administrators prepared yearly *Blue Books* containing information about the value and quantity of exports and imports, government revenues and expenditures, and the number of health and education facilities in the country. Starting in 1891, population censuses took place every ten years.[64] In the first decades of the twentieth century the task of collecting more accurate statistics fell increasingly on specific Government departments. For example, the Gold Coast Department of Agriculture was reformed in 1928, with the institution of a section devoted to agricultural statistics (Gold Coast 1930, 10). G. Auchinleck, the Director of Agriculture, forcefully stated: 'In a country of illiterate farmers, no exact information is obtainable unless special arrangements are made for obtaining it, and no impartial information is available unless Government issues it' (Gold Coast Colony 1932, 19). Although on one hand the great depression led to a severe reduction of the funding available for statistical work (Gold Coast Colony 1934, 15-16), on the other hand it led colonial administrators to think of the Empire as an economic unit, and to foster the improvement and the standardisation of statistical work in the colonies (Clauson 1937, 3-4).

The Second World War had an even greater impact on the importance attached to statistical knowledge in the African colonies. The formation of the Colonial Economic Advisory Council (CEAC hereafter) in 1943, in charge of providing recommendations to both colonial administrations and the Colonial Office on matters of economic and statistical policy was indicative of the prevailing intellectual atmosphere. In a 1944 memorandum for example it was written:

> Hardly any colonial government in the past has consciously planned the development of its territory. Law and administration have been the favourite sons, education and public health the not so favoured daughters. There has been no economic staff to look ahead and to direct; prosperity and depression have been

[64] More on this in chapter 5.

> gifts from God or Satan, unforeseen, if not as often uncomprehended. This approach to colonial administration belongs to an era that is passed.[65]

The more ambitious goals of late colonial policy required then a much more extensive knowledge, typically in the form of statistics, of economic life, that could then be manipulated by a handful of economists and statisticians to advise the government on the best course of action.[66] Leaving aside the pressure for more and better statistics coming from the colonial administrations and the experts of the CEAC, the demand and the supply of more economic data in the postwar world was also a consequence of the creation of international organisations like the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. These institutions contributed to the formalisation of a 'global epistemic space' in which knowledge about African economies could be packed, and travel more easily (Speich 2008; 2011). It was in this context that the most important change in the institutional landscape in which statistical knowledge was produced in Gold Coast took place: the establishment of the Office of the Government Statistician (OGS).

Although this was formally instituted in 1948, correspondence about the possibility of setting up a centralised statistical service dates back to 1943.[67] Initially there was some debate as to whether the appointment of a qualified statistician should have simply been in assistance to the work of the economic advisor of Gold Coast, appointed in 1943, or constitute the nucleus of a new institution completely devoted to statistical work. It was finally agreed in 1947 that

> the object to be aimed at is a self-contained Statistical Office, not subordinated to any one Department, but serving and working with all Departments which require statistical information or interpretation in any form in the course of their duties. Such a pattern […] leads to the avoidance of much duplication of effort, and to the more efficient and instructed collection and evaluation of statistical data.[68]

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[65] 'Some Aspects of the Flow of Capital into the British Colonies', p. 31, British Library of Political and Economic Science (BLPES hereafter) CEAC 4/7/file not numbered.

[66] On the intellectual change in colonial discourse, see the classic study by Lee (1969). More specifically on the rise and demise of the CEAC, see Ingham (1992).

[67] See for example Telegram of the Governor to the Secretary of State, 1st November 1943, PRAAD RG 2/1/62/1.

[68] Telegram from the Secretary of State of the Colonies to the Office administering the Government of the Gold Coast, 24th January 1947, PRAAD RG 2/1/62 /51.

Much early discussions between the Gold Coast administration and the Secretary of State for the Colonies focused on the choice of an appropriate legislative framework to discipline the activity of the OGS. This was identified in the Ordinance no. 22 of 1935, or the Statistics Ordinance, of the Government of Palestine.[69] The Palestinian law, which was then reproduced with no significant changes in the 1950 Gold Coast Statistics Ordinance, declared that the main tasks of the OGS included the collection, compilation and publication of 'statistical information relative to the commercial, industrial, social, economic and general activities and condition of the people', the collaboration with all other government departments requiring statistical information, and the undertaking of censuses.[70] The Ordinance also grounded the possibilities of the OGS to successfully perform its tasks within the state's monopoly over the enforcement of the law. Any person who refused to answer 'to the best of his knowledge and belief, […] all questions asked him by the Government Statistician'[71] was liable to pay a fine between £10 and £50.[72] Finally those working the collection of statistics, and disclosing any confidential information were 'liable to imprisonment for a period not exceeding three years'.[73]

Even once an agreement was reached on the legislative framework disciplining the statistical office's activities, there were many practical problems to be solved before the OGS could become operational. The selection of the first Government Statistician was a lengthy process which excluded several candidates for reasons as different as their lack of specialist training in statistics, and old age.[74] After months of consultation between the Gold Coast administration and the Secretary of State of the Colonies the post was finally allocated in 1947 to A. B. Reisz, a Hungarian statistician employed as the Deputy Head of the statistics and economics branch of the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Endowed with 'the right academic qualifications', a 'strong personality', and by 'accent and appearance Central European', Reisz was someone

[69] Possibly Palestine emerged as a model because it was considered, among the territories on which Britain exercised some control, the one with the best developed statistical services.
[70] Government of Palestine – Statistics Ordinance. No. 22 of 1935 –An Ordinance to Provide for the creation of an office of statistics, 3 (1), p. 1, PRAAD RG2/1/62/18.
[71] Ibidem, article 15, p. 4, PRAAD RG2/1/62/21.
[72] Ibidem, article16 (2), p. 4, PRAAD RG2/1/62/22.
[73] Ibidem, article 12 (3), p. 3, PRAAD RG2/1/62/20.
[74] Telegram of the Governor of the Gold Coast to the Secretary of State of the Colonies, 27th May 1946, PRAAD RG 2/1/62/48; PRAAD RG/2/1/62/59.

who thought 'in terms of a highly organised department'.[75] In hindsight it is possible to speculate as to whether[76] the Hungarian statistician, described as someone made impatient by his high standards of efficiency,[77] remained disappointed following his arrival in the Gold Coast. Indeed Reisz made clear that before the OGS could begin its work he needed two assistants for typing and clerical work, or at least borrow them from another government department.[78] But what seems like a reasonable (and perhaps trivial) request turned into a bureaucratic nightmare.

The Electrical Department, one of the first to address Reisz' query, simply said: 'it is regretted that as the office staff of this Department is inadequate for our own requirements, we are unable to release any officer for these duties'.[79] Although the specific words used were slightly different in each case, negative responses came from the Director of Surveys, the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, the Superintendent of Broadcasting, the Public Relations Department, the Deputy Commissioner of Income Tax, the Commissioner for Labour, the Director of Agriculture, the Director of Prisons, the Accountant General, the Commissioner of the Gold Coast Police, the Director of Education, the Controller of Customs and Excise, the Medical Services, and many others.[80] A typist was finally appointed in July 1948,[81] and the Office of the Government Statistician was finally ready to begin its work.[82]

This digression sheds light on a general feature of statistical offices in late colonial Africa: they were chronically understaffed, with obvious consequences on the quality of their work. This problem was not only extended to clerks and other administrative staff; also the number of qualified statisticians in Africa was

[75] Telegram from the Secretary of State of the Colonies to the Governor, 19th August 1947, PRAAD RG 2/1/62/ 68.
[76] See Letter of G. E. Sinclair to The Director of Public Works, Accra, 4th December 1947, PRAAD RG 2/1/62/85 and Letter of Letter of F. Leach to A.B. Reisz, 5th January 1948, PRAAD RG 2/1/62/ 93.
[77] Telegram of the Secretary of State to the Governor of the Gold Coast, 31st October 1947, PRAAD RG 2/1/62/77.
[78] S.C.S. PRAAD RG 2/1/62/97.
[79] Letter of the Chief Electrical Engineer to the Colonial Secretariat, Accra, 20th April 1948, PRAAD RG 2/1/62/106.
[80] All the correspondence between the Colonial Secretariat and the government departments on the possibility of lending two typists can be found in PRAAD RG 2/1/62/26-129.
[81] Letter of the Government Statistician to the Colonial Secretary, 19th July 1948, PRAAD RG 2/1/62/134.
[82] A.B. Reisz stayed in the Gold Coast until 1952, when he left the post of Government Statistician to take up a position at the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East. He was then replaced by K. M. Francis, formerly employed by the East African Meteorological Service and then Government Statistician of Sierra Leone, Letter of W.D. Sweaney to E. Norton Jones, 9th September 1952, PRAAD RG 2/1/62/137.

depressingly low. In occasion of the 1951 ‘Conference of Statisticians of Countries in Africa South of the Sahara’, when representatives from the statistical offices of several African colonies gathered in Salisbury (Southern Rhodesia) to discuss their common problems (including the strength of statistical machineries in colonial territories) and perspectives, the situation, presented in table 2.1, looked very grim.

Country or Region	Number of Qualified Statisticians	Date of Establishment Statistical Office
Belgian Congo, Ruanda Urundi	3	1948
Central Africa	14	1927
East Africa	11	1943
Gold Coast	8	1948
Nigeria	9	1947
Sierra Leone	2	1951
Union of South Africa	12	1917
French Cameroons	1	1945
French Equatorial Africa	5	1945
French West Africa	5	1945
Mozambique	1	1924
Angola	1	1936
Total	72	

Table 2.1: Statistical offices and statisticians in a sample of Sub-Saharan African countries, 1951.Source: PRO CO 852/1078/2.

Even with the qualification that 'these figures do not necessarily indicate the total administrative resources of the different territories since some offices are able to draw on outside services of a well developed administrative system', the Report points at the shortage of 'resources of *technical* personnel available for statistical planning'.[83] Although the Gold Coast was certainly among the most advanced colonies in training qualified technical personnel, with the highest number among the African colonies of citizens studying in Britain for a degree in economics, statistics or mathematics,[84] and accounting for the fact that it would be impossible to come up with an 'optimal' ratio of statisticians over population and area, it emerges that the production of economic statistics in the late colonial era was the outcome of the action of a negligible number of people in charge of collecting information over sparsely populated and usually vast territories.

[83] Conference of Statisticians of Countries in Africa South of the Sahara, Draft Report, Salisbury Southern Rhodesia 30th July -7th August 1951, p.7, PRO CO 852 1078/1.

[84] A comparative tables of African students enrolled in British universities for degrees relevant to the taking up of position in statistical offices is presented in Searle, Phillips and Martin (1950, 278).

2.3 Constructing statistics in the 1950s.

2.3.1 The new Gold Coast statistics

The early years of the Office of the Government Statistician were characterised by a significant increase in the technical sophistication and an expansion in the domain of inquiry of the economic statistics produced. A part of the 'new' work of the statistical office was related to the creation of macroeconomic statistics. The publication in 1953 of the first *Economic Survey of the Gold Coast*, resulting from the cooperation of the government statistical service with the Ministry of Finance included 'for the first time an estimate of the Gold Coast's balance of payments and capital investment' (Gold Coast Ministry of Finance 1953, foreword).

Following a first attempt in 1931 by the Chief Census Officer A.W. Cardinall to produce a national income figure (Cardinall and Gold Coast Census Office 1932), the introduction of national income accounts in the Ghanaian context was pioneered by Dudley Seers and C.Y. Ross, both members of the Oxford Institute of Statistics. Appointed by the Colonial Office to produce a report on the 'organisation and utilisation of building resources in relation to the economy' (Seers and Ross 1952, i) their *Report on the Financial and Physical Problems of Development in the Gold Coast* pioneered not only the use of national income accounts, but also the construction of accounts for the most important sectors of the economy (then recombined in what probably remains, in the Ghanaian context, the earliest input-output table). National income accounts for the three years preceding their visit were provided to give a rough order of magnitude of the gross national (rather than domestic, as it was usually the case) product (figure 2.1).

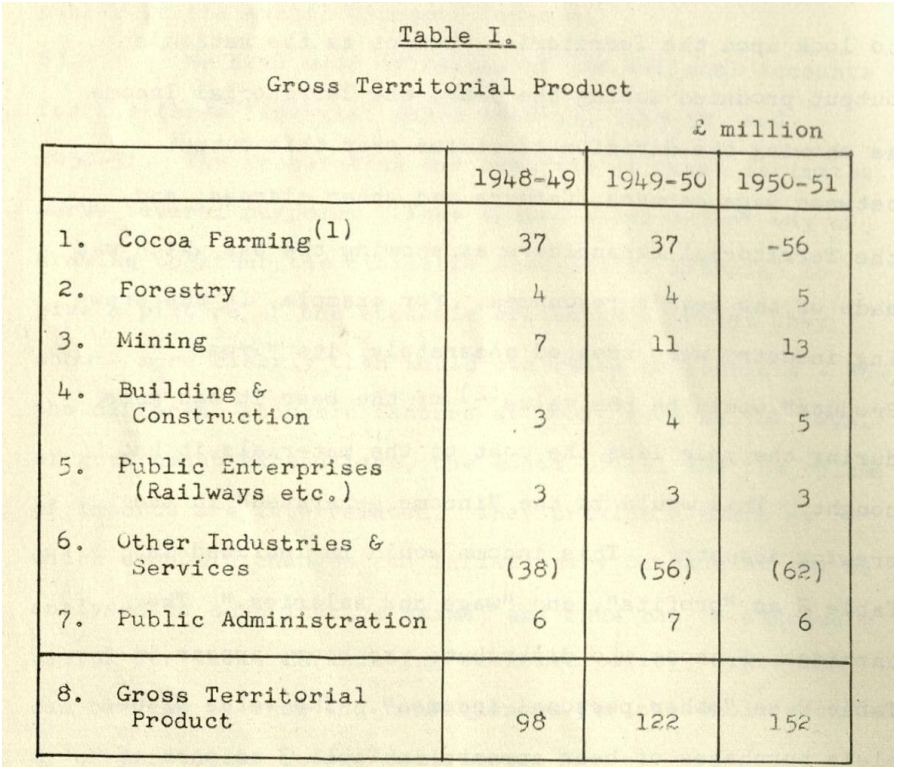


Table I.

Gross Territorial Product

£ million

	1948-49	1949-50	1950-51
1. Cocoa Farming(1)	37	37	-56
2. Forestry	4	4	5
3. Mining	7	11	13
4. Building & Construction	3	4	5
5. Public Enterprises (Railways etc.)	3	3	3
6. Other Industries & Services	(38)	(56)	(62)
7. Public Administration	6	7	6
8. Gross Territorial Product	98	122	152

Figure 2.1: Dudley Seers' and C.Y. Ross' estimates of the Gold Coast gross territorial product, 1949-1951. Source: Seers and Ross (1952, 33).

Well aware of the limitations of the data used in their computations and the stringent time constraints under which they produced the report, Seers and Ross justified the importance of macroeconomic representations by declaring that

> The national accounts are to an economist what a map of the battle area is to a General […].
> The first set of national accounts is like a sketch map, drawn up partly from proper geographical surveys, but with features which are pencilled in freshand [sic] from travellers' descriptions, or from clues such as the trade routes. Further surveying would greatly improve the map. But wars cannot wait while accurate maps are made: rough sketches, showing the main features, are more useful to the General in planning the campaign than reliance of what he can see of the terrain with his unaided eyes (Seers and Ross 1952, Appendix A, 12).

Although some members of the colonial administration were sceptical the results of the Seers and Ross's report, and more generally about the capacity of national income accounts to provide a meaningful representation of African economies,[85] W.F. Searle, Chief statistician of the Colonial Office (also speaking on

[85] In the case of the Seers and Ross report, much opposition was raised by P. Selwin, a principal of the Colonial Office Economics Department, who stressed the incapacity of national income accounts and other macroeconomic aggregates to quantify the large sections of the population working in subsistence farming, P. Selwyn, 19/11, PRO CO 554/747/file not numbered. On the other hand opposition to

behalf of the GCOGS) praised the conceptual innovations of the Report and declared that, in spite of some doubtful figures in the report

> In a visit of only a few weeks Mr Seers has pushed forward thought on these questions in the Gold Coast more than it might otherwise have moved in a couple of years. He has been an excellent fertilising agent and we shall see the results of his influence for many years to come.[86]

Although still very incomplete, and largely based on the expenditures side, the publication of national income estimates eventually became a standard feature of the *Economic Survey* since the mid-1950s. Besides Seers and Ross's suggestive analogy, it is difficult to understate the political appeal of national income accounts for the politicians of 'new nations': according to Speich the introduction of national income accounting in the developing world contributed to define 'a post-imperial political topography' (Speich 2011), since 'in all instances of national income accounting, the nation state was reified as a category of knowledge and hence enormously stabilised as a historic entity' (Speich 2011, 15).[87]

Yet, the construction of macroeconomic statistics did not constitute the area to which the statistical service devoted most energies and work. Beginning in 1952 the OGS started preparing a new series of Statistical and Economic Papers to make available the results of special inquiries and publish information 'of significance in relation to the general economic life of the Gold Coast' (GCOGS 1953a, iii). It is striking to note that the first seven papers, accounting for the whole period under consideration,[88] were all inquiries based on household budget surveys (table 2.2).

national income accounts in the 1950s was not limited to Ghana: among its opponents were distinguished economists like Peter T. Bauer and Sally Herbert Frankel (Speich 2011, 7). For further discussion on the conceptual and practical difficulties encountered by economists trying to construct national income accounts for African economies in the 1940s and 1950s see Morgan (2011) on Phyllis Deane's experience in Northern Rhodesia.

[86] W.F. Searle, 7/11/52. PRO CO 554/747 (file not numbered). Rough estimates of national income accounts became a recurring feature of the Economic Survey published by the Ministry of Finance already in the second half of the 1950s. Instead the first official estimate of the industrial origin of GDP took place only in 1965 (Killick 1978, 84).

[87] As well as allowing the new nation-states of the developing world to enter a transnational world of statistical standards.

[88] Although the last papers were published after independence, the actual surveys had begun before that date.

Publication date	Location of the survey	Reference	Final sample (households)
September 1953	South-East Akim-Abuakwa	GCOGS 1953a	832
December 1953	Accra	GCOGS 1953b	570
June 1955	Akuse	GCOGS 1955	163
March 1956	Sekondi-Takoradi	GCOGS 1956a	546
March 1956	Kumasi	GCOGS 1956b	560
July 1958	Odu-Swedru-Asankamene	GOGS 1958	1,080
December 1960	Ashanti	GCOGS 1960	1,620

Table 2.2: Household budget surveys published by the Office of the Government Statistician, 1953-1960. Source: GCOGS and GOGS, various publications.

The main reason behind the rise of budget surveys has to be found in the increasing concerns of colonial governments, from the 1940s on, with African poverty and welfare (Iliffe 1987, ch. 11; Cooper 2002, ch. 5). Budget surveys were perceived as a reliable basis for the construction of a consumer price index and the most rigorous tool for 'measuring standards of living and variations in consumption patterns' (Colonial Office 1951, 13). Furthermore, given the scarce financial resources available for statistical work in the African colonies, budget surveys could serve simultaneously different purposes, including checking the population figures obtained in censuses (Colonial Office 1954, 8) and provide additional data for the construction of national income accounts (Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics 1961, 3).

All the household budget surveys shared certain methodological and practical features. They comprised two parts: 'first an enumeration of a fairly large proportion of the total population and second a detailed budget record over a period of one month covering a smaller sample of families drawn from those visited during the population enquiry' (GCOGS 1956a, 1). Secondly, the creation of the budget records consisted in the filling of tables listing the elements that were identified as the main sources of income and expenditure for the families selected in second part of the survey. Thirdly, the inquiries relied on the work of a large number of local enumerators and interviewers, with the exact number depending on the size of the survey area and the final sample selected.

2.3.2 The challenges of data collection

In spite of the common structure, the collection of data in the field posed many conceptual and practical problems. The first, and one that still haunts contemporary statisticians working on African economies, is an appropriate definition of 'family' as an economic unit.[89] The minutes of the 1951 statistical conference suggest that Ghana was one of the first countries attempting to tackle systematically this issue; A. B. Reisz stated that 'the difficulty of defining the family was so complex in the Gold Coast that the family as a unit had been eliminated. Instead it had been decided to use the household group'.[90] Other conceptual problems experienced in designing the surveys discussed in the minutes of the statistical conference included the pervasive presence of retribution in kind, differences among tribes in patterns of income and expenditures, the communal holding of capital and items such as bicycles and clothing, and the high labour turnover.[91]

A second crucial set of problems was related to sampling: while the advantages deriving from a rigorous process of random sampling were acknowledged, this was sometimes not feasible in practice. In the case of the agricultural survey of Akim-Abuakwa, for example, random sampling was not possible for the lack of a complete list of villages (GCOGS 1953a, 2). The way in which the selection of samples was conducted in practice incorporated many extra-statistical considerations. The First Conference of Colonial Government Statisticians, which met in London in 1950, agreed that the 'necessity to gain the confidence of the public would sometimes imply the choice of a larger budget sample than was scientifically required' (Colonial Office 1951, 12). [92] This simple consideration hints at the political undertone of the process of data collection. Indeed, in spite of the existence of a legislative framework vesting

[89] For further discussion on this, see Hill (1986, chapter 7). This was a problem that complicated also the construction of national income accounts. Phyllis Deane, for example, wrote about her fieldwork in Northern Rhodesia (Zambia): 'The principal difficulty in surveying was that the sleeping household, the producing household and the spending household all represented different combinations and permutations within one wide family group' (quoted in Morgan 2011, 313).

[90] Minutes of Conference of Statisticians of Countries in Africa South of the Sahara, PRO CO 852/1078/1, 36.

[91] Ibidem, PRO CO 1078/1, 33–36.

[92] Nor was this limited to the Gold Coast: A monumental survey of Yoruba cocoa farmers in Nigeria published in 1956 under the auspices of the Nigerian Cocoa Marketing Board reveals that the procedure of random sampling could not be adopted, among other reasons because 'there was no certainty of even likelihood of obtaining the cooperation of the headmen and farmers in villages chosen at random' (Galletti, Baldwin, and Dina 1956, xxiv).

part of the state's coercive power into the hands of the OGS,[93] the collection of statistics on the ground was a very different matter, often involving complex and fragile alliances.

The history of Ghanaian statistics provides several examples of the extent to which the collection of statistics involved attempts on part of the investigators to build trust in the subjects observed. In 1932, in the context of the preparation of a survey of economic activities of the cocoa producing village of Akokoaso, before the inquiry could begin a meeting with the Chiefs, the elders and the villagers had to be held to explain the reasons why such an inquiry was undertaken, and convince the villagers that the Government had no other goal than that of gathering knowledge about agricultural yields, labour costs, and other sociological data (Beckett [1944] 1979, 1). W. H. Beckett, the author of the survey, not only had to rely on the contacts established during his work in Akokoaso as District Agricultural Officer, but he felt the need to send two months before the beginning of the inquiry 'an African Overseer […] to form contacts' (Beckett [1944] 1979, 1).[94] Conversely, an unpublished survey of agriculture prepared by the Department of Cooperation in the Cape Coast Area reveals that some farmers in the remote village of Kruwa were happy to provide the information required in exchange for the promise of being admitted to a cooperative society that, in theory, should have guaranteed them a larger share of profit on the sale of cocoa.[95] In some cases the collection of information involved a more direct confrontation between the observer and the subjects of the survey. P. Ady, an economist involved in the Colonial Economic Research Committee, with reference to her study of wages and living conditions in Accra during World War II wrote:

> The house-to-house visits which are involved in an investigation of this sort and the question which it is necessary to ask make the task of an investigator not at all enviable […]. Pioneer work of this kind is always meets with abuse and misunderstanding and, in this, Accra has been no exception. In fact […] abuse has

[93] This was not only mirrored in the sanctions for those who opposed or obstructed the work of the OGS, but also in the provision which granted to the Government Statistician, or any person nominated by him the right 'enter any factory, mine, workshop or place where persons are employed, and […] inspect part of it', Government of Palestine – Statistics Ordinance. No. 22 of 1935 –An Ordinance to Provide for the creation of an office of statistics, 16 (1), p. 4, PRAAD RG2/1/62/21.

[94] Similarly at the 1951 conference of statisticians working in Africa the representative of the East African statistical delegation remarked that inquiries had to rely on a local chief, whose prestige could overcome the difficulties encountered by African clerks in obtaining information from the villagers. Minutes of Conference of Statisticians of Countries South of the Sahara- Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, 31st July- 7th August, p. 23. PRO CO 852/1078/1.

[95] Department of Cooperation Western Area, Survey of Cape Coast District, Appendix II, p. 4, PRAAD RG 4/2/158/16.

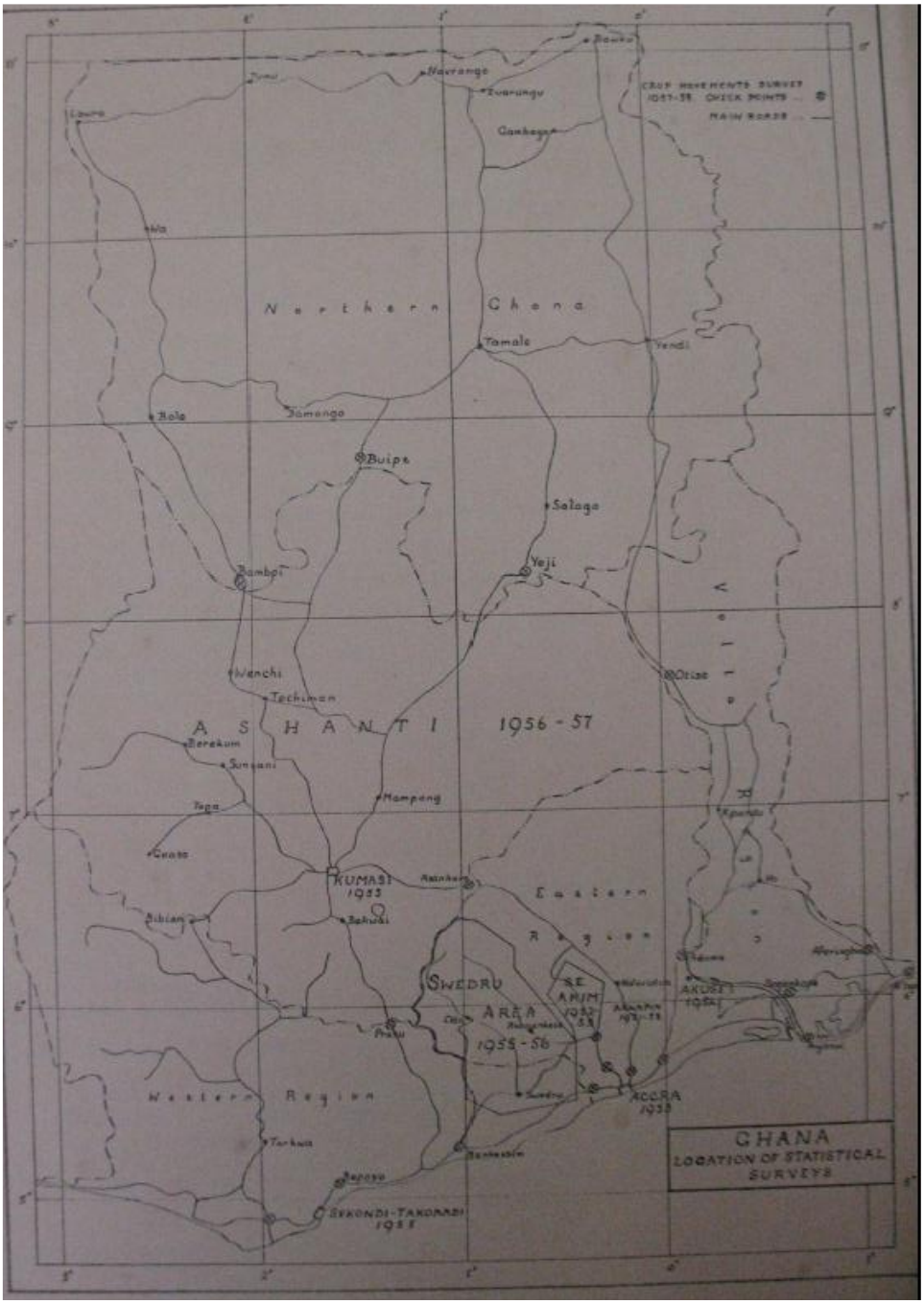
> sometimes been violent, and the continuation of the queries has taken great personal courage.[96]

This observation reveals the existence of a wide gap between the relatively educated elites in charge of statistical enquiries and the people who were the object of the inquiry.[97] Furthermore, the atmosphere of distrust in which statisticians and interviewers collected statistical information was not simply limited to the relationship between them and the people who (or whose resources) were object of counting, but also invested the technologies of measurement, forcing in turn the observers to find alternatives to what they considered to be the 'best practice'. For example in occasion of the agricultural survey of the food producing region of South-East Akim Abuawka in the early 1950s, 'compasses and chains were found to arouse suspicion of farmers' (Gold Coast Office of the Government Statistician, hereafter GCOGS, 1953a). This led the statisticians 'to pace along each side of a farm, observing the general shape at the same time, and then to plot the results on a grid using a scale of 50 yards to the inch', and then reading the total area of the farm from the grid (GCOGS 1953a, 5), probably resulting in a loss of accuracy.

2.4 Uneven topographies: the political economy of household budget surveys

The evidence presented in the previous section suggests that an inquiry into the way in which statistics were collected opens a window onto the legitimacy of the state, its coercive capacity, and its ability to establish alliances at the micro-level.[98] But the political undertone of statistical work cannot simply be reduced to the interaction taking place in the field between state representatives and observed subjects. The spatial politics of the construction of statistical information can be visualised in map 2.1, showing the locations of the household surveys conducted until 1960.

[96] Letter of P. Ady to Secretariat of State of the Colonies, 6th March 1946. PRAAD RG 3/1/253/2.
[97] This was by no means exclusive to Africa. D'Onofrio (2012) for example has defined this feature 'remoteness', and has described it in the context of agricultural enquiries in Southern Italy in the early twentieth century.
[98] This is certainly not something that was unique to the African context: see for example D'Onofrio (2013) on the making of Italian statistics in the early twentieth century and Didier (2012) on the construction of agricultural statistics in the United States.



Map 2.1: Location of the areas included in household budget surveys up to 1960.Source: Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics (1961, v).

The map suggests that northern part of the country was left virtually untouched by the institution of the OGS. The only systematic economic survey of the Northern Territories of which the author is aware preceded the election of Nkrumah's government in 1951, and was prepared in 1950 by John Raeburn, professor of agricultural economics at the London School of Economics and member of the

Colonial Economic Research Committee[99]. However the picture emerging was one of underdevelopment and backwardness with limited prospects of change:

> Disease and slave raiding have resulted in the depopulation of large areas of land which are reported to be fertile, while elsewhere increases of population have led to misuse of land. […]
> Production of crops, livestock and forest products is limited in all areas by long dry season.[…] All areas are subject to risks of poor crops due to insufficient or ill-timed rainfall during the wet season. […]
> So far no mineral deposits of considerable economic value have been reported. […]
> It is unlikely that supplies of underground oil exist. […]
> Production and incomes are not only low: they are also unstable (Raeburn 1951, iii, 2 3, 7).

Raeburn qualified his findings with caution, inviting the Government to invest in the preparation of agricultural surveys and household budgets in order to gain a more accurate picture of the resources and development prospects of the region (Raeburn 1951, iii, 6). But from the evidence available (or rather from the lack of it) it does not seem that these recommendations were ever taken too seriously: the northern part of the country, which according to the 1960 population census hosted around 1,288,917 people (Ghana Census Office, vol. II, xvi) (accounting for almost 20% of the total population) was left in the 1950s to its underdevelopment, hidden by a cloud of statistical neglect.[100] The 'uneven topography' of household budget surveys prepared by the statistical office closely reflected and mirrored the will of the state to extend its power over different parts of its territory.

2.3.1 Measuring expenditures: household budgets in urban areas

The construction of household budgets in urban areas can be placed within the broader context in which statistics were employed by the colonial administration to measure the impact of price controls and assess urban welfare during the Second World War. An early attempt was the 1942 *Report on the Enquiry into the Cost of Living in the Gold Coast* (Gold Coast 1942), prepared by officers of the Department of Labour, and

[99] John Raeburn was the British agricultural economist who designed the food policy for Britain during WWII.

[100] A recent historical assessment largely confirms Raeburn's view: 'This area has a history of chronic malnutrition and enduring poverty, even if it has not suffered massive famine mortality' (Destombes 1999, 4). On the other hand this does not imply that the CPP government did not try to establish institutions in the northern constituencies, especially in the aftermath of the PPP, which however was defeated in the 1951 election.

recommending an increase in urban wages, followed by a 1945 *Report on Wages and Standards of Living in Accra*. The latter, among other things, noted that, unlike traders, fixed income groups 'suffered a steady deterioration in their standards of living'.[101] Given the important role played by Kwame Nkrumah in mobilising urban discontent in the face of inflation and increasing food prices during the Accra riots, in the early 1950s the CPP government knew all too well how crucial the support of urban constituencies was for the survival of his government.[102]

While the lack of archival evidence on the matter makes it difficult to understand the precise influence of the government in determining and directing statistical policy, it should not come as a surprise if four of the five household budgets published before independence dealt with urban areas.[103] Although the first of the household budget surveys prepared by the OGS dealt with the rural area of Akim-Abuakwa, the location was selected because it constituted 'an important source of food supply for Accra and other towns' (GCOGS 1953a, 25). Far from showing a deep concern with the welfare of rural producers, the Akim survey bluntly stated that 'the principal agricultural problem in the Gold Coast at the present time is the supply of foodstuffs to growing urban communities' (GCOGS 1953a, 25).

Following the publication of the Akim-Abuakwa survey, the OGS turned to the cities of Accra, Kumasi, Akuse and Sekondi-Takoradi to identify the features of the 'typical' urban worker, whose income was not too high or too low, and would mostly derive from wage labour. Leaving aside the somehow obvious choices of the capital Accra in 1953 (GCOGS 1953b) and Kumasi, the second largest town in the

[101] Peter Ady 'The minimum wage earner' PRAAD ADM 5/3/52/15.

[102] The postcolonial history of Ghana presents a counterexample: the devaluation of the cedi in 1971 under Busia, making the food consumed in the towns more expensive, led to wide discontent, and eventually to the fall of the government and the seizure of power by the military (Bates [1981] 2005, 31).

[103] The earliest of these attempts which involved the new Office of the Government Statistician was the survey on bread consumption in Accra, prepared in cooperation with the Medical Department in September 1950. The slim survey, amounting to little more than ten pages, found that bread, cassava and corn were the most consumed food in Accra, but the statistical methodology left much to be desired: the sample of households interviewed was constituted by families already known to the Medical department, showing another example of survey in which the good statistical practice of random sampling was overrun by practical considerations. The survey, which was never published, can be found in PRAAD RG 4/1/124. On the other hand, attempts at measuring income and expenditures did not exhaust the range of statistical enquiries conducted in urban areas. In 1955 for example, the Ministry of Industries prepared a survey of industrial enterprises in Accra. 'Industrial enterprises' in this case was not confined to industrial plants, but included economic activities as different as laundries, mechanical repair shops, bakeries and shoe repair establishments. The survey itself simply consisted in a list of 'industrial enterprises' classified according to sector and the number of persons employed by each, Accra Survey, 27 June-30 July, PRAAD RG 7/1/359/1.

country and a key centre of government's opposition, in 1955 (GCOGS 1956), the selection of the specific survey localities typically fell on what the government saw as the iconic representations of its attempts at modernising the economy. Akuse, for example, was selected because of its proximity to the Volta River, which was the theatre of the most ambitious development project undertaken in Ghana: the construction of a dam that could provide electricity for the whole country (GCOGS 1955, 1). Sekondi-Takoradi instead was not only the capital of the Western Region, but also constituted one of the most developed infrastructural nodes of the country, hosting a port-harbour and representing a terminal point of the railway linking Accra and Kumasi (GCOGS 1956a).

The choice to focus on wage labourers was made under the assumption that the income of traders would follow more closely price fluctuations, and therefore did not require a separate analysis. However it was soon discovered that this was not necessarily the best choice for all the survey areas, as the percentage of waged labour over the total samples differed widely across locations. Certainly the waged worker was representative in the cases of Accra and Sekondi-Takoradi, where the percentage of the total population earning their main income from wage labour amounted to 57% 'due to the employees of Government and commercial firms' and 69% arising from the port and railway activities respectively (GCOGS 1956, 4). In Kumasi instead this choice did not seem appropriate since after 'examining the results of the population enquiry it was decided not to limit the budget sample to wage earning families as was done in Accra and Sekondi-Takoradi, as these formed only 34% of the total' (GCOGS 1956, 7). In spite of these differences in sampling methods, the statistical office eventually managed to produce a comparative picture of income levels and of income percentages spent on different classes of goods. This information is reported in table 2.3.

		Accra 1953	Akuse 1954	Sekondi-Takoradi, 1955	Kumasi 1955
Number of families		570	163	546	570
Income	**Average earnings**	£16.80	£12.13	£11.10	£17.18
Expenditure group (%)	**Local food**	49.2	51.5	52.3	52.3
	Imported food	8.8	5.7	5.4	5
	Total food	58	57.2	57.7	57.3
	Clothing	12.1	17.3	14.8	13.8
	Drink and tobacco	6.1	6.6	5.1	4.2
	Fuel and light	4.7	4.6	6	6.2
	Services	5.8	5.9	4.9	5.8
	Rent and rates	5.4	2.2	6	7.5
	Durable goods	3.6	2.7	2.5	2.1
	Miscellaneous	4.3	3.5	3	3.1
	Total	100	100	100	100

Table 2.3: Comparative patterns of income and expenditures in urban areas. Source: GCOGS (1956b, 11-12).

The statistical construction of the 'typical' urban worker was made easier by focusing on the composition of expenditures rather than on the composition of income, which instead proved to be more heterogeneous. Not only, as it has been indicated above, did the percentage of wage earning households vary greatly across the sample; among the wage earners this kind of income accounted for a wide range of the total income, spanning from the 22% observed in Kumasi to the 90% recorded in Sekondi-Takoradi. The notion of urban *typicality* emerging from the surveys of Accra, Sekondi-Takoradi and Kumasi was reinforced by the explanation given for the lower expenditure observed in Akuse: these were attributed to the fact that 'more rural conditions prevailed' (GCOGS 1956b, 11).[104] Yet, the conceptual unevenness embedded in the construction of household budgets emerges fully when one contrasts the design and implications of urban surveys with those prepared for the cocoa producing areas.

2.4.2 The struggle over cocoa: measuring income and credit in Swedru and Asante

Following the completion of the household budget surveys in the urban areas, the statistical office turned once again to the rural world with the publication of the *Survey*

[104] The low expenditures observed in Akuse were also a consequence of the fact that the survey had been conducted 'about two months before the beginning of the Christmas expenditure' (GCOGS 1956b, 12).

of Population and Budgets of the Cocoa Producing Families in the Oda-Swedru-Amankese Area, 1955-1956 (GOGS 1958), and the *Survey of the Cocoa Producing Families in Ashanti, 1956-1957* (GOGS 1960). As it is clear from the title, unlike the food farming communities described in the Akim Abuakwa survey, the object of inquiry in these cases was the cocoa producer. At the beginning of the Swedru survey it is stated that, following the completion of surveys in the urban areas, 'it was apparent that economic information about cocoa producers was a more urgent requirement than an extension of the urban investigations and attention was shifted to the rural areas' (GOGS 1958, 1). The urgency to introduce household budgets in Swedru and Asante was firmly grounded in the political and economic importance of cocoa, as it was reflected in an old Asante ditty:[105]

> If you want to send your children to school, it is cocoa,
> If you want to build your house, it is cocoa,
> If you want to marry, it is cocoa,
> If you want to buy cloth, it is cocoa,
> If you want to buy a lorry, it is cocoa,
> Whatever you want to do in this world,
> It is with cocoa money that you do it (quoted in Young, Sherman and Rose 1981, 162).

A similar message was expressed, although in a very different manner, by the Ministry of Finance:

> The significance of cocoa production to the Gold Coast economy requires no underlining, since cocoa makes up about two-thirds of the value of the export trade. Even this figures [sic] does not emphasise sufficiently the dependence of the country on the cocoa crop. Not only is the cocoa industry by far the largest single direct source of income, but other sections of the economy such as transport and distributive services, depend directly or indirectly on its prosperity, and it provides a large part of the public revenue (Gold Coast Ministry of Finance 1953, 15).

A combined reading of these two sources point at the fact that such rich wealth was the object of a fierce redistributive struggle: the cocoa money that could have contributed to the development of Asante was being taken away and redistributed by the government for the economic development of 'the nation' (Boone 1995). Initially this took place through the operation of the Cocoa Marketing Board, officially

[105] Throughout the thesis I adopted the standard spelling 'Asante' rather than 'Ashanti'. I adopted the latter only when quoting from historical sources.

established by the colonial government in 1947 with the declared aims of acquiring foreign exchange and stabilising the income of the farmers.[106] The Cocoa Marketing Board acted as a monopsony, being granted by law the task of purchasing the total of the cocoa produced by the farmers, and selling it on the world market. However the Cocoa Marketing Board paid the farmers a price that was inferior to the one prevailing in the world market, thus cumulating large surpluses that were being used to finance government's expenditures. [107]

Before the victory in 1951 election, Nkrumah and the CPP had managed to mobilise rural discontent by claiming that with their victory the surpluses cumulated through the Cocoa Marketing Board would be given back to the farmers (Danquah 1994). Soon it became obvious that this would not happen: 'big cocoa producers turned against the CPP as early as 1952, when it became clear that the state would have used the cocoa marketing board as a mechanism of state accumulation' (Boone 1995, 29). A decomposition of the Marketing Board's expenditures between 1948 and 1954 shows that out of the £ 25.9 million spent, 73% (around £18.9 million) of it was devoted to grants and loans to other institutions (Hawkins 1958, 54), and that 88% of the total loans and grants to other institutions were composed of loans and grants to the government (Hawkins 1958, 55). The cocoa producers in the Asante region, where one quarter of the Gold Coast population lived and where more than 50% of the estimated cocoa acreages were located, mounted in opposition. The most evident expression of this was the formation, in 1954, of the National Liberation Movement (NLM hereafter), a political party calling for the secession of Asante from the rest of the Gold Coast. A propaganda leaflet of the same year stated: 'Ashanti produces more cocoa than the colony. IS THERE ANY COCOA IN THE NORTHERN TERITORRIES [sic]? NO! Why should Government tax cocoa farmers to develop the country in which Ashantis suffer most?' (quoted in Allman 1990, 266).[108]

[106] However the issues that led to the institution of the Cocoa Marketing Board can be traced back to the consequences of the Great Depression, the cocoa hold ups of 1937-1938, and wartime measures on cocoa production and exports. For further discussion on the constitution of the Cocoa Marketing Board see Meredith (1988) and Alence (2001).

[107] A precise presentation of the allocation of the marketing boards' surplus can be found in Hawkings (1958).

[108] That the opposition to the central government did not depend on a specific price conjuncture, but it was directed against the redistributive principles embodied in its policies is shown by the fact that 'crystallisation of the anti-CPP opposition […] occurred when Ghanaian cocoa producers incomes were stable (1951-1954) during which time the flow of state patronage to the rural areas increased' (Boone 1995, 29).

In order to cope with this heated political situation 'the regime of Kwame Nkrumah sought to establish centralised control over a state apparatus that reached deep into localities, governing the cocoa belt intensively through a dense network of official institutions that insinuated state power into the micro-level dynamics of local political economies' (Boone 1995, 7). An important part of this struggle involved a direct confrontation between the CPP government and the chiefs, the traditional authorities that, especially in Asante, still enjoyed wide popular support.[109] Besides direct attempts at incorporating the chiefs into the party machinery (and destool those who refused), the government's strategy was extremely varied, and included the formation of agricultural cooperatives, the institution of new monopsonistic agencies (the Cocoa Purchasing Company in 1951) and the provision of credit. This attempt of the government to appropriate the wealth of the cocoa producing areas and integrate the farmers in a more extensive network of state institutions had two important consequences for the way in which the statistical office designed the surveys of Swedru and Asante.

The first was a more sophisticated and complete way of conceptualising income. As reported by a postcolonial analysis of the field surveys prepared by the statistical office in the 1950s, the household budgets in cocoa producing areas differed from those conducted in urban areas in one important aspect:

> In the other family budget surveys, income data was recorded mainly as a check of the expenditure information and was not a primary concern of the investigation. The principal object was to provide the basis for retail prices indexes and, for this, expenditure classes were the most satisfactory method of analysing the results (GCBS 1961, 79).

Unlike the case of urban areas, in the case of the cocoa producing areas much attention was paid to a careful assessment of farmers' income. The survey of the Swedru area marked the introduction of a more sophisticated system to report and classify rural incomes. This was based on several distinct entities: gross cocoa income (equal to the value of the cocoa sold) gross farming income (equal to the gross cocoa income plus the income deriving from the sale of other farm products), total gross

[109] The confrontation between the CPP government and the chiefs in the 1950s was certainly a key site for the construction of Ghana as a 'modern' nation-state, simultaneously representing and the articulation of new tools of administration and state penetration. For a comprehensive discussion of the relationship between government and the chiefs in the years of decolonization, see the classic Rathbone (2000).

farming income (equal to the gross farming income plus incomes deriving from other sources such as wage labour, rent from property and petty trading). The sum of these three entries, plus cocoa grants and other remittances received, amounted to the total of receipts. The net farming income was the difference between gross farming income and farming costs, while the net income was the difference between the gross earned income and total costs. Finally, the overall budget was the result of subtracting the total payments from the total receipts. The conceptual apparatus used to report rural incomes is shown in table 2.4.

ITEM		
RECEIPTS	Sales of farm produce	1.Cocoa
		2.Foodstuffs
		3. Livestock
	4. Gross farming income (A)	
	5.	Petty trading
	6.	Work on own account
	7.	Rent from property
	8.	Wage incomes
	9. Total gross earned income (B)	
	10.	Cocoa grants
	11.	Sales of property
	12.	New loans
	13.	Repayment of loans given
	14.	Other remittances received
	15. TOTAL RECEIPTS (C)	
PAYMENTS	16.	Share payment to caretakers
	17.	Payment to labourers
	18.	Other cocoa harvesting costs
	19. Farming Costs (D)	
	20.	Trading purchase for resale
	21.	Costs of materials for crafts
	22. Total costs (E)	
	23.	Domestic expenditure
	24.	Loan repayments
	25.	Loans given
	26.	Payments on property purchased
	27.	Other payments
	28.Total payments (F)	
NET FARMING INCOME (A-D)		
TOTAL NET EARNED INCOME (B-E)		
OVERALL BALANCE ON BUDGET (C-F)		

Table 2.4: Receipts and payments table for surveys conducted in cocoa producing areas. Source: GOGS (1958, 68) and GOGS (1960, 54).

The second important element of innovation was the inclusion, in the calculation of receipts and payments, of credit and debit positions: this, which was not considered in any of the surveys considered so far, has to be understood against the

background of the crucial importance attached to the provision of credit by the government in order to gain the political support of cocoa farmers. Admittedly the indebtedness of Asante cocoa farmers was, already in the 1920s, a concern of the British colonial administration, principally because they feared that the repayment of onerous loans would have a negative impact on the quality of cocoa, resulting in a loss of market share (Austin 2005, 300). But Nkrumah's CPP acted in a more intensive fashion, not only by expanding the amount of formal credit available to the small farmers, but by setting up a series of institutions (most notably the Cocoa Purchasing Board in 1951) that could extend the state's reach in the countryside, and replace other sources of credit like European brokers and 'informal' institutions. The household budget surveys then became in the cocoa producing areas a tool to quantify the farmers' dependence on the state in contrast with other sources of credit, and perhaps more generally their degree of integration in the network of state sponsored institutions. This was made possible by decomposing the loans taken and given according to the source, as it is shown in table 2.5.

			Total (shillings)
New loans	**Type of loan**	Pledged farms	5.5
		Advance on crop	54.7
		Other	32.3
		Total	92.5
	Source of loan	Cocoa Purchasing Co.	4.8
		Co-operatives	9.5
		Firms and brokers	32.9
		Other	45.3
		Total	92.5
Loans repayments	**Type of loan**	Pledged farms	180.4
		Advance on crop	425.5
		Other	178.5
		Total	784.4
	Source of loan	Cocoa Purchasing Co.	75.3
		Co-operatives	127.9
		Firms and brokers	246.5
		Other	334.7
		Total	784.4

Table 2.5: Average amount of new loans and loan repayments per budget family in each earned income class, classified according to type of loan and loan source. Source: GOGS (1960, 74).

The table presented above shows the distribution of new loans and loans repayments in relation to different income classes; an additional set of tables included in the surveys show the sources and types of loans according to alternative

classifications, such as survey areas and the distribution of loans over time. The performance of the CPP government in extending its control over the countryside was mixed. From a merely political point of view it could be considered a success: the National Liberation Movement, which was literally competing with the central government in providing credit to the farmers, lost the 1956 election. However, the fate of most of the loans made to farmers by the Cocoa Purchasing Corporation was not to be repaid (Boone 2003, 168). Furthermore, both the Asante survey and later studies confirm that the state had not succeeded in eradicating the presence of alternative sources of credit. Shortly after independence the amount of loans provided by the Cocoa Purchasing Corporation in Ahafo, a region that was part of Asante, amounted to almost 7%: more than 85% was still provided by local farmers and relatives (Austin 2005, 389).[110] The Swedru and Asante surveys then represented not only the cognitive locus where the possibility to measure more precisely the state's influence on the economic life of the cocoa farmers was established, but also provided a clear indication that the CPP government had not managed to fully bring to the countryside the structural transformation it had envisaged for it.

2.4.3 Household budgets and cocoa production figures

The 1951 statistical conference agreed that 'a minimum service of agricultural statistics' should provide information on:

1. Acreage figure of crops.
2. Output figures of crops, with yield per acre as a by-product.
3. Number of trees and their products.
4. Number of livestock.
5. Output of animal product.
6. Crop forecasts.
7. Movement of crops.
8. Prices to the producer and market prices
9. Particular and value of total agricultural output
10. Numbers dependent on agricultural employment and earnings.[111]

Yet the actual state of African production statistics diverged dramatically from this ideal picture: the statisticians gathered in Salisbury agreed that 'as regards crop

[110] A more detailed classification of 'informal' credit sources to cocoa farmers is presented by McClade in her survey of the Cape Coast area. Out of the 48 creditors identified, 32 were farmers with no other occupation, 7 farmers with other occupations and 4 were cocoa brokers (McGlade 1957, 14).
[111]Conference of Statisticians of Countries in Africa South of the Sahara (Draft Report), Salisbury (Southern Rhodesia) 30th July-7th August, 1951, p.17, PRO CO 852/1078/2/file not numbered.

statistics, most countries are still grappling with the elementary problem of providing a suitable system of collecting regular statistics of acreage and output'.[112] Even if the Gold Coast compared favourably in terms of statistical coverage with many other colonies represented at the conference, in the first Economic and Statistical Survey the Ministry of Finance candidly admitted that 'the coverage of statistics on agricultural activities does not at the present permit a detailed comparison between production in 1952 and 1951' (Gold Coast Ministry of Finance 1953, 17). Besides the administrative problems that made the collection of any kind of statistical information in Sub-Saharan Africa particularly difficult, such as shortage of trained staff, those in charge of collecting data on agricultural production were facing additional obstacles such as the irregularity of the plots, the subsistence basis of agriculture, the communal ownership of the land and the practice of mixed cropping.[113]

Certainly the statistical information existing in the Gold Coast about cocoa, even preceding the introduction of household budgets, was much more accurate than that available for food crops: a report on the reorganisation of the statistical office after independence admitted that 'So far, no general statistical information is available about agriculture in Ghana except in the case of crops which are mainly exported' (Ghana 1960, 21). But where did the knowledge about cocoa production come from? Still in the 1960s the *exact* number of acreages under cocoa was unknown (Killick 1966, 237). On the other hand, as it was already argued in the rural survey of the food exporting region of Akim-Abuakwa, the irregular shape of the farms and the practice of mixed cropping made the estimate of acreages a very costly exercise, and it was therefore recommended to focus on production figures.[114] Although most of the problems identified by the conference of African statisticians still applied to cash crops, the existence of the marketing board purchasing what was assumed to be the totality of the crop produced provided significant help. Of course, this worked only

[112] Conference of Statisticians of Countries in Africa South of the Sahara (Draft Report), Salisbury (Southern Rhodesia) 30th July-7th August, 1951, p.18, PRO CO 852/1078/2/file not numbered.
[113] Conference of Statisticians of Countries in Africa South of the Sahara (Draft Report), Salisbury (Southern Rhodesia) 30th July-7th August, 1951, pp.18-21, PRO CO 852/1078/2/file not numbered. In some cases these difficulties depended on some specific features of the crops counted. For example, in spite of its crucial importance for the West African diet, cassava was extremely difficult to count because, being a tuber, it is buried underground. Hill (1986, 34) notes that cassava 'is often cultivated with tiny plots and in mixtures so that no West African country can have the faintest idea of how much is produced'.
[114] Note that choosing to focus on production figures without paying too much attention to acreages makes at least theoretically impossible to gain accurate information about yields.

under the assumption that the Cocoa Marketing Board was actually able to locate and purchase 100% of the cocoa produced in the country.[115]

However, given the relatively weak cognitive capabilities of the colonial (and postcolonial) state this was by no means obvious: part of the importance attached to the introduction of household budgets in the cocoa producing areas relied exactly in the fact that they provided an opportunity to check the figures constructed by the Cocoa Marketing Board. This was made possible by comparing the marketing agency figures with those arising from the household budget surveys through the application of the following formula:

*Average declared cocoa production per budget family (loads) * total number of cocoa owning families * total districts/ sample districts = total cocoa production survey area*

In the case of Asante the formula (74.5 * 13,957 * 940/240) produced a result of 4,072,540 loads (or 109,000 tons). This number, according to the statistical office, compared 'quite closely with the Cocoa Marketing Board purchasing figures of 132, 416 tons for the survey period' (GOGS 1960, 10). This was certainly good news, but it conflicted with the previous estimate that 40% of the smaller farmers (which in Asante represented the norm rather than the exception) underreported their production (GOGS 1960, 9). Ex post this was imputed to different possible reasons:

> From this it would appear that any under-recording which occurred during the preliminary enumeration was confined to families others than those owning established cocoa. It is possible that enumerators, knowing the inquiry to be mainly concerned with cocoa producers, were not so careful in enumerating other types of households, but it is also possible that families living in hamlets not listed in the 1948 census records were omitted. This problem would have not arisen if maps showing enumeration area boundaries had been available for the survey (Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics 1961, 33).

In other cases instead the gap between the estimate of cocoa production obtained through the survey and the figures of the Cocoa Marketing Board was higher. The application of the same formula to the Swedru area (35.3 * 8,201 * 225/90) produced a figure of 724,000 loads (or 19,400 tons), while the purchase of the Cocoa Marketing Board amounted to 32,000 tons. Since the survey region could have

[115] For a review of the scope of the crops statistics produced by West African marketing boards, see Bauer (1954).

produced so much cocoa only if productivity was 30% higher than elsewhere, it was likely that the cocoa purchased in Swedru by the marketing board included crop produced in other regions and bought on its way to the ports (GOGS 1958, 17). This seemed a reasonable assumption but, given the lack of precise data on acreage or more extensive crop movement statistics, it could not be conclusively tested.[116]

2.5 Conclusion

The chapter has shown that the phase of decolonisation, either ignored in long-run accounts of African state building or reduced to the 'high politics' of nationalism, was characterised by a significant reconfiguration of the relationship between state building and statistical knowledge. The household budget surveys, to which much statistical work was devoted in the 1950s, emerged in the Gold Coast as an important cognitive tool, allowing to quantify the expenditures of urban elites and the income of cocoa producers, gain a more precise understanding of cocoa production, and enquire about the sources and composition of rural credit.

On the other hand, in contrast with Scott's (1998) emphasis on the capacity of the state to make societies 'legible' through the imposition of uniform conceptual grids, it has been emphasised that the construction of statistical knowledge was a territorial activity significantly shaped by practical constraints and political contingencies. Indeed a close look at the household budgets' journey from Accra to Asante points out their heterogeneity, and reveals that their construction was embedded in an 'uneven statistical topography', closely mirroring the will of the CPP government to establish different forms of institutional presence in different parts of the country.

While the OGS was finalising the compilation of budget records for the Asante survey (GOGS 1960, 10), at midnight of the 6th March 1957 the Gold Coast achieved independence from British rule, and changed her name into Ghana. After the new flag was raised and the new national anthem was sung Nkrumah and the CPP had to reinvent themselves from leaders of a political struggle –exemplified by Nkrumah's slogan 'Seek ye first the political kingdom and all else shall be added onto you'- to torch-bearers of economic modernisation. This process of identity formation,

[116] A crop movement survey, including both vehicle and lorry checks was then in fact organised between 1957 and 1958 (Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics 1961, 59).

paralleled by the government's attempt to transform a former colonial dependency into a 'modern' nation-state, an industrialised economy and the epicentre of a Pan-African revolution, shaped the interaction between economics, statistics and the political realm in many surprising ways.

Part II. Beyond the State: The Economics and Statistics of Pan-Africanism.

3. Continental Visions: Kwame Nkrumah and the 'Economics of African Unity'

> Theory best serves practice when it is unrealistic in a certain sense: when it is ahead of reality, not just following it.
>
> *Otto Neurath 'Economics in Kind, Calculation in Kind and Their Relation to War Economics'*

One of the aims of this work is to explore the historical relationship between economics, statistics and state building. Yet, as noted by Frederick Cooper, in writing the history of Africa in the twentieth century it is all too tempting, and ultimately misleading, to 'read history backwards from the 1960s, when the territorial nation-state emerged as the modal end-point of the evolution of colonial empires' (Cooper 2011, 197). In considering the nation-state as the only possible outcome of the end of colonial domination what gets lost is a sense of *process*, in which different visions for parts of Africa, or for the continent as a whole, emerged and competed for political legitimacy. In fact the struggle for economic development and modernization comprised in the 1950s and 1960s a series of attempts to imagine a variety of political forms more inclusive than the nation-state. The new challenges of independence and self-government led African leaders not only to re-think the heritage of colonial domination as experienced at the level of single colonies, but also to plan for a more inclusive future: significantly in the speech of Ghanaian independence at midnight between the 5th and the 6th March 1957, Kwame Nkrumah declared that 'our independence is meaningless unless it is linked up with the total liberation of the African continent' (Nkrumah [1957] 2001, 29). African attempts to question the political heritage of colonialism, re-shape their relations with other former colonies, and re-define the realm of their economic and political possibilities were mostly associated with Pan-Africanism, defined by Immanuel Wallerstein (1968, ix) as 'the strongest indigenous political force on the continent' in the 1950s and 1960s. While it is very difficult to agree on a single definition of Pan-Africanism, its relevance partly stems from the fact that it came to embody different, and often competing, visions of African present and future. In contrast with existing literature of Pan-Africanism,

confining the intellectual history of this notion to politicians and activists, part II of the thesis (chapters 3 and 4) shows that Pan-African ideas had a significant impact on economic theorising and on the political economy of statistics.

This chapter deals with Kwame Nkrumah's project of African Unity, aiming at bringing the whole of Africa together under a continental government. This was, among the different varieties of Pan-Africanism, the most radical attempt to re-imagine the national boundaries inherited from colonial regimes. It is argued that Nkrumah's ideas brought a significant change in the economic research conducted in Ghana, leading some professional economists to embark in a struggle to challenge the conventional wisdom of mainstream economic theory and construct new arguments to support the causes of African Unity and continental planning. This is observed through the intellectual trajectory of Ann Seidman and Reginald H. Green, two American economists. Seidman and Green became, as members of the research team on 'The Economics of African Unity' established at the University of Ghana in 1963, the most sophisticated and systematic advocates of Nkrumah's economic argument for continental planning and political union. The chapter argues that Green and Seidman's support for Pan-Africanism was rooted in an attempt to question radically the applicability of mainstream economic theory to African conditions, and find an alternative framework to conceptualise African trade, institutions and economic integration. Chapter 4 instead focuses on the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, which emphasized the need for statistical standardization and statistical improvement before any meaningful form of economic cooperation could begin, and identified in infrastructure a key element to promote economic integration. In contrast with the continental scope of the ideas discussed in this chapter, the Economic Commission for Africa identified the optimal unit for policy-making in macro-areas composed of physically contiguous states.

This chapter is structured as follows. Section 3.1 presents a brief history of Pan-Africanism, necessary in order to place economic approaches to African Unity in the broader context of African attempts to re-imagine political spaces. Section 3.2 uncovers the political and economic reasoning behind Nkrumah's vision of African Unity through a critical analysis of one of his main works, *Africa Must Unite*. Section 3.3 shows the influence of Nkrumah's ideas on the community of professional economists at the University of Ghana, and specifically on the analysis developed by

the newly established research team on 'The Economics of African Unity'. The focus is on Ann Seidman and Reginald H. Green, two American economists who became the two most articulate and systematic advocates of African unity and continental planning. The last two sections address the problem of the reception and application of the continental visions developed by Nkrumah and economists like Green and Seidman. Section 3.4 discusses the end of Nkrumah's dream, and shows the failure of his continental vision to gain acceptance among African policy-makers. Section 3.5 offers some critical reflection on the reception and the heritage of Green and Seidman's 1968 *Unity or Poverty? The Economics of Pan-Africanism*. It is argued that the possibility of establishing a continental union did not survive Nkrumah's regime, and that Green and Seidman's attempts to ground more firmly Nkrumah's ideas in economic analysis failed to find almost any real acceptance, but that also because of this reason the trajectory of these two American economists is a useful departure point to deepen our understanding of the co-construction of economics and political imagination in postcolonial Africa.

3.1 A brief history of Pan-Africanism

Pan-Africanism has a long and complex intellectual history, beginning in the United States as a set of disconnected ideas about race, Negro rights and the African diaspora in the late eighteenth century, and eventually becoming an institutionalised movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, with the 1893 Chicago Congress and the 1900 1st London Pan-African Congress.[1] However, it was only with the end of World War II, at the peak of the struggle for decolonization, that the claims associated to Pan-Africanism became less concerned with Afro-American diaspora (Duffield 1984, 101), and more directly an expression of the will of Africans to gain independence from colonial rule and imagine alternatives to the nation-state. This transition was epitomized by the 1945 Pan-African Congress which took place in Manchester. Among the participants to the Congress were many future postcolonial leaders: Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Hastings Banda of Malawi, and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. It was during the 1945 congress that Kwame Nkrumah 'emerged as a star figure' of the Pan-African movement: not only did he help setting up the conference, but 'he infused it with his own rhetoric' (Falola 2001,

[1] For a detailed history of this evolution see Esedebe (1994) and Geiss (1974).

155). At this point Nkrumah's declared aim was less ambitious than the one embedded in his 1960s proposals for a continental union: while already willing to re-imagine the boundaries imposed from colonial rule, his aim was limited to the constitution of a Union of West African Socialist Republics.

Since the 1920s colonial regimes had also drafted proposals for the merging of territorial entities that were considered too small to be economically viable (Gardner 2012, 192). But the debate on African economic cooperation and political integration acquired new significance as a possible answer to the problems faced by the Empires in the postwar world. Indeed colonial 'officials believed that larger territorial units would be able to diversify their economies and build a more stable fiscal base, in addition to providing public services more efficiently through the economies of scale' (Gardner 2012, 222).[2] Although the European domination of Africa would formally end for most countries in a few years, colonial ideas and practice, especially in the case of Francophone Africa, tended to have a long-lasting influence on African attempts to design alternatives to the nation state.

Generally speaking, the struggle for decolonization was fought at the level of single colonies, rather than in direct association with the Pan-African movement.[3] However Nkrumah's Ghana, as the first black colony in Sub-Saharan Africa to gain independence from British rule, became a catalyzer of great significance in bringing African leaders together in imagining alternatives to the nation-state.[4] In 1958 the first conference of independent African states was hosted in Accra, and attended by representatives of eight countries (Lybia, Morocco, Ghana, Ethiopia, Liberia, Tunisia, Sudan and Egypt). Five of the eight countries represented were North African; most other African countries had to wait until 1960 to achieve formal independence. The year 1958 was crucial for a different set of reasons, more directly related to the fate of French colonies but full of implications for the shaping of Pan-African imagination.

[2] It is in this context the should be understood the institution of a Central African Federation and an East African Federation in the British Empire, and the creation, in 1945, of the CFA franc in French Africa.

[3] Of course, there are exceptions. The most notable is certainly the experience of the Rassemblement Démocratique Africain, fighting for decolonization involving political parties from French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa.

[4] Significantly W.E.B. DuBois, the president of the Pan-African congress wrote to Nkrumah: 'I hereby put into your hands, Mr. Prime Minister, my empty but still significant title of President of the Pan-African Congress to be bestowed on my duly-elected successor who will preside over a Pan-African Congress due, I trust, to meet soon and for the first time on African soil, at the call of the independent state of Ghana' quoted in Wallerstein (1968, 26).

In that year France proposed a referendum, asking her colonies to choose between maintaining adherence to the system of the CFA franc and the French Community, and immediate independence. All French colonies, with the exception of Ahmed Sékou Touré's Guinea, opted for the former option. Even after independence in 1960 and in contrast with Nkrumah's virulent anti-imperialism, former French colonies thought that the best way of promoting their economic development and imagine alternatives to the nation state was, through the possibility of establishing a Federation of African States, within the framework of sustained relationship with France (Cooper 2008, 167-168).

The almost simultaneous achievement of independence by many African countries in 1960 led to the formation of three main blocs divided along three lines: identity of the colonizer, position in terms of Cold War blocs, and vision of optimal unity. This classification allows a fair understanding of the three groups which, united by some commitment towards the idea of Pan-Africanism, emerged in the aftermath of independence. The Casablanca Group, formed of Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Morocco and Algeria included the more 'radical' and pro-socialist states, calling for the immediate formation of a Pan-African Government. Although there were wide differences in the degrees of commitment to the Pan-African cause (with Ghana and Guinea emerging as the most committed), the countries of the Casablanca group tended to be the most outspoken critics of European imperialism. The Brazzaville group included all the former French colonies (with the exceptions of Algeria, Mali and Guinea). Rather than offering a vision for the whole continent, the scope of their thinking about supra-national integration was limited to the former French colonies, with which they shared language, currency and institutions. Finally there was the Monrovia group, including Ethiopia, Liberia, Libya, Nigeria, Togo, Somalia, Sudan and Tunisia, arguably the most diverse, including former Italian, French and English colonies. The only common element was a relatively 'conservative' outlook (especially when compared with the claims of the Casablanca group), and a gradualist approach towards the idea of Pan-Africanism, rejecting at any time the possibility of dramatically altering the boundaries inherited by colonial regimes (Nugent 2004, 101).[5]

[5] This does not mean that some of these countries did not have territorial claims, and thus strongly desired to alter the borders drawn by colonial powers. The case of Somalia and the rise and fall of Pan-

The earliest and most radical experiment in supra-national integration, which followed Nkrumah's lead, and in opposition to Brazzaville and Monrovia groups, was the constitution of the short-lived Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union or, as it was pompously called, the Union of African States. The Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union was on the one hand a partial embodiment of the dream associated to the West African National Secretariat in the 1940s to establish a group of West African Socialist Republics. On the other hand, given the shift in the focus of Nkrumah's ideology from West Africa to the unification of the whole continent the Union was supposed, according to Nkrumah, 'to form the nucleus of the United States of Africa' (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 142). Yet, in the increasing polarization brought in the African continent by the Cold War, only the Soviets recognised the Ghana-Guinea-Mali Union as a truly progressive enterprise.[6] Indeed between 1961 and 1963 the leaders of the three countries were all to be awarded Lenin Peace Prizes: Ahmed Sékou Touré of Guinea in 1961, Nkrumah in 1962, and Modibo Keita of Mali in 1963 (Klinghoffer 1969, 53). African reactions were very different. Even a critique of colonialism as vocal as Nnamdi Azikiwe, at the time President of Nigeria and another participant in the 1945 Pan-African congress, held the union in little consideration and before Mali joined in declared that, in spite of their union, Ghana and Guinea did 'not have yet one parliament or currency. Ghana is a very different country indeed, from Guinea, and the so-called union remains a scrap of paper' (quoted in Falola 2001, 172). Later historians have tended to confirm this view.[7] According to David Birmingham the union was 'magnanimous, ambitious and unrealistic' (Birmingham 1998, 103). Although 'Sékou Touré' , Nkrumah and Keita were ideological soulmates', 'different official languages, currencies, administrative traditions and sheer physical distance created practical impediments that would have taken decades to overcome' (Nugent 2004, 79). This led to the end of the union in 1963.

It was in this uncertain context, with the new African nations torn apart between forward-looking dreams of economic independence, old colonial ties and

Somalism, claiming territories that belonged to Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia, proves the point. For further discussion on the trajectory of Somali nationalism, see Touval (1963) and Lewis (1989).

[6] On the other hand, the union of the three countries was celebrated as 'Africa's strongest foundation' in a classic highlife track by famous Ghanaian artist E.T. Mensah.

[7] On the other hand it is fair to acknowledge that 'Because of the quiet functioning of this organization […] very little has been written about it. Thus a student of Africa is reduced to dependence upon short newspaper accounts of the various meetings of the leaders of the states involved, to brief references in more general works of African unity, and to conjecture' DeLancey (1966, 35).

new alliances dictated by the Cold War, that Kwame Nkrumah rose as the most radical and loud voice calling for African Unity.

3.2 Nkrumah's vision: neo-colonialism, African unity and continental planning

3.2.1 Nkrumah as an economic thinker

Kwame Nkrumah has been the object of a vast number of biographies, discussing his life and career, as well as his intellectual evolution and impact.[8] Born in 1909 in the village of Nkroful, following the beginning of a career as a primary school teacher in a Roman Catholic School, Nkrumah left for the United States to receive further education. If Nkrumah's obvious importance in shaping the fate of the Ghanaian economy in the 1960s was not enough to take his ideas seriously, there are a few additional reasons not to dismiss Nkrumah as an economic thinker. If we consider the obtainment of an economics qualification the precondition for being an economist, then Nkrumah, at least formally, might have been one. Not only did he obtain a B.Sc. in Economics and Sociology from Lincoln University (Pennsylvania) in 1939,[9] but during a visit to Eastern Germany in 1961, Nkrumah received an honorary doctorate in economics from Humboldt University.[10]

What kind of economic analysis is found in Nkrumah's books? Given the variety of the subjects with which he engaged during his studies, including not only economics but also philosophy and theology, it should not come as a surprise that Nkrumah's intellectual influences were many and extremely varied, spanning from the Italian patriot Giuseppe Mazzini to Karl Marx, and including theorists of Pan-

[8] See the Introduction.

[9] This was followed by a Bachelor in theology, also obtained from Lincoln University, in 1942 (*Kwame Nkrumah* 1973, 21) and the beginning of a PhD in philosophy (never completed) on 'Mind and Thought in Pre-literate Society. A Study in Ethno-Philosophy with special reference to the Akan people of the Gold Coast' (Rooney 2007, 31). During his stay in Britain (1945-1947), Nkrumah began to study logical positivism at the London School of Economics (Rooney 2007, 41).

[10] However it should be noted that the reason for the award was, in the words of Dr. Karl Fischer (then Dean of the Faculty of Economics), Nkrumah's role 'as a leading fighter for the independence and freedom of African people', 'Nkrumah gets new science degree', *Evening News* 2nd August 1961, paper clip found in George Padmore Research Library on African Affairs (GPRL herafter) / Bureau of African Affairs (BAA hereafter) 97/2/995/file not numbered. The same month Nkrumah also received an honorary doctorate in Law by the University of Moscow, 'Moscow State University honours Osagyefo "highest award"', *Evening News* 10th August 1961, paper clip found in GPRL/BAA/97/2/995/file not numbered.

Africanism such as Marcus Garvey and religious figures.[11] As stated by Ama Biney in her recent assessment of Nkrumah's thought

> He had robust and bold views on a number of subjects, including history, the 'African Personality', culture, peace, imperialism, colonialism, socialism, neocolonialism, and African unity. Together these composed his overall ideological outlook. Therefore, Nkrumah's political, social, economic and cultural views cannot be examined discretely for they are part of a holistic nationalist and Pan-African perspective (Biney 2011, 119).

Yet, a closer inspection of Nkrumah's works reveals that, in spite of the differences in style, Nkrumah's thought, and especially his economic component, was characterised by a set of recurring themes and ideas.[12] There is little doubt that in order to understand Nkrumah's thought about the causes and consequences of African underdevelopment and the need for African Unity, Vladimir Lenin's theory of imperialism represents the single most natural departure point. Lenin's best known work in this field is the 1917 *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism: A Popular Outline*. As early as 1915, penning the preface of Nikolai Bukharin's essay on 'Imperialism and the World Economy', Lenin wrote without hesitation that the 'question of imperialism is not only one of the most essential question but is probably *the* most important question in that sphere of economic science which traces the change in the forms of capitalism in modern times' (Lenin [1915] 1964, 103). Indeed 'the question of imperialism' came to imbue virtually all of Nkrumah's writings with an economic element since his PhD thesis on 'The Philosophy of Imperialism'. This connection is now explored with reference to *Africa Must Unite* (Nkrumah [1963] 1985), Nkrumah's most systematic work on the economic impact of colonialism and the consequent need to unite the African continent.

3.2.2 Africa Must Unite*: the call for political unity and continental planning*

Nkrumah's Pan-African policy included three main elements: a continental defence policy, a continental foreign policy, and a continental economic policy. While he

[11] For a more detailed appraisal of Nkrumah's intellectual influences, see Biney (2011), especially chapter 2.

[12] In this regard, Wallerstein's appraisal appears fairer: 'No doubt his [Nkrumah's] thinking has developed over the years in response to the evolution of African and world politics. But his basic view of man in the modern world has been steady' (Wallerstein 1967, 519).

stated his case for African Unity in a large number of public speeches and writings,[13] *Africa Must Unite* remains, among Nkrumah's works, the one that deals more explicitly with the theme of African unity from an economic point of view, and in which the notion of continental planning was first introduced. *Africa Must Unite* is a multi-layered book, in which a long-run historical narrative, a personal recollection of political events, an assessment of administrative difficulties facing the new countries of independent Africa and a blueprint for a better future, go hand in hand. One of the main features of the book is the evident influence of Lenin's discussion of imperialism. Certainly the 'imperialism' that Lenin was describing differed from what Nkrumah saw as the one hindering African development in some relevant aspects: as rightly remarked by Meghnad Desai (1989, 21), 'by imperialism Lenin means not so much the metropolis-colony relation but more the relations of financial and industrial penetration within similarly developed countries'. Yet, even if Nkrumah was more directly concerned with the metropolis-colony relationship, he saw much truth in the argument that

> imperialism is the development of the capitalist system to its highest stage. Its most important feature is that of monopoly. The concentration of production and capital has developed to such a degree that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life. National monopolies have linked up internationally to share the world among themselves, and the territorial division of the globe is complete. Banking capital has reached the stage where it dominates production capital (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 22).

Furthermore, Lenin's treatise did indeed contain some references to the causes and consequences of the 'scramble for Africa', and to the fact that by 1900 around 90.4% of the continent was under European rule (Lenin [1917] 2012, 93). This led Lenin to establish a link between 'capitalism's transition to the stage of monopoly capitalism' and 'the intensification of the struggle for the partition of the world' (Lenin [1917] 2012, 95). In a similar fashion Nkrumah described the scramble as a necessary condition for the further development of European capitalism, 'which had by then reached the stage of industrial and financial monopoly that needed territorial expansion to provide spheres for capital investment, sources of raw materials, markets, and strategic points of imperial defence' (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 22).

[13] For a complete list of sources in which Nkrumah's statements about Pan-Africanism can be found, see Poe (2003, 27-36).

In analytical terms Nkrumah's analysis does not seem to differ in any significant aspect from Lenin's treatment of imperialism.[14] Instead, Nkrumah simply thought that independent Africa was living a phase in the history of capitalism subsequent to the one described by Lenin. The choice of the word 'neo-colonialism' well represents the continuity as well as the novelty of the phenomenon that Nkrumah wanted to explain. While acknowledging the persistence of Western monopolistic domination of Africa, Nkrumah identified the gap between political independence and economic dependence as the main feature of the stage of neo-colonialism. The fact that political independence could coexist with economic dependence is something that Lenin noted with reference to Portugal's and South America's dependence on British capital (Lenin [1917] 2012, 105), but did not thoroughly discuss. While Nkrumah admitted, in reference to Lenin's treatment of the Portuguese situation, that the 'form taken today by neo-colonialism in Africa has some of these features' (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 174), the divergence between political and economic independence played a much more important role in his argument, to the point of becoming the *main feature* of neo-colonialism as a stage in the history of imperialism (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 174). As a consequence, the closure of the gap between political and economic independence was the main aim of the African struggle that lay ahead. Shaking off European economic domination was defined 'the crux of our economic policy, and the essential heart of our endeavours' (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 102). For, continued Nkrumah, 'unless we attain economic freedom, our struggle for independence will have been in vain, and our plans for social and cultural advancement frustrated' (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 102).

Yet the capacity of foreign monopolies to exploit Africa's resources in spite of political independence was made possible by decisions taken at the time of the scramble for Africa and the beginning of colonialism: 'The greatest danger facing Africa is neo-colonialism and its major instrument, balkanization' (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 173) . The division of Africa into small, fragmented units was precisely what

[14] The two books are remarkably similar even in their rhetorical strategies: both Lenin and Nkrumah largely employed evidence which 'was drawn, deliberately, from unimpeachably bourgeois sources, so as to condemn the bourgeoisie, so to speak, with their own words' (Brewer 1980, 109). In the same way in which Lenin quoted Sir Cecil Rhodes saying that the British Empire was 'a bread and butter question', Nkrumah quoted Jules Ferry, the French premier at the time of the Scramble, stating 'And can we say that this colonial policy is a luxury for modern nations? Not at all, gentlemen, this policy is, for all of us, a necessity, like the market itself'. The two quotes come respectively from Lenin ([1917] 2012, 97) and Nkrumah ([1963] 1985, 20).

allowed, even after the granting of political independence, neo-colonialism to act 'covertly, maneuvering men and governments, free of the stigma attached to political rule'. Ultimately neo-colonialism was what kept Africa underdeveloped in spite of her great resources. Africa possessed 'the greatest water power potential in the world', 'some of the greatest known reserves of uranium ore', 'coal reserves estimated at 4,500 million tons', and accounted for 96%, 69% and 63% of diamonds', cobalt's and gold's world output (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 151). Nkrumah maintained that the economic freedom associated to the possibility of deploying these resources in the age of neo-colonialism could not be achieved under the present institutional framework, composed by a series of small, weak states; the only viable solution relied in a full political and economic union. The economic argument for African Unity was grounded in a deterministic philosophy of history. In the same way in which the balkanization of Africa was necessary to the further expansion of European capitalism, a union of African states emerged as 'an inescapable desideratum' (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 221) for the achievement of African economic development:

> A continental merging of our land areas, our populations and our resources, will alone give full substance to our aspirations to advance from our pre-industrial state to that stage of development that can provide for all the people the high standard of living and welfare amenities of the most advanced industrial states (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 221).

The history of other countries appeared rich in political and economic lessons that Nkrumah was eager to learn and apply to Africa. Unity embodied a progressive political vision. For example, in Nkrumah's simplistic reading of the history of the United States, America's evolution was paradigmatic of a people willing to undertake a civil war to 'maintain the political union that was threatened by reactionary forces' (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 216). On the other hand the call for unity was supported by a strong economic argument: Nkrumah identified it in what he saw as the main lesson that Africa could learn from the history of industrial development:

> The greatest single lesson that be drawn from the history of industrial development in the world today is the uncounted advantages which planning has in the first place over the laissez-faire go as you please policies of the early pioneers of industrialism; and secondly, how immensely superior planning on a continental scale, allied to a socialized objective, has proved for the giant latecomers into the realm of modern

> statehood over the fragmented discordant attempts of disunited entities (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 165).

With respect to this, the model to imitate was closer to the Soviet Union, rather than the United States. It is at this point that Nkrumah introduced the notion of continental planning that would recur in Green and Seidman's work, and can therefore be comprised among the main elements of the economics of African Unity. Nkrumah believed that the continental plan could develop Africa not only as a tool of modernization and structural transformation, but also as a powerful device protecting, within the new framework of the political union, traditional lines of specialization, finally shielded from the disruptive influence of neo-colonialism.[15] Furthermore, the continental plan should have acted as a redistributive device, by coordinating 'all existing resources, economic, agricultural, mineral, financial, and employing them methodically so as to improve the over-all surplus, to assist a wider capital development'. (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 168).

Some form of planning in the period under consideration was the rule rather than the exception: under the general label of 'economic planning', one could easily comprise models as different as the Soviet command economy, and decentralized planning prevailing in France. Beyond claiming that African continental planning should take place 'centrally and scientifically' (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 170), Nkrumah never specified the features of the 'right' planning for Africa: its distinctive character arose exclusively from its continental scale. Nor did Nkrumah ever address the specific problems that the designers of a continental plan would have encountered in Africa, most notably the paucity of statistical information and the notable divergences in statistical practices and standards inherited from the different colonial regimes. But Nkrumah was not interested in addressing these problems. Instead, he was suggesting a broad, all-encompassing vision of political and economic transformation:

> Under a major political union of Africa there could emerge a United Africa, great and powerful, in which the territorial boundaries which are the relics of colonialism will become obsolete and superfluous, working for the complete and total mobilization of the economic planning organization under a unified political direction. The forces that unite us are intrinsic and far greater than the difficulties

[15] 'The individual character of population groups might properly be expressed in special kinds of development within the universal plan, particularly in the field of specialized production, whether in agriculture or industry, of handicrafts or culture' (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 171).

> that divide us at present, and our goal must be the establishment of Africa's dignity, progress and prosperity. […] It is for us to grasp what is a golden opportunity to prove that the genius of African people can surmount the separatist tendencies in sovereign nationhood by coming together speedily, for the sake of Africa's greater glory and infinite well-being, into a Union of African States (Nkrumah [1963] 1985, 221-222).

This is how *Africa Must Unite* ends. What was expressed in the messianic tone of a revolutionary leader, grounded in a Leninist interpretation of history and political economy, represented Nkrumah's challenge to contemporary economic relations between Africa and the West and, indirectly, his plea for a change in economic theorizing.

3.3 Ann Seidman, Reginald H. Green and the 'Economics of African Unity'

3.3.1 The 'Economics of African Unity' at the University of Ghana

Since its foundation in 1948 the University College of the Gold Coast in Legon instituted a Department of Commerce, offering some teaching in economics, statistics, accounting and economic history: it was the first in the whole of British West Africa.[16] The early 1950s envisaged the creation of an Economic Research Unit and, on the eve of independence, the constitution of the Economic Society of the Gold Coast, aiming at 'the advancement of knowledge in the field of economics, especially as it relates to the problems of the Gold Coast'.[17] Although in the early 1950s the number of those studying economics (either as a major in the department of Commerce or as part of a General Studies programme) was negligible, the very presence of an institutional site where a new class of indigenous technocrats be trained in this discipline reverberated in the political sphere.

This can be seen for example in the debates on the possibility of establishing a national commercial bank in the Gold Coast. This institution was seen as both an important political achievement, and as a way to foster economic development by expanding the credit available to Africans, usually discriminated against in favour of Europeans and Asians by existing commercial banks (Uche 2003, 76). Expressing his

[16] The second would be the department of Economics established at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria in 1958 (Austin and Serra 2014, 248). Between 1953 and 1958, when a separate Department of Law was finally set up, the Department of Commerce also hosted a section devoted to Legal Studies, and, until 1963, a division of Political Science (Agbodeka 1998, 61, 178).

[17] Letter of J. Williams on behalf of the Economic Society Sponsoring Committee to the Ministry of Education, 27th December 1956, PRAAD RG 3/5/834/1.

opinion in favour of the establishment of a national commercial bank, Sir Cecil Trevor, the expert chosen by the Colonial Office to conduct a feasibility study and former Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, wrote

> It appears to me that if progress has to be made with Africanisation, consideration should be given to the recruitment of staff with special educational qualifications to fill some of the senior posts and accelerate the process. The number of available candidates of this type is bound to be limited for some years to come but the Gold Coast University College now offers courses in Economics to degree standard and some graduates in this subject might well be suitable for training for officer grades (Trevor and Gold Coast 1951, para 165).[18]

Nor were associations between the creation of a class of indigenous economists and modernization limited to progressive colonial officials like Trevor; the same year of Ghana's independence the American sociologist Edward Shils stated that the situation of 'the newly emerged countries' like 'India, Indonesia, Burma, Malaya and Gold Coast is rather different' from that of industrialised nations since

> These are countries without either the class of innovating craftsmen in industry or innovating risk-taking industrial entrepreneurs. […] The alternative source personnel for industrial progress therefore must necessarily be the educated classes or the intellectuals – the university trained government official, the scientist, the economist […]. Economists well trained in both theoretical and applied economics are even more integral to the promulgation and execution of plans for economic development than they are in long-established countries with a large stratum of experienced and forceful businessmen (Shils 1957, 233).

But in 1960s Ghana the scope of the economists' work was not merely limited to the national arena. In the academic year 1963-64 the Department of Economics of the University of Ghana instituted a research unit on the 'Economics of African Unity'. The institution of the research unit was a signal that professional economists had to engage directly with the challenges raised by the Pan-African movement. In the Ghanaian context, this meant that Nkrumah's ideas about the possibility of creating a continental union had to be supported with the tools of economic science. The main aim of the research group was 'to make a contribution towards a better understanding

[18] Although it is difficult to establish the specific role played by this part of Trevor's argument, the national commercial bank was established in 1953. For further discussions on the debates leading to the establishment of the bank, see the pamphlet published by the bank to celebrate its first twenty years of existence (Ghana Commercial Bank c.1973).

of conditions and economic consequences of the political integration of Africa' by addressing a sub-set of problems like

a) General economic conditions of African integration
b) Studies in the Structure of African Economies
c) A comparative study of economic plans in West Africa
d) Import Substitution in West African economies (*The Economic Bulletin of Ghana* 1964b, 49).[19]

The Research team on 'The Economics of African Unity' was formed of Jan Drewnowski, at the time director of the department, R. Bellamy, J. E. A. Manu, G. M. Adamu, P.P. Van, Reginald H. Green and Ann Seidman. The most systematic outcome of the activities of the research team was the publication, in 1968, of *Unity or Poverty? The Economics of Pan-Africanism,* co-authored by Green and Seidman. The volume represents the most sophisticated version, from an economic point of view, of the call for African political and economic unification and continental planning. As it is claimed in the acknowledgments, the volume was truly the result of a co-operative team effort, with Drewnowski drafting the original prospectus, Van der Wel preparing 'the first draft of the section on joint industrial location', Manu writing partial drafts of the section on intra-African trade and transportation, and Adamu and Bellamy contributing with comments at different stages of writing (Green and Seidman 1968). However, following the presentation of a first draft of the book as background paper at the 1964 Cairo Heads of State Conference of the Organisation of African Unity, further revisions of the initial material and refinement of the ideas expressed became the sole responsibility of Green and Seidman.

This section presents an historical reconstruction of Green and Seidman's contribution to the economics of African unity, by analysing its evolution between the early 1960s, when the two American economists joined the University of Ghana, and the publication of *Unity or Poverty*. It is argued that Green and Seidman were trying to create a new theory of market integration and a series of policy measures which truly reflected the characteristics and the needs of the African continent, and at the same time could support Nkrumah's call for continental planning and political union.

Before turning to their work, it is useful to introduce the main characters of this section. Ann Seidman graduated (M.Sc.) in 1953 from Columbia University, with

[19]The institution of the research team on African unity was part of a larger process of reorganisation of the economics department, discussed in detail in chapter 7.

a thesis on 'Economic Concentration and Economic Theory'. Following four years (between 1958 and 1962) in which she was employed as Lecturer in Economics at Bridgeport University (Connecticut), she took the same position at the University of Ghana, where she remained until 1966. During her stay at the University of Ghana she was presumably working towards on her Doctorate, completed in 1968, on 'The Implications of Ghana's 1941-1965 Development Experience for Economic Theory'. Reginald H. Green was born in 1935 in Walla Walla, in the Washington region. After obtaining his PhD in economics from Harvard in 1960, Green had by the end of the decade worked as a university lecturer in former colonies such as Kenya, Sudan, Tanzania, and Singapore, and held academic positions at prestigious American universities like Yale and Harvard. His experience in Ghana began in 1960-61, when he travelled to West Africa as a Ford Foundation Area Studies fellow. Following a short tenure as Assistant Professor of Economics at Yale, he went back to Ghana as a member of the Department of Economics of the University of Ghana, Legon (Green and Seidman 1968, back cover).

3.3.2 The analytical foundations of the 'Economics of African Unity': Seidman on neo-colonialism, Green on institutions

The earliest explicit reference to Nkrumah's brand of Pan-Africanism within the Ghanaian economics community was Ann Seidman's second contribution in *The Economic Bulletin of Ghana*. The context was Seidman's review of Walter Birmingham's textbook *Introduction to Economics.* Walter Birmingham[20] had been a Professor of Economics at the University of Ghana since its foundation in 1948, and decided to put his experience into writing a textbook which would suit the specific needs of African economics students.[21] Seidman was very critical of Birmingham's work: she claimed that 'because his consideration of economic principles is limited by the underlying assumption of capitalist enterprise' it was not an adequate 'textbook for students in Ghana today' (Seidman 1963a, 39).[22] By criticising one of the leading

[20] For further biographical information on Birmingham, see, the obituary published by Moonman (2004) in *The Guardian*.

[21] The teaching of development economics, given the special problems arising from adapting knowledge to developing countries and the policy-oriented nature of the discipline, attracted much attention from development economists in the 1960s. For an introduction to the debate surrounding the teaching of development economics, see the collection of essays edited by Martin and Knapp (1967).

[22] A similar critique was expressed by Seidman (1962) in an earlier review of an undergraduate economics textbook. The fact that Seidman strongly believed that African students needed a different kind of textbook is proved by the fact that she set such a task for herself, leading to the publication of

figures in the research and teaching of economics in late colonial Ghana, Seidman seemed to stress the discontinuity brought by Nkrumah's attempt at socialist transformation of Ghana, a state of affairs requiring new analytical tools. More importantly Seidman thought that Birmingham's analysis of trade, based on orthodox economic theory, was contradicted by the historical experience of colonialism, and this kind of analysis might eventually lead to the repetition of past mistakes:

> Birmingham's last chapter on international trade seems to accept uncritically the dictum that each nation should specialize 'on those products for which it has the lowest opportunity costs' (p. 110). He does not point out that historically the particular kind of 'specialization' has created colonial economies which provide raw materials and products for capitalist industries of Europe and the United States. To disregard this historical reality might lead to the perpetuation of old economic relationships which have in the past chained the nations of Africa to the instability of world markets and condemned them to underdevelopment (Seidman 1963a, 39).

The context of Seidman's call for Pan-Africanism was Birmingham's misleading understanding of African trade, since Birmingham did not

> examine the problems of reconstructing the economies of former colonies to build the foundations of mutually beneficial trade between equal nations, each specializing to a degree in production of goods in accordance with their resources – a kind of trade which might become the cornerstone of Pan-African cooperation. The possibility that such a fundamental reconstruction might best be undertaken through planning within the framework of socialist ownership tends […] to be precluded by Birmingham's underlying assumptions (Seidman 1963a, 39).

The theme of neo-colonialism recurred in all the articles published by Seidman until 1965 (when she left Ghana) in *The Economic Bulletin of Ghana*. For example in her study of the impact of foreign capital on Brazil's economic development she pointed out that Brazil, given its reliance on coffee, was exposed to price fluctuations on primary product markets, and therefore, in spite of having achieved political independence in the nineteenth century, in fact shared the features of a colonial

An Economics Textbook for Africa (Seidman 1972). Interestingly shortly before Seidman's textbook came out, a collection of essays dealing with the problems of teaching economics in Africa was published, based on a conference which took place at the University of Dar Es Salaam in Tanzania (where Seidman went to teach in 1972). The volume hosts, among other contributions, a paper by Green (1973), who at the time was working for the Tanzanian Treasury.

economy (Seidman 1963b, 19).[23] Her 1964 study on 'The economics of neo-colonialism in West Africa' significantly begun with a quote from *Africa Must Unite*: 'The greatest danger at present facing African countries is neo-colonialism and its major instrument, balkanization' (Seidman 1964, 3). Her treatment of the relationship between balkanisation and lack of fruitful economic cooperation in West Africa represented a further elaboration of Nkrumah's argument, acknowledging for example that the co-existence of different monetary zones 'posed a serious obstacle to the growth of trade between West African nations' (Seidman 1964, 4). At the time when Seidman was writing, over half of the population of West Africa lived in the sterling area, with the exceptions of Liberia, which used U.S. dollars as its currency, and the former French colonies.[24] Although Mali and Guinea had established, like previously Ghana and Nigeria,[25] their own central banks, the remaining former French colonies were still under the CFA Franc zone, and therefore had their foreign exchange reserves 'still pooled and allocated from Paris, sharply limiting the possibility of diversifying their trade and affecting their purchase of capital equipment essential for development' (Seidman 1964, 4). Finally, and very much in line with Nkrumah's analysis, Seidman put more emphasis on the reliance on foreign private firms for investment which, as already argued with reference to Brazil, made West African states vulnerable to the predatory action of foreign companies: 'divided, they [the West African states] have permitted large foreign firms, mainly from the United States, to gear the commercial sectors of their economies to the profitable export of raw materials' (Seidman 1964, 12-13). This was the first explicit criticism of American 'economic imperialism' in the *Economic Bulletin of Ghana.*

But how should a policy capable of re-directing patterns of trade and improving resource allocation be formulated? Green's institutional analysis and his reflections on policy-making in Africa provided a partial answer to this question. These concerns can be traced back to a paper on 'Multi-purpose Economic Institutions in Africa', published in 1963 in *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. Although he stated that 'regional or continental unity of interests and practical co-operation may also be regarded as furthering Pan-African objectives' (Green 1963, 181) at this point

[23] As it has been shown in the previous section, the gap between 'merely' political and 'real' economic independence was a pervasive theme in Nkrumah's argument for Pan-Africanism.
[24] Before starting to adopt the US dollar as its currency in 1943, Liberia used the pound sterling. For a recent discussion of this evolution, and the reasons behind the shift, see Gardner (2014).
[25] Sierra Leone was in the process of developing its own currency.

Green's focus was, rather than on African unity as such, on the relationship between policy goals and policy instruments, as a response to the work of the econometrician Jan Tinbergen (1952; 1958). Tinbergen had produced a formal model of economic policy in which a set of equations represented the relationship between policy instruments and policy goals. Green contradicted Tinbergen's univocal association between policy tools and policy goals by claiming that in Africa institutions as policy instruments could be, and should be, used for the *simultaneous* achievement of several economic policy objectives.[26] According to Green,

> to stress the need for at least as many instruments of policy as aims to be promoted, and the implicit belief that single institutions should normally concentrate on one aim, are highly unrealistic and operationally undesirable in many African situations (Green 1963, 164-165).

Whereas Tinbergen was providing a formal model of policy-making, Green turned to the history of economic institutions. By drawing on his previous work on the Ghana cocoa industry (for example Green 1961), and the role of the Ghanaian Cocoa Marketing Board between 1938 and 1960, Green argued that the use of a single economic institution to fill different policy objectives was not only possible in theory, but in fact it had already been a pervasive phenomenon in recent African economic history.[27] The Cocoa Marketing Board was a cartel of cocoa buyers, aiming at keeping the prices of cash crop stable. He claimed that the Cocoa Marketing Board had been successful in pursuing policy objectives as different as short- and long-run price stabilisation (Green 1963, 170), income stabilisation and redistribution 'to the advantage of Ghanaians and at the expense of expatriate buyers and agents' (Green 1963, 171). Furthermore, by making the collection of revenue easier and by favouring the release of aggregate purchasing power, the Marketing Board had also fostered the implementation of fiscal and monetary policy (Green 1963, 171). Finally, the Marketing Board had contributed to the creation of 'the confidence necessary for long-run improvement and extension of cultivation' and, more generally, had helped the government achieve other 'general' policy objectives such as Africanisation and the mobilisation of foreign exchange reserves for domestic purposes (Green 1963, 171). While the extent to which the contribution of the Marketing Board to these policy

[26] Green explicitly referred in a footnote to Tinbergen (1958).
[27] For further discussion on beginning of the Ghana cocoa marketing board see Alence (2001).

objectives was varied, Green's point was that the evolution of the Marketing Board took place in a relatively spontaneous way, and that only a more conscious design of institutions, incorporating the assumption that a single institution could be used to achieve simultaneously several policy goals, could lead to effective reform in Africa.

Methodologically, Green's discussion of the relationship between institutions and African policy was used to criticize the narrow focus of economists writing about Africa. While maintaining that the approach of growth theorists had 'some educational and analytical value in studying the basic sectoral implications of national economic objectives', Green maintained that these tools ultimately failed to shed light on the 'institutional and political aspects of development' (Green 1963, 164). This had detrimental consequences on economic policy, making the preservation of the status quo more likely:

> Economic theories of growth – dealing as they do with models built up from a limited number of highly aggregated variables – assume an institutional matrix rather than providing insight into how such a matrix might be improved (Green 1963, 163-164).

The solution to Africa's problems then required a radically new vision, grounded in history but capable of *imagining* alternatives especially suited to her situation. In order to promote an economic policy of African Unity this did not require anything less than the reconstruction of the theory of economic integration.

3.3.3 Green and the 'Economics of African Unity': reforming the relationship between economic theory and political vision

The 'Economics of African Unity', defined as a line of research incorporating the methodological concerns described in the previous section, an explicit adoption of Nkrumah's Pan-African vision, and the proposal of an alternative institutional framework, found its most significant expression in Green's article 'African Economic Unification: Some Perspectives, Paths and Problems' (Green 1965b).[28] This paper can

[28] Green's article was loosely based on a paper titled 'Customs Union Theory, Political Economy and Tiers Monde Reality: A Critique Toward a Revision of Economic Integration Analysis' (referred to as Green 1965a), discussed at the seminar of the Department of Economics the same year. The latter was the second of a series of three papers, but unfortunately the author has not been able to find the remaining two. In fact, after a thorough exploration of the Library of the Department of Economics at

be read as Green's attempt to reconstruct the theory of economic integration to make it relevant for African conditions, a task made more urgent by the fact that 'The range and scale of the impact of true economic unification is much wider than that of almost any other policy' and 'Economic integration is *not* easily or costlessly reversible (Green 1965b, 3)'.

According to Green the theory of economic integration presented several layers of applicability to different economic areas. While it was particularly fruitful in understanding the advantages of integration in the case of the European Economic Community, and partly applicable to the case of the socialist Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (Green 1965a, 11), Africa stood out as a 'nearly pure case of non-applicability' (Green 1965b, 12). The reason for this was that conventional theory, too 'concerned with alternative equilibrium states, with narrow changes in allocational efficiency, with evaluation of marginal gains and losses for members and non-members states' (Green 1965b, 11) failed to capture the essence and the timing of Africa's priorities: 'Rapid economic development depends on radical structural (not marginal) change' (Green 1965b, 4). By 'radical structural' Green meant that the economic change sought by African nations went beyond an improvement in static efficiency and mere economic growth: rather it involved a deep change in the structures of production, with a marked shift from dependence on agriculture to industrialisation, and a consequent relocation of underdeveloped countries in the global patterns of specialization.

Consistently with his methodological stance, the achievement of 'radical structural change' could take place only after imagining and designing 'the most effective institutional-policy framework' (Green 1965b, 9). This largely resonated with the blueprint provided by Nkrumah ([1963] 1985) in *Africa Must Unite* and included:

1. a continental plan formulation and coordination body
2. a series of major multi-national projects, e.g. in coordinated river basin power-water industrial-industrial development and in the creation of coordinated sub-regional transport systems;
3. a continental central bank […];
4. substantial member state initiative in project proposal, small-scale development project initiation, and major programme implementation (Green 1965b, 9-10).

the University of Ghana, I feel confident enough to state that Green (1965a) is one of the very few surviving unpublished papers discussed in the economics department under Nkrumah's rule.

Explicitly citing Nkrumah, Green claimed that political unity was not only 'a pre-condition for economic unity' (Green 1965b, 9),[29] but also a prerequisite for setting in motion the continental plan and made it work effectively, deciding the allocation of industries across different countries and by establishing a mechanism of incentives for the fulfilment of the plan objectives (Green 1965b, 9). In the history of the *Economic Bulletin of Ghana* nothing has ever come so close to an explicit rationalization of Nkrumah's Pan-African agenda. Green's paper consolidated the double soul of the 'economics of African unity' not only as a set of policy implications in line with Nkrumah's political aspirations but, more importantly, as the defence of a specific way of thinking about the theory of economic integration.

But how distinctive were Green and Seidman's claims when placed in the broader context of contemporary development economics? Although the notion that economic theory required several substantial modifications before it could be fruitfully applied to Africa was a recurring element in their work, this position was far from uncommon. As it was noted by Albert Hirschman, what he labelled 'the pluri-economics claim' (Hirschman 1981, 3) - the notion that there was not a single body of theories that explained economic realities regardless of time and place- was one of the foundations of 1960s development economics. A similar state of affairs can be observed in discussions about the relevance of existing theories of customs unions and market integration for the developing world. Even Béla Balassa, one of the fathers of the 'orthodox' theory of economic integration, shared with Green the belief that many recent contributions on customs union 'concentrated on problems of resource allocation in a static framework and paid little attention to the dynamic effects of integration' (Balassa [1961] 1962, ix) and that the 'traditional theory of customs unions will [...] be of little usefulness for evaluating the desirability and the possible consequences of integration among less developed countries' (quoted in Plessz 1968, 31).[30] Green and Seidman's claim that a correct understanding of underdeveloped economies involved some form of *historical* knowledge against which it was possible,

[29] The importance of the connection between economic planning and political identity in post-colonial Africa was noted by Green in his comparative study of development plans in Africa, where he went as far as to say that a development plan was 'viewed by almost all African states as one of the standard attributes of sovereignty' (Green 1965c, 249).

[30] Interestingly Balassa and Green were at Yale in the early 1960s, but unfortunately the author does not possess any evidence about the relationship between the two which might have helped to clarify the development of Green's views on integration.

if not to *test* economic theories, at least to establish their relevance had already characterised since the 1950s the work of Latin American structuralists.[31] But in his 1965 paper Green went one step further and explicitly pointed out the historical nature of economic knowledge, and the political context of its application:

> The theory of economic integration began in the world of Vinerian tariff and neo-pigovian [sic] welfare economics. […] This is the world of Marshallian synthesis, of the unalterable division between primary producing and industrial nations, of 'nature does not make haste'. It is a world not simply alien and irrelevant to, but totally rejected by, African political decision makers because it was the economic world order of colonialism (Green 1965b, 4).

According to Green, consciously or not, the notion of trade on which the classical theory of economic integration was built had acted as an apology for colonial exploitation by ruling out, through the notion of comparative advantage, the *theoretical possibility* that colonies could embark on industrial development. The achievement of African independence, filled with the postcolonial leaders' dreams of radical transformation, required the establishment of a new type of economic theorising. The implications of Green's statement emerge more clearly by considering the case of another economist discussing the relationship between economists' advice and politicians' actions with reference to economic integration. In 1957 Robert Triffin sarcastically remarked:

> Orthodox economic advice is once again being spurned by statesmen. The common market treaty has already been signed, and negotiations on the establishment of a European free trade area are moving rapidly towards a successful conclusion. […] The economists, however, are gentle fellows who take such rebukes in their stride, and are quite willing –even anxious- to try to find belated economic justifications for the decisions of their governments to do the opposite of what they wanted them to do. Keynes did this in the 1930s and I suspect that we may have been assembled at this conference for a similar face-saving operation (Triffin 1960, 247).

Green, on the other hand claimed that 'Economic integration movements – when effective- are usually part, and often a secondary part, of broader socio-political movements' (Green 1965b, 3). He noted that 'the idea of Europe and the E.E.C.

[31] Well before, similar instances had been expressed from the German Historical School and from the economists associated with American Institutionalism. The influence of the latter is particularly evident in Green's views on the need for a 'new' economics in the postcolonial world.

[European Economic Community] are integrally related (if separable)' and, more importantly, that 'the connection between varying expressions of political and economic Pan-Africanism are even closer' (Green 1965b, 3). Probably this statement implied that the problem of African economic integration could be fruitfully addressed only in the terms raised by the Pan-African movement itself, hence rejecting as irrelevant ideologically alien perspectives. Secondly, given that Green had obviously set for himself the task of shaping the economic element of Pan-Africanism, this might be interpreted as a declaration of his support for Nkrumah's vision. This is consistent with the role that Green (1965b, 3) attributed to the political arena as the testing ground of economic thinking: 'Programmes and institutions directed to the solution of challenges in political economy are relevant only if they serve and *are seen to serve* the goals of governments and other groups wielding political power'. Although on one hand the work of Green and Seidman broadly fits into the intellectual context of 1960s development theory, the ultimate essence of the short-lived 'economics of African Unity' relied precisely in its attempt to translate into the language of the development economics profession the Pan-African vision articulated by Nkrumah. This implied unmasking the economist as a 'social engineer' who builds his authority by appealing to universalistic and neutral 'science', and placing him firmly in the realm of politics, where he would listen to politicians' dreams and help them re-negotiate the boundaries between the possible and the utopian.

Green's vision of economics as a tool contributing to political and institutional transformation gave to his article a dramatic sense of urgency: he worryingly noted that several factors like the 'lack of adequate knowledge' about African economies, the action of 'many foreign economic interests', and the fear of each nation part of a union that gains would be distributed unfairly made successful economic cooperation in Africa difficult to achieve (Green 1965b, 8-9). Although he stated that the ideal framework for continental economic integration could be properly designed within two years, he warned that 'unless substantial break-throughs creating a tangible forward momentum to both political and economic unity are achieved within a decade, Africa will enter a period in which unification will be distinctly unlikely' (Green 1965b, 12). The fall of Nkrumah in February 1966, a few months after these words appeared in print, shows that Green was being overly optimistic.

3.4 From Addis Ababa to Accra: the end of Nkrumah's continental vision, 1963-1966

The previous pages discussed the content of the economic arguments in support of the political and economic union of African states. But how did Nkrumah's vision shape African affairs? Did the tenets associated to 'the economics of African Unity' have any significant impact? The short answer is 'As long as Nkrumah only talked about Pan-Africanism few objected. Indeed, virtually every African leader paid lip-service to the Pan-Africanist ideal. However, once Nkrumah indicated that he intended to act and not just talk, opposition began to mount' (Hadjor 1988, 91).

Following its publication in 1963, *Africa Must Unite* was acclaimed in Ghana as a success, and went through several editions (two in 1963 and four in 1964). The book also received much praise from the Soviet Union: the Russian translation of *Africa Must Unite*, published in 1964, was greeted as 'the passionate story of an outstanding fighter for the final liberation of Africa from imperialism and colonialism', pointing out 'the necessity to strengthen in every possible way the unity of Africa, and to come out against enemies of freedom in the united front'.[32] However by this time Ghana had effectively turned into a one-party state with powerful connections with the Eastern side of the Cold War, and the enthusiastic reviews of Nkrumah's writings on Pan-African themes should be treated with caution. Its reception in Africa, among those leaders who should have been persuaded by Nkrumah's call for political union and continental planning, was very different.

The year 1963 represents a watershed in the history of African attempts to imagine alternatives to the nation states. The occasion was represented by the conference of African Heads of States and Governments held in Addis Ababa in May, gathering together both members of the Casablanca and the Monrovia group. Set up by the Emperor of Ethiopia Heile Selassie, the aim of the conference was to reconcile the claims of different blocs, and start building a new institutional infrastructure in which more fruitful relations could develop among African states. On the 1st January 1963 Nkrumah sent to all the participants a short draft explaining his Pan-African vision, comprising a common foreign policy, a common continental planning, a common currency and monetary zone, and a common defence system (Nkrumah 1973,

[32] 'Kwame's book published in Soviet Union', *Ghanaian Times*, 12th September 1964, paper clip found in GPRL/BAA 436.

229). Shortly before the summit Nkrumah sent his ambassadors to different African capitals to distribute copies of *Africa Must Unite* (Biney 2011, 123). During the conference he forcefully restated that African unity was the only way to fully reap the benefits of economic development, modernisation and political stability:

> Unless we can establish great industrial complexes in Africa –which we can do only in a united Africa- we must leave our peasantry to the mercy of foreign cash crops markets, and face the same unrest which overthrew the colonialists. What use to the farmer is education and mechanization, what use is even capital for development; unless we can ensure for him a fair price and a ready market?
> Unless we can establish great industrial complexes in Africa, what have the urban worker, and those peasants on overcrowded land gained from political independence? (Nkrumah 1973, 239).

While industrialisation was seen as a desirable goal by all African leaders, its connection with the institution of a continental government appeared far less clear. The principal outcome of the meeting was the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), a supra-national institution admitting all African independent states. Among the purposes of the organisation were elements which undoubtedly found Nkrumah's approval such as, 'To promote the unity and solidarity of the African states' and 'To eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa' (OAU [1963] 1971, article II, 3). However, the Organisation was firmly based on principles which more or less openly contradicted Nkrumah's call for a Union of African States. In occasion of the ratification of the charter, in June 1963, Nkumah (1973, 260) stated that the charter 'must be regarded as the last but one step on the road to Continental Union'. Most other African leaders opposed this view. As noted by Joseph Nye, the main goal of regional organizations like the OAU was 'not that of creating high levels of integration among their members'; if anything among 'the new states of Africa, regional organisation is attractive precisely because it appears to maximize the values of independence, unity and development, and to avoid the problems inherent in nationalist isolation and ambitious unification' (Nye 1971, 21-22). More specifically, the OAU 'largely reflected the demands of the Monrovia group and was thus entirely different from Nkrumah's envisaged framework […] because the guiding principles of sovereignty and non-interference prohibited deeper integration […], therefore fixing the map of Africa' (Welz 2013, 3).

It was in this context of defeat that a draft paper based on the work of Green, Seidman and the other economists of the research team on 'the economics of African Unity' was brought to the international arena, and included in the preparatory background material for the second OAU summit, which took place in Cairo in 1964.[33] Seidman attended the conference as a member of the Ghanaian delegation. There Nkrumah once again stressed the need for a common 'Defence, Foreign Policy and Economic Development (including a common currency for Africa)' and claimed that 'The imperialists […] will not respect' the OAU charter 'until it assumes the form of a Union Government' (Nkrumah 1973, 83). With a few exceptions, proposals for a continental union were greeted by other African leaders with a range of reactions spanning from plain indifference to open criticism. The harshest critique came from the otherwise progressive, if not openly socialist, Julius Nyerere, President of Tanzania:

> a choice between achieving African unity step by step and achieving it in one act. The one act choice is not available to us except in some curious imagination. […] To rule out a step by step progress towards African Unity is to hope that the Almighty will one day say 'Let there be unity in Africa', and there shall be unity; or to pray for a conqueror. […] To say that the step by step method was invented by the imperialists is to reach the limits of absurdity. I have heard the imperialists blamed for many things, but not for the limitations of mankind (Nyerere 1964, 5-6).[34]

By 1965, when the third OAU summit took place in Accra, Nkrumah was almost completely isolated.[35] The tragic irony of his vision of African Unity (and nationalistic cult of display) was epitomized in the construction of the spectacular Kwame Nkrumah Conference Centre (figure 3.3) to accommodate the OAU conference. The building, estimated to cost between £8 million and £10 million (Omari [1970] 2009, 127) when Ghana's foreign exchange reserves were almost

[33] Unfortunately the author has not been able to get hold of a copy of the document, either in published or unpublished form.

[34] Nyerere and Nkrumah had very different goals and visions of Pan-Africanism. In particular, although Nyerere had paid lip-service to the notion of a federalist Africa, his concrete plans for economic and political development were regional (referring mostly to East Africa) rather than continental in scale. Furthermore it is fair to claim that the two were 'rivals as symbols of African radicalism' Agyeman (1992, 13).

[35] Looking back the reception of his proposals at the Cairo summit Nkrumah wrote: 'To my great disappointment, it was clear from the speeches of some of the conference members that there were some who were still not ready for such a radical step to be taken' (Nkrumah 1973, 277).

exhausted and the economy was plagued by shortages of basic goods, 'became the symbol of all Nkrumah's foolish prestige projects' (Rooney 2007, 316).

Although Nkrumah chaired the deliberations of the third OAU summit, he was already seen by other African leaders as a lonely Don Quixote against the windmills of real or imaginary neo-colonialist forces, if not as a dangerous threat to their recently gained national sovereignty. The latter hypothesis gained further acceptance when evidence was presented that Ghana hosted camps where, under the supervision of East German and Chinese instructors, revolutionaries from Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Upper Volta, Niger, Nigeria and other African countries were receiving training in guerrilla techniques to overthrow their respective governments.[36] The Foreign Minister of Niger Adamou Mayaki stressed the irony between the promotion of African self-reliance and the dependence on foreign assistance in such matters:

> If this subversion does not cease immediately it will lead to intervention in our countries by foreigners such as China, Russia or America. The example of President Nkrumah is a direct invitation to all foreign forces who wish to intervene in Africa (quoted in Wolfers 1976, 152).

What was worse, the training of guerrilla fighters clearly constituted a violation of the fifth principle of the OAU charter, calling for 'unreserved condemnation, in all its forms, of political assassination as well as subversive activities on the part of neighboring states or any other State' (OAU [1963] 1971, article III, 3). The 1965 Accra Summit had already been boycotted by a number of French colonies, but the revelation that Nkrumah was offering political asylum and training to armed revolutionaries threw Ghana into even more discredit. Eventually it was agreed to expel some of the refugees, but it was already too late (Wolfers 1976, 153).

Shortly after the Accra summit, in November 1965, Nkrumah published a book titled *Neo-Colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism* (Nkrumah [1965] 1970). Both the title and the actual content of the volume suggest a further radicalization of Nkrumah's thought, and an even closer connection with Lenin's ([1917] 2012) *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. If *Africa Must Unite* (Nkrumah [1963] 1985) provided a blueprint for the continent's future, *Neo-Colonialism* devoted many pages to expose the 'subtle and varied' (Nkrumah [1965] 1970, 239) means through

[36] An interesting and detailed study of the recruitment of Cameroonian revolutionaries in Ghana is Terretta (2010).

which neo-colonialist agents hindered Africa's development. By 1965 Nkrumah's list of neo-colonialist agents was exceptionally long, including not only former colonial powers and multinational corporations, but also 'reactionary' African governments who opposed the progressive causes of socialism and African Unity.

Amidst this atmosphere of isolation from other African leaders and popular discontent, Nkrumah was overthrown in February 1966. The revolutionary dream of a Union Government and a continental plan ended with his fall. After the coup, it seemed unlikely that Guinea and Mali, isolated from other French-speaking countries and without Ghana's support, could push in any significant way the cause of African Unity. In 1968 Modibo Keita was also overthrown in a coup d'état, and Mali almost immediately went back to the CFA franc (Stasavage 2003, 162), *de facto* erasing Keita's dream of socialist emancipation from the metropolis. The only remaining bastion of the movement of African Unity was Guinea, where Nkrumah found asylum and acted as honorary vice-president between 1966 and his death in 1972.

3.5 Requiem for a dream: *Unity or Poverty? The Economics of Pan-Africanism*

In 1968, in this context of grim disillusionment, Green and Seidman published *Unity or Poverty? The Economics of Pan-Africanism.* The book, dedicated 'To all who have striven and strive for the liberation and unification of Africa' (Green and Seidman 1968, no page), was an extended and refined version of these two Americans' work on the 'economics of African Unity'. The authors emphatically asked: 'Can continental African economic unity be achieved? The answer is not only that it *can* be achieved, but that it *must* be achieved. African economic unity is a revolutionary concept. Its accomplishment requires an economic revolution' (Green and Seidman 1968, 23). As it has been shown in section 3 this revolution was twofold, implying not only a re-organisation of the practice of economic cooperation in Africa, but also the embracement of an alternative set of methodological principles to think about African economic integration. The volume once again presented a description of Africa's potential for industrialisation and of the detrimental economic consequences of balkanisation, but also presented in support of its claims an impressive amount of novel empirical evidence, collected from reports of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, documents of national African planning agencies, bank reports, industrial and trade statistics, and political pronouncements of African leaders.

It is crucial to note that, while still maintaining their support for continental planning, in the aftermath of Nkrumah's fall Green and Seidman separated its economic component from the constitution of a unitary African government:

> The need for an all-African political authority […] does not imply that economic unification requires a unitary African government, totally submerging individual states. Neither does the formulation of united African development planning require prior identities of economic ideologies or institutional frameworks (Green and Seidman 1968, 228).

This was perhaps an attempt to detach the 'economics of Pan-Africanism' from the political vision in which it originated, and make its analysis and policy prescriptions survive the fall of Nkrumah's regime. Furthermore, by stating the assumption that united African development planning did not require 'prior identities of economic ideologies', the book also marked a retreat from the association of socialism and continental planning which was, for example, expressed by Seidman (1963a) in her review of Birmingham's *Principles of Economics* (Birmingham 1962). Even with these qualifications, a look at contemporary research on the prospects of African economic integration shows the relative peculiarity of Green and Seidman's views. Indeed, while Green and Seidman thought that the solution to Africa's economic problem relied in a radical restructuring of the political framework, contemporary economists adopted a much more disillusioned view of supranational African politics. This does not imply that all of them rejected the notion that an African political union would foster economic integration, but only that its actual realisation looked very unlikely. For example Nicholas Plessz argued that

> Barring the possibility of a rapid political change which would bring to power in each country of the region […] a government inspired by the same political ideas and by a sincere desire for unity, economic integration can proceed only step by step (Plessz 1968, 24).

With the possibility of rapid and radical political change relegated to the realm of the implausible, 'economic integration is likely to proceed at a very slow pace, if at all, in the foreseeable future' (Plessz 1968, 80). Similarly, at the end of his study of African economic integration Peter Robson (1968, 311) concluded that 'time alone will reveal the future of economic integration in Africa, but, as has proved to be the

case with political regrouping, time may not be on its side'. More specifically Robson noted that 'even to achieve and to maintain more limited forms of cooperation', such as 'the joint promotion of selected industries' or the 'establishment of preferential trade groupings falling short of a common market', 'will certainly pose a formidable challenge to African leaders' (Robson 1968, 311).

The reception of *Unity or Poverty?* indicates that Green and Seidman's work was perceived as hopelessly utopian. The vagueness with which 'an all-African political authority' was defined made it undistinguishable, according to one reviewer, from Nkrumah's dream of 'a Pan-African government' (Ankomah 1969, 159). Although the quality and the amount of empirical evidence collected to show the existence of 'neo-colonialism' in Africa impressed and convinced the reviewers (Sutcliffe 1968, 256), the notion that some form of continental planning was the solution to it seemed unfeasible, unpractical and detached from reality. At best Green and Seidman were perceived as progressive dreamers: the most sympathetic reviewer for example called them

> not 'quiet Americans' but rebels with a cause, recalling Shaw's maxim: 'The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable man persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore all progress depends on the unreasonable man (Clairmonte 1969, 493).

In spite of the constant attempt to place economic theory in the political arena by adopting institutions as a crucial unit of analysis and policy design, the authors were accused of not understanding the political obstacles to African integration. A reviewer of the book identified its main problem in 'the gap between the ideal and political reality. Although the case for economic integration is well made, it rests entirely on an analysis of economic institutions. The impediments to integration are, however, mainly political' (Davies 1968, 812). What was probably worse from Green and Seidman's point of view was that even their systematic attempt to base policy recommendations on 'specific' African conditions failed to be acknowledged. Kofi Ankomah, a Ghanaian lecturer from the Ghana Institute of Public Administration, stated that Green and Seidman's 'models, without doubt, have been the European Economic Community and the Council for Mutual Assistance of the Socialist Nations […]. But the authors fail to note the inapplicability of these institutions to the African problems they have highlighted' (Ankomah 1969, 161). Ankomah's view of the book

was overall extremely negative, claiming that much of the case for unity had been argued, well before Green and Seidman, by intellectuals like George Padmore and W.E.B. DuBois (notably he did not mention Nkrumah!), and that the plans presented were 'more idealistic than practical' (Ankomah 1969, 161). *Unity or Poverty* was read as a posthumous manifesto, and the requiem for Nkrumah's dream of African unity.[37]

Regardless of its political outcome, the history of the 'economics of African Unity' can lead us to think of development economics, rather than as a body of doctrines that was imposed by the West on the Third World, as a mutable set of ideas, tools and methodologies that interacted with, and were in turn shaped by, the political, economic and epistemic conditions of developing countries. Although, as it will become clear in the next chapter, the ideas of Green and Seidman can be understood as part of a larger intellectual milieu that was critical of neo-colonial patterns of trade and questioned the economic viability of African states, the distinctiveness of the 'economics of African Unity' emerged from its attempt to give voice, with the tools of economic theory, to a radical political dream that found in Nkrumah its most vocal and systematic spokesman. [38]

[37] This does not imply that the book was completely forgotten after its publication. In the 1970s and 1980s some pages from the book were reproduced in an anthology of writings on African political economy edited by Dennis L. Cohen and John Daniel (Green and Seidman 1981). A few years ago Kofi Kissi Dompere, a professor of economics at Howard University, published a volume in which he offered an enthusiastic reading of Nkrumah's *Africa Must Unite*, and explicitly quoted Green and Seidman (1968) as providing a refinement and an improvement of Nkrumah's economic argument (Kissi Dompere 2006, 216). On the other hand it should be pointed out that for historical reasons Howard University has a special relationship with Pan-Africanism and black political activism. June Milne, Nkrumah's literary editor, deposited there a substantial part of the President's personal papers and correspondence.

[38] In this sense, the 'economics of African Unity' introduces a theme that will be analysed in more detail in chapter 7: economists' contribution to the transformation, reincorporation or resistance to Nkrumah' ideas.

4. A Milder Shade of Pan-Africanism: Statistical Standardization and Industrial Policy at the Economic Commission for Africa

> 'the Cartographers Guild struck a Map of the Empire […]. The following Generations […] saw that that vast Map was Useless and […] they delivered it up to the Inclemency of Sun and Winters. In the deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map'.
>
> *Jorge Luis Borges 'On Exactitude in Science'*

The previous chapter analysed the economic reasoning supporting the constitution of a political and economic continental African union, and described its failure to gain acceptance at the policy level. Yet, no analysis of the economic component of Pan-Africanism would be complete without referring to the work of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA hereafter). Since its foundation in 1958, ECA's trajectory has to be understood in connection with the questions raised by the Pan-African movement on the economic feasibility of postcolonial African states, and on the possibility of establishing alternative political or economic arrangements. However, already by the late 1960s it was clear that the Commission had achieved very little in practical terms (Adedeji 2004, 252). To account for this failure James Magee claimed that part of ECA's decline derived from the fact that the commission adopted 'an analysis and strategy that resembles the pan-African vision of Kwame Nkrumah', which as a consequence made the Commission unpopular (Magee 1971, 73).

In contrast with this view, I argue that the ideas prevailing at ECA can be considered what I label a 'milder shade of Pan-Africanism', which had in fact very little to do with the radical proposals for immediate African economic and political unity which permeated Nkrumah's political vision, or the writings of economists like Seidman and Green. Certainly the two approaches shared three basic ideas: that African poverty was largely the outcome of colonial domination, the conviction that the size of African nations did not make them necessarily

economically viable, and the assumption that a focus on industrialisation rather than agriculture was the key for the achievement of rapid economic development.

On the other hand ECA's analysis and strategy to foster Pan-Africanism differed from Nkrumah's in many important respects. Firstly, it differed with regard to the choice of the ideal unit of analysis and policy. Whereas Nkrumah called for *continental* political *and* economic unity, ECA chose to think and act upon the basis of sub-regional divisions. The fact that ECA thought of Africa as composed of several sub-regions found expression in the publication of separate economic surveys for West Africa and the Republic of South Africa (ECA 1967a), North Africa (ECA 1968), and East Africa (ECA 1969). Unlike all the other UN regional commissions, which instead put more emphasis on the analysis of problems and situations which were common to the whole continent under consideration, ECA's choice to focus on smaller sub-regions 'was made because it was judged more realistic than a Pan-African approach' (Berthelot 2004, 28).

Secondly ECA's almost exclusive focus was, in contrast with the ideas analysed in the previous chapter, on economic integration, and never attempted to question the political boundaries of the nation-state. Given the importance attached by Reginald Green (1965b) to political vision as a prerequisite for a correct understanding of the problems of African integration, and the notion that effective unity could be achieved only at the political level, this is another important element of difference.

Thirdly, there was a wide divergence in terms of the cognitive tools employ to envisage and describe the ideal pattern of integration in Africa. While Green and Seidman attempted to re-construct the theory of market integration drawing on history, institutional analysis and direct observation ECA emphasised the need for more, better and more standardised statistics on African economies as a necessary condition for the undertaking of integrated economic planning at the regional level. This approach is a particularly useful lens to analyse the differences between the Commission's work and the ideas described in chapter 3. Indeed one of the weakest points of Green and Seidman (1968) is that, while praising the prospects of continental planning, they chose to leave unaddressed the intimidating statistical problems which would arise before such a massive exercise could be

successfully performed.[1] Fourthly, ECA identified in the establishment of heavy industries that could serve simultaneously several national markets and the construction of infrastructures the main tools of economic integration for Africa. This was also seen as a necessary step by Green and Seidman, but only as a part of a broader strategy of political unification.

Yet, in spite of what might appear a more pragmatic approach in comparison with the 'utopian' visions described in chapter 3, in the 1960s ECA achieved very little in terms of fostering African economic integration. Besides an exploration of ECA's intellectual history in the 1960s, the chapter focuses on the political economy of the statistics produced by the Commission. This is explored in connection with two main aspects. Firstly, it is shown with reference to the failed attempt to establish an iron and steel plant serving the whole West African market that the Commission's commitment to make policy decisions informed on a wide range of newly produced statistical evidence was manipulated by African policy-makers. Indeed, from the point of view of African governments, asking the Commission to produce more inclusive and detailed studies became a viable strategies to oppose policy proposals that run against national interests. The second aspect is related to the political implications of the focus on statistical improvements and standardization from the Commission's point of view. It is shown that this statistical focus was a way of presenting an alternative to the radical brand of Pan-Africanism represented by Nkrumah, deferring the discussion about continental economic planning to an indefinite future in which the quality and the quantity of statistics produced would have made it possible.

The chapter is divided into four sections. Section 4.1 discusses ECA's focus, in its early years, on statistical standardization and improvements. Section 4.2 explores ECA's position on the role of industrial development in economic integration, and, based on unpublished evidence from Ghanaian archives, discusses the political obstacles faced in designing and implementing industrial policy. Section 4.3 places ECA's failure to foster economic integration in comparison with the 'success story' of the United Nations Economic Commission

[1] This does not mean that the issue was never raised; for example Green (1965b) noted this point, but also claimed that the exchange and standardisation of statistical information the easiest step towards economic integration.

for Latin America. Section 4.4 offers come concluding remarks on the similar results, in spite of very different premises, of the intellectual developments described in this chapter and in chapter 3.

4.1 ECA's statistical work

The United Nations (hereafter UN) was created in 1945, at a time when 'economic and social security was accorded an importance at least as great as, if not greater than, political and military security' (Toye and Toye 2004, 1). In the intellectual context of the time, with the increasing importance attached to planning and state intervention in economic affairs, it should not come as a surprise if the perceived importance of statistics for policy-making was widespread. The first meeting of the United Nations Statistical Office took place at the UN temporary headquarters in New York in 1946, gathering people who developed their expertise working for other international organisations such as the International Labour Organisation and the League of Nations. While official histories of the UN stress that the agreement on a general framework of statistics was a UN success, they also acknowledge that that the UN was not much of an innovation centre for statistical thinking: rather it became a powerful disseminator of statistical methods (Ward 2004). Between 1945 and 1958, year of ECA's establishment, UN statistical policy had had an impact in Africa mostly through the work of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO herafter). Indeed in those decades the organisation played an active role in organising statistical workshops and disseminating knowledge about techniques of sampling around the world. However only 11 out of the 148 seminars and training centres organised by FAO between 1950 and 1960 were directly targeted at Africa, and in any case their scope was mostly limited to agricultural statistics.[2] The relationship between UN and African statistical practices changed dramatically with the creation of ECA. Although the earliest proposals for the institution of an African Regional Commission can be traced back to the 1940s, ECA was finally created only in 1958. This can be partly explained by the fact that in 1945 only four African states (Egypt, Liberia, Ethiopia and South Africa) were

[2] The numbers are my calculation based on FAO (1961). For a review of the work of FAO in organising seminars and training centres in statistics and agricultural economics, see Ezekiel (1957).

formally independent from any foreign power.[3] The matter of creating a regional commission for Africa was brought to the attention of the UN for the first time in 1947 (when it was suggested that a special commission for North Africa and Ethiopia be created), and again in 1950, 1951 and 1956. The reaction of the UN members was almost unanimous: there was too much diversity among African states to justify the creation of a UN regional commission dealing with all of them at once.[4] Following independence in 1957, Ghana became an active player in lobbying for the constitution of a Regional Commission concerned with the African continent.[5] This became possible in 1958, when it was clear that European colonial domination in Africa would be short-lived.

Already by 1959 ECA had set for itself the ambitious task of preparing a survey analysing economic development in Africa since 1950. Since the Commission was still building its statistical machinery, the survey (the only one in the 1960s covering the whole continent) was published by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs in cooperation with ECA (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 1959). The difficulties involved in preparing a continental economic survey of Africa were explicitly acknowledged at the beginning of the report:

> As the statistical data available in respect of individual countries vary considerably, it has not been possible to ensure full geographical coverage in the various sections of the report. Moreover, the delay in the publications of statistics has made it impossible in several instances to analyse fully changes in individual economies in more recent years (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 1959, iii).

[3] It is important to note that the widespread presence of colonial domination had not prevented the creation of the ECAFE (Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East). Indeed at the time of the creation of the ECAFE only three countries were independent, although India, Ceylon and Philippines were to gain independence soon. For further discussion on the intellectual history of ECAFE see de Silva (2004).

[4] This consideration will lead, even following the institution of the ECA, to the grouping of African states into the four main sub-regions of North Africa, West Africa, East Africa, and Southern Africa, and to the design of projects for economic integration within each of these areas. It emerges clearly that this development practice, drawing on the conceptual sub-division into sub-regions, went against the proposals analysed in the previous chapter.

[5] For an extensive discussion on the role of independent Ghana in the negotiations leading to the establishment of ECA, see Ghana Information Service Department (1958).

The low reliability of available information was perceived as a serious problem affecting all branches of economic statistics, such as population, with 'the data for certain countries being sheer administrative guesses' (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 1959, 5), trade, where 'comparatively few tropical African countries have adopted the Standard International Trade Classification' (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 1959, 158) or capital formation, where inter-country comparisons were 'seldom relevant because of divergences in concept, definition and coverage underlying the assembling data' (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 1959, 185). A deep awareness of these obstacles led ECA to attach extreme importance to the creation of reliable and standardised statistics as the precondition for successful supranational planning and industrial development. As a 1966 report made clear 'co-ordination within the region is necessary to ensure that data are fully comparable and effectively utilized' (ECA and Centre for Industrial Development 1966, 12). The early statistical work conducted by ECA fell under three headings:

> (i) Promotion in Africa of statistical activities adequate to meet the requirements of economic and social planners for statistical data. […]
> (ii) Formulation of statistical methods and standards appropriate to conditions prevalent in Africa.
> (iii) Servicing member countries by publishing statistical series covering the African region, presented in as comparable form as possible (ECA 1961, 1).

The scope of the Commission's statistical activities was extremely broad, including the preparation of manuals on national income accounting, the organisation of seminars on public budget statistics (ECA 1962b, 1). However, given the scant attention paid by colonial regimes to the development of African industries (with the obvious exceptions of mining and infrastructures) (ECA 1962b, 1), and consistently with the notion that successful economic development and integration in Africa could take place only through industrialisation, it was in the field of industrial statistics that ECA played the most notable role.

Firstly, the Commission undertook periodical reviews of the existing industrial statistics, in order to assess the state of available knowledge. The picture emerging from these studies was often quite disappointing. Still in 1966 for example, only 11 out of 45 countries included in the inquiry on industrial statistics

had ever undertaken an industrial census (ECA and Centre for Industrial Development 1966, 1-5). Furthermore not only industrial censuses in the countries analysed had taken place in a discontinuous manner, making an assessment of the evolution of industrial activities in each country over time difficult, but, as shown in table 4.1., there was a wide gap in the statistical coverage of national industrial statistics, severely hindering the scope for international comparis

	Ethiopia	Ghana	Kenya	Malawi	Sudan	Tanzania	Tunisia	Egypt	Zambia
Agriculture						X		X	
Mining and quarrying		X	X			X	X	X	X
Manufacturing	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Construction	X		X			X	X	X	X
Electricity, gas, water	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Commerce								X	
Transport, storage								X	
Services								X	
Activities, grand total				X		X	X	X	

Table 4.1: Branches of the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities covered in industrial censuses for a sample of African countries, 1954-1963. Source: ECA and Centre for Industrial Development (1966, 7).

The table shows that the focus of most African industrial censuses undertaken between 1954 and 1963 had been the collection of information on mining and quarrying, electricity, gas and water and manufacturing. The fact that the only African country following the International Standard Industrial Classification of all Economic Activities precisely was Egypt pointed out the relative underdevelopment of statistics in Africa south of the Sahara in terms of international standardization and comparability. This state of affairs led the Commission to devote much effort to identifying the weaknesses inherent in different systems of gathering industrial statistics, and offering recommendations to member countries on how to improve statistical coverage. The choice of the right method, as it was pointed out in a 1962 study, involved the careful weighting of considerations as different as the degree of administrative control of the industrial units to be covered, the speed with which the results should be issued,

the amount of money available for the inquiry, the availability of qualified staff and complete and accurate lists from which a sample could be selected (ECA 1962a, 3-4). Sometimes ECA acted as an institutional channel to bring to African countries the lessons learnt in different contexts. For example, in order to deal with the high costs of extensive field enquiries to locate, identify and list small enterprises (quantitatively very important but usually not included in industrial statistics), ECA recommended African countries to learn from the experience of the Indian 1953-1955 National Sample Survey, and the 1954 Demographic and Economic Survey of Thailand (ECA 1962a, Annex I). In both cases the field enquiry was not limited to industrial activities, but included households as well.[6]

The attempt to achieve increased standardisation did not simply amount to the identification of best practices to be followed by all countries in the collection of information, but also included in some cases the production of a more precise set of conceptual definitions. In 1964 for example ECA pointed out that the language commonly used to describe industrial activities in Africa was unclear, using expressions like industrial estates, industrial parks and industrial districts as synonyms (ECA 1964c, 2). In order to introduce some clarity ECA produced a new definition of types of industrial activities based on facilities and services (industrial areas, industrial zones, industrial townships, and industrial estates), location (estates in or near big cities, estates in small towns, and estates in rural areas) and functions (single-trade estates, functional estates, ancillary estates, nursery estates) (ECA 1964c).

In order to fulfil its role as creator and disseminator of statistical knowledge, ECA set up a series of new institutions and activities. The first was the Conference of African Statisticians, an annual conference where statisticians from African statistical offices and economic ministries and experts from international organisations met in order to discuss their problems and perspectives.[7] The context of high expectations and political hopes in which Pan-African statistical cooperation took place emerges from the words of Tunisian Secretary of State for Finance and Planning Ahmed Ben Salah who, in occasion of the Second

[6] As it is discussed in the next chapter, this anticipated some trends of 1960s Ghanaian statistics.
[7] Arguably the Conference of African Statisticians organised by ECA is the most similar thing to the colonial Conference of Statisticians in Countries in Africa South of the Sahara mentioned in chapter 2.

Conference of African Statisticians in 1961 declared that 'African cooperation over statistical information would help free the continent from racialism and colonialism'.[8] Besides the already mentioned Conference, the Commission organised summer vacation courses and study tours on specific topics, published a quarterly Statistical Newsletter with updates on African statistics, and established Regional training centres. Furthermore the ECA set up a Regional Advisory Service, composed by eight experts drawn from the United Nations technical assistance programmes, the Economic Commission for Africa and the FAO. The goal of the service was 'to make readily available to African countries a short-term consultative service offering specialised knowledge of demography, sampling methods, national accounts, public finance statistics and agricultural statistics' (ECA 1961, 7).

It was believed that the creation of these institutions could not only improve the quality of African statistics, but also play an important role in their standardisation. This standardisation was expected to be both conceptual and technological. To deal with the latter issue, ECA set up the Secretariat's Mechanical Unit, where punching cards for the compilation of data were installed from 1961 afterwards. The unit served 'the dual purpose of demonstrating mechanical methods and of aiding those countries which lack such mechanical equipment' (ECA 1961, 9). Conceptual standardisation should have been guaranteed by the adoption of the same concepts to describe the same phenomena across the continent, and by establishing similar training facilities for those employed in statistical work. This could have been more easily achieved by making the contact among African statisticians more frequent. In order 'to keep statisticians in neighbouring countries sufficiently in contact to ensure that in their more important activities, they do not work in isolation' (ECA 1961, 8), the so-called Sub-regional meetings were created. Within ECA's Pan-African strategy, a crucial task for improvement and statistical standardization was the training of indigenous personnel, who could be fruitfully employed in the national statistical offices and, by sharing a common view of how to measure economic variables and occasions of interaction, build the base for successful economic integration.[9]

[8] Telegram on African Statistical Conference, PRAAD RG 17/2/206/1.

[9] For the same reasons, in 1963 ECA established an Institute of Economic Planning in Dakar.

4.1.1 The creation of the Statistical Training Centre in Ghana

Following the first conference of African Statisticians in 1958 it appeared clear that if statistics had to play a role in promoting Africa's development, training Africans for jobs in statistical offices and planning commissions was absolutely necessary. This led ECA to create centres of statistical training in Rabat (Morocco), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia), Yaoundé (Cameroon) and Abidjan (Ivory Coast). Achimota, in Ghana, was chosen as the ideal location for the establishment of a similar institution serving English speaking West Africa. In the first two years of their existence the ECA regional centres has managed to train 256 African cadets for middle-jobs in statistical offices. Consistently with the commission's regional outlook, the coverage of the training centres included North Africa, Central Africa, West Africa and parts of Eastern and Southern Africa. In its early years the Achimota centre trained statistical personnel from Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Gambia (ECA 1962c, 2). With 54 students (25 in 1961/1962 and 29 in 1962/1963), by 1963 the Ghanaian Statistical Training Centre was the second, following the one in Rabat serving Morocco and Tunisia, for number of students enrolled (ECA 1962c, 2-4). The mission of the centre was twofold:

a) to organise courses in statistical methods and techniques for the training of middle grade statistical personnel from African countries;
b) to arrange for the participation of trainees in field survey organised by the Government of Ghana and other African countries.[10]

While the Government of Ghana provided infrastructures, furniture and funds for Ghanaian students,[11] the UN was in charge of appointing a director, providing technical journals, publications and other teaching material, arranging fellowships for non-Ghanaian students and organise lectures by UN statisticians.[12] The agreement between the Government and the UN comprised also the provision of the technological apparatus needed for statistical work: the Office of the Government Statistician and the United Nations contributed by providing

[10] Draft (revised) 17 May 1961 Agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Ghana relating to the establishment of a Statistical Training Centre in Achimota, Article I 'Establishment, Objectives and Activities of the Statistical Training Centre' PRAAD RG 2/3/92/2.
[11] Ibid., Article V Cooperation with the Government PRAAD RG 2/3/92/ 7.
[12] Ibid., Article IV 'Cooperation with the United Nations' PRAAD RG 2/3/92/ 5.

punching card machines for demonstrative work and purchasing 16 calculating machines respectively.[13] During the first session courses were offered in elementary statistical methods, statistical organisation and procedures, applied statistics and mathematics and 'stress was placed on the practical nature of the course'.[14] However in 1962 it was noted that the theoretical background of the trainees was insufficient. The solution envisaged was the introduction of a course in advanced mathematics, and the inclusion of courses in economics and accounting.[15]

The same year a Department of Statistics was established at the University of Ghana, offering advanced courses for the training of professional statisticians (rather than middle grade personnel as in the training centre sponsored by the United Nations) (Sen 1965, 41). Since the advisory board of the UN training centre was still dissatisfied with the low technical sophistication of the students of the centre, it was suggested in 1964 to integrate the training offered at the centre with the expertise of the Department of Statistics of the University of Ghana.[16] The involvement of the Department of Statistics had immediate consequences on the content of the courses taught at the Centre. One of the few surviving syllabi (presented in table 4.2) following this integration shows a marked diversification of the exams in statistics, more attention paid to mathematics and techniques of sampling, and the introduction of linear programming and game theory.

[13] Report of the Advisory Board of the Statistical Training Centre, Achimota, for the session 1961-1962 by R.R. Oswald, p.1, PRAAD RG2/3/92/20.
[14] Ibidem, p. 2, PRAAD RG 2/3/92/21.
[15] Minutes of the Advisory Board of the Statistical Training Centre held on 23rd July 1962, PRAAD RG 2/3/92/29.
[16] The Government Statistician stated that the courses at the centre had 'led to a definite improvement in the standards of the employees of the Central Bureau of Statistics', Minutes of the Advisory Board of the Statistical Training Centre held in the office of the Government Statistician of Ghana, on 10th July 1964' PRAAD RG 2/3/92/44.

MICHAELMAS TERM	LENT TERM	TRINITY TERM
Probability and introduction to mathematical statistics	Sample surveys	Descriptive statistics and statistical organisation
Statistical methods (use of research techniques without mathematical approach)	Regression analysis and design of experiments	Demography *
Economic statistics	Economic statistics (continued)	Economic statistics *
Programming and game theory	Demography	Sample surveys and experimental design *
Mathematics (special) and numerical analysis		Business statistics, market research and quality control *
		Laboratory

Table 4.2: Syllabus of the Statistical Training Centre diploma in statistics for the academic year 1964-65. Source: PRAAD RG 2/3/92/ file not numbered. The subjects marked with (*) were optional.

The next step to strengthen the statistical capacity of the ECA sponsored institution involved building a closer relationship between the students of the centre and the already existing statistical machinery of Ghana. Notable examples of projects that were planned by 1965 included a sample survey of demography and nutrition in cooperation with the Central Bureau of Statistics, the Registrar's General Office and the Nutrition Board, studies of crop yields in relation to environmental and meteorological factors with the Ghana Academy of Sciences and the Cocoa Research Station located in Tafo, and the preparation of input-output tables of the Ghanaian economy with the Office of the Planning Commission (Sen 1965, 43-45).

The merger between the Department of Statistics and the UN training centre took place in 1966. The creation of the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER) was shortly followed by the establishment of a two-year course in statistics, 'open to holders of UN fellowships from all African countries'.[17] The extension of the possibility to study statistics at the ISSER to *all* African holders of United Nations fellowships represented at once an attempt to

[17] Meeting of the Advisory Board of the Statistical Training Centre held in the conference room of the School of Administration, Achimota, on 9th June 1965, p.1, PRAAD RG2/3/92/49.

promote statistical standardisation across the continent (in contrast with the former West African focus of the training centre), to raise the technical skills of the statisticians operating in Sub-Saharan Africa and, through the special projects listed above, to strengthen the link between ECA and the national statistical machineries.

4.2 'Integrated economic development', statistics and industrial policy: the case of the iron and steel plant in West Africa

4.2.1 Heavy industry in ECA's vision of economic integration

Since the early 1960s ECA's 'statistical Pan-Africanism' was increasingly accompanied by a more systematic reflection on the importance of economic integration to develop African economies. Similarly to Green and Seidman, ECA realised that underdeveloped countries could reap the benefits of economic integration only through a structural transformation of their economies:

> In Western Europe the problem of integration is, by and large, one of dovetailing national structures that are already well developed into an efficient mosaic. […] But African economies are in many instances so underdeveloped, that there is little to integrate, and the economic planner has to give as much attention to creating the structures themselves as to uniting them at the sub-regional level into consistent whole (ECA 1965, 2).

As noted by ECA's Executive Secretary Robert K.A. Gardiner 'a term more expressive of this situation than "economic integration" would be "integrated economic development"' (ECA 1965, 2). The potential scope for 'integrated economic development' embraced several policy areas, including customs and trade, monetary policy and agriculture. Although the expansion of agriculture was 'vital', according to the Commission it would 'do little to solve the employment problem, since agricultural advance means a rapid increase in the productivity of labour' (ECA 1964b, 15). Furthermore price fluctuations and declining terms of trade in exports of primary products meant that African economies were made

even weaker by conditions prevailing in international markets (ECA 1964b, 15):[18] the only way out of structural weakness and poverty was industrialisation.[19]

The experts of the Commission noted that, given the necessity of adopting import substitution strategies, 'the manufactures that can replace imports tend to be small and medium scale industries producing in particular consumer goods' (ECA 1964b, 16). However the high elasticity of demand with respect to income associated to most consumer products put 'a limit on the market opportunities for small and medium scale industries' (ECA 1964b, 16). Heavy industries, on the other hand, were capable of becoming *growth points*, namely 'industries which themselves stimulate the growth of other industries as users of their products', a role, noted the Commission, which was 'beyond the scope of most small and medium scale enterprises' (ECA 1964b, 16). Within the modernist vision prevailing at ECA heavy industries represented the focal point of a process of economic development that could be engineered with the right policies. ECA's position was that, given that the 'limited size of the national markets is one of the major obstacles to the development of manufacturing industries in the individual countries of the sub-region' (ECA 1964b, Annex VI, 2), economic integration at the sub-regional level and the establishment of growth points should have gone hand in hand. However, finding the suitable location for the construction of industrial poles serving several multiple national markets and promoting regional integration would prove to be extremely complicated.

4.2.2 Ghana and the West African mission

In *Industrial Growth in Africa*, a volume capturing well ECA's 1960s position on economic integration, it was stressed that an 'iron and steel industry is the foundation of a modern integrated industrial complex' (ECA 1963a, 30). This section links ECA's intellectual identity with its shortcomings in the realm of policy-making by analysing the debates on the possibility of establishing an iron and steel plant serving the West African region, and acting as a departure point for further economic integration. Endowed with one of the richest iron ore deposits in

[18] This is another re-statement of the Prebisch-Singer thesis, discussed in section 3.
[19] This does not imply that the Commission was not active in other policy areas, as it is most clearly exemplified by the establishment of the African Development Bank in 1964. For further discussion on this, see the the text of the final agreement in ECA (1964e).

the world, West Africa was particularly suitable for the large scale production of iron and steel (ECA 1964a, 22): rich deposits of iron ore were known to exist in Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Even countries that, according to the available statistics, had not produced any iron ore until 1960 had already begun or were planning to do so in the near future. These included Cameroun, Gabon, Nigeria, Niger, Mauritania and Senegal (ECA 1963a, 32). The main point, however, was that

> there is a strong case for only one such [iron and steel] plant, serving a substantial portion of the needs of the whole West African region. This in turn would require co-operation between African countries in the financing and setting up of the plant, together of course with support from non-African countries, and also an agreement among the countries of the sub-region to ensure markets for the products of the plant (ECA 1963a, 43).

How to identify the optimal location of the plant remained problematic. The Commission agreed that it was premature to identify the most suitable place on the basis of available knowledge. Only the collection of more information could lead to the correct decision. Following the application of a clause approved during the 5th Meeting of the Commission in Leopoldville (Congo), in 1963 it was decided to send a technical mission to West Africa to undertake a field investigation.[20] The mission, composed of an industrial economist, a senior economist, two FAO experts, an International Labour Organisation expert on small industries, and two members of the ECA secretariat,[21] would tour West African countries, gather information on their industrial structure and natural resources and act as a 'catalyst for the establishment of ad hoc committees from among several countries for the discussion of concrete and individual projects'.[22] In only two months the mission was expected to cover Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria, Chad, Upper Volta, Mali, Dahomey and Togo.[23] After it was agreed to include Ghana in the mission, ECA's Executive Secretary Robert K.A. Gardiner communicated that

[20] Copy of a letter of the ECA to the Embassy of the Republic of Ghana in Addis Ababa, 22nd March 1963, PRAAD RG 7/1/2058/5.
[21] Ibidem.
[22] Copy of a letter of R.K.A. Gardiner to the Ministry of Industries, 31st May 1963, p. 2, PRAAD RG 7/1/2058/99. The composition of the mission gives also an idea of the importance assumed by the ECA in channelling and allocating experts, and in coordinating the work traditionally belonging to different international organisations.
[23] Copy of a letter of R.K.A. Gardiner to the Ministry of Industries, 31st May 1963, p. 2, PRAAD RG 7/1/2058/99.

the team of experts would have stayed in Ghana from the 8 September, arriving from Togo, to the 12 September, and then departed for Nigeria.[24] Given that the mission had only four days to gain a comprehensive view of Ghana's industrial structure Gardiner made clear that 'a great deal of the mission's success will hinge on the advance preparations which your Ministries can make'.[25]

Although the request of the ECA to include Ghana in the 1963 West African tour was accepted in a reasonable time, some of the Ghanaian reactions reveal elements of tension between the two different visions of Pan-Africanism embodied by the Commission and Nkrumah's regime. The most indicative bit of evidence in this regard can be found in a letter of the African Affairs Secretariat, the body accountable to the Office of the President in charge of the promotion of Pan-Africanism, to the Ministry of Industries, whose work, given the nature of the mission, would have been most affected:

> This Secretary has no objection to the visit of the UN team since it stems from a resolution of E.C.A. [...] It should be noted, however, that the policy of Ghana as understood by the Secretariat is for economic planning on a Continental scale *as opposed to* regional economic planning.[26]

But the tension between the African Affairs Secretariat and ECA was not limited to differences in ideological outlook. What mattered from the point of view of the African Affairs Secretariat was the possibility to exercise some form of control on the selection of the members of the mission, possibly in order to convince them that Ghana was indeed the most suitable location for the plant. This might help explain why the African Affairs Secretariat asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to contact the Ghana Embassy in Addis Ababa in order to find out

a) The nationalities of the individual members on the mission.
b) Their technical competence in the fields of economics, industry, planning, co-ordination, and other allied fields.
c) Their experience in and familiarity with African conditions.

[24] Ibidem, p. 3, PRAAD RG 7/1/2058/101.
[25] Ibidem. The paucity of already existing information, combined with the extent to which the Commission depended on the countries involved in the mission to gather data and the extremely short length of technical missions perhaps casts doubt on the quality of the evidence produced in the course of these initiatives.
[26] Letter of A. K. Duah, Principal Secretary of the African Affairs Secretariat, to the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Industries, 7th May 1963. PRAAD RG 7/1/2058/29 (my italics).

d) The number of Africans on the mission and their status.[27]

The reply of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, after stressing the technical nature of the Economic Commission for Africa, and the fact that the Government of Ghana had a say only on the technical composition of the mission but not on the specific individuals appointed, concluded that 'If the other African countries were to demand the same right which we are demanding there would probably be different teams visiting the African countries for the same purpose'.[28] The Ministry also identified in this attempt to influence the standard practices prevailing at ECA the heritage of practices mirroring the lack of transparency and efficiency of colonial economic policy:

> If I have understood you correctly I must say that I find this attitude amazing. It is like the practice whereby some of our Boards and Corporations used to be established to run on profitable and efficient lines, and yet were instructed to employ Mr. X and not Mr. Y with the inevitable result of chaos, losses and mismanagement.[29]

This critical reference to the recent colonial past settled the dispute, and ECA's technical mission finally visited Ghana in September 1963. But the disagreement between the African Affairs Secretariat and the Ministry of Industries, and the former's attempt to control the composition of the mission, is indicative of the contested terrain in which ECA operated, and an invitation to reflect more broadly on the strategies put in place by African governments to shape the Commission's decisions.

4.2.3 Towards stalemate: the 1964 Bamako conference

Following the completion of the tour of West African countries and the preparation of the *Report of the West African Industrial Co-ordination Mission*, a conference was organised to communicate and discuss the choice of the most suitable location for the new West African iron and steel plant. The attendance was impressive:

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[27] Letter of the African Affairs Secretariat to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 15th July 1963, PRAAD RG 7/1/2058/105.
[28] Letter of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the African Affairs Secretariat, 14th August 1963, p. 2, PRAAD RG 7/1/2058/ 131.
[29] Ibidem, p. 1, PRAAD RG 7/1/2058/130.

West African representatives from Dahomey, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo and Upper Volta gathered in Bamako (Mali) in October 1964 (ECA 1964d, Annex I). Representatives of international organisations (FAO, ILO) and delegates from France, Poland United Kingdom, Morocco, India, Israel and Japan were also present as observers (ECA 1964d, 1). In theory the Bamako conference should have been a major departure point for the definition of a common strategy of economic integration and industrial development in West Africa.[30] Jean-Marie Kone, the Malian Minister of State who introduced the conference emphatically remarked:

> it is a source of legitimate pride for us to welcome to our fatherland the authentic representatives of this Africa, which has progressed still further along the road of economic and social development, in harmony and concord (ECA 1964d, Annex II).

As the reactions to ECA's report show, nothing could be farther from the truth. Upon the basis of the information collected during the mission, the Commission deliberated that there was scope for two iron and steel plants, one in a coastal area and the other one in the hinterland. The most suitable locations were identified in a not yet specified Liberian port and Gouina (Mali) respectively. Several national delegations immediately opposed the decision. Nigeria, for example, claimed that it had already started working on the establishment of an iron and steel plant in 1959, thus possessing an advantage over other countries (ECA 1964d, 3). Even the delegation of Gabon, a country that in ECA's classification belonged to Equatorial Africa rather than the West African region, present at the conference as an observer, asked the Commission to consider Gabon as the most suitable location for the plant (ECA 1964d, 4)! One of the most forceful reactions came from the delegation of Mauritania, another country that had been excluded from the inspection:

> it seems that certain delegations are in haste to see their projects realised.[…] It seems to us that there are States that it is desired to make into markets and sources of supply and others that are being predestined for genuine

[30] Indeed the conference did not only discuss iron and steel, but also other key industries for West African economic integration, such as textiles, food and cement. The focus on iron and steel is justified by the extreme importance attached by ECA to this industry (ECA 1963a, 30).

> development, and that an attempt is being made to cloak all this under the fallacious terms of harmonisation and African unity (ECA 1964d, Annex XI, 1-2).

According to the Mauritanian delegation statistical coverage of certain countries and not others was part of the Pan-African façade set up by the Commission. This, in turn, might have introduced an element of potential competition between ECA and specific countries in the production and dissemination of information. The Mauritanian delegation, asking ECA to consider Port Etienne as a possible location for the plant, declared that its country 'will adhere to a co-ordination programme […] when *we* first make a survey of *our* potentialities and when it seems to us unequivocally that the sites chosen are the most advantageous' (ECA 1964d, Annex XI, 2).[31] Thinking about whether or not most single African countries had the resources and the will to compile statistics that could make their national case and oppose ECA's suggestions goes beyond the scope of this study, but it is fair to assume that the cheapest and safest strategy for African states to oppose some of ECA's deliberations was to ask the Commission to produce more inclusive studies. The Guinean delegation summarised neatly one of the themes prevailing at the Bamako 1964 conference:

> Mr. Chairman, it is clearly apparent that, despite all the efforts made by ECA experts, the report submitted is incomplete. […]
> We stress that no mention is made of Guinea. Therefore, my delegation considers that, with a view to genuine harmonization and specialization, it is indispensable to recommend that the ECA […] make[s] additional studies before any decision is taken (ECA 1964d, Annex X, 3).

Eventually the Commission agreed to conduct more inclusive investigations,[32] but the possibility of establishing an integrated iron and steel plant vanished after a few years. A few months before the Bamako conference, in a note on the study of the prospects of industrial development in Central Africa, the Commission anticipated that 'it is inevitable that each country would wish to have at its disposal a pole of industrial growth' (ECA 1964a, 1). Perhaps what ECA did

[31] The Commission's response to this was simply that 'the omission of Port Etienne from the studies was largely due to the apparent lack of interest shown by Mauritania in the early stages, and to some obvious disadvantages concerning location of an iron and steel plant there' (ECA 1964d, 3).
[32] For example by promising to send some experts to tour Mauritania (ECA 1964d, 3).

not take into account was the fact that the will of each country dissatisfied with the 'statistically informed' decision of the Commission would have been translated into a request for more inclusive statistics and preparatory studies, eventually leading to stalemate.[33] This situation was already discussed at the conference on African economic integration organised by Reginald Green and K.G.V. Krishna in Nairobi in 1965:

> the need for more, accurate and more technically buttressed facts is one of the general hindrances to the adoption of integration proposals in Africa today. When data on the probable results of major decisions are either fragmentary or unreliable protection of national interest –as well as caution- counsels postponement of any decision or acceptance of, possibly less beneficial but more certain, national alternative schemes (Green and Krishna 1967, 43).

The evidence presented suggests that the collection of new (and presumably better) statistics is not a necessary and sufficient condition to inspire evidence-based policies. This was the case because, as it was stated in the Commission's terms of reference, the 'Economic Commission for Africa […] takes no action with respect to any country without the agreement of the Government of that country' (ECA 1958, 1). In practice this meant that ECA had no political power to enforce its decisions.

ECA's goal of improving and standardising African economic statistics had to be achieved through a multi-layered institutional transformation that involved, as we have seen, changes in statistical practice and methods, and the training of African statisticians according to uniform templates. However, from the point of view of African states, whenever statistical information supported a decision that went against their vested interests, there was always the option of asking ECA for additional data and more inclusive studies. In this sense ECA's decline was not directly rooted in the similarity between its approach and Nkrumah's ideas, but rather in the institutional context in which the Commission collected, produced and disseminated statistical information. However ECA's

[33] This was by no means exclusive to West Africa. In the context of the mentioned enquiry on industrial development in central Africa the Congolese government asked for the writing of another special report on Central Africa, the admission that the earlier version of the report was not final, and called for the inclusion of industrial possibilities in Eastern Congo as an important revision to the study (ECA 1964a, 7).

limited success can be further understood when discussed in comparison with another UN regional commission, the Economic Commission for Latin America.

4.3 Vision without numbers, numbers without vision: ECLA versus ECA

4.3 1 Narratives of underdevelopment versus statistical data

While sharing with ECA a 'third world' working context, the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA hereafter) under the direction of Raúl Prebisch experienced a very different trajectory. Existing historical narratives of the evolution of the two Regional Commissions tend to emphasise ECA's failure to think seriously about the applicability of foreign theories of development to African conditions before the mid-1970s (Adedeji 2004, 252) in contrast with ECLA's impressive success in shaping development theory and policy. [34] However our aim here is to gain a more precise understanding of the distinctiveness of ECA's intellectual identity and modes of action in the policy realm. This is done by contrasting ECA's focus on statistical data and regional industrial projects with ECLA's creation of grand narratives and 'general' theories of underdevelopment.

The most significant among ECLA's contributions to development thinking is the so-called Prebisch-Singer thesis (PST hereafter). Drawing on the work of the Argentinian economist Raúl Prebisch and the German economist Hans Singer, the PST states that 'the net barter terms of trade between primary products (raw materials) and manufactures have been subject to a long-run downward trend' (Toye and Toye 2003, 437).[35] This apparently simple relationship was in fact perceived as going against an established tradition in trade theory, as old as the classical political economy, emphasising the virtues of free trade and the international division of labour. The policy implications of the PST were clear enough: Latin American countries (but, more generally, underdeveloped economies specialising in the production of primary products) had to follow an import-substitution strategy in order to benefit more from the redistribution of the gains deriving from international trade. It was within this context that Prebisch

[34] One scholar for example argued that the ECLA 'gave birth to one of the most influential ideologies of development' (Sikkink 1997, 228). A similar assessments can be found in Rosenthal (2004, 168).
[35] For further discussion on the figures of Prebisch and Singer, see Dosman (2008) and Shaw (2002) respectively.

elaborated the notion of core-periphery to account for the unequal distribution of economic power on which the interaction between the North (the capitalist and the socialist countries) and the South (the underdeveloped countries) was based. While Prebisch identified the relationship and wrapped it in the suggestive 'core-periphery' analogy, Hans Singer, a former student of Joseph Schumpeter in Austria and John Maynard Keynes in Cambridge, provided the empirical evidence to support it. In an article published on the *American Economic Review*, Singer (1950) constructed price series for manufactures and commodities from the late 19th century and showed how the net terms of trade for primary products producers worsened over time.

With this background, it is possible to clarify the expression 'vision without numbers': on one hand ECLA, like all the other UN regional commissions, provided a great stimulus towards more extensive and standardised collection, aggregation and dissemination of statistical information, leading eventually to a widespread adoption of national income accounting and the establishment of statistical offices in several Latin American countries. Furthermore, Singer's contribution to the PST was actually very much empirical in content: the point is rather that what came to be seen as the 'intellectual trademark' of the Commission was *completely independent* from its data gathering activities.

The history of the rise of the PST is an outstanding example of how a new development theory can gain credibility, reorient academic research, and influence the conduct of policy-makers. It can be inferred that in the 1960s context in which both ECLA and ECA operated, the scarcity and general low quality of statistical information available about the developing world did not preclude the formulation on a position based on such grand narratives inspired by other countries and time periods, as far as the link with contemporary underdevelopment was made explicit, its relevance specifically claimed, and the implications resonated with the goals and the ambitions of the policy-makers at the time. Even assuming that African data were worse than Latin American ones, it is possible that ECA's focus on the accumulation of more detailed statistical information was a scapegoat to avoid

taking any clear stance on issues which were, from a political point of view, potentially explosive.[36]

Yet, there are other elements which might have facilitated the acceptance of ECLA's ideas among Latin American policymakers. One reason could be that the commission's intellectual identity was perceived as the institutionalisation of a truly *indigenous* economic tradition. Leaving aside Prebisch's Argentinian nationality, the connection between the commission's outlook and indigenous tradition is very evident also with reference to the structuralist theory of inflation, another major theoretical contribution of ECLA to 1950s development economics. The structuralist theory of inflation treated inflation as a non-strictly monetary phenomenon, whose roots could be identified in the pressures exerted by supply bottlenecks in agriculture, imports and taxes (in other words from a structural condition of underdevelopment in the real economy), as well as from social conflict.[37] While it significantly shaped ECLA's identity in the 1950s, the Latin American roots of structuralist theory of inflation can be found in the work of the Chilean economist and historian Francisco A. Encina. In 1912 Encina published an influential book called *Nuestra Inferioridad Económica Sus Causas, Sus Consequencias* [38] ('Our Economic Inferiority Its Causes, Its Consequences') already emphasising the role of 'stagnant agriculture and resource bottlenecks' and in which 'we can hear […] the early notes of structural inflation theory' (Craven 1994, 12).[39] In contrast, it is much more difficult to identify any strong link between the pillars of ECA's analysis and previous African indigenous traditions of economic thinking. Of course, this does not mean that Africa did not have indigenous thinkers who wrote about economic matters,[40] but simply that the first generation of West African economists was more concerned with gathering facts

[36] This was made clear by ECLA's experience: two years after the presentation of the PST to Latin American leaders 'The thesis promptly entered the Cold War battlefield' leading the United States government to try and close down ECLA in 1951 (Toye and Toye 2003, 463).
[37] For further discussion on the structuralist theory of inflation see Craven (1994).
[38] Interestingly the book was republished in 1955, at the peak of Latin American debates on the causes of inflation (Craven 1994, 12).
[39] The location of ECLA's headquarters in Santiago de Chile, where this intellectual tradition initially developed, possibly further contributed to the acceptance of these ideas.
[40] This is especially true for the colonial period, when West African thought produced a variety of interesting views on economic matters. For further discussion, see Hopkins (1966) and Austin and Serra (2014).

about their national economies, rather than producing long-run narratives of (under)development (Austin and Serra 2014, 248-249).[41]

But within the UN, 'the culture of each commission –consisting of ideas, value judgements and institutional mechanisms' was also largely shaped by 'the leadership of their executive secretaries' (Berthelot 2004, 7). Part of the divergence between ECLA and ECA then can also be grounded in the approaches, administrative styles and personalities of the Commissions' leaders.

4.3.2 Raúl Prebisch versus Robert K.A. Gardiner

Although ECA's first Executive Secretary was the Sudanese Mekki Abbas, who remained in charge from 1958 until 1963, during those years the Commission devoted much of its energies to dealing with the troubled aftermath of Congo's independence. The man who in the 1960s shaped more significantly the connection between ECA's statistical focus and industrial policy, and who can offer a more interesting comparison with ECLA's Executive Secretary Raúl Prebisch, was the Ghanaian Robert K.A. (Kweku Atta) Gardiner.

Born in the Gold Coast in 1914, Gardiner studied economics at Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone, and completed his education with a Master Degree in Economics from Oxford in 1943. After teaching economics for three years at Fourah Bay, Gardiner worked as an Area specialist at the UN headquarters in New York between 1946 and 1949, when he returned to Africa and took the post of director of the Department of Extramural Studies at Ibadan University College in Nigeria (Misteli 2014, 1). In 1953 he started his career as a civil servant in the Gold Coast government, helping Sir Alan Burns, the last colonial Governor, to write 'a little pamphlet for travellers to West Africa from Britain and to Britain from West Africa' (Gardiner 1966, 22-23). Between 1953 and 1959 Gardiner had a brilliant career in his native country's civil service as Director of the Department of Social Welfare and Community, permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Housing and as the first Head of the Civil Service of postcolonial Ghana (Misteli 2014, 1). In 1959 he took the post of Deputy Executive Secretary at ECA, until

[41] Under Nkrumah, this state of affairs was also the outcome of an increasingly repressive regime, as it will be discussed in chapter 7. Things would already be different since the early 1970s, when the influence of Marxism became much stronger in the work of many West African economists (Austin and Serra 2014, 250).

1963 when he replaced Abbas as Executive Secretary. This short biographical sketch points to important differences in outlook between Gardiner and Prebisch. While Gardiner had a background in economics, he never contributed directly to the development of economic theory. His first main work was a 1954 volume on *The Development of Social Administration*, co-authored with the LSE scholar Helen O. Judd (Gardiner and Judd 1954). In Gardiner's book economics is never dealt with directly; rather his early work can be considered an introduction to the functions of civil service, and a fairly optimistic portrait of administration in democratic policy-making, aiming at finding a balance between bureaucratic power and the public:

> A well chosen civil service will not only be competent and incorruptible, but it will exert a considerable influence on the ministers it advises and on the general public. […] On the other hand the only real safeguard against corruption in public life and the growth of bureaucracy is an informed and watchful public opinion (Gardiner and Judd 1954, 19).

Although both Gardiner and Prebisch shared a general commitment to planning and a certain degree of scepticism about the benefits of existing patterns of trade between the West and developing countries, they followed very different roads in trying to shape their political environment. Crucially, their administrative styles were completely different: in her comparison of Gardiner and Prebisch, political scientist Isebill Gruhn stated that Gardiner's administrative style was 'low and erratic' and, unlike Prebisch, was not interested in building 'a brain trust' (Gruhn 1979, 34). The focus on statistical information, versus the production of theories of development, played an important role in shaping the identity of ECA in Africa, and in characterising Gardiner's cautious approach. Even without going as far as to state that 'Gardiner was an international technocrat with a conservative political outlook and a strong belief in the capitalist development model' (Nweke 1987, 142), it is undeniable that his stance towards the issue of African unity was in striking contrast with the sense of 'revolutionary' urgency imbuing the writings of Kwame Nkrumah, or the radical stance of Prebisch against economic orthodoxy.

Unlike Gardiner, whose limited scholarly work dealt with administration as a tool for social advancement, Prebisch was not only the author of the intellectual trademark of the Commission, but was also able to attract a small cadre

of outstanding personalities, and create a well-developed network capable of spreading the commission's ideas. With reference to this Rosenthal (2004, 170) defined him 'a master disseminator of ideas'. In contrast Gardiner during an interview declared 'that he spent his initial years at the ECA trying to build a data base upon which a development programme could be built *in the future*' (Gruhn 1979 31), therefore procrastinating the possibility of defining a 'typical' ECA position that could be easily identified and possibly embraced by policy-makers.

But there were other relevant elements accounting for the differences between ECA and ECLA. The differences in the pattern of relationship between national civil services and commission activities in Africa and Latin America respectively might also explain part of ECA's failure. While this was not necessarily the case of Gardiner himself, many of the African members who joined the ECA in the 1960s preferred it to a career in the civil service of their own countries: this meant 'that they were unlikely to wield influence in the political ranks of the countries from which they had, in effect, defected' (Gruhn 1979, 31). Sometimes choosing ECA over the national civil service was dictated by considerations about the uncertain political climate of postcolonial Africa: Gardiner's involvement with ECA was a safe exit strategy to avoid further conflicts with Nkrumah's increasingly anti-democratic regime (Gruhn 1979, 31; Misteli 2014, 1).[42] The process of Africanisation at the ECA proceeded at a quick pace, and by 1976 almost 80% of the ECA's professional staff was constituted by Africans (Gruhn 1979, 32), but during the formative years of the organisation (and unlike the ECLA) a very high percentage of the staff was composed by expatriates, aware of the fact that they would have been replaced as soon as possible by African colleagues. This, and the fact that Gardiner had the 'habit of working with an African inner circle' made things worse, and further de-motivated the ECA staff (Gruhn 1979, 33). Even those experts who were eager to apply their knowledge to African problems and worked for the United Nations tended to work on specific UN projects, 'and remained largely unconcerned about the policies and direction of the ECA as such' (Gruhn 1979, 33).

4.3.3 A more balanced assessment

[42] As the next chapters show, this was far from uncommon.

While the narrative about ECA vs. ECLA presented in most existing literature tends to be dualistic, contrasting the former's 'failure' and the latter's 'success', the experience of the two commissions needs to be understood in a more nuanced manner. In spite of its apparent capacity to shape Latin American policy, when seen through the lens of economic integration, ECLA's performance is at best mixed. On one hand Latin American attempts at market integration have been more successful and frequent than those in Sub-Saharan Africa: some scholars went as far as to say that Latin America has 'the longest history of regional integration efforts in the developing world' (Ocampo and Titelman 2012, 3). [43] In the 1950s and 1960s 'ECLA played a major role in fostering economic integration' (Rosenthal 2004, 184) by providing 'a model of constructive interaction between a part of the UN Secretariat and its intergovernmental machinery' (Rosenthal 2004, 185). On the other hand proposals for a monetary union, in spite of the creation in 1964 of the Central American Monetary Council, were never made operational, and were eventually completely abandoned in the 1990s (Ocampo and Titelman 2012, 8).[44] Furthermore, ECLA's success in promoting regional integration through industrial development (a key element in ECA's strategy) was very limited. Out of the four industrial plants initially designed to benefit from economies of scale in industrial production and favour market integration in the region, only two were implemented: a tire plant in Guatemala and a caustic soda and an insecticide plant in Nicaragua.[45] What is clear is that ECLA was much more successful in creating a basis of publications and research papers on the causes and consequences of Latin American economic integration. For example, already by 1961 the United Nations Library of Mexico possessed several hundreds of publications, including books, official reports and academic papers, on the themes of the Latin American Common Market and Central American Economic Integration (Biblioteca de las Naciones Unidas en Mexico 1961).

[43] A very significant example is the Central American Common Market, established in 1961 by El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, and joined by Costa Rica in 1963.

[44] Here the contrast with Sub-Saharan Africa is striking, with the CFA Franc zone being the most obvious example. However the reasons for the persistence of the CFA Franc zone has to be found in the colonial order, rather than in the action of the ECA.

[45] In contrast, the one producing manufactured pulp and paper, and the one producing glass containers were never realised (Rosenthal 2004, 185).

It would also be unfair and historically inaccurate to claim that ECA was *solely* focused on statistics, and thus deny that the Commission made *any* kind of intellectual contribution to grand narratives of underdevelopment. In at least two occasions ECA pioneered lines of research and analysis that proved to be crucial for 1970s and 1980s development economics. The first was, in 1963, an analysis of the economic implications and consequences of racial practices (ECA 1963b); the second was a 1967 assessment of the role of women in the East African economic development (ECA 1967b), anticipating gender research which would become classic in the field of development economics, and in the 1980s and the 1990s would also inspire some of the World Bank policies (Barker and Kuiper 2006).[46] While these works shifted the attention of a few professional economists towards race and gender, they never became the base of an overall developmental ideology on which African leaders could act in a coordinated manner.

On the other hand the early success of ECLA as innovator in development thinking was also 'the seed of its subsequent decline, since some of Prebisch' followers gave credence to the notion that they had developed a theory for economic development' (Rosenthal 2004, 170). Already in the 1960s and 1970s the empirical basis and the policy implications of the PST became the object of much criticism. For example it was questioned that the data chosen by Singer on the United Kingdom could be considered representative of the 'industrialised world' as such, and as a consequence that the inverse of the British net barter terms of trade could be considered a fair proxy for the terms of primary products. [47] More broadly, by the 1970s many development economists had become distrustful of stylised facts of the breadth of the PST, and abandoned the structuralism which, like in the case of Green and Seidman, had made possible the construction of politically charged visions. Instead they increasingly turned towards apparently 'neutral' and formal work within the paradigm of neoclassical economics (Ascher 1996, 313).

4.4 Conclusion

[46] To the issue of racism Gardiner dedicated his Reith Lecture for the B.B.C. in 1965 (Gardiner 1966).
[47] For an excellent review and critical assessment of this literature, see Spraos (1980).

This chapter has analysed ECA's trajectory in the fields of statistics and West African industrial integration. In contrast with previous accounts of ECA's dismal performance, content with reducing the Commission's intellectual identity to Nkrumah's brand of Pan-Africanism (Magee 1971) or criticize it for not developing theories of development that explicitly mirrored African realities and concerns (Adedeji 2004), this chapter has attempted to fully historicise the commission's focus on 'statistical Pan-Africanism' and regional industrial development.

It has been shown that, in contrast with the outlook of Nkrumah and economists like Green and Seidman, and with the grand narratives of underdevelopment proposed by ECLA, ECA identified in regional (rather than continental) economic integration, and in the improvement and standardisation of economic statistics (rather than in a reconceptualization of economic theory) the optimal policy and intellectual tools to foster African economic integration. Ironically, while the 'continental visions' of Green and Seidman appeared too closely related to the personal ambitions of Kwame Nkrumah, ECA's reliance on statistics, aptly called by Porter (1995, ix) a 'technology of distance', did not bring very different results. Indeed, as suggested by the debate on the possibility of establishing am iron and steel plant for the West African market, the construction and dissemination of statistics without the possibility of imposing any decision on African governments led very quickly to a state of affairs in which the demand for more and better data could work as a veto for any decision opposing national interests.[48] The benefits of 'integrated economic development' were overwhelmed by the crude reality of national politics. Like the map of the empire described in Borges' short story at the beginning of the chapter, the thousands of pages that in the 1960s ECA filled with statistical information stand in a metaphorical desert, like yellowed ruins pointing at paths of economic integration that failed to materialize.

In conclusion ECA's tale offers an interesting historical example of how statistics fail, in the absence of the right institutional constraints, to support and

[48] While it goes well beyond the scope of this work, it is worth noting that ECA, in cooperation with the African Development Bank and the African Union (the successor of the OAU) is still pursuing the task of harmonising and standardising African statistics (African Union Commission, African Development Bank and UNECA 2009).

inform policy action. While ECA's 'integrated economic development' and Nkrumah's dream of a continental government failed to bring the desired results, the history of post-colonial Africa also offers instances in which statistics and economics emerged as powerful tools for rapid and multi-layered political transformation. This is the case of Ghana from 1960 to 1966 when, in different guises and roles, economists and statisticians became involved in the country's transformation into a socialist one-party state.

Part III. Towards Socialism: Statistics, Planning and Political Economy in the One-Party State

5. The Statistical Office, the Field, and the State: The *1960 Population Census of Ghana* and Its Aftermath

> The story of the census is like a great historical pageant. Famous and mighty persons –kings and their ministers and soldiers, statesmen, scientists and philosophers – parade across the stage. A host of ordinary people from all times and places follow and do their bidding. […]But, in one way or the other, man persists in seeking an answer to the question, 'How many of us are there?'
>
> *H. Alterman 'Counting People: The Census in History'*

Around the protean notion of Pan-Africanism economists and statisticians in the 1960s were reconfiguring the dividing line between the economic and the political, imagining alternatives to the nation-state, and calling for statistical standardization across the continent. But as far as Ghana is concerned the articulation of a Pan-African vision cannot be disentangled from a simultaneous attempt to build a socialist one-party state at home.

The first clear signal of authoritarian shift was the Preventive Detention Act, 'under which it was possible to detain a person for five years (without right of appeal to the courts) for conduct prejudicial to the defense and security of the state and its foreign relations' (Austin 1970, 380). Passed in July 1958, the act found a much wider application since the early 1960s, when hundreds of people were summarily imprisoned without trial, often upon the basis of pre-fabricated accusations of political opposition and subversion. The most famous victim of the Act was J.B. Danquah, the founder of the UGCC and Nkrumah's main political opponent since the formation of the CPP in 1949. Danquah, still today considered as one of the great African intellectuals and nationalist leaders of the twentieth century, passed away while still in jail in 1965; his death has become a symbol of the darkest side of Nkrumah's rule. The Preventive Detention Act has to be understood within a broader process of legislative and institutional transformation.

A new constitution was imposed on the 1st of July 1960, turning Ghana into a Republic. Article 55 of the republican constitution, titled 'Special Powers of the First President' gave Nkrumah the power to 'give directions by legislative instruments', de facto allowing him to bypass the Parliament and 'rule by decree' (Omari [1970] 2009, 82). With the weakening of parliament, Nkrumah himself and the Party rose even more prominently as the main sites of political decision making.

The shift in national politics was matched by changing Cold War alliances: while formally maintaining a commitment to non-alignment, Ghana's 'lurch to the left' led the country to increasingly gravitate towards the sphere of influence of the Eastern bloc.[1] In the economic realm, the years between 1960 and 1966 saw an extended and rapid expansion of the role of the state: 'the modernization of agriculture and the rapid expansion of the industry' came to be seen as 'the foundation of a socialist society' (T. Jones 1976, 149). In 1963 the State Farms Corporation was established, in charge of developing large, government-owned, mechanised farms to increase the output of rubber, cotton, tobacco, palm oil and food crops. In the industrial sector, impressive investments were made in order to create large state firms producing iron and steel, as well as controlling to an unprecedented extent mining, commerce, construction and manufacturing (Rimmer 1992, 91). The economy came to be directed through an extensive use of price and capital controls, and administrative mechanisms largely replaced the market. As put by Tony Killick (1978, 48), there was 'a real sense in which Nkrumah was turning Ghana into a "command economy" in which the state was gradually taking over all major economic activities'.

Part III of this study (chapters 5, 6 and 7) analyses the contribution of statistics, planning and political economy respectively to the transformation of Ghana into a socialist one-party state until the fall of Nkrumah in 1966. The current chapter discusses the role of statistics in this transformation. Chapter 6 discusses the design and implementation of the *Seven-Year Development Plan*, the ambitious template that should have laid the foundation of Ghana's economic modernization

[1] For further discussion on Cold War politics in Ghana see, respectively, Mazov (2010) on the Soviet presence and policy and, on the deterioration of US-Ghana relationships, Nwaubani (2001, chapter 5).

and transition to socialism. Finally chapter 7 discusses the role of economics and political economy of socialism in shaping the intellectual identity of the socialist one-party state, and the relationship between economists and the regime.

5.1 The 'first modern census of contemporary Africa'

Census-taking is a fairly obvious departure point to explore the relationship between statistics and the making of nation-states because, as noted by Mara Loveman (2009, 438-439) in her study of Brazil, it sits 'at the intersection of three driving projects of modernization: the political project of developing the administrative infrastructure and authority of a modern state, the cultural project of constructing the communal bonds […] of a modern nation, and the scientific project of producing useful knowledge about the population'.[2] This chapter uses the 1960 census as a privileged site to analyse the role of international organizations in shaping notions of 'modernity' and disseminating statistical methods and practices in postcolonial Africa. It examines the concrete steps taken to overcome the lamentable quality of existing demographic information and, more importantly, understand the novel role envisaged for the *field* in gaining the trust of the observed subjects.[3] The importance of the latter point needs to be understood with reference to some influential tendencies in development and science studies. James Scott's *Seeing like a State* (Scott 1998) has offered scholars a powerful and neat account of the cognitive practices under which different versions of 'authoritarian modernism' simplified natural and social realities, made them 'legible' and turned them into an object of political intervention. Similarly, in sociology and science studies the literature on 'performativity', shaped by a broad set of intellectual influences which include American pragmatism and the

[2] There is a rich literature on the relationship between population statistics and state building, comprising a variety of approaches and focusing on different geographical areas. Recent examples include Anderson (1988) on the United States, Curtis (2001) on Canada, Lam (2011) and Mullaney (2011) on China, Merridale (1996) on the suppression of the 1937 census in the Soviet Union and Levitan (2011) on 19th century Britain. The few existing historical studies on African population censuses include van den Bersselaar (2004) on the 1921 Nigeria census and Cristopher (2010) on occupational classifications in South Africa.

[3] This is consistent with what Tong Lam (2011, 16) observed with reference to the history of Chinese social surveys, namely that what mattered the most in the contribution of statistical inquiries to state building 'it was how this process contributed to the training of cultural agents for the state's civilising and modernising initiatives'.

philosophy of language (MacKenzie, Muniesa and Siu 2007, 3) has already identified a rich taxonomy of phenomena (reviewed in MacKenzie 2007) which accounts for the ways in which social sciences make, rather than simply describe, the world. Yet, both types of accounts miss crucial elements in the processes by which statistics create new 'things' (including nation-states).[4] To some extent, the explanatory power of these framework is limited by their narrow focus; as rightly noted by Ervin (2007, 570) many 'studies of statistics' roles in helping modern states create national identities have been limited by a focus on results (the use of numbers) rather than process (the gathering of numbers)'.

Building on this simple insight, the chapter interrogates the relationship between population statistics and the making of postcolonial Ghana by expanding the site of historical observation, from an exclusive focus on the statistical office to a broader exploration of the relationship between the statistical machinery, the field, where the data was actually collected, [5] and emerging political representations. As I hope it will become apparent in the next pages, this approach implies what anthropologist Murray Li (2005, 38) has labelled a repositioning of 'state optics'.

Secondly, the chapter enriches historiographical debates on the intellectual evolution of the UN. In his overview of statistical thinking at the UN, Ward (2004) rightly stressed the importance of the demographic statistics in shaping, since the foundation of the Population Division in 1946, statistical thinking and practice at the United Nations. Reliable population counting was indeed considered the basis on which more effective policies towards health, nutrition and education could be framed. While the importance of the international organizations in shaping statistical practice in developing countries is beyond question, the chapter focuses on the political and social implications of the importation of UN statistical formats and practices in the 'local' context of 1960s Ghana.

Certainly limitations in the archival evidence surviving in the records of the Ministry of Education makes possible a detailed analysis of the intentions,

[4] For a critique of performativity along these lines, see Didier (2007).

[5] On the other hand this does not imply that the role of the field in the making of statistical knowledge has not been explored; see for example Morgan (2011) on Phyllis Deane's fieldwork and the construction of national income accounts in Northern Rhodesia (today's Zambia) , D'Onofrio (2012) on Southern Italy, or Didier (2012) on the United States.

rather than the actual outcomes, of new practices and institutions associated with data collection. However, in contrast with existing literature focusing on the capacity of statistical offices to 'create' nation-states by choosing specific heuristic tools and templates, the case study of the *1960 Population Census of Ghana* and the Census Education Campaign should be read as an invitation to expand the site of historical observation from the statistical office to the field, where the data is actually collected, in order to provide a more holistic appraisal of the multiple ways in which statistics institutionalise new representations of the state.

5.1.1 Landmarks of modernity

The *1960 Population Census of Ghana* remains the most impressive statistical enterprise taking place under Nkrumah's rule. Based on the work of thousands of enumerators and supervisors, extensively employing for the first time punch card machines for data tabulation and analysis, and resulting in the publications of six thick volumes, the census was expected to provide the most accurate, detailed and reliable information to date on demographic structures, human geography, labour and housing conditions. The great importance attached to population counting was made clear in the speech that Nkrumah gave on census night, in which he declared:

> My Government attaches the very greatest importance to the successful outcome of this operation, the first census since Ghana became independent. […]
>
> The Government needs to know how many people there are in the country and the structure of the population in order to enable it to organise its development plans and services in accordance with the manpower resources of the country (Nkrumah [1960] 1997, 42). [6]

Of course, this does not imply that the 1960 inquiry represented the first attempt at population counting. In spite of serious problems of underreporting (Austin 2008, 1002) in Ghana, as in much of Sub-Saharan Africa, the collection of

[6] Nor were these high expectations about population counting limited to Ghana. Discussing the 1962 population census of Nigeria, the popular political and business weekly *West Africa* commented that 'The £1 m. the census is likely to cost may prove to be the most fruitful public money Nigeria has spent' (*West Africa* 1962a, 477). It is ironic that in spite of the major financial and organization effort, the figures of the 1962 population census, produced in a climate of escalating ethnic hatred, were subject to heated political contestation, and the results had to be nullified. The 1973 census met a similar fate. On the troubled history and politics of Nigerian postcolonial population counting see Aluko (1965) and Ahonsi (1988).

demographic statistics is as old as colonial rule itself.[7] Indeed the Gold Coast undertook the first attempt at population counting as early as 1891, shortly after the British occupied the country's coastal areas. As it can be seen from table 5.1, between 1891 and 1960, population counting became a recurrent feature of the Gold Coast administration, taking place roughly every ten years.

Number	Year	Title	Total population
1	1891	Report of the Census of the Gold Coast Colony for the Year 1891	768,882
2	1901	Report of the Census for the Year 1901	896,046
3	1911	Census of the Population, 1911	1,503,386
4	1921	Census Report 1921 for the Gold Coast Colony, Ashanti, the Northern Territories and the Mandated Area of Togoland	1,174,971
5	1931	Appendices Containing Comparative Returns and General Statistics of the 1931 Census	3,163,568
6	1948	Census and Population, 1948: Returns and Tables	4,118,450

Table 5.1: List of population censuses conducted in Ghana up to 1960 and total population returns. Source: *Report on the Census of the Gold Coast Colony for the Year 1891* (c.1891, 9), Gold Coast Colony (Appendix A, 49), Gold Coast (1932, 1), Gold Coast (1950, 10). For the 1901 and 1921 censuses, the data are from Kuczynski (1948, 413).

In the eventful decades between the late nineteenth century and the 1950s statistical practice in Ghana experienced radical changes. For example the geographical focus of the census of population enquiries expanded; whereas the 1891 census was limited to the coastal administrative district known as 'the Colony', the 1901 census incorporated the recently annexed Asante Empire; from 1911 on censuses included population returns in the northern parts of the country, but mostly limitedly to the big towns.[8] The first total enumeration of the population was attempted in the 1931 census (Gil 1959b, 1). 1948, the year in which the last colonial census was undertaken, was as we saw in chapter 2 an important year for the history of Ghanaian statistics because it overlapped with the foundation of the

[7] In some rare cases attempts at population counting even predate European domination. This was for example the case of the kingdom of Kongo (largely overlapping with what are today Gabon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo Brazzaville and Angola) in the XVII-XVIII century, for which some Catholic baptism records are available. A population count of Lagos was attempted as early as 1789 by an American sailor (Aluko 1965, 372). For further discussion on African demographic statistics since the nineteenth century, see Frankema and Jerven (2014).

[8] After the First World War the areas subjected to census-taking came to include Togoland, a former German colony which was placed under British administration in the aftermath of Germany's defeat in the conflict.

Office of the Government Statistician. Leaving aside the cognitive value of an exhaustive census for planning purposes, the first postcolonial census was also deemed crucial as a test for the capacity of the new state to perform complex administrative tasks. In the words of government statistician E.N. Omaboe (1966a, 23): 'A population census requires good national administrative machinery for its execution and a relatively advanced statistical system. These are all important requirements in the modern exercise of nation-building'.

More specifically, the 'modernity' of the 1960 census stemmed from the fact that the enquiry represented a conscious attempt to make Ghana conform closely to the transnational cognitive templates disseminated by the UN, turning it into the first African census 'which is part of the 1960 World Population Census' (Gil 1959b, Appendix B, 16). The influence of the UN in this context can be observed by studying the role played by Benjamin Gil, the director of the social and demographic section of the Central Bureau of Statistics of Israel, who travelled to Ghana in 1959 to help with the planning and the technical aspects of the census.[9] It was Gil who in several occasions emphatically described the Ghanaian population enquiry as the 'first modern census in contemporary Africa',[10] and who linked explicitly the successful conduction of the census to the capacity of postcolonial Ghana to govern itself and foster a sense of nationhood (Gil 1959b, Appendix B, 16).

In Gil's view in order to be defined 'modern' a census was supposed to have certain technical and operational features:

a. A complete enumeration of the whole population of Ghana within a fortnight […].
b. Each person will be recorded individually on a separate line, to enable a very extensive analysis to be made.

[9] Since the mid-1950s Gil lent his expertise to a variety of government statistical projects in the fields of demography and social statistics: see for example Gil and Sicron (1956), Gil and State of Israel (1956), Gil and Central Bureau of Statistics (1958), Israel et al (1955), Israel Central Bureau of Statistics and Ministry of Social Welfare (1959).

[10] This claim needs some qualification. Between 1960 and 1961 many countries planned to conduct better censuses. However mostly (but not exclusively) in the cases of countries still under colonial domination these were either censuses by assembly (as in Angola, Mozambique and Nyasaland) or sampling censuses (like in Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia). Censuses based on complete enumeration were planned for British Cameroon and Nigeria in 1962, Kenya in 1961 or 1962. Furthermore, the same year in which Ghana agreed to conduct a full-enumeration census, the same decision was taken in smaller territories, such as São Tomé and Principe and Cape Verde (Lorimer 1961, 4-7).

c. The information collected will be according to international standards recommended by the United Nations, where necessary adapted to national circumstances.
d. In addition to the complete enumeration, a Sample Survey will be carried out about 4 to 8 weeks after the Census enumeration […]. In this survey about 5 per cent of the total population, spread all over the country, will be visited again and asked nearly the same questions but by more qualified enumerators in order to estimate the extent of error involved in the Census information.[11]

While the possibility of obtaining 'a complete enumeration of the population' within a fairly short time-span can be considered one of the key features of a census worth the name, this was not so obvious in the African context.[12] For example the delegates of the 1951 conference of the statisticians working in Sub-Saharan countries pointed out that a harsh climate, the necessity to cover vast areas combined with the lack of roads, and the high mobility, suspicious attitude and widespread illiteracy of the populace were only some of the severe obstacles inhibiting the possibility of obtaining accurate population returns.[13] Lack of trained manpower and financial resources, forcing administrators to travel and work 'from dawn to dusk' and to 'camp in the open, both during the dry and rainy seasons' were also recurring complaints in the correspondence of those in charge of population counting in Sub-Saharan Africa.[14] These problems led many statisticians working in Africa to think that sampling, rather than a complete enumeration, was a more feasible way to obtain population returns.[15]

[11] Technical Aspects of the 1960 Population Census of Ghana (paper read at the first meeting of the Central Census Committee on 8th July 1959 By Dr. Benjamin Gil, United Nations population census expert), pp. 1- 2, PRAAD RG 3/5/1815/41-42.
[12] Nor is this limited to Africa: the relation between complete population enumeration versus sampling in census taking has been object of recent heated political debates also in the United States (Anderson and Fieto nberg 1999).
[13] Conference of Statisticians of Countries South of the Sahara (Draft Report) Salisbury, Southern Rhodesia, 30th July – 7th August 1951, p. 9, PRO CO/852/1078/2/file not numbered. The same points were raised by the East African Statistical Department (1948) in their discussion of the 1948 population census.
[14] B.M. Read, Report of the Census of the North-Western Province, 1911, p. 5, PRAAD ADM 56/1/96/file not numbered.
[15] An early example of this is the discussion following the presentation at the Royal Statistical Society of a paper on the 1911 population census of the British Empire (Baines 1914). In the 1950s, the divergence of opinion among statisticians on the practical and conceptual pros and cons of sampling and complete enumeration can be observed in the minutes of the conference of the colonial statisticians working in Sub-Saharan Africa, 'Minutes of the Meeting on Monday, July 30, 1951. Item 1: Population Statistics, Chairman: Monsieur P.G. Marietti (France),' 3-8, PRO CO

In the Ghanaian context, while closer to a complete enumeration of the population (and already presenting the application of more refined sampling methods when compared to its predecessors) not even the 1948 inquiry could be fully considered a 'modern' census, 'as it lacked two essential features […]: individual units and simultaneity' (Gil 1959b, 2).[16]

Although much valuable technical and administrative experience had been cumulated between the 1891 and the 1948 census, the expectations placed on the 1960 population enquiry made necessary an unprecedented degree of collaboration and coordination, as it was made clear by Gil in a passionate recruiting campaign published in *The Economic Bulletin of Ghana*:

> A population census is one of those national operations which require manifold professional and technical skills for its preparation, much organisational effort […], and also great enthusiasm on the part of its planners and organisers […]. We are therefore appealing to the intellectual forces available in Ghana to join the Census Planning Team on a full time or a part time basis. […] University and Government Departments who will be the main users of the census data are morally bound to participate actively in this big undertaking (Gil 1959a, 5).

5.1.2 Planning for the census

Debates on the preparations for the 1960 census began in 1958[17]. From this early stage it was already clear that 'the census will largely follow United Nations' in the way in which the collection of information about name, usual residence, nationality, sex, age, education, and occupation of the African population should have taken place.[18] Following months of intense debate in which government departments and local academics from different fields (from economics to zoology) offered suggestions and 'negotiated' the technical specifications, the content and the final aims of the census, [19] the actual responsibility of the technical,

852/1078/1/file not numbered. The strongest advocate of sampling over total enumeration was John Shaul, government statistician of Southern Rhodesia. See also Shaul (1952).

[16] Indeed while in the Colony and Asante the enumeration was completed within 3-4 days around the date fixed for census day in February 1948, in the Northern Regions it took between three and four weeks, and it was carried between December 1947 and January 1948 (Gil 1959b, 2).

[17] However the earliest reference to the future 1960 census that the author could find is a letter sent by J.B. Danquah in 1952 to complain that in the 1948 census there was no detailed classification of the Gold Coast's vernacular languages. Letter of J.B. Danquah to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defence and External Relations, 8th August 1952, PRAAD RG 3/5/1815/1.

[18] 1960 Census of Population, note on items to be recorded, pp. 1-2, PRAAD RG 3/5/1815/10-11.

[19] These discussions can be found in 'Census of Population 1960 Comments on First Draft of Questionnaire', PRAAD RG 3/5/1815/19-34.

logistic and organizational aspects of the census fell on a newly appointed Census Central Committee, including among others the Minister of Finance (acting as chairman), the Minister of Education, the Minister of Local Government, the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, their respective Permanent Secretaries, and the United Nations census expert.[20] The Census Central Committee was directed and coordinated by statistician Emanuel Noi (E.N.) Omaboe (figure 5.1).

Born in 1930 in the cocoa producing Akwapim region, the son of a goldsmith, following the completion of primary education and five years at the Accra Academy (one of the most prestigious private secondary schools in the country), Omaboe entered the University College of Gold Coast in 1951 to read for a B.Sc. in Economics. His striking results granted him a scholarship at the LSE in 1954, where he specialised in Statistics under the supervision of distinguished scholars like James Durbin and Maurice Kendall. Following his graduation in 1956 with first-class honours, in 1957 Omaboe returned to Ghana upon request of the Government. Besides working to improve the statistical apparatus of the young nation, he was also appointed at the University of Ghana in Legon as an Economic Research Fellow (*West Africa* 1962b, 957). In the year 1962-63 he became the president of the *Economic Society of Ghana*. Omaboe's career was indeed quite representative of the first generation of postcolonial economists, who after completing their education in the former colonial metropoles went back home 'staffing what in the West African context were fairly recent institutions like central banks, planning commissions and statistical offices' (Austin and Serra 2014, 248). He was highly regarded for his competence and expertise. The political and business weekly *West Africa* for example reported that 'Ghana is fortunate in having young men like Omaboe, educated, rational and yet still in touch with the ordinary people and their ambition and needs' (*West Africa* 1962b, 957).

From a technical point of view, for the 1960 population census to be 'modern' and 'scientific' particular rigour should have been applied in all the tasks related to the sampling design of the post-enumeration survey (PES hereafter): in his presentation of the technical features of the 'modern' census, Gil defined the

[20] Letter of S.E. Grant, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Finance to Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education, 2nd July 1959, PRAAD RG 3/5/1815/36.

PES 'the most modern technique'.[21] Taking place a few weeks after the main enumeration, the PES should have not only produced a measure of the census' reliability expressed as a margin of error, but also provided additional information on some aspects deemed of crucial importance for social and economic reform, like housing and sanitary conditions, which for reasons of cost or administrative complexity the main inquiry could not cover adequately (Gil and de Graft-Johnson 1960, 15-16), as well as providing a testing ground to produce a 'comparison between the different techniques used in the Census and in the Post-Enumeration Survey and enable their evaluation for future use' (Gil and de Graft-Johnson 1960, 17).

Yet, in 1959 the University of Ghana did not have yet a Department of Statistics. ECA established its Statistical Training Centre only in 1961, and even then only to train middle-level personnel for statistical offices, rather than experts in charge of statistical design.[22] The Department of Mathematics, which was established in 1948 in parallel with the opening of the University, had in the academic year 1958-1959 only three third year undergraduate students (Agbodeka 1998, Appendix 11 (a), 359). As bluntly put by Gil, Ghana had 'no mathematical statistician'.[23] Ultimately the appointment fell on K.T. de Graft-Johnson, a Ghanaian mathematics graduate who was employed in the Education department. Faced with the offer de Graft-Johnson pointed out that he studied mathematical statistics while reading for his B.Sc. in Mathematics, but he had never applied it to practical statistical work. However, he was confident that with the help of Gil (and one additional UN sampling expert, who joined in February 1960)[24] he would be able to face the tasks of the statistical planner,[25] including the design of the sampling model to be used for the PES, the preparation of the 'programme for the statistical evaluation of the Census enumeration using mainly the Post-

[21] Technical Aspects of the 1960 Population Census of Ghana (paper read at the first meeting of the Central Census Committee on 8th July 1959 By Dr. Benjamin Gil, United Nations population census expert), p. 2, PRAAD RG 3/5/1815/44.
[22] See chapter 4.
[23] Attachment written by Gil (dated 15th October 1959) to letter from P.H.G. Scott, census administrator to Mr. de Graft-Johnson, PRAAD RG 3/5/1815/127.
[24] The UN sampling expert was M. Sicron, at the time Deputy Director of the Central Bureau of Statistics in Jerusalem and close collaborator of Gil during the 1950s Israeli statistical studies (Ghana Census Office 1971, vol. VI, xxi).
[25] Letter of the headmaster, Government Secondary Technical School, Takoradi to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, 22th October 1959, PRAAD RG 3/5/1815/135.

enumeration Survey as a basis', the supervision of computations, and devising the procedures for controlling discrepancies in the tabulations.[26]

If Omaboe and de Graft-Johnson provided an important part of the technical expertise needed, there were many other practical and organizational requirements that needed to be addressed before the census began. Among these there was the choice of an appropriate census night. This was particularly crucial as the inquiry was a *de facto* census (namely one recording the people present in the country on census night) rather than a *de jure* one (recording the number of people formally resident in the country). It was quickly decided that the best choice would be March, before the beginning of the cocoa harvesting season, when thousands of workers would migrate from their normal place of residence.[27]

It was also agreed that the best day for the conduction of the census should have been a Sunday, as many people stayed at home. It is interesting to note that even such an apparently intuitive consideration was supported in 1960 by a process of data collection and analysis: the Statistical Planning Section interviewed 4,687 people in the different regions of the country and found out that 95.5% of them stayed at home on Sunday, thus supporting the suggestion advanced by the Central Census Committee to fix census night on Sunday 20th March 1960.[28] Another important step in the preparation of the census, making the 1960 inquiry different from the previous ones, was the design of a sample pilot survey, conducted between the 25th May and the 6th June 1959 in order 'to examine under field conditions the feasibility of the questionnaire, the techniques of enumeration and organisational procedures and arrangements' (Census Office and Gil 1959, i). Based on a non-random selection of localities in the Western, Northern, Asante and Accra regions (Census Office and Gil 1959, 7), and on the work of 54 enumerators, the pilot survey pointed out that the lists of enumerating localities

[26] Attachment written by Gil (dated 15th October 1959) to letter from P.H.G. Scott, census administrator to Mr. de Graft-Johnson, PRAAD RG 3/5/1815/127.
[27] Organisational and Administrative Problems of the 1960 Population Census of Ghana (paper read at the first meeting of the Central Census Committee on 8th July, 1959 by Mr. W.L. Booker, Ag. Gov. Statistician), p. 2, PRAAD RG 3/5/1815/41.
[28] File Cen./ Gen. no. 3/21, Government Statistician, PRAAD RG 3/5/1816/171.

was incomplete and outdated, and in some cases the maps of rural areas had not been updated since 1930 (Census Office and Gil 1959, 10).[29]

Furthermore the pilot survey revealed that, in spite of the fact that Radio Ghana had spread news about the pilot census in the interested areas, and several enumerators had established contacts with the chiefs to inform the local populaces, there was still much to be done to ensure that everyone knew about the inquiry and its ultimate purposes: in 10% of the cases the respondent were reluctant to exchange information with the interviewers, in 3.8% the enumerators had other difficulties in obtaining the answers, while the lack of publicity about the census accounted for 8.9% of the difficult interviews (Census Office and Gil 1959, 58). As appeal to the authority of the colonial 1950 Statistics Ordinance, prescribing a fine and eventually imprisonment for those obstructing the work of the Government Statistician, had to be considered a tool of last resort, the main way of being able to extract accurate information from the subjects interviewed was to *persuade* them that their cooperation was necessary. But how was this goal to be achieved?

5.2 Building trust in the field

In the radio speech that he gave on census night, Nkrumah stressed that the 'most important element in this operation [the census] […] is your co-operation' without which 'the best plans and organisation, and the efficiency of the field staff will not achieve the results we want' (Nkrumah [1960] 1997, 43). Certainly the understanding of the co-operative nature of statistical inquiries did not suddenly emerge on census night in in Nkrumah's speech; this is something that had been repeatedly noted by colonial statisticians and census administrators. Historically the uncertainty and distrust surrounding the encounter of state representatives and observed subjects elicited a variety of responses from the local populations, spanning from open hostility[30] to the provision of deceitful information, and

[29] The pilot also confirmed the scepticism of the 1950s, when the preparation of household budget studies revealed the inadequacy of the adoption of 'household', as prescribed by the UN directives, as the main statistical unit for the census. This led in the main population enquiry to the enumeration of the people living in the same house, defined as 'a self contained building unit' (Ghana Census Office, vol. I, xvi).

[30] See for example the reactions to Miss Ady's 1946 study of living conditions in Accra described in chapter 2.

including in some cases hiding to avoid being counted in the first place.[31] Occasionally the politically loaded encounter between counter and counted assumed comical tones, as in one case described by a provincial commissioner involved in the 1911 census:

> On one chief I found it was absolutely necessary to inflict a fine, for whilst he was assuring me that he was poor and had no Cattle his veracity was fated to suffer a rude and unexpected shock, for a thunder storm which had been threating suddenly developed, and his cattle which he had hidden in the bush on our approach, became terrified at the voilence [sic] of the storm, suddenly stampeded from their place of concealment and rushing into the town, in no unmistakable manner demonstrated their presence before my eyes and their perfidious owner.[32]

If a commissioner in charge of population counting in the Northern regions simply attributed people's unwillingness to cooperate to 'ignorance, fear and stupidity',[33] more often this was explained by appealing to 'African cultural taboos' and fear of taxation (Shaul 1952). The latter was firmly grounded in Ghana's history. Indeed the use of taxation to estimate the number of people living in a given area can be traced back to 1852, with the passing of the Poll Tax Ordinance. Still in 1884, after the poll tax had been abolished, , the yearly *Blue Book* claimed that 'no means exist whereby a census could be taken of the Gold Coast settlements, the natives of which are suspicious of their numbers being counted, having, perhaps a lively recollection of the old days when the poll tax was in force' (quoted in Engman 1986, 53).

What was new in the case of the 1960 inquiry was the extent to which the awareness of the importance of people's trust and cooperation shaped the whole process of census planning. Whereas during the first meeting of the Central Census Committee in December 1959 Government Statistician W.L. Booker claimed that the success of the census was largely dependent on the quality of the administrative

[31] Discussing the experience of the 1921 Census Gil reported that 'In some territories the people run away when they heard about the Census or they used to state they have already been counted' (Gil 1959b, 3).

[32] Letter of Colin Harding, Acting Provincial Commissioner of Wa Province to Acting Chief Commissioner, Tamale, 16th June 1910, p.3, PRAAD RG ADM 56/1/96/file not numbered.

[33] B.M. Read, Report of the Census of the North-Western Province, 1911, p. 5, PRAAD ADM 56/1/96/file not numbered.

machinery,[34] Gil placed more emphasis on the importance of obtaining the cooperation of the public at large.[35] This insight, which according to Gil was not receiving enough attention in the practice of African population counting (Gil 1959b, 7),[36] had several far-reaching implications, investing the choice of school teachers as enumerators, the activities taking place in the field, and the setting up of an institutional network for educating the public.

The 'Census Education and Enlightenment Campaign' represented, probably for the first time in the history of Ghanaian statistics, a systematic attempt to guarantee the best conduct of a census by bringing together statistical experts and representatives of government departments working with information and mass education. At the first meeting of the newly appointed Census Education Committee in August 1959 were present the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education, the Deputy Director of the Broadcasting Service, the Director of Social Welfare and Community Development, representatives of the Bureau of Ghana Languages and the Information department, as well as Gil, Government Statistician W. L. Booker and Deputy Statistician and Census Planning Officer (later Government Statistician) Emanuel N. Omaboe.[37] By December 1959 the list of publicity activities set up by the Census Education Committee included the printing of 8,000 posters translated into the eight main vernacular languages, the publication of a few thousands booklets, regular broadcasts on Radio Ghana, newspapers coverage and the production of a movie significantly titled 'Answer for Tomorrow', to be screened in rural areas by using the mobile vans of the Social Welfare Department.[38] This should have been supplemented by a mass campaign conducted in primary and middle schools. According to Gil, only a simultaneous

[34] Organisational and Administrative Problems of the 1960 Population Census of Ghana (paper read at the first meeting of the Central Census Committee on 8th July, 1959 by Mr. W.L. Booker, Ag. Gov. Statistician), p. 1, PRAAD RG 3/5/1815/40.
[35] Technical Aspects of the 1960 Population Census of Ghana (paper read at the first meeting of the Central Census Committee on 8th July 1959 By Dr. Benjamin Gil, United Nations population census expert), p. 1, PRAAD RG 3/5/1815/41.
[36] While it seems that Ghana was the first country in West Africa to establish a census education campaign, similar developments took place in Nigeria (Aluko 1965, 377-378) and Liberia (Republic of Liberia Bureau of Economic Research and Statistics 1961) for their respective 1962 population censuses.
[37] Meeting of the Census Education Committee on August 7, 1959, at Census Head Office, p. 1, PRAAD RG 3/5/1815/57.
[38] Meeting of the Central Census Education Committee on December 22 1959 at the Census Head Office at 2.30 pm, pp. 1-3, PRAAD RG 3/5/1816/218-220.

action on all these fronts made possible the achievement of the main goals of the campaign, which included, but not were limited to, 'Issue of information for the literate public', 'Creation of enthusiasm among the thousands of potential enumerators', and 'Stimulation of devotion on the part of the Census staff' (Gil 1959b, Appendix B, 15).

Although the Census Education Campaign was a novel phenomenon, it did not imply a total discontinuity with the practices informing the making of previous population statistics: reference to the possibility of employing 'schoolmasters' to supplement other enumerators can already be found in circulars preceding the conduction of the 1921 census.[39] The employment of school teachers continued with the 1931 and 1948 inquiries.[40] In these cases the suitability of school teachers to act as enumerators was justified on the ground that they were unequivocally literate and employed in the public sector,[41] as well as being more likely to be perceived as detached from tax collection, which represented the main source of misunderstanding in the making of colonial statistics. While agreeing with all this,[42] the radical novelty of Gil's approach relied in the assumption that school teachers were ideally located to teach the usefulness of census-taking to the *pupils* themselves.[43] This apparently trivial observation carried profound implications for the chains of authority and the social relations that the state chose to mobilise, involving a partial reconfiguration of the role of subjects traditionally associated to data collection, as well as the mobilisation of a new set of agents.

[39] Letter of John Maxwell, Acting Colonial Secretary, 17th August 1920, PRAAD ADM 56/1/96/file not numbered.

[40] Yet still in 1960 in the Northern Territories, where there were not enough teachers, the task fell partly on agricultural officers. Central Census Committee, Second Meeting held at the Prime Minister's Conference Room at 9 a.m. on 3rd December 1959, p. 3, PRAAD RG3/5/1816/237. In some cases the extreme importance attached to the census resulted in disruptions of ordinary school activities, as when a group of teachers left for one week for census work without the manager of the school knowing about it. Letter of the General Manager, Holy Order of Paraclete, Convent of Our Lady and St. Monica, Mampong to The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, 9th December 1959, PRAAD RG 3/5/1816/194.

[41] These points were restated in a paper written by Gil and Omaboe several years after the census (Gil and Omaboe [1965] 1983, 44-45).

[42] Dr. Benjamin Gil, The General Framework of Census Education, Accra 3rd August 1959, p.2, PRAAD RG 3/5/1815/50.

[43] Gil also noted that the teachers were the best qualified not only in estimating the age of the children when this was not known, but also, through the estimation of the children's age, to infer the age of their parents. Dr. Benjamin Gil, The General Framework of Census Education, Accra 3rd August 1959, p.2, PRAAD RG 3/5/1815/50.

In the 1891 and 1901 censuses the state did not directly manifest its presence in the field: each head of family was simply expected to place into a container 'an Indian corn for each male and cowrie or kernel for each female' (Ghana Census Office, vol. I, ix). The containers were brought to the local chief, and he was in charge of reporting the numbers of males and females in a form provided by the administration, which was then sent to the District Commissioner (Ghana Census Office, vol. I, ix). Some enumerators were used in the 1911 census, but in a non-systematic manner, and limitedly to the bigger towns (Gil 1959b, 1); Even following the beginning of a more systematic employment of enumerators with the 1921 and 1931 censuses, chiefs were still the ones mainly in charge of recording the population of rural areas; otherwise in order to save money population counting was also undertaken by district commissioners during their tours, leading to the loss of simultaneity in data collection. Thus before the 1960 census the process of acquiring the trust of the observed subjects strictly followed a vertical, top-down approach: the administration tried to persuade the chiefs of the importance of the census, and the chiefs in turn tried to convince the population to cooperate.[44]

Instead Gil came up with the innovative idea that 'the children will act as the best communication media; through the children we want the Census idea to reach the parents and enlighten them'.[45] In order to achieve this goal, the Ministry of Education was in charge of preparing a series of special lectures about the census. These were expected to be studied by the teachers and delivered by the teachers in the classroom. Unfortunately out of the eight or nine lessons planned by the Ministry of Education, the author was able to find in the archives only the text of the first three. However from them it is still possible to understand the way in which the census organization aimed at mobilising the teachers and the Ghanaian youth to act as agents of census propaganda and, more generally, make the public 'Census minded'.[46] A recurring strategy to make the purpose of the

[44] Nor were the chiefs, as we saw earlier, always easy to convince to provide truthful information to census enumerators.

[45] Technical Aspects of the 1960 Population Census of Ghana (paper read at the first meeting of the Central Census Committee on 8th July 1959 By Dr. Benjamin Gil, United Nations population census expert), p. 3, PRAAD RG 3/5/1815/43.

[46] This is an expression that recurs in minutes of the Census Education Committee and in other writings related to the educational activities. See for example Ministry of Education, 27th October

census understood was to compare the operation of census-taking to tasks faced by pupils and teachers in their daily lives: for example in the first lesson census-taking was compared to compiling class registers.[47] But the census education campaign was also designed in order to convey a specific representation of the state, described as a benevolent and inclusive agent which, while possessing knowledge that was not given to single individuals, did not de-humanize citizens:

> You will be interested to know that with respect to teachers the Ministry of Education knows the number – here are the figures. […] Is this not interesting? How many children are in approved primary and middle school? Again the Ministry knows the figure to a child […].
>
> The boy or girl sitting in the corner of the classroom and the child in the 2nd column, 4th row in the class are included in the total. I think each school child should be proud to know that the Ministry of Education regards or sees him or her as an individual.[48]

In spite of its extensive knowledge of aggregate figures, the government had 'no money but that which belongs to the people', and thus was burdened with the moral responsibility of spending them in the wisest possible way for the benefit of everyone.[49] The second lesson, titled 'Man and Measurement: Census as a form of measurement' was aiming at convincing children, again with a variety of everyday examples, that

> the idea of measurement, whether applied to space, time, weight, distance, or area is indispensable if men have to live wisely, and that measurement is in fact photographed [sic] on every aspect of civilised life.[50]

It was pointed out that unlike most acts of measurement that children observed in their daily lives, the census, compared to an arithmetic problem, stood out for its complexity.[51] But the association between 'measurement' and 'civilised life', and the stress on the fact that a better understanding of quantitative methods

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1959, Population Census – Ghana 1960: Census Education and Enlightenment Campaign: Special Letter to Field Education Officers, p. 3, PRAAD RG 3/5/1816/212.

[47] Ministry of Education, 28th October 1959, Ghana's 1960 Population Census, Census Education, Reasons for Undertaking the Census, Lesson I, p.1, PRAAD RG 3/5/1816/199.

[48] Ibidem, p. 4, PRAAD RG 3/5/1816/202.

[49] Ministry of Education, 29th October 1959, Ghana 1960 Population Census, Census Education, Lesson II, Subject: Man and Measurement: Census as a Form of Measurement, p. 3, PRAAD RG 3/5/1816/206.

[50] Ibidem, p. 2, PRAAD RG 3/5/1816/205. The idea of measurement as something characterising 'civilised' life is expression of a broader set of beliefs according to which economics and statistics were tools of social engineering not only limitedly to economic development, but more broadly concerned with the modernization of 'traditional' African customs.

[51] Ibidem, p. 4, PRAAD RG 3/5/1816/207.

paved the way for a better life did not suddenly emerge with the census, and already characterised the late colonial mentality. This is particularly evident if one takes a look at the picture below (figure 5.1), found in the records of the Ministry of Education. It shows the back cover of a leaflet promoting a mathematics textbook that could be used in Ghanaian middle schools in 1954. The first volume of the textbook was devoted to counting and measurement. [52]

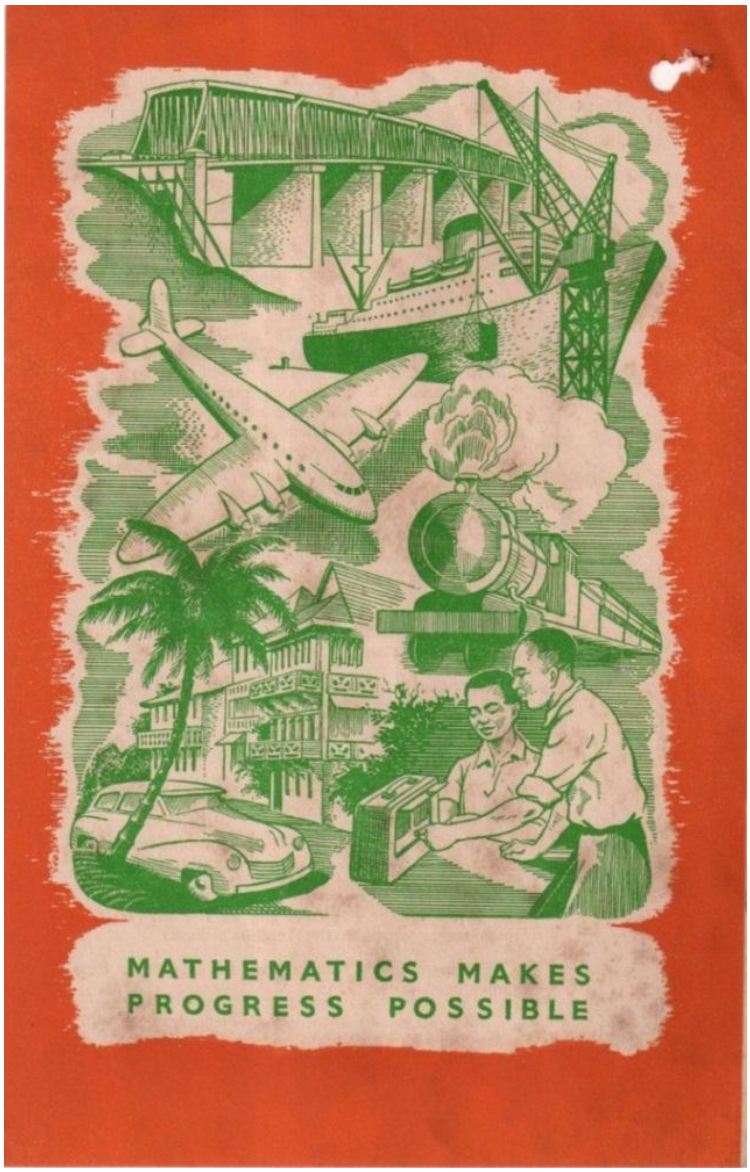

Figure 5.1: Back cover of a 1954 booklet illustrating the middle school textbook 'A West African Mathematics' by G.R. Gibson and T.J. Mardell. Source: PRAAD RG 3/1/462/ file not numbered.

[52] Amongst the topics covered in book one were 'The basic processes applied to time. The use of the 24-hour clock, time tables and time cards. Simple applications to speeds and distances', 'Fractions', 'Area of rectangles. Problems involving cost and area', 'The metric system as used in practice', PRAAD RG 3/1/462/ file not numbered.

Although the colonial leaflet and the Census Education and Enlightenment Campaign shared an appeal to measurement as a tool of economic and social advancement and an attempt to make the importance of measurement understood through placing it in the context of the children's daily lives (in both cases by appealing to 'West African' quantities, measure and 'situations'),[53] they differed in the sense that the Census and education campaign was explicitly bringing the state into the picture as the ultimate measurer, and thus as the paramount source of human welfare.

The third lesson, 'Everyone should count as one person, not more nor less' linked more explicitly individual conduct to the final outcome of the census. Building on the comparison between the census and an arithmetic problem introduced in the second lesson, the Ministry of Education stated that if the single tasks of counting each individual (compared to the different steps of the problem) were flawed because of lack of cooperation with the enumerators, the whole result would be wrong: 'If you will say "I do not matter" and that fellow "he does not matter" the correct population of Ghana will not be known'.[54] The delivery of these lessons took place within a broader range of activities performed by field assistant education officers. These were sent on ten days visits to villages, equipped with material related to all phases of the census and a list of compulsory activities. The first day of the visit had to be categorically devoted to a visit to the local school, where didactic material on the census had to be distributed to teachers, and all the children introduced to the topic. The main reason stated was that this would 'give the children something to talk about when they go home'.[55] Officers were asked

[53] The attempt to explain the importance of the census to school children went, in the case of the Liberian education campaign for the 1962 counting, as far as to invent an allegorical fable titled 'How spider helped elephant take census'. The plot is the following: elephant, nominated king of the jungle after the death of its predecessor, suggests that taking a census is the best way to improve the welfare of all the animals living under his jurisdiction. In spite of initial opposition by a dog (who knew that in the past the census was used to increase taxation, and was thus afraid that his hidden bones would be confiscated), and a deer (afraid that the jaguars might use the information published in the census to hunt him), the king successfully convinces all the animals of the importance of being counted and cooperate with the census. Spider, who was initially sceptical about king elephant's idea, becomes very enthusiastic about it, and he is put in charge by the king for counting, with his many legs, the animal population. The full text of the fable is in Republic of Liberia Bureau of Economic Research and Statistics (1961, Appendix D).

[54] Ministry of Education, 30th October 1959, Census Education, Everyone shall count as one person not more nor less, p. 2, PRAAD RG 3/5/1816/209.

[55] Ministry of Education, 27th October 1959, Population Census – Ghana 1960: Census Education and Enlightenment Campaign: Special Letter to Field Education Officers, p.2, PRAAD RG 3/5/1816/211.

to deliver the content in the local vernacular 'as it is in the vernacular that these children will talk to their parents and illiterate brothers and sisters and friends about the Census'.[56] The third day of the visit should have been dedicated to organising a meeting with the Chief and elders to introduce the subject.[57] Headteachers were asked to keep a separate exercise book titled 'The 1960 Census' in which they noted all work done in their school with reference to the Census Education and Enlightenment Campaign.[58]

The mobilisation of new subjects, most notably school children, for the population census mirrored a simultaneous tendency in Nkrumah's regime: the active lobbying of the youth became one of the pillars for the construction of socialism, as proved by the institution of the Young Pioneers.[59] Modelled on the Soviet organisation with the same name, the Ghanaian Young Pioneers were in charge of conveying to their parents and local communities specific representation of Nkrumah as the Great Saviour of the nation, the CPP and his government as sources of prosperity as justice, as well as acting as spies reporting to the local authorities expressions of dissent against the regime, including those of their parents (Ahlman 2011, 73).[60]

Although the content of the lessons prepared for the Census Enlightenment and Education Campaign and 'Nkrumah's gospel' as forced upon Young Pioneers differed in many substantial ways, they both embodied attempts on part of the planners to create a capillary institutional structure that, using schools as incubators, could mobilise children in spreading specific representations of the state as a benevolent and omnipresent entity.

Meanwhile contemporary representations show new ways of connecting the process of data collection to dreams of postcolonial state-building. An

[56] Ibidem.
[57] Ibidem, p. 3, PRAAD RG 3/5/1816/212.
[58] Ibidem, p. 4, PRAAD RG 3/5/1816/213.
[59] Unfortunately there is still very little systematic research on the mobilisation of the youth in postcolonial African regimes. An exception is Straker's (2009) excellent study of Guinea under Sékou Touré.
[60] The foundation of the Young Pioneers needs to be understood within a broader attempt to mobilise the youth for the construction of socialism. Another important example of this was the constitution of the Builders Brigades. For further discussion on this, see Ahlman (2012).

interesting example is a picture (figure 5.2) published in *West Africa* shortly after the beginning of the census.

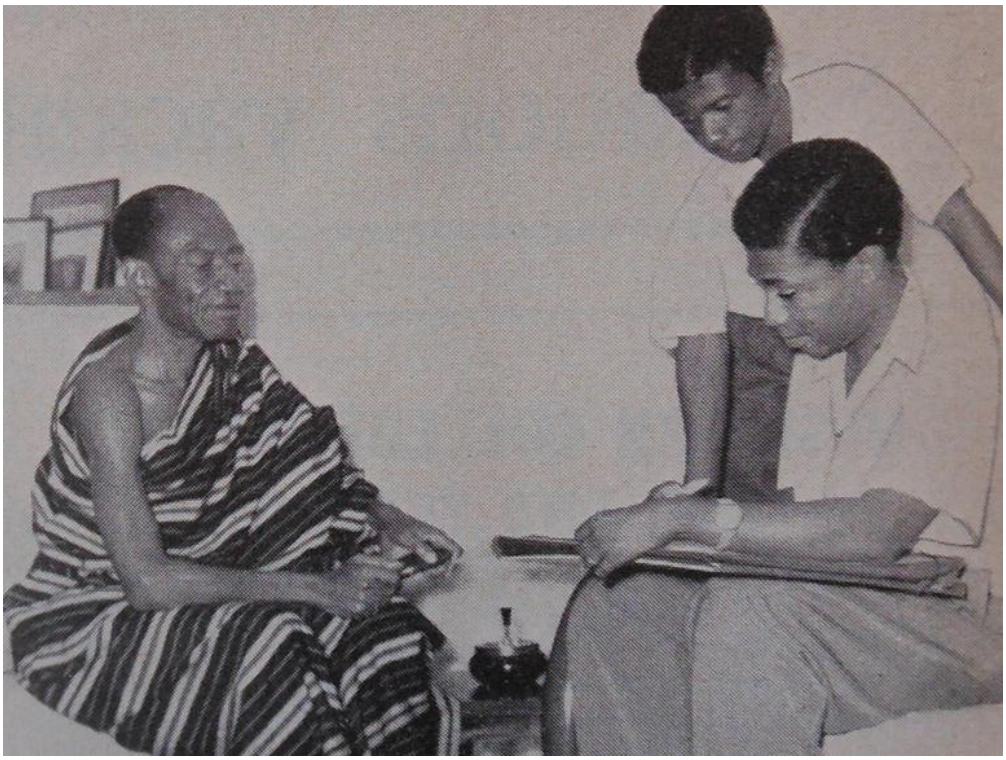

Figure 5.2: The Asantehene Osei Tutu Agyeman Prempeh II is counted in the census. Source: *West Africa* (1960, 410).

The picture shows two enumerators obtaining information from the late Asantehene (the 'traditional' king of Asante) Osei Tutu Agyeman Prempeh II. Besides offering a simplified representation of co-existence of 'traditional' and 'modern' (as indicated by the Western clothes of the enumerators and the *kente* worn by the Asantehene), the picture acquires a very specific connotation in the Ghanaian context. Indeed the Asante region, where most of the cocoa trees of the country are located, was the main centre of opposition to the regime and the cradle of a fierce political struggle for the redistribution of cocoa resources.[61] Nkrumah's policy since the years of decolonization in the 1950s had been particularly hostile towards the traditional authorities (like the one depicted above), generally seen as obstacles to the modernization of the country, who refused to cooperate with the regime (Rathbone 2000). In this sense the picture not only projects an image of the census as a non-partisan, non-political and inclusive operation, but through the

[61] See chapter 2.

incorporation of the Asantehene creates an idealistic and harmonious representation of postcolonial state building.

5.3 From the Office of the Government Statistician to the Central Bureau of Statistics

On the night of the 20th March 1960 seven thousand enumerators began the counting of the population. Between census night and the first week of April millions of census forms were filled with data on locations, age, economic activity and nationality. The data were then gathered in the statistical office in Accra, where they were processed with newly purchased IBM punch-card machines.[62] But the collection and analysis of the population data did not exhaust the role played by the census in 1960-1961 in pioneering the future orientation of Ghanaian statistics. The rise of the first postcolonial census as a new type of statistical enquiry in Ghana's history depended on two main elements. The first was an increase in the technical sophistication of procedures of data collection and analysis, tabulation and sampling design, in a way which was increasingly consistent with UN directives. The second, and more important for the perspective adopted here, was the unprecedented importance attached to data collection in the field through a new set of operations and institutions fostering the presence of the state over its territory. Both these elements can be observed in the post-census transformation of the institutional framework of Ghanaian postcolonial statistics.

Drawing on the guidelines presented at the Conference of African Statisticians in 1959 and the suggestions sent by 89 private and public actors (including most Ministries, the Bureau of Language, some gold mining companies, Barclays, and the Bank of Ghana) (Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics 1961, 43), a special committee comprising the Government Statistician W.L. Booker, a representative of the of Ministry of Finance, Assistant Commissioner of Commerce K.O.A. Appiah, UN national income expert R.R. Oswald and Omaboe (who since June 1960 had succeeded Booker as Government Statistician), published in 1960 a report offering a template for the restructuring of the national statistical machinery (Ghana 1960, 2). The transformation was symbolised by the

[62] Second Meeting of the Central Census Committee, Report by the Acting Government Statistician, p. 4, PRAAD RG 3/5/1816/181.

change in name: the Office of the Government Statistician was renamed Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS hereafter).[63] The report on the creation of the CBS indicated that the sought expansion of the statistical service required a 25% increase in the budget, from the £G 181,160 allocated for 1960-1961[64] to £G 250,000 for the following financial year. This would mostly pay for the staff employed, which was supposed to increase both in number and in technical expertise: the fulfilment of what were described as 'future requirements' implied an increase in the number of statisticians from six to eight, and in senior statisticians from one to five (Ghana 1960, 11). By 1966-1967 it was envisaged that 27 Ghanaians (versus the three employed in 1959-1960) who were trained at the local university rather than abroad could have occupied positions in senior statistical and economic ranks of the Bureau (Ghana 1960, 12). The increased number of employed personnel had to be matched by a physical expansion of the statistical office's premises: the office units allocated to the Accra branch had to increase from 61 to around 80, and the establishment regional branches in Tamale, Kumasi and Takoradi was deemed necessary (Ghana 1960, 15). The importance attached by the government to the expansion of the statistical machinery is confirmed by the provision of £G 580,000 to the CBS mentioned in the ambitious seven-year development plan passed in 1964 (Ghana Office of the Planning Commission 1964, 216).

Before the reforms the Office of the Government Statistician in Accra was composed of four main sections, devoted respectively to Administration, Data Processing, National Income and Planning, and General Statistics. The latter was in charge of collecting information about household, enterprises, labour, production, government transactions and internal and external trade. The 1960 population census made necessary the establishment of a separate Demography section, which should have kept population records updated even after the end of

[63] The importance attached by the political leadership to the reform of the statistical office can be seen in a letter sent from the Office of the President in December 1960, 'requesting all Ministries and Departments to afford you [the Government Statistician] the greatest possible co-operation in setting up the Bureau'. Letter of T.K. Impraim, Secretary to the Cabinet, Office of the President to the Government Statistician, 5th December 1960, PRAAD RG 3/5/1817/327.

[64] This figure excludes the expenses associated to the population census, and refers only to ordinary activities, Ghana (1960, 15).

the enquiry (Booker 1959, 2). The new organogram designed by the Committee for the CBS is presented in figure 5.3.

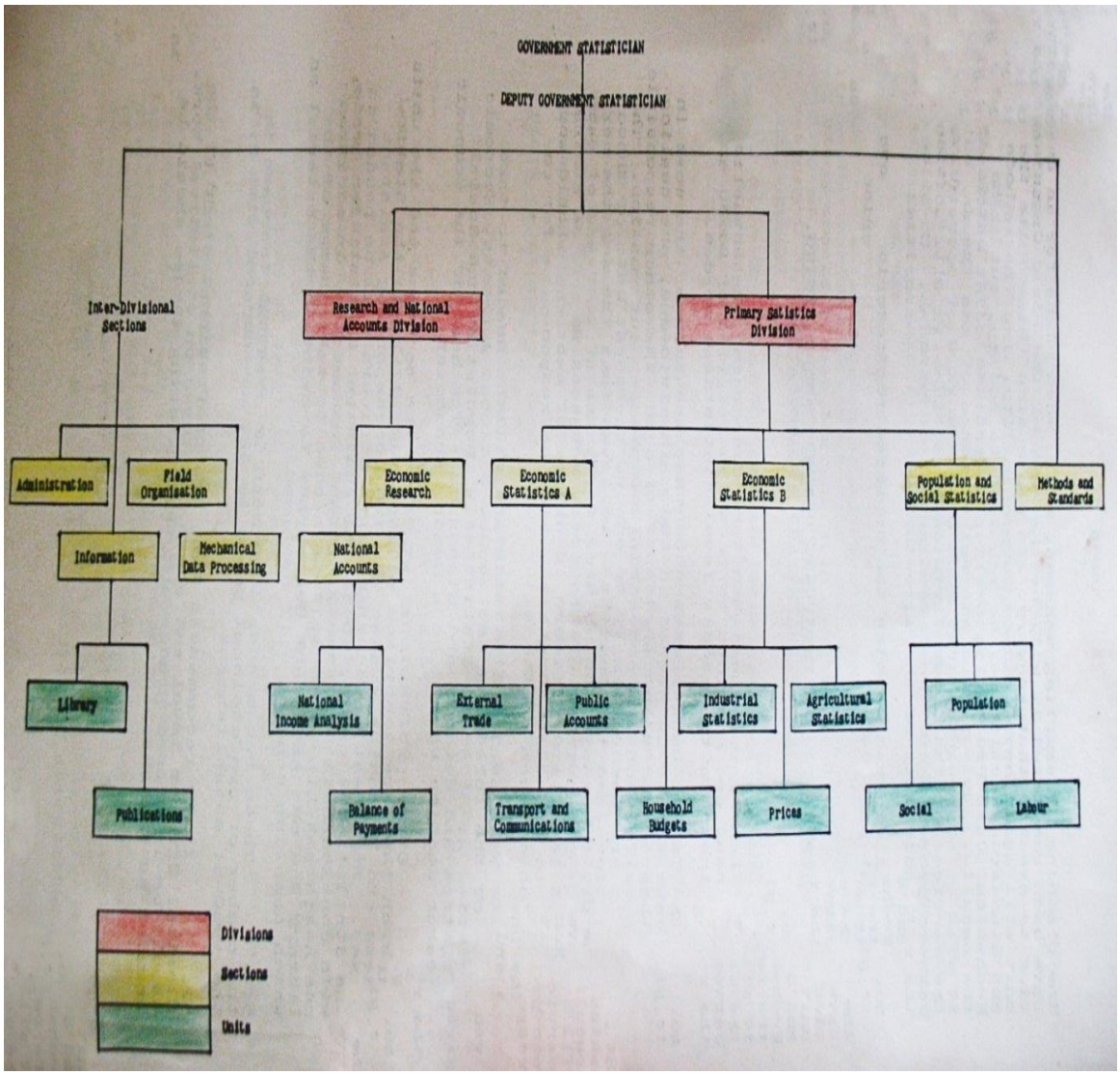

Figure 5.3: Organisational structure of the Central Bureau of Statistics. Source: Ghana (1960, 8).

The CBS presented a more complex organizational structure, based on a clear distinction between divisions, sections and units. Increasing attention was paid to national income accounting. While in 1950s Ghana national income accounts were still in their infancy,[65] in 1959 Booker (1959, 15) noted that the 'compilation of national income accounts serves as a good guide to the optimum development of the work of the Office and may be used as the means of co-ordinating all statistical activities'. Similarly, the committee responsible for the creation of the CBS stressed that the National Income Accounts and Research

[65] See chapter 2.

Division 'will have a considerable controlling influence over the development of work in other sections of the Bureau' (Ghana 1960, 4). Yet, the most important changes were the constitution of a Methods and Standards section, and of an inter-divisional section, comprising administration, information, mechanical data processing and the field organisation. Formally independent from any division, the Methods and Standards section was in charge of the most technical aspects of statistical work, related to the construction of sampling frames for different inquiries, and the provision of advice for the improvement of sampling methodologies adopted by the other divisions (Ghana 1960, 26).

The other crucial transformation, and one that was more directly related to the experience of census-taking, can be observed in the reform of the relationship between the statistical office and the field. Indeed in the *Report on Creation of Central Bureau of Statistics* it was clearly acknowledged that the main deficiency in Ghanaian statistics lay in the lack of data on the private sector of the economy, comprising households and firms (Ghana 1960, 2). These shortcomings, affecting the quality of price indexes and inhibiting the construction of reliable national income accounts figures, were also indicative of the uneven capacity of the state to establish a capillary presence over the territory. As it had already been noted by W.L. Booker in 1959:

> the development of a statistical organisation capable of meeting Ghana's needs does not only consist primarily of establishing a central office for the processing of data. […] [A]dequate statistical coverage can only be achieved by direct contact with the relatively small units of which the economy is composed (Booker 1959, 15).

The task of establishing *direct contact* with the units composing the economy, which as we have seen became the lynchpin of the new social practices embodied in the census, fell on the newly created *Field Organisation*. This comprised several roles, including junior enumerators for recording data on households and senior enumerators responsible for supervising the former's work and collecting data on industrial firms (Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics 1961, 8).[66] The importance attached by the statistical office to the field organization led

[66] The envisaged structure for the new Field Organization was completed by field supervisors and higher field supervisors, 'responsible for sub-divisions of the area covered by each regional office' and a senior statistical assistant 'in general control of the operations in each region' (Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics 1961, 8).

to plans for a remarkable expansion of the staff employed in the division: from the 250 people employed in 1960 to an estimated 600 in 1962 (Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics 1961, 1). Members of the field organisation were now endowed with water filters, malaria prophylaxis, and camping equipment to allow them to reach the most remote rural areas (Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics 1961, 76).

The relevance of the field organisation arose directly from what was perceived as the lamentable quality of the information available about households and firms. With reference to the household budget studies discussed in chapter 2, it was pointed out that the adoption of radically different classifications for urban and rural areas, hindered the comparability of the information obtained (Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics 1961, 80). Thus the field organization was placed in charge of a continuous collection of more standardised data on household budgets in order to create a national sample.

Furthermore in contrast with the past, the field organization of the statistical office had to be made *permanent*, thus replacing 'the mobile staff used for field surveys in the past' (Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics 1961, 36). Specifically it was recommended that, following the establishment of the field organisation, there should be 'as little movement of staff between different parts of the country as possible, the object being to ensure that all officers become thoroughly familiar with their own districts and the people and the organisations in those districts (Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics 1961, 26). Significantly, besides Accra, the other region selected for 'testing' the new permanent organisation was the Northern region (Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics 1961, 7), arguably the most neglected so far by systematic statistical inquiries, and the one that presented most problems.[67] The pilot census pointed out the existence of a language problem: most of the enumerators, who were southerners, in the Northern regions had to rely on the work of a local interpreter. While this could be useful in some instances, as the interpreter could act as a guide and make sure that no dwelling was omitted, Gil estimated that it would increase the cost of enumeration by 50%, and therefore in the actual census enumerators had to be

[67] For example in the 1960 population census the lower rate of literacy and the smaller number of teachers available in the region led planners to employ members of the Department of Agriculture as enumerators. Central Census Committee – Second Meeting held at the Prime Minister's Conference Room at 9 a.m. on 9th December 1959, p. 3, PRAAD RG 3/5/1816/237.

selected among the local people (Census Office and Gil 1959, 18). Although the perceived scientific value of statistics relies in their capacity to 'escape the bounds of locality and of culture' (Porter 1995, 389), the importance of specific *contextual* knowledge, cumulated by the enumerators over time and not easily replicable by training or the adoption of standardised procedures, became an important element in the making of the Field Organization. This 'field-intensive' approach (again under the supervision of a UN statistical expert), estimated to employ up to 3,488 teachers as enumerators,[68] was the backbone of the first postcolonial industrial census, covering mining, quarrying, construction, electricity, gas and steam (Republic of Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics 1965).[69] Indeed in the case of industrial statistics field methods were perceived as a more reliable (although more expensive) alternative to postal questionnaires which, tried out in the past, had elicited very low response rates.[70]

On the other hand the transformations experienced by Ghanaian statistics in the early 1960s cannot be fully understood without referring to the changing legislative context. The 1961 Statistics Act, replacing the 1950 colonial Gold Coast Statistics Ordinance, greatly expanded Nkrumah's personal powers in the field of statistical policy. The Act placed the CBS directly under the Office of the President, in contrast with the Office of the Government Statistician which depended, as it is still sometimes the case in Sub-Saharan African countries, on the Ministry of Finance (Jerven 2013, 92), the CBS was directly placed under the Office of the President. This shift was probably no coincidence, and should perhaps be understood in the context of the degenerating relationship between Nkrumah and Komla A. Gdebemah, who had served as Minister of Finance until 1960. After becoming the victim of a poisonous derogatory campaign conducted by the party press, Gbedemah left the country in voluntary exile in order to avoid imprisonment for political reasons (Tignor 2006, 92). The new powers vested in the figure of the president included 'to make regulations generally for the better

[68] Summary for Appendix no. 1, Recruitment of enumerators and supervisors for Ghana Industrial Census, 1962, PRAAD RG 3/5/1817/397.
[69] Although this was preceded by the publication of an industrial directory in 1960 (Ghana Central Bureau of Statistics 1960).
[70] A pioneer and unpublished example of colonial 'industrial' census on Accra, clearly showing the lamentable quality of data collected on non-agricultural economic activities, can be found in PRAAD RG 7/1/359.

carrying into effect of the provisions of this Act' and to take decisions concerning the content of the statistical information required at a given point in time (Republic of Ghana 1961, clause 15, p. 9). Although there is no evidence suggesting that Nkrumah ever used these new powers to modify significantly the collection of statistics, there is little doubt that the authoritarian orientation of the government became reflected in the legislation disciplining the collection and dissemination of statistics.

5.4 Conclusion

As pointed out by Martha Lampland, 'assuming that the effective use of numbers depends upon their veracity obscures crucial social processes at the heart of modernizing practices' (Lampland 2010, 378). Thus, regardless of the adherence of the final figures to the actual number of people present in Ghana on census night, it is more important from our point of view to identify in the 1960 census the first example of a new type of statistical inquiry in which the nation-state and the national economy emerged, like in the case of Egyptian cadastral mapping described by Timothy Mitchell (2002, 93), through a series of series of removals and relocations of knowledge in the interaction between the office and the field. This reconceptualization occurred through the institutionalisation of a new set of ideas and social practices, contributing to construct the image of an authoritarian and technocratic state, but at the same time founded on an understanding of statistics as the outcome of a cooperative interaction between state representatives and counted subjects. In this sense the educational practices promoted by the UN expert with the census education campaign, and then somehow 'appropriated' by the socialist regime with the Young Pioneers can be seen as expression of an unresolved tension between an authoritarian political vision and 'democratic' statistical practices. The notion of a field-intensive statistical practice, marking the capillary presence of the state over its territory (and protected by a stricter statistical law), explains part of the diversity between the structure and organization of the CBS and its predecessor.

Of course, the expansion of the state presence in the field does not imply that people's total and unconditional trust for statistical purposes had been totally

won: the post enumeration survey, taking place shortly after the main enumeration in a sample of locations, reported that 'the unsophisticated people in towns and villages could not understand why, after the success of the main Census count, another large-scale operation should be mounted' and occasionally 'put up a certain passive resistance and in a few cases even adopted an unkind attitude toward the P.E.S. interviewer' (Ghana Census Office 1971, vol. VI, xxv). But even with these qualifications the case of the Ghanaian census illustrates that there is more in the making of postcolonial nation-state via statistics than adopting standardised formats: nations can also be made by conveying and institutionalising new representations of political power in the field. This suggests that a broader understanding of the relationship between statistics and state building requires the expansion of historical analysis from the templates adopted by the statistical office to the inclusion of the practice of data collection in the field, and more broadly an exploration of the political constellation within which statistical knowledge was produced and disseminated.

On the other hand there is no doubt that the 1960 census provided planners with what at the time seemed a more accurate and extensive representation of the national economy. Even before the final figure of the total population, amounting to 6,726,815, was published (Ghana Census Office, vol. I, xiii) the preliminary results made public in May 1960 showed clearly that the colonial censuses of 1931 and 1948 suffered from severe underreporting (Oswald 1960, 7). In a tentative estimate of Ghanaian GDP in 1958 appeared in 1960 in the *Economic Bulletin of Ghana*, R.R. Oswald, a UN expert in national income accounts and one of the people responsible for the reform of the statistical office described in the previous section explicitly pointed out that around 87% of his national income figures were either highly or partially dependent on population statistics.[71] Similarly in their mid-1960s extensive study of the Ghanaian economy Walter Birmingham, I. Neustadt and Omaboe argued that 'The presentation of a conventional macroeconomic study of Ghana is a task that has been made possible only in the very recent past' thanks to a number of statistical projects which significantly

[71] A similar point was made in the same years by Nigerian economist Pius Okigbo, who claimed that the possibility of constructing per capita measures of Nigerian GDP that were reliable and internationally comparable was 'aggravated by the lack of adequate population data' (Okigbo 1962, 1).

included ‘the 1960 Population Census’ (Birmingham, Neustadt and Omaboe 1966, 37).[72] Although in itself the production of statistics in 1960s Ghana played a crucial role in reconfiguring the relationship between knowledge of the economy, and the identity and reach of the nation-state, the most important potential contribution of postcolonial statistics relied in informing and guiding a broader, more complex and more ambitious task: the design of development planning.

6. Forging a New Economy: The *Seven-Year Plan for National Reconstruction and Development*

> And the people bowed and prayed
> To the neon god they made.
> And the sign flashed out its warning,
> In the words that it was forming.
>
> *Simon and Garfunkel ‘The Sound of Silence’*

The government’s dream of forging a new economy on the base of the statistical evidence produced in the early 1960s found its most articulate and ambitious embodiment in the *Seven-Year Development Plan for National Reconstruction and Development* (Ghana Office of the Planning Commission 1964, hereafter GOPC 1964). Approved by the Parliament on the 16th March 1964, the *Seven-Year Plan* (7YP hereafter) was the economic blueprint for Ghana’s transition towards industrialization. The plan also attempted to translate into economic policies some of the ideas expressed in the *Programme for Work and Happiness*, the political manifesto published by the CPP (1962) in which the party solemnly stated its commitment to industrialization and economic development as means towards the final goal of socialist construction.

The paramount importance attached to development plans by the political leaders in the postcolonial world needs to be understood within a broad intellectual context, dominated by the perception of economists as social engineers (Morgan 2003) and, more generally, by the trust vested in a handful of ‘experts’ for

[72] Even in recent years the Ghana Statistical Service (2005, xv) acknowledged that ‘the 1960 census was a classic example of […] improvements in data collection methods, objectives, scope and production of adequate and reliable demographic information’.

reorganising society and nature (Scott 1998; Bounneil 2000, 267). The extent to which the 7YP embodied a more general concern with the possibility of shaping the world according to 'scientific' principles can be found in Nkrumah's words, who on the day of its launch defined the plan as 'a programme of social and economic development based on the use of science and technology to revolutionize our agriculture and industry' (Nkrumah [1964] 2009b).[1]However, by the end of the plan's implementation period with the fall of the regime in 1966, the change envisaged in the plan had not occurred. Indeed the country's economic conditions had considerably worsened: the growth rate (one of the main policy targets of the plan) had slowed down, inflation had risen, public debt was skyrocketing and foreign exchange reserves had been depleted on prestige projects of dubious economic value. But did this imply that, as suggested by Tony Killick (1978, 140) the plan was simply 'a piece of paper with an operational impact close to zero'?

The chapter analyses the plan's intellectual genealogy, placing it both in the context of Ghanaian colonial planning and contemporary planning experiments in 1960s West Africa. It is argued that plan, incorporating many of the tenets prevailing in 1950s and 1960s development economics, allows to observe the new expectations placed on economists as experts in charge for transforming a country's fate.

The second part of the chapter deals with the plan's implementation. Admittedly the fragmentary nature of the surviving archival evidence does not allow a detailed understanding of the multiple ways in which the plan shaped the Ghanaian economy between 1964 and 1966. Yet, it is argued that an assessment of the plan based on its own terms (typically in the form of macroeconomic aggregates or production targets, like much existing literature has done), while remaining a helpful departure point to judge a country's performance, it is unlikely to capture fully the variety of concrete ways in which the plan shapes the economy. Specifically, it is suggested that although the plan failed to transform the national economy according to its own design, it might have mobilised and institutionalised new power relations at the micro-level.

[1] Nkrumah's speech is also reproduced at the beginning of the plan (GOPC 1964, ix-xxii).

The chapter is divided into four sections. Section 6.1 discusses the design of the 7YP, by recounting the making of the planning machinery, placing the document in the context of the evolution of Ghanaian planning since colonial times, and comparing it with contemporary experiences from other African countries. Section 6.2 explains in detail the ends and means of the plan. With reference to the former aspect, it is shown that popular representations of the plan created a new political narrative about the state's capacity through the plan to facilitate the country's transition towards economic progress. Secondly, the economic strategy of the plan is described. Section 6.3 addresses the problem of how and why the plan failed to align Ghana with the planners' expectations, presenting a snapshot of mistakes in planning design, performance of the state sector and macroeconomic conditions, as well as formulating additional hypotheses on the actual impact of the plan on the national economy. Section 6.4 offers some concluding remarks.

6.1 Designing a new economy

6.1.1 A brief history of Ghanaian development planning

The historical significance of the 7YP can be fully grasped only when placed in the longer history of Ghanaian planning since colonial times. Albert Waterston, the World Bank expert in charge of advising on the improvement of the planning machinery in the aftermath of Nkrumah's fall, went as far as to say that 'development planning in […] Ghana antedates all other development plans in the modern world, even that in the Soviet Union' (Waterson and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 1966, 2).[2] As it can be seen from table 6.1, the practice of 'development planning' started as early as 1920, and since then became a recurring element of the political economy of the Gold Coast. Following independence in 1957, before the 7YP the government launched the so-called *Consolidation Plan* (1958-1959) which brought to a conclusion the projects started

[2] Of course, leaving aside the somehow contentious definition of 'development planning' (as distinct from other types of economic planning), Waterson ignores other experiences of 20th century planning which predated both Ghana and the Soviet Union. Perhaps the most interesting example of this remains German planning during World War I. For an early account of how German war planning could have informed the building of socialism, see the writings collected in Neurath (2005).

in the terminal phase of colonial rule. This was followed by the *Second Development Plan*, suspended in 1961.

Plan no.	Title of Plan	Period scheduled for implementation	Period implemented
1	The Guggisberg Ten-Year Development Plan	1920-1930	1920-1927
2	A Ten-Year Plan of Development and Welfare for the Gold Coast	1946-1956	1946
3	Ten-Year Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the Gold Coast	1951-1961	1951
4	The First Five-Year Plan Development Plan	1951-1956	1951-1957
5	The Consolidation Plan	1958-1959	1958-1959
6	The Second Development Plan	1959-1964	1959-1961
7	Seven-Year Development Plan for National Reconstruction and Development	1964-1970	1964-1966

Table 6.1: Ghana's development plans up to 1966. Source: Ewusi (1973, 1).

The 7YP simultaneously represented a marked rupture from older planning documents and the exacerbation of trends that emerged in the late colonial period. In contrast with the colonial period, when 'development plans' tended to amount to 'shopping lists' of projects to be undertaken by different government departments, the 7YP was a highly theoretical document aiming at designing a comprehensive strategy for the economy as a whole. This was clearly acknowledged in the final text of the document, described as

> the first attempt in Ghana to formulate a development plan with a wide concern for the growth of the economy as a whole in contrast to previous planning which has been largely limited to programmes of public works and social development (GOPC 1964, 292).

On the other hand the 7YP embodied the further development of trends which characterised previous planning experiences. One is the increasing employment of the expertise of economists.[3] Whereas the colonial plans relied on administrative personnel, the *Second Development Plan* bore the imprint of W. Arthur Lewis, one of the fathers of development economics and the author of

[3] For further discussion on the practice of colonial planning in comparative perspective see the classic study by Niculescu (1958). Interestingly Barbu Niculescu wrote this book while working in the research unit of the economics department at the University of Ghana.

important contributions on development planning.[4] As it is shown in the next section, in the formulation of the *Seven-Year Development Plan* the expertise of professional economists came to play an even bigger role.

The second trend is the increasing amount of expenditures assumed in the plan (Ewusi 1973). [5] Colonial economic policy was dominated by the constraints of sound finance and fiscal conservatism, based on the assumptions that colonies should pay for themselves. Since the 1950s, also thanks to the rise of Keynesian economics, expansionary policies and deficit financing were more likely to be seen as legitimate policy tools to promote a structural transformation of underdeveloped economies. A closer look at the composition of the expenditures is indicative of the policy priorities prevailing among rulers at different points of time. In the case of Ghanaian planning, it is useful to distinguish three phases. The first, represented by the Guggisberg Plan, was characterised by a focus on infrastructure (accounting for roughly 90% of the total expenditures). The second phase, including the 1st Development Plan and the *Second Development Plan*, while maintaining a high percentage of expenditures on infrastructure, envisaged an impressive rise in the provision of social services like health and education, which accounted for an important part in the nationalist revendications during decolonization. The 7YP inaugurated a new phase, not only characterised by much higher expenditures, but also by the fact that a much higher percentage of government investment was devoted to productive investment in agriculture and, above all, in manufacturing, rather than to social services.[6]

But in spite of all these trends and diversities, what these most of these planning experiments share is that they were abandoned before the estimated date for completion. This is a powerful reminder of the role played by volatile political developments, unstable cocoa prices and changes in economic ideologies in making outdated specific visions of the economy's present and future.

[4] See for example Lewis ([1949] 1963), Lewis (1966) and, especially important in this context, the article published in *The Economic Bulletin of Ghana* following the preparation of the *Second Development Plan* (Lewis 1959).

[5] The exception to this trend was represented by the *Consolidation Plan*, but simply because it aimed at completing projects already started before independence.

[6] The decomposition (in percentage) of total government investment in 'agriculture and industry' vs. 'social services and infrastructures' is 11.2 and 88.8 for the *First Five-Year Development Plan*, 20.3 and 79.7 for the *Second Development Plan*, and 37.3 and 62.7 for the 7YP (Ewusi 1973, 38).

6.1.2 The new planning machinery

When W. Arthur Lewis arrived in Ghana in October 1957 to act as Economic Advisor to the government, the most important body in charge of planning was the Standing Development Committee. While not changing radically its outlook, an important part of Lewis' early work in preparing the *Second Development Plan* consisted in fostering the exchange of regular information within the planning unit, and consolidate its distinctive expertise vis a vis the proposals and suggestions put forward by the different government departments. All these elements emerge in a letter sent by Lewis shortly after his arrival in Ghana:

> When a five-year plan is being made it is usual for the members of the planning unit to meet once a week in Seminar to decide what line to take on major policy issues. Members of other departments may be invited occasionally, where their departments are concerned, but more usually this is a purely internal affair […]
>
> This is part of building up the authority of the planning unit […] The planners do not merely accept what the departments put forward, perhaps trimmed down to size. The departments may be expert on professional techniques – pathology or road making or electricity or whatever it might be- but they are usually pretty deficient at making economic or social policy. […] I feel strongly that our planning unit should seize the initiative in framing the policies of the next five-year plan, and that we should therefore adopt the usual procedure of having a weekly seminar on policy matters.[7]

Seminars were indeed organized on themes as different as sewerage in urban areas, housing policy – defined by Lewis 'a complete mess',[8] road development, education, electricity, tourism and, of course, issues of monetary policy and public finance.[9] Yet, in spite of the planning unit's hard work and the extensive propaganda organised to celebrate the launching of the *Second Development Plan* (1959-1964) in the summer of 1959 as an important achievement,[10] the plan was abandoned in 1961. As recalled by Omaboe,

[7] Letter of W. Arthur Lewis to Mr. Taylor and Sir Robert Jackson, 21st December 1957, PRAAD RG 7/1/1671/1.
[8] Ibidem.
[9] The drafts of the notes presented at the seminars can be found in PRAAD RG 7/1/1671. An early list of topics that the planning unit wanted to cover is 'Development Seminars', PRAAD RG 7/1/1671/6. On monetary policy, see especially a draft by Lewis titled 'How much foreign exchange do we need?', PRAAD RG 7/1/1671/file not numbered.
[10] Hundreds of copies of a speech by Nkrumah celebrating the plan were sent to schools in all the regions of the country, Second Development Plan: Publicity Campaign, 16th July 1959, PRAAD RG 3/1/421/10. The government was also preparing a Development Exhibition in Accra, displaying with the help of 'models, photographs, drawings, graphs and charts' the economic and social

Government Statistician and Chairman of the planning commission in charge of the 7YP, the abandonment of Lewis' plan had also something to do with the visit paid by Nkrumah and some of his political affiliates to the Soviet Union, other parts of Eastern Europe and China in 1961:

> During their visit they had a chance to have explained to them the techniques of planning in these countries. They were naturally impressed by the rapid economic advance that these countries had made and they were able to compare the Second Five-Year Plan back in Ghana with the development plans of these countries. It is likely that they came to the conclusion that their plan was no plan at all (Omaboe 1966b, 440).[11]

Since the *Second Development Plan* seemed inadequate and detached from the new socialist orientation of the government. During his 1961 trip to the Eastern Bloc Nkrumah asked for the advice of the Hungarian economist Joszef Bognar, former professor of trade at Karl Marx University of Budapest, and former elected major of Budapest and Minister of Home and Foreign Trade (Tignor 2006, 184). Bognar arrived in Accra in January 1962 and, with the help of two other Hungarian economists, he started working on a report. Although foreign observers were extremely worried that the Hungarian's contribution to the plan might result in Ghana's further embracement of Marxism (Tignor 2006, 184), the Bognar report occupied the wide grey area between socialist ideology and mainstream development planning, with its emphasis on protectionist policies, and the notion of capital accumulation as the main engine for growth.[12] One of the points raised in the report that found its way in the final draft of the plan, the notion that the national economy should strive for a growth rate of 5%, did not have necessarily anything to do with socialism. Not only was the achievement of rapid growth considered one of the ultimate goals of policy on both sides of the Cold War, but the United Nations themselves declared that the 1960s were the first decade when all countries should have striven for a 5% rate of growth per annum by the end of the decade (Ariga 2001, 198). Indeed one of the main reasons why development planning became, in the words of Gunnar Myrdal ([1968] 2000) '*the intellectual*

programmes undertaken under the plan by different government departments, Letter of the AG of the Development Commission to All Secretaries to Regional Commissioners, 17th July 1959, PRAAD RG 3/1/421/14.

[11] This is possibly also confirmed by the choice of a plan period of seven years, closely mirroring the Soviet seven-year plan for 1959-1965 period.

[12] For further discussion of this overlapping Killick (1978, 24-26).

matrix of the entire modernization ideology' in the 1950s and 1960s was its simultaneous capacity to cross the ideological boundaries reinforced by the Cold War, represent a template widely accepted by the new governance system of international organizations like the World Bank and the United Nations, and serve as a powerful tool in the hands of political leaders to situate the state at the centre of articulated representations of economic progress and social advancement.[13]

Bognar's overall impact on the plan was not particularly significant; its actual design was placed in the hands of a novel and rapidly expanding bureaucratic machinery. The Standing Development Committee (SDC), which contributed to the design of economic plans since the 1950s, was dissolved in 1961, in parallel with Gbedemah's self-exile and the expulsion of Kojo Botsio (former Minister of Agriculture) 'in the overall climate of political purges and expulsions orchestrated by leftist elements in the CPP' (Ariga 2001, 136). The SDC was replaced by a National Planning Commission (NPC hereafter), chaired by Nkrumah himself, composed of twenty-nine 'experts', variously drawn from Ministries, the Bank of Ghana, trade unions and Chambers of Commerce.[14] The NPC in turn established several sub-committees staffed with civil servants, consulted in their quality as experts in specific areas of economic and social intervention (health, finance, agriculture, industry, infrastructures, etc.). The NPC was served by an Office of the Planning Commission (OPC hereafter), a new government department, once again placed 'directly under the President' (Omaboe 1966, 451) and staffed with economists and statisticians. Besides Omaboe the main Ghanaian technician serving in both the NPC and the OPC was J. H. Mensah, Executive Secretary of the OPC.

The fact that the formulation of the plan could rely on a planning machinery staffed with Ghanaians who had the competence to make use of the increasing body of data collected by the CBS represented in itself a major achievement. As acknowledged by Omaboe in his 1963 presidential address to the Economic Society of Ghana:

[13] This idea has been captured in an insightful way by Morgan (2008, 20-25) with the notion of 'planning circles' in her study of the first postcolonial Nigerian development plan.
[14] A full list of the members of the National Planning Commission can be found in GOPC (1964 Appendix A, 304).

> until the creation of the Office of the Planning Commission there was no governmental technical body sufficiently equipped to make use of statistical data in the formulation of economic decisions. It is true there was a Development Secretariat which was largely responsible for the preparation of the previous Development Plans, but it was just another government administrative organ staffed mostly with administrative officers. […] the institution was unable to make use of statistical data available at the time […]
>
> The position has now changed completely. We have now an Office of the Planning Commission staffed by both Ghanaian and non-Ghanaian economists and other experts. […] In drawing up [the Seven-Year] plan the Planning Office has attempted to make full use of the modern tools of development planning and has stretched to the limit the services of the Central Bureau of Statistics (Omaboe 1963, 4-5).

On the other hand it would be inaccurate to think that the planning process was simply a triumph of technical expertise and was untouched by the increasing obsession with 'ideological correctness' characterising the last years of Nkrumah's rule. Indeed Nkrumah established a Special Socialist Development Committee (SSDC) in order 'to ensure that the socialist principles of the Government were kept in view with plans submitted by the Ministries'.[15] But the lack of further evidence on the SSDC makes it impossible to understand if it played any significant role in the planning process. Perhaps Nkrumah's most significant personal contribution to the reform of the planning machinery took place in June 1963 when, after requesting more information about the organisational structure of the OPC, he 'directed […] that a special division in the Planning Commission be established specifically for Research and Analysis'.[16] This division, dealing with fiscal and monetary policies, the formulation of future '7-year plans', annual plans and perspective plans, would supplement the other main divisions of the OPC.[17] These were a Project Planning Division (including an industrial planning unit, an agricultural planning unit and an infrastructure and social services unit), a Programming Division (including a Development Estimates Section and a Construction Unit), a Plan Management and Implementation Division, and a

[15] Extracts from the minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on 16th August 1960, item 17. Other business, iv Special Socialist Development Committee, PRAAD RG 7/1/1683/2.
[16] Letter of Okoh, Office of the President to J.H. Mensah, Office of the Planning Commission, 11th June 1963, PRAAD RG 2/3/104/1.
[17] Organisational Structure of the Office of the Planning Commission (attachment of a letter of J.H. Mensah to the Principal Secretary, Establishment Secretariat, 17th August 1963), PRAAD RG 2/3/104/4.

Manpower division.[18] Unfortunately there is no evidence allowing a further exploration of the tasks and the functioning of the OPC's sub-divisions, but it can be inferred that there was a trend towards making each division of the OPC dependent upon a Principal Economics Officer (presumably someone trained in economics).[19]

The increasing importance attached to economists in policy-making was not a phenomenon limited to the planning commission. For example Nicholas Kaldor visited Ghana in the summer of 1961 to advise the government on tax policy and fiscal reform; his proposals included a proposal to tax the profits of multinational companies, a compulsory savings scheme, and 'administrative reforms to stamp out corruption' (Targetti 1992, 18). While the first proved particularly successful, and was incorporated into the country's financial legislation, the second led to an outbreak of unrest, riots and violence, and the third made the economist so adverse to some influential ministries 'that Nkrumah was obliged to abandon Kaldor's consultancy' (Targetti 1992, 18). Leaving aside the cases of foreign and prestigious advisors like Lewis and Kaldor, the newly established Ministry of Industries (emerging from the liquidation of the colonial development corporations) became another important site for the re-articulation of the link between economists and industrial development.[20] As it can be seen in figure 6.1, economists were expected to fill many crucial posts and play a crucial role in the Ministry's division.

[18] Ibidem.
[19] 'Directorate', PRAAD RG 2/3/104/5.
[20] Pretty much along the lines described by the sociologist Shils (1957) in chapter 3.

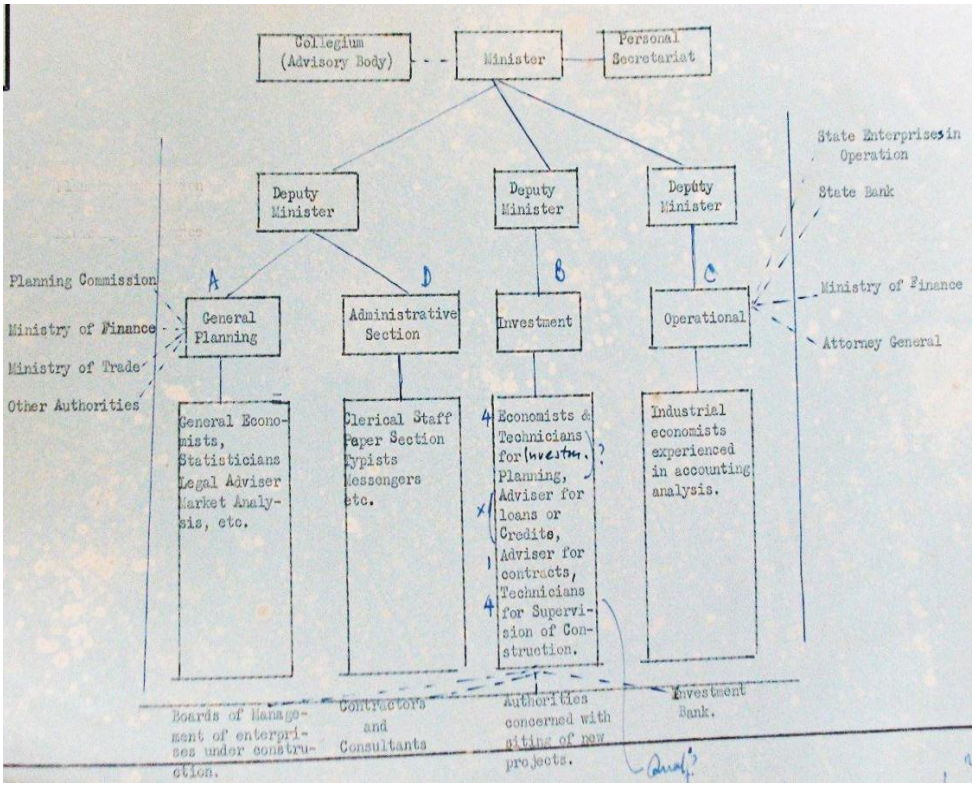

Figure 6.1: 1962 proposed organisation of the Ministry of Industries, with particular reference to the role of the economists. Source: PRAAD RG 7/1/2049/367.

Economists were sought to fill posts in the General Planning division, in charge of coordinating the work of the Ministry of Industries with that of the Ministries of Finance and Trade, as well as in the State Planning Commission, the Investment Division, and the Operational Division. Degrees in economics were also a precondition for a series of posts within the Ministry of Industry that are not included in the picture above, like the Industrial promotion officer, in charge of collating 'information relating to industries, industrialisation and investment problems',[21] as well as many posts in the Investment and Project division, largely concerned with collection and evaluation of pre-investment data, pre-investment negotiations and project analysis the assistant project officer should have held a degree in economics.[22] A qualification in economics was required to fill a post as Assistant Economics Officer in the General and Planning division, in charge of 'planning, co-ordination and formulation of economic and development policies, investigation into problems of general economic and development programme and

[21] Appendix 'A' Ministry of Industries – Entry Qualifications for Vacant Posts 1962, p.1, RG 7/1/2049/371.
[22] Ibidem, pp. 2-3, RG 7/1/2049/372-373.

the offering of advice about them'.[23] Thus economists were expected to be at the core of the industrial construction of Ghana,[24] at a time when the number of those studying economics at the University was indeed increasing.[25] However, in spite of the articulated planning machinery set up in the early 1960s, the time pressure placed by political rulers on the planning machinery was so intense that the penultimate draft of the plan was the product of the hasty work of J.H. Mensah alone (Tignor 2006, 186).

6.1.3 An 'exemplary' plan

Not only did the 7YP represent a break-through compared with previous planning attempts in Ghana, but more generally it emerged as an attempt to dialogue with contemporary development economics. The importance attached to the economics community's approval of the plan is confirmed by the fact that in April 1963 sixteen economists gathered in Accra to discuss Mensah's draft. The list of the attendees, looking like like 'a who's who of development economics' (Tignor 2006, 187), included old acquaintances of Ghana like Walter Birmingham, Dudley Seers (at the time working for ECA), W. Arthur Lewis, Nicholas Kaldor and Joszef Bognar, as well as first-time visitors like the distinguished theorist Albert

[23] Revised Entry Points for Professional Posts, Pensionable Appointments, 10th April 1962, PRAAD RG 7/1/2049/file not numbered. In May 1962 the qualification of Assistant Economics Officer in the General and Planning Division was rectified by suggesting that a qualification in economics was not sufficient, but only candidates with a 1st or a 2nd class would be considered, Revised Entry Points for Professional Posts, Pensionable Appointments, 23rd May 1962, PRAAD RG 7/1/2049/424.

[24] At the same time it would be misleading to think that economists were mostly employed in Ministries and in top level economic planning. The records of the Ghana Academy of Sciences, where economists accounted for the majority of places in the social sciences (Economics 33%, History 32%, sociology 12%, education 10%, political science 9%, anthropology 4%) suggest that many fellows with degrees in economics were employed in a variety of places, including secondary schools, the African Affairs Secretariat (the public body in charge of the promotion of Pan-African policy), the oil company Shell and Ghana Airways, among others. These data are based on Ghana Academy of Sciences (1965, 37-47).

[25] For example, while in the academic year 1964-65 there were 441 students taking courses in economics at the University of Ghana (76 of them as part of their BSc in Economics and the others as part of programmes in Administration, General Studies, etc.), the following year the students taking economics courses were 560 (77 of which were enrolled in a BSc in Economics). The numbers are from *The Economic Bulletin of Ghana* (1964a, 59) and *The Economic Bulletin of Ghana* (1966, 55).

Hirschman, and representatives of ECLA and African planning commissions and ministries.[26]

Among economists discussing development planning the scope for disagreement was certainly wide. Many economists in the Eastern bloc tended to think that, although most countries were producing policy documents titled 'development plans', something worth the name implied a centralised control of resources. In contrast Wolfgang Stolper, a former disciple of Joseph A. Schumpeter and the main author of the first development plan in postcolonial Nigeria,[27] stressed that structural uncertainty and 'the very lack of detailed knowledge' under which planning in Africa took place required 'that decision-making be decentralized and delegated' (Stolper 1966, 12).[28] Although the scope of disagreement on the 'right' principles of planning was wide, in his influential textbook *Development Planning: The Essentials of Economic Policy*, W. Arthur Lewis argued that a good development plan should include:

i) a survey of current economic conditions;

ii) a list of proposed public expenditures;

iii) a discussion of likely developments in the private sector;

iv) a macroeconomic projection of the economy;

v) a review of government policies (Lewis 1966, 13).

The 7YP contained all these elements. Current economic conditions (i), which in any case were analysed at great length in the annual *Economic Surveys* published by the CBS (as well as in the statistical tables frequently presented at the end of the issues of the *Economic Bulletin of Ghana*), usually preceded in the plan the discussion of specific policies. Proposed public expenditures (ii) were decomposed in great detail. Developments in the private sector (iii) were discussed, although not in great depth, with reference to the sources of financing of the plan, while a review of government policies (v) was scattered between

[26] The full list of the economists who attended the conference can be found in GOPC (1964, Appendix B, 305).
[27] On Stolper's experience in Nigeria, see Morgan (2008).
[28] The examples of Eastern European socialist and Stolper represent perhaps two extremes. A more precise way of thinking about this comes from Morgan (2008, 6), who claimed that most planning in the 1960s 'lay somewhere between the three extremes of the Eastern bloc central planning […], French 'indicative' planning […] and the simpler application of public-expenditure planning'.

several chapters. A 'macroeconomic projection of the economy' (iv) was also included, although in the form of a series of projections of specific aggregate variables like money supply and capital accumulation.

But what played an important role in making the plan look like an artefact speaking the economists' language was the incorporation of the so-called Harrod-Domar model. The Harrod-Domar growth model, emerged as a synthesis of the insights of Roy Harrod's 'An essay in dynamic theory' (Harrod 1939) and Evsey Domar's 'Capital Expansion, Rate of Growth and Employment' (Domar 1946) became the lynchpin of postwar growth economics. While the specific features of Harrod's and Domar's contributions differ considerably, the model postulated the existence of a relationship between the rate of growth of the economy over a certain period of time, aggregate savings, and capital stock. Specifically (following Harrod's, rather than Domar notation) the fundamental equation can be written as

$$g = s/C$$

where '*g'* equals the rate of growth of the national economy, 's' equals the marginal propensity to save (the level of aggregate saving '*sY'*, equal to the product of marginal propensity to save and the national income is assumed to be, consistently with the Keynesian tradition, equal to aggregate investments) and '*C'* was 'the value of capital goods require for the production of an additional unit of output' (Harrod 1939, 16). The equation, linking the rate of growth of the national economy, capital and savings, also allowed, following the inverse logic, to determine how much savings and capital were necessary in order to achieve the desired rate of growth (in Harrod's notation '*Gw*', or warranted rate of growth, in contrast with '*G*', the actual rate of growth experienced by the economy). This was how the model was incorporated in the 7YP: assuming that the government wanted to achieve a rate of growth of 5.5% (Gw), how much capital accumulation was necessary, considering that the population was growing at around 2.6% (as inferred from the provisional results of the 1960 population census)? What disappears in the Harrod-Domar equation is that in practice the 'desired' growth rate could either be based on accurate estimates of savings and capital available to the economy, or, as it was the case in Ghana, could be decided aprioristically, and then calculate the resources needed in terms of savings and capital (Tignor 2006, 187).

Leaving aside the many grounds on which it is possible to criticise this extremely simple model,[29] the cultural impact of the Harrod-Domar model as a tool for transforming economies (and, as a consequence, societies) was profound, as it can be seen in figure 6.2. The picture reproduces the cover of the leaflet illustrating the programme of the 1962 Nyasaland Economic Symposium, an important development economics conference.

[29] Douglas Rimmer (1973) went as to label the early attempts of economists like Harrod and Domar to think about development in aggregate, mechanicistic terms, a form of 'macromancy'. On the other hand, discussing in the 1960s what came to be known as the 'Harrod-Domar model', Harrod wrote 'Many years after I had made certain formulations in the field of growth theory and after Professor Domar had made similar formulations, there began to be references to the "Harrod-Domar model". I found myself in the position of Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme who had been speaking prose all his life without knowing it. I had been fabricating "models" without knowing it' quoted in Morgan (2012, 12).

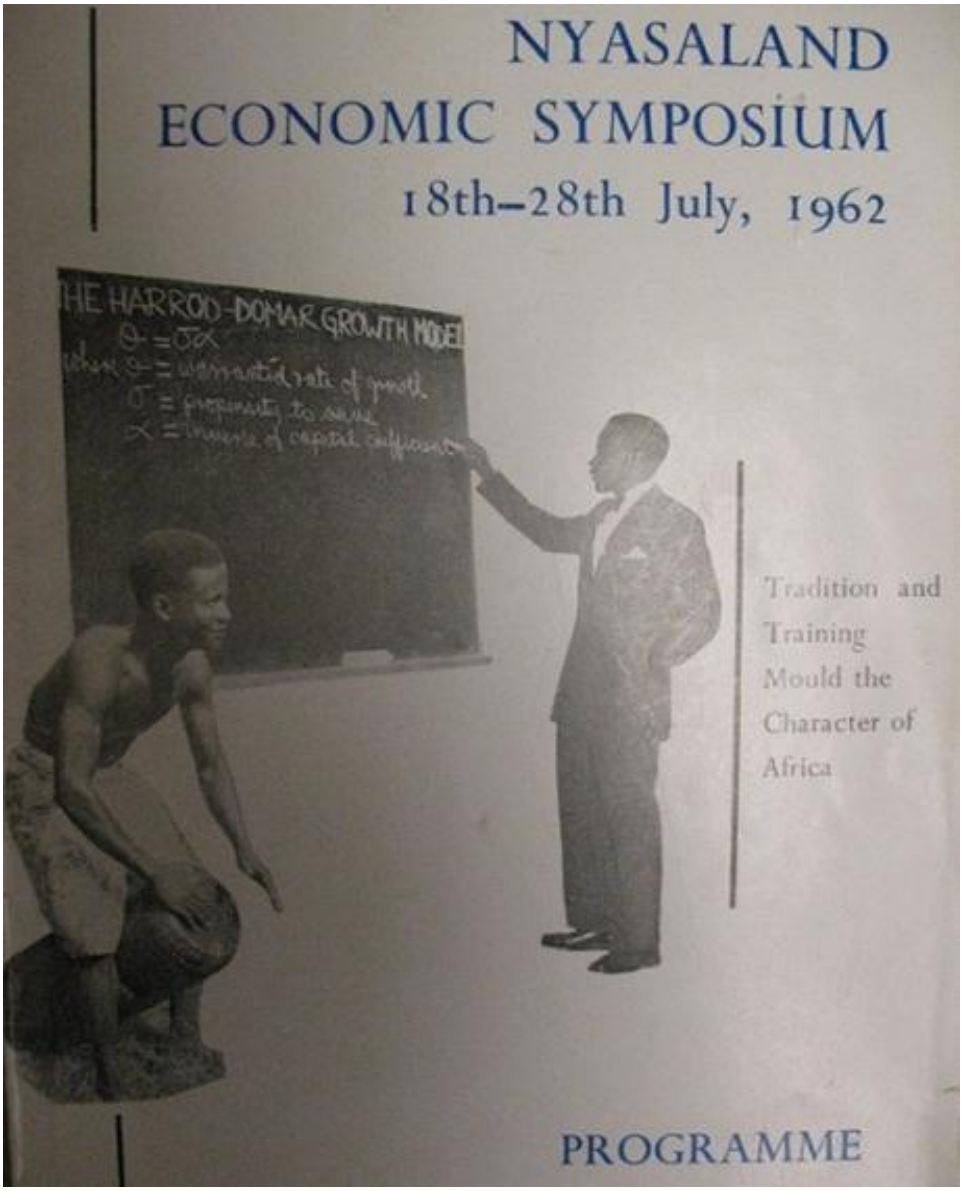

Figure 6.2: Cover of the leaflet illustrating the programme of the 1962 'Nyasaland Economic Symposium'. Source: Gerald Meier papers 1928-2003, box S1, 'Nyasaland conference'.

Leaving aside the slightly different notation used in the equation written on the blackboard,[30] the ultimate meaning of the picture was explained in the following way:

> The picture depicts life in Africa in the 1960s. […]. It portrays the uncanny ability of the African to derive joy from traditional cultural activities, and to master the techniques directly needed in the solution of the development problems of Africa. It reveals the secret of effective African nationhood, namely

[30] In the illustration θ is the rate of growth, σ the propensity to save, and α the inverse of capital coefficient (or, in Harrod's original notation, 1/C).

> a sense of oneness between the rural and the city African, between the educated and the uneducated, and between the rich and the poor.[31]

This interpretation makes explicit the perception, widely held at the time, of economists as modernising agents possessing knowledge of the techniques required for putting an end to 'underdevelopment' (in this case epitomised by the Harrod-Domar model) *and* creating modern 'nation-states'.[32] At the same time the illustration could be read as a subtle critique of 'traditional' institutions; while necessary to preserve Africa's cultural identity (and 'derive joy'), their potential contribution to economic development could only derive from their subjugation to the templates provided of the expert's technocratic knowledge.[33]

The distinctiveness of the 7YP emerges even more clearly when contrasted directly with the contemporary experiences of other African countries. Guinea for example, which shared with Ghana an ideological commitment to socialism, attached much importance to the first development plan after independence as a tool of structural transformation of the economy. However the weak statistical basis and the sudden departure of the French administrators following the 1958 referendum in which Guinea voted against maintaining its status within the France left the country virtually without trained manpower for the collection of statistical data and the design of the plan. Sékou Touré's populist rhetoric led the country to embark in what was defined 'development from below', such that each Party's village committee had to contribute to identifying the projects (W.I. Jones 1976, 141). The first draft of the plan, presented in April 1959, devoted more than 400 pages to the political goals and framework of the plan, and less than 20 to a discussion of investments (W.I. Jones 1976, 142).

Other plans lacked an integrated vision of what the economy should look like, and thus did not carve a role for the private sector. If in the case of Guinea the reason for this was partly ideological, even in 'capitalist' Sierra Leone,

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[31] Nyasaland Economic Symposium 18th -28th July 1962, Gerald Meier papers, box S1, Nyasaland conference.

[32] Of course, many economists were aware of the fact that the practice of postcolonial development plans could raise unreasonable expectations among African policy-makers, leading 'sober economists and technicians' to 'find themselves uncomfortably enveloped in ideology' (Sutton 1961, 43).

[33] In the Ghanaian context this approach certainly resonated with the struggle between the 'modernising' government of Kwame Nkrumah and the 'traditional'chiefs. For further discussion see Rathbone (2000).

American-trained Sierra Leonean David Carney prepared what was, among the plans produced in 1960s West Africa, the one that resembled most closely a colonial 'shopping list' (W.I. Jones 1976, 146). In contrast with the articulated statistical and planning machinery established in Nkrumah's Ghana, some West African countries lacked even basic statistical facilities. This was for example the case of Niger, where an embryonic statistical office was established only in 1959 (W.I. Jones 1976, 143). In other cases what was lacking (or perceived to be lacking) was indigenous manpower who had the right education and the right skills for plan design. Thus for the design of their socialist policies Mali and Guinea relied on the expertise of imported Marxists: the Egyptian Samir Amin and the Frenchman Jean Bernard in the case of Mali, and the Frenchman Charles Bettelheim in the case of Guinea' (Austin and Serra 2014, 248).

Nigeria's first postcolonial plan (Nigeria Federal Ministry of Economic Development 1962) provides an interesting comparison with the 7YP. Not only did Ghana and Nigeria share the same colonial tradition of 'shopping list' plans but, like the 7YP, the Nigerian plan was largely based on the expertise of professional economists. While the plan was mostly drafted by the Austria-born economist Wolfgang Stolper, it also relied extensively on the work of distinguished indigenous technocrats.[34] Like the 7YP, Nigeria's *National Development Plan, 1962-68* was based on a substantial backlog of updated statistical information, and should have been written, at least in Stolper's intention, in the shared language that would have allowed the plan to 'travel' and gain acceptance as a credible and reliable template by a wide range of actors, including the technocrats working with him, the Nigerian government (bot at the central and federal level), the World Bank, the Ford Foundation, and other sources of aid and technical assistance (Morgan 2008).[35] Yet, in spite of these qualifications, the

[34] Most notably, Pius Okigbo. For further discussion on Okigbo's role in the plan and more generally his contribution to theory and policy in Nigeria, see the essays collected in Guyer and Denzer (2005) (especially the memoir by Stolper 2005), and Austin and Serra (2014). For a detailed historical reconstruction of Stolper's contribution to the making of the plan, see Morgan (2008).

[35] However, the possibility of achieving 'consistency' in the plan proved to be more difficult than Stolper imagined, as exemplified by his conflict with the World Bank advisor Narayar Prasad. For further discussion of the implications of this conflict on the final outcome of the plan, see Morgan (2008).

Nigerian plan was seen by Reginald H. Green as 'superficially modest in its targets' (Green 1965c, 259).[36]

In contrast according to Green, who conducted a comparative study of development plans in Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and Tanzania, the 7YP Ghanaian was 'virtually a textbook in applied economic analysis and policy'.[37] Such a positive appraisal is perhaps not surprising given Green's overall support for Nkrumah's political project.[38] But even Douglas Rimmer, at the time lecturer in Economics at the University of Ghana and 'a critic of "statist" development policies well before this became a fashionable position' (Austin 1996, 555) acknowledged that the 7YP 'was regarded as one of the most impressive plan documents yet produced in Africa', drawing on 'statistical resources such as are available to very few African countries' and 'drafted by men of undoubted technical ability' (Rimmer 1969, 195).

6.2 Ends and means

6.2.1 Aims and narratives of progress

'Our aim, under this Plan' declared Nkrumah 'is to build in Ghana a socialist State which accepts full responsibility for promoting the well-being of the masses' (Nkrumah [1964] 2009b, 350).[39] The construction of socialism, however poorly defined, implied a much more significant role of the state in the economic realm

[36] I am not concerned here with establishing whether this was a consequence of Stolper's careful appraisal of the actual prospects and potential of Nigeria's economy, or, as it has been claimed by Green (1965c, 262) an unjustified scepticism about the potential of planning. For better or worse, the 'conservative' outlook of the Nigerian plan can be identified more easily when placed in comparative perspective. For example W.I. Jones (1976, 153) shows that, while in the Nigerian plan the envisaged average annual compound rate of investment growth over the plan period was only around 4.35%, for countries like Guinea and Mali this was equal to 14.35% and 28.7% respectively.

[37] This has to be taken quite literally, since numerous paragraphs of the plan read like a contemporary textbook in development economics. As evidence might suffice the long digression on the theory of import-substitution industrialization, and the lengthy exposition on the role of the state in correcting market failures in the section. These discussions were occasionally supplemented by an explicit presentation of what most economists would have considered to be simple common sense, like when it is said that 'the investment must be placed where it will yield the highest returns' (GOPC 1964, 265)..

[38] See chapter 3.

[39] Given the interconnection of socialism and Pan-Africanism in Nkrumah's Ghana, it is not surprising that the plan also mentioned the importance of not keeping an inward looking policy (GOPC 1964, 17), since 'Ghana's prospects for economic emancipation, like those of other African countries, ultimately depend upon the political and economic unification of Africa'(GOPC 1964, 22).

and, in the Ghanaian context, was inextricably linked with industrialization.[40] The importance attached by political authorities to the notion that industrialization largely equalled progress can be seen in a brief outline of the 7YP published in 1963 for popular consumption. Presenting a table showing per capita national incomes and percentage of working population engaged in agriculture (using 1960 data) for a small sample of developed and developing countries,[41] the booklet claimed that 'the richer the country, the smaller the proportion of the working population engaged with agriculture' (GOPC 1963, 3). To make the link between industrialization and economic development more intuitive, the booklet also employed pictorial statistics (figure 6.3).[42]

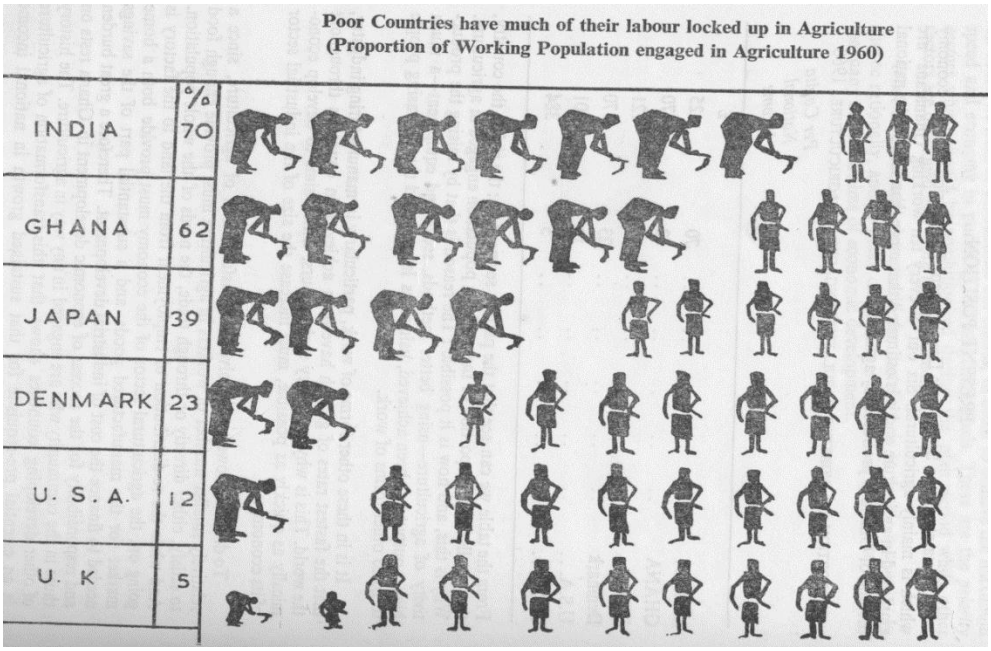

Figure 6.3: Pictorial statistics showing the percentage of workers employed in agriculture and in other sectors for a sample of developed and developing countries. Source: GOPC (1963, 4).

Although the punch-line 'Poor countries have much of their labour force locked up in Agriculture' is self-explanatory, the iconography of the picture is indicative of a broader intellectual context. Firstly, the clear-cut division between the 'modern' industry sector and 'traditional' agriculture became a linchpin for

[40] In Nkrumah's words 'Socialism, however, will continue to remain a slogan until industrialization is achieved' (Nkrumah [1964] 2009b, 351). But this was not necessarily the case in the context of other forms of African socialism: the 'rural socialism' pursued in Tanzania under Julius Nyerere remains the most interesting counterexample.

[41] An expanded version of this table can also be found in the definitive text of the plan (GOPC 1964, 8-9).

[42] Invented by polymath Otto Neurath, pictorial statistics emerged in the twentieth century as a powerful device to present statistical information in an intuitive form. For a recent assessment of this phenomenon, see Leonard (1999).

much development economics in the 1950s and 1960s, institutionalised by W. Arthus Lewis' seminal article on 'Economic Development with Infinite Supplies of Labour' (Lewis 1954). Also, the different stance held by the two different types of workers should be noted: whereas those employed in 'other sectors' stand in an apparently relaxed pose, the agricultural workers bend forward working on the land.

This presentation of the relationship between national income per capita and percentages of population working in agriculture and other sectors is the embodiment of a specific philosophy of history in which time is linear and, in a way that is remindful of Marx (1982, preface) 'The country that is more developed industrially only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future'.[43] Of course, this did not imply that all Ghana had to do was to wait for time to pass subjecting itself to the laws of historical development. Rather, while following a basic trend, progress was something that could be fostered or delayed by purposeful human action. In this context the state emerged as the key actor of change, and the plan in itself as the most significant heuristic tool guiding the transformation: the final text of the plan declared that the 'long term objectives of economic policy can be accomplished in a relatively short period if each development plan aims at maximising the rate of adoption of modern technology and the rate of productive investment' (GOPC 1964, 21).

There is a real sense in which popular representations of what could be achieved with the 7YP pointed at the creation of a new political iconography. As noted by Peter Caldwell (2000, 2) with reference to East Germany, this was built around three main elements: 'a subject who plans', 'an object of the plan', and 'a teleology'. More specifically,

> By way of an organized historical process, the plan was intended to move the object, society, from its present state to a future one. The subject of the plan was the party […]; the object of the plan was a transition […] to socialism […] (Caldwell 2000, 2).

Aristide Zolberg (1966, 64-65) perceptively noted that 1960s development plans were seen by the leaders of the new African nations as producing 'a

[43] On the other hand the articulation of an idea of progress based on a linear notion of time imbued development discourse even in more conservative environments. The classic case is Rostow's ([1960] 1991) theory of 'stages of economic growth'.

mechanical and clock-like contraption which can be manipulated by relatively educated and intelligent men, thus enabling them to control the future'. A combined reading of Zolberg and Caldwell point at an inherent tension in the nature of the plan in narratives of progress. On one hand the plan is an *historical subject*, almost a living thing that could, in the words of a 1980 Hungarian political dictionary 'strive […], ensure, […] guarantee' (quoted in Lampland 1995, 243) and articulate the link between the action of the state, the object of intervention (the economy, or society), and the final goal of socialist construction. On the other hand, if we build on Zolberg's clock analogy, development plans can be seen, like clocks according to Walter Benjamin, as 'monuments of a historical consciousness' (Benjamin 2007, 262). The different ways in which calendars and clocks 'count time' are expression of divergent philosophies of history and articulates different 'modes of historiography'.[44] In the 7YP 'the counting of objects was also paired with the counting of time' (Lampland 1995, 240) and the 'march of numbers' (Lampland 1995, 241) in the text of the plan embodied an alternative timeline around which a narrative of progress and redemption was institutionalised, and their relationship to the salvific action of the state was re-invented. This is especially evident in the speech given by Nkrumah to the Parliament in occasion of the launching of the plan:

> Mr. Speaker, Members of the National Assembly, 1964, the year in which we launch the Seven-Year Development Plan, will be hailed as the turning point in the history of Ghana. […]
>
> I can already see, in my mind's eye, a picture of Ghana as it will be by the end of the Plan period. I see a State with a strong and virile economy, its agriculture and industry buoyant [sic] and prosperous, an industrialised nation serving the needs of its people (Nkrumah [1964] 2009b, 367).

But what were the specific ways in which the plan hoped to bring this transformation to Ghana's economy?

[44] An enlightening discussion of this problem, with reference to the ideas of Walter Benjamin and Franz Rosenzweig, is Gibbs (2005).

6.2.2 The plan's strategy

The socialist rhetoric of the 7YP did not entail a 'revolutionary' strategy of total and sudden nationalization of the means of production. Over the plan period Ghana should remain a mixed economy in which state and private ownership coexisted, but where 'the public and cooperative sector of the productive economy should expand at the maximum possible rate' (GOPC 1964, x). Rather than shifting immediately to the production of capital goods, the plan envisaged a series of stages of industrial transformation aiming at first to manufacture locally those consumer products (like 'textiles, clothing, footwear, soap') which, due to the simple technology required, could be produced locally (GOPC 1964, 93). Given the increase in demand for these products experienced before the launching of the plan, and the fact that the implementation of the plan itself would have raised living standards, the local production of these goods could allow, by satisfying increasing demands, to save foreign exchange while increasing national revenues. Other crucial classes of consumer goods which represented the core of the industrial strategy described in the plan were food-processing, furniture and the 'assembling of components for the manufacture. The goal to move away from an economy largely dependent on the export of raw materials did not leave untouched cocoa, the country's main export. Indeed the planners optimistically envisaged that 'by the end of the Seven-year Plan perhaps one third of the total exports of cocoa from Ghana shall be in the form of cocoa products rather than cocoa beans' (GOPC 1964, 97).

However, the transformation of Ghana into an industrialised economy also depended crucially on the completion of the Volta River project (GOPC 1964, 203). This project, defined 'the single biggest step that has been taken in the economic and industrial development of Ghana', (GOPC 1964, 203) represented also the single most important investment envisaged in the plan, amounting to roughly £G 135.8 million. The Volta scheme consisted of two main projects: the completion of the Hydro dam (that should have absorbed £G70 million), and the establishment of the Aluminium Smelter Project (accounting for £G 58.6 million) (GOPC 1964, 203). Besides providing cheap electricity to the country and setting up the production of capital goods, the Volta River project was thought of as an

undertaking presenting 'new opportunities for industrial development' (GOPC 1964, 211). These included the possibilities associated with the exploitation of limestone and iron ore deposits by integrating them in a system of cheap water transportation, as well as, consistently with the overall industrial strategy, the possibility of using the man-made lake as a strategic basin for the development of 'food processing and packing industries, leather, sugar and perhaps textiles' (GOPC 1964, 211). The Volta River project was simultaneously a triumph of what James Scott (1998) defined the 'high modernist imagination', and an expression of the subtleties of Cold War politics. If it is likely that Nkrumah saw in the Volta River Project a clear application of Lenin's famous dictum 'Communism is the Soviets plus Electrification', the process leading to the completion of the Volta River Project was made possible by American corporate power (specifically, the Kaiser Industries).[45] Furthermore, economic aid for the completion of the project came from sources as different as the British government, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. On the other hand the Volta River Project is a powerful reminder of how easily projects undertaken by the late colonial state could acquire new guises under the developmental agendas of postcolonial regimes.

In spite of the focus on industrialization, the plan carved an important role for agriculture: 'Ghana needs an agricultural revolution as a precondition for the Industrial Revolution at which policy is aiming eventually' (GOPC 1964, 56). Policy in the agricultural sector aimed at improving the nutritional conditions of the population (worsened by an increasing food deficit, leading in turn to increasing food imports and a rise in the cost of living), increase rural incomes, and expand the production of agricultural raw materials for export (GOPC 1964, 61). This was particularly crucial, since the OPC rightly noted that foreign exchange was, and was likely to remain for a long time 'one of the scarcest of the resources needed for Ghana's economic development' (GOPC 1964, 56). Even in the case of agriculture, the state was expected to play a much bigger role. Out of the £G 67.5 of investment in agriculture over the plan period (mostly devoted to the extension of development services, machinery, research and seeds production and distribution), the state sector (composed of the State Farms Corporation, the

[45] For further discussion on this aspect, see Decker (2011).

Workers Brigades and the United Ghana Farmers' Co-operatives) was allocated £G 16.6.

The achievement of the radical transformation envisaged in the plan required not surprisingly an impressive amount of financial resources. Large sums of money were needed in order to set up new industries, modernize agriculture and pay for the marked expansion in social services and infrastructure. The total expenditures forecasted over the plan period, ending in 1969-70, amounted to a striking 1, 249 £G million (GOPC 1964, 277). Although the government's capacity to raise revenues saw a dramatic increase since the 1950s,[46] data from recent financial years pointed at the economy's persistent dependence on cocoa: in 1961-1962 for example, export duties on the crop still accounted for roughly 30% of the total ordinary revenue. Besides planning to increase the government's capacity to extract enough revenues to cover recurrent expenditures (estimated at £G 727 million over the plan period), the government was to contribute to the financing of the development effort through the profits of the state corporations (expected to provide 23 £G million), yield from other existing taxes (£G 661), levy new taxes up to £G 160, and sell goods and services for a total value of £G 65 million (GOPC 1964, 277).

However, in spite of much emphasis on internal revenues, the 7YP was not constructed as an experiment in financial autarchy. Nkrumah's frequent and vocal critiques of neo-colonialist nations and companies did not imply that foreign capital was not welcome. Not only was the government expecting to mobilise £240 million out of the £ 476 million of total public investment through foreign loans and grants (GOPC 1964, 261), but it was hoped that foreign private capital could contribute an additional £100 million (Ewusi 1973, 71). These expectations were placed within a broader legislative context, which had found a significant expression in the Capital Investment Act, passed in 1963, and granting 'a wide

[46] This had been achieved through a series of successive steps: the company tax, levied in 1961-62 up to £G 11.82 million out of the total ordinary revenues of £G 95.75 million (GOPC 1964, 252). Between 1960 and 1961 a personal income tax was added, but overall direct taxation contributed still very little to state finances due to the low level of personal income tax, to the narrow tax base and, as far as the company tax went, to the 'modest rate of expansion of the productive base of the economy outside cocoa farming' (GOPC 1964, 255).

range of fiscal and other incentives to would be investors' (Killick 1978, 37). Yet, the economy's performance proved to be disastrous.

6.3 What went wrong?

6.3.1 Planning design

In spite of its theoretical adherence to the main tenets of 1960s development economics, the plan design contained several flaws. The most striking is what looks like a miscalculation in the application of the Harrod-Domar growth model, which as we have seen played an important role in determining the plan's 'modernity' and its 'scientific' nature. The plan stated that, given the desired annual rate of growth of 5.5% (resulting in an increase in income per capita of 3% given annual population growth rate of approximately 2.6%) and a capital-output ratio of 3.5%, the base-year GDP of £507 million should have risen to £796 million in 1970, at the end of the plan implementation period. The required amount of total investment was then obtained by multiplying the difference between expected GDP at the end of the planning period and base year GDP times the capital-output coefficient. In the planning document this calculation ((796-507) * 3.5) yields as a result a total of £ 1,015 million of investment. Yet in a detailed appraisal of the plan published in 1967 Isaac Bissue, a new lecturer at the University of Ghana who joined the Department of Economics after Nkrumah was overthrown, noted that

> Even in this simple operation a few errors were committed. First, with a base year figure of £ 507 million for GDP and an annual average growth rate of 5.5 per cent, the GDP at the end of seven years is £ 731 million and not £ 796 as the planners imagined. Incremental income is then given as £ 731- 507 million= 231 million. Applying this to the capital coefficient of 3.5, gross investment […] is equal to £ 231 x 3.5= £ 808.5 (Bissue 1967, 23).

This mistake had two possible main implications. Either the investment requirements were *overstated* by £ 207 million (equal to the difference between the total investment presented in the plan document and the one actually resulting by multiplying the capital-output ratio times the GDP differential) or, assuming an initial income of £ 507 million, a capital-output ratio of 3.5 and a total investment of £ 1,015, the annual average rate of growth to be expected was *underestimated* by 1.4% (Bissue 1967, 23). According to Bissue (1967, 24) 'arithmetical slips such

as these detracted immensely from the technical correctness of the Plan' (Bissue 1967, 24).

While Bissue's claims remain partly dubious,[47] the conference held in Accra in 1963, comprising many distinguished development economists and planners, pointed out other shortcomings of the plan. Although the high level of scholarship put in the plan was recognised (as it was done by Leon Barawski of the World Bank), the economists gathered in Accra criticised the plan on the ground that it did not present enough specific development projects (with the most spectacular exception represented by the Volta River project), it covered a span of time that was too long, and because 'insufficient work had been done on the internal consistency of the plan' (Killick 1978, 56). Another important subject of criticism was the level of expenditures, which was considered unrealistic and overambitious. However Mensah (most probably subject to political pressures) dismissed the advice of the experts, and instead of reducing the expenditures he actually increased their total amount to £ 1 billion, implying that the government should have mobilised £143 million per year. This was an amount that 'no self-respecting economist, whether socialist or capitalist, considered feasible' (Tignor 2006, 189).

At a more general level it has been argued that the failure of the 7YP to embodied a broader failure of the development theories on which it was built. Even economists who did not take part directly to the planning process came to see Nkrumah's Ghana as a test case, and the disappointing performance of the Ghanaian economy as evidence of their tenuous grasp of economic development. For example Y.S. Brenner, at the time the Head of the Economics Department of the University of Cape Coast, confessed:

> Almost forty years ago, like many others from England, France, Russia and the USA, I went to Ghana hoping to play a part in the economic development of this first African country liberated from colonial yoke. Naive as most of us were, we believed that it was mainly lack of capital and technological know-how which separated the developed from the underdeveloped countries. […] We all knew that economic growth requires investment, and that investment requires savings. What we did not know was that development involves much

[47] Indeed it might be that the divergent estimates produced by the planners and Bissue depended on differences in the way in which the investment required per year was calculated.

> more than investment and technology. When some of us finally realized this, it was too late (Brenner 2002, 51).

6.3.2 The performance of the state sector

The possibility of successfully transforming Ghana into a socialist economy depended on a dramatic expansion of the role of the state in both agriculture and industry: as put by Douglas Rimmer (1992, 91) 'State enterprises expressed the choice of socialism allegedly made by the nation'. Although profit was by no means the only indicator on which the performance of state enterprises in a socialist economy could be based, the government sincerely hoped to achieve through state ownership a wide range of policy-objectives, including profitability. The 1963 plan outline claimed that out of the £G 476 million of government investments, £G 23 million (accounting for approximately 4.8% of total government investment) should have been provided by the 'Profits of State Corporations' (GOPC 1963, 29). Nkrumah himself during the launching of the plan declared that

> In every socialist country, state enterprises provide the bulk of State revenues, and we intend to follow the same pattern here. Our State enterprises will be set yearly financial and production targets so that they may […] operate efficiently and profitably (Nkrumah [1964] 2009b, 352-353).

Also the text of the plan stated that from state enterprises was expected 'not only the accumulation of sizeable reserves to replace their capital, but also steady flow of profits from their operation' (GOPC 1964, 274-275). Yet, as it can be seen in table 6.3, the overall performance of the state sector in 1964-65 amounted to an overall gigantic loss of more than £G 14 billion.

STATE ENTERPRISES	Profit/loss 1964-65 (£G 000)	PUBLIC CORPORATIONS	Profit/loss 1964-65 (£G 000)
Fibre bag factory	-318.8	**National trading corporation**	6514.5
State boatyards	-8.4	**State Farms corporation**	-12,732.50
Brick and tile factory	-18.7	**State Fishing Corporation**	-239.5
Tema steelworks	-295.4	**State Construction Corporation**	353.9
State cannery	15.3	**State Gold Mining Corporation**	-2689.2
Metal products	24.4	**State Hotels and Tourist Corporation**	-137.4
Paper conversion	2.1	**Ghana Airways**	-3573.2
Sugar products (Asutsudare and Komenda)	-1191.8	**Food Marketing Corporation**	-133.6
Cocoa products (Takoradi)	-506.6	**SUBTOTAL PUBLIC CORPORATIONS**	-12,367
Paintworks	117.9	**TOTAL STATE ENTERPRISES AND PUBLIC CORPORATIONS**	-14,116
Vegetable oil mills	-323.8		
Marble works	41.6		
State distillery	953.4		
Electronic products	29.8		
SUBTOTAL STATE ENTERPRISES	-1,479		

Table 6.2: Performance of a sample of state enterprises and public corporations, 1964-1965. Source: Killick, (1978, 219).

The state owned agricultural enterprises comprised the State Farms Corporation, the Workers Brigade farms, and the United Ghana Farmers' Co-operatives. To these activities the plan initially allocated £G 16.6 million of the

total £G 67.5 million devoted to agriculture, fishing and forestry (GOPC 1964, 85). From a political point of view, the establishment of state farms and agricultural workers' brigade can be understood as the evolution, which started in the early 1950s, of a broader attempt by the state to establish its presence in the countryside by granting access to the provision of seeds, fertilizers, use of capital-intensive technology, and credit.[48]. Starting in 1962, state farms were being established in charge of producing annual crops and export crops. While acknowledging the sketchy nature of statistical information available about agricultural crops, the 7YP set extremely ambitious production targets.[49] In contrast the first progress report of the Plan, published in 1965, clearly pointed out the wide gap between actual production and acreage achieved in 1963-64 and the ambitious production targets set for 1965, making the production targets initially set for the end of the plan period look even more unrealistic (see table 6.3).[50]

[48] See chapter 2.

[49] A detailed decomposition of the agricultural production targets set by the plan can be found in GOPC (1964, 74).

[50] Unfortunately I have not been able to find any archival or published evidence of discussions taking place before the publication of the Progress Report which could give a sense of the way in which production targets were renegotiated.

Crops		Acreage		Production (tons)	
		1963-1964 (actual)	1965 (target)	1963-1964 (expected)	1965 (target)
Annual crops	**Rice**	8,885	17,750	4,443	8,875
	Maize	6,718	9,620	2,920	3,205
	Guinea-corn	924	_	284	_
	Groundnuts	4,182	7,305	1,242	1,826
	Tobacco	654	1,620	92	320
	Fibre (Lobata)	726	3,700	235	1,850
	SUBTOTAL	22,089	39,995	9,216	16,076
Plantation crops	**Rubber**	10,551	22,788	_	_
	Oil palm	10,335	17,933	8,655	10,000
	Coconut	500	2,620	_	_
	Citrus	440	1,648	_	_
	Banana	1,448	2,500	_	_
	SUBTOTAL	23,274	47,489	8,655	10,000
TOTAL		45,363	87,484	17,871	26,076

Table 6.3: Acreage and production of state farms, current (1963-64) and 1965 targets. Source: Republic of Ghana OPG (1965, 19).

For example, while the plan set for the state sector a production target for maize of 10,000 tons in 1963-64, and expected a rise to 41,000 tons already in 1966-1967 (GOPC 1964, 74), the progress report recorded a production estimate in 1963-64 of less than 3,000 tons, reducing the 1965 target to 3,205 tons. Similarly, in the case of groundnuts, the plan set a production target of 3,000 tons in 1963-64, and expected an expansion to 14,000 in 1966-67 (GOPC 1964, 74). The progress report, in contrast, presented for 1963-64 an estimate of only 1,242 tons, and expected the production to increase to 1,826 in 1965. Although some of the production targets were significantly reduced in the progress report, the 1965 acreage targets envisaged in one year an approximately twofold expansion in the area under cultivation in 1964, as in the cases of rice and rubber, or an even more dramatic increase in the cases of tobacco, coconut, citrus and banana.

By 1966 the State Farms Corporation, which represented one of the icons of Nkrumah's dreams of socialist development, had incurred a striking loss of more than £G 12 million. Although some state farms were arguably more successful than others, and the state performed comparatively well in plantation crops (Miracle and Seidman 1968), the overall dismal performance of large-scale mechanised state agriculture cannot be questioned. The contribution of the state farms to food production, made more urgent in the 1960s by frequent shortages, amounted to a negligible 0.5% of the total (T. Jones 1976, 250). The vast amount of money spent for the acquisition of tractors and the mechanization of the farms, an important goal in the agricultural section of the plan, did not automatically translate itself into higher productivity or increased production. Agriculturalist J. Gordon painted a bleak picture of the consequences of rushed mechanization in Ghanaian agriculture when he said that 'perhaps nowhere else in the tropics can so many tractors be seen lying in yards or abandoned in the bush' (quoted in T. Jones 1976, 251). Whenever tractors broke down managers of state farms preferred to purchase new ones rather than attempting reparations, since the inherent difficulties in obtaining spare parts were exacerbated by the co-existence of different models of 'Russian, Yugoslav, Czech, British, German and American' tractors (quoted in T. Jones 1976, 251).

The situation in manufacturing did not look rosier. Although the 7YP listed, among other objectives of industrial policy 'the attainment of the maximum utilization of existing plant capacity' and 'an expansion wherever possible of the productive capacity of existing enterprises in preference to the setting up of entirely new factories for the production of the same commodity' (GOPC 1964, 105) the rush towards industrialization led to the hasty establishment of industrial plants in inappropriate sites. Furthermore, when drafting their ambitious production targets,[51] the 7YP did not seem to pay much attention to the fact that the attainment of the maximum utilization of existing plant capacity would have been a complex and time consuming process.

[51] However in the 7YP production targets for industrial goods, unlike in agriculture, are not divided between public and private sector. Rather, the production targets had to be 'considered merely as the basic minimum targets which, for reasons of balance of payments and economic strategy, it is mandatory to attain before 1970' by summing the output of both state and private enterprises (GOPC 1964, 103).

The 1965 annual plan provides a snapshot of the problems hindering state industries' capacity to play their role in the fulfilment of the planners' vision:

1. Many public industries are still taking a much longer time to construct and bring into full operation than they reasonably should. This tends to lock up large amounts of capital without any current returns to show for it.
2. Secondly, inadequacies of management continue to show up in the form of low levels of productivity and incomplete utilisation of capacity in a number of state factories. […]
3. Thirdly […] public enterprises have not yet been able to set themselves clear targets of production and profitability and to achieve these targets (Republic of Ghana OPC 1965, 24).

In spite of this sober analysis, the government tended to 'opt for project design emphasising grandeur' over sound economic considerations, thus reinforcing 'the bias towards capital intensity' (Killick 1978, 229) embodied in the Harrod-Domar growth model. The actual process of industrial policy implementation in Ghana transformed the focus of 1950s and 1960s development economics on capital intensity as the engine of growth into a grotesque caricature.[52]

6.3.3 Macroeconomic conditions

Although the poor performance of the state sector undermined the government's overall strategy (Killick 1978, 249), the failure of the plan to bring the expected results had also much to do with unfavourable macroeconomic conditions. Whereas between 1955 and 1960 the Ghanaian economy, largely due to the rising cocoa prices, was able to experience a growth rate of around 5% (in constant prices) and accumulate a large amount of foreign reserves, since 1960 the trend reversed, 'culminating in a major foreign exchange crisis in 1965-1966' (Killick 1978, 66; 69). The economic performance of the last years of Nkrumah's rule clearly revealed that the growth rate of 5.5% mentioned in the plan was an overtly optimistic projection.

[52] On the other hand, not all state projects failed. The Volta River Project, arguably the most ambitious of all, inaugurated in 1966, stands in contrast as a remarkable success, with the actual power sales consistently outperforming the estimates of the World Bank (Killick 1978, 250).

The OPC also noted that 'the balance on the Government's budget has changed from a surplus of £G 35 million in 1954-55 to a deficit which has been running at over £G 50 million per year in the last three years' (Republic of Ghana OPC 1965, 34). In spite of the increased state capacity to raise revenues, the reduction in cocoa exports and the plummeting of the crop's price, combined with the fast accumulation of expenditures on both the recurrent and capital accounts led the country into an unsustainable situation of debt. In 1965 the OPC had to admit that 'the economy has not shown a rate of progress during 1963 and 1964 commensurate with the sacrifices which the country has made in order to undertake these investments' (Republic of Ghana OPC 1965, 9). Indeed, as noted by Killick (1978, 67), 'Stagnation is scarcely an experience unique to Ghana but what is remarkable is that it occurred in spite of massive development effort during the first half of the decade'. While the planners were dreaming of diversifying the economy and establishing a stronger industrial base, the macroeconomic performance was a bitter reminder of the country's extreme dependence on cocoa. The shortages of foreign exchange limited the possibilities for importing new machinery and spare parts, thus contributing to the disappointing performance of state enterprises in manufacturing and agriculture.

In 1965, when Nkrumah published *Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism* (Nkrumah [1965] 1970) condemning the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund as neo-colonialist agents, the country asked for the intervention of the two institutions. In its report on the Ghanaian economy the IMF pointed out that in order to save the economy drastic measures had become necessary. These included stopping the extreme dependence of State enterprises on the public budget, more explicit and consistent efforts to reassure foreign private investors, and a drastic limitation of Government expenditures (both recurrent and capital) 'to an amount that can be covered by Government revenue and by non-inflationary borrowing'.[53] While the necessity of these measures was subtly acknowledged also in the 1965 annual plan, there were other aspects of IMF recommendations that were not at welcome to the government. Specifically, in what was a shrewd political move disguised as economic advice, the IMF asked

[53] 'Document 1: IMF Report on the Ghana Economy, Parliamentary Statement by Ministry of Finance, 10 September 1965' (quoted in Hutchful 1987, 45-46).

Ghana to reconsider the bilateral agreements with the Eastern Bloc. This met the firm opposition of the Minister of Finance Kwasi Amoaka Atta, who declared in front of the Parliament 'There is no question of any outside body telling us that we should revoke our agreements with the Centrally-Planned economies. We shall not accept such advice'.[54] If ideological considerations might have played a role in justifying this choice, its ultimate rationale was economic. In contrast with IMF advice, calling for reduction of cocoa producer prices and internal demand, the Ghanaian government wanted to solve its balance of payment crisis by exporting more cocoa to the Eastern bloc, and selling it at a higher price than the one prevailing in Western markets.[55] But ultimately none of this worked: until the coup d'état (and for long afterwards) the Ghanaian economy was plagued by high inflation, food shortages and government deficit.

6.3.4 Despite the plan, or because of it?

The story told so far is one of unconditional failure. Part of the dismal performance of Ghana's economy under Nkrumah's rule can also be explained by the rampant corruption prevailing in government circles and a pervasive disregard for the state of public finances. Admittedly the predatory behaviour of the political elite had already emerged very clearly in the years that preceded the implementation of the 7YP. Recalling his visit to Ghana Nicholas Kaldor wrote that

> The ambience of the government was that of a medieval court, flamboyant, extravagant and corrupt. An initially strong financial position, based on Ghana's rapidly expanding cocoa output and the high world price of cocoa, had been dissipated in a grasshopper's summer of waste, extravagance, corruption and prestige project (quoted in King 2009, 124).

While as we have seen the 7YP contained many of the features that according to W. Arthur Lewis characterised a 'good plan', the economist's warning that 'total projected expenditure should not exceed the total finance expected to be available' (Lewis 1966, 221) was evidently contradicted by the lack of accountability and widespread misuse of public money reflected in prevailing political practices. Not only was the condition set by Lewis violated in the plan's

[54] 'Document 3: Ghana's Government Response on Bilateral Payments Agreements, Parliamentary Statement by Minister of Finance, 16 September 1965' (quoted in Hutchful 1987, 50).
[55] Ibidem.

final text, containing the over-optimistic assumption that the country could mobilise over £G 1 billion, but its denial can also be observed in the few surviving unpublished minutes of the NPC. Given that the Planning Commission was largely responsible for the plan's emphasis on productive investments in agriculture and manufacturing, the gap between plan and reality looks even greater. In April 1962 for example the planning commission signed a contract with Technoexpert (a revealing name), a Bulgarian state commercial enterprise located in Sofia, to send some representatives to Ghana to work on a 'scheme for the development of Accra Beach from the environs of the Castle to the old Accra harbour area as a recreation and entertainment centre'.[56] The project was presented to Nkrumah, who immediately gave his approval, but since the Bulgarian architects left Ghana without actually providing an estimate of the costs involved, the task fell on the Ghana National Construction Corporation. The first three phases of the planned works, including the construction of a swimming pool, a recreation area for children, the demolishing of some already existing buildings and the erection of a monument to 'an Unknown Freedom Fighter' were expected to cost £ G 500,000.[57] Of these, £G 200,000 should have been provided directly from the Ministry of Finance.

However, this does not necessarily imply that that the plan 'was a piece of paper with an operational impact close to zero' (Killick 1978, 140). Even if the 7YP failed to transform Ghana according to its design (both in terms of overall performance and specific production targets) and the archival evidence collected so far is not enough to fully substantiate this claim, it is possible that the experience of Nkrumah's Ghana resonates with that of socialist Hungary, where

> The process of developing abstract social goals to be achieved through planning actually facilitated schemes for the personal aggrandizement of those in charge: party bureaucrats, local officials, and farm managers. The representation of planning as serving the long-term interests of the people's economy contrasted starkly with the everyday project of enhancing one's personal fortunes and reaping significant individual gains among managers and party officials (Lampland 1995, 232-233).

[56] Draft State Planning Commission Memorandum by the Ministry of Works, Subject: Development of Accra Beach from the Castle to the Old Accra Harbour as a Recreation and Entertainment Centre, PRAAD RG 17/2/301/file not numbered.
[57] Ibidem.

Indeed it is possible to speculate that there were local political practices that, while not created from scratch by the plan, were probably reinforced, disseminated and institutionalised by it. The contrast between representation of planning as serving the social welfare and actual political practices noted by Lampland could have been particularly evident in the evolution of agriculture, the sector which, at the beginning of the plan period, still employed 61% of the recorded active population (GOPC 1964, 53).

In the field of agricultural policy the 7YP placed much emphasis on the state sector (formed of State Farms, the agricultural wing of the Workers' Brigade and the United Ghana Farmers' Co-operatives) as a way of introducing large scale farming (something that, it was noted, could be considered 'an entirely new form of economic activity in Ghana, GOPC 1964, 80), the 'introduction of new crops' (GOPC 1964, 79), the popularization of 'new methods', and the clearance of idle land for productive use (GOPC 1964, 79). Furthermore, it was specified that 'the leading principle in the organization of state farms must be that each farming unit will be under the full control of a manager who is completely responsible for its economic success' (GOPC 1964, 80).

Although as we have seen the state farms failed spectacularly to meet the production targets set by the plan, or achieve any significant results in the other objectives listed above, the 'full control' institutionalised by the plan paved the way for a widespread abuse of power by state farm managers and members of the agricultural wing of the Workers' Brigade. Sometimes this took a symbolic form, as in a case discussed by the Parliament in September 1965:

> Is it not astonishing? We have one leader in Ghana, and that is Osagyefo.[58] When Osagyefo goes to a place, he can be carried in a palanquin accompanied by a retinue carrying a state sword and an umbrella. That is understandable. But how can a National Organizer go to Tafo and be carried in a palanquin accompanied by people carrying state swords and umbrellas? Is he a chief? (quoted in T. Jones 1976, 228).

More often, the power vested in the hands of state representatives had more profound effects on the local political economies of crop production and reporting, with detrimental consequences for the measurement practices on which knowledge

[58] 'Osagyefo', or 'the redeemer' is the attribute that was being extensively used to refer to Nkrumah during his last years in office.

of the fulfilment of the plan's production targets could be based. A commission of inquiry set up after the 1966 coup to investigate agricultural (mal)practices, reported that the 'Secretary-Receivers', as the buying agents of the United Ghana Farmers' Council were called

> were not inclined to weigh the cocoa themselves and often entrusted this task to illiterate labourers who had never been tutored to register weights […] it was common practice for farmers to be forbidden to read the scales and if a farmer made an attempt to contravene this injunction was often left waiting until the next day before receiving attention (quoted in T. Jones 1976, 241).

The buying agents were also accused of tampering with the cocoa weighting machines; sometimes the crop would be purposely spilled on the ground during weighting, and the farmers forbidden to collect it (T. Jones 1976, 242). The spilled cocoa would then be sold privately by representatives of the Council for their own profit (T. Jones 1976, 242), disappearing from aggregate production figures. By vesting power in the hands of state farm managers, the 7YP probably led to the further institutionalisation of a set of practices widening the gap between the production targets set in the plan and what was actually happening in the economy. If on one hand the plan 'made' the economy by shaping power relations in the field, on the other hand the 7YP planted the seed of its own unfulfilment.

Although expressed in a speculative manner, these considerations help to think in a broader way of the types of 'agency' set in motion by a plan, and thus more generally of the actual connection between the plan and the economy. An assessment of the plan based on its own terms (typically taking the form of macroeconomic aggregates or production targets), might be an helpful departure point to judge a country's performance, but it is unlikely to capture fully the variety of concrete ways in which the plan, both as a template articulating a vision of progress and as an 'historical subject', shapes the economy.

6.4 Conclusion

In the preface of the 1965 annual plan J.H. Mensah stated that future annual updates should become 'a more detailed record of our achievements under the Seven-Year Development Plan and a more exact guide towards the successful implementation of the remaining tasks under the Plan' (Republic of Ghana OPC

1965, no page). But no annual plan followed the 1965 one: like the French and British colonial administrations in the 1950s, the CPP government was 'planning for futures that did not exist' (Cooper 1996, 110). Although the 7YP spoke the language of contemporary development economics and was based on a degree of statistical knowledge that most African countries did not possess, it did not manage to transform Ghana's economy according to its design. Instead, its main legacy as an 'historical subject' acting on the economy has to be found in the empowering of state representatives and in the re-making of localised political practices. By envisaging coming to embody the idea of order and rationality, the plan contributed to the consolidation of a state of corruption and abuse of power.

The notion that the latter, rather than the harmonious world of the plan, represented the ultimate essence of Nkrumah's Ghana found also expression in contemporary literature. The dialogue below, excerpted from *The Beautyful* [sic] *Ones Are Not Yet Born* (Armah [1968] 1975), is a remarkable example. The novel, authored by Ghanaian Ayi Kwei Armah and set during the plan period, [59] describes the tragedy of a man who struggles to remain pure and honest in a nation where striving for modernization in the aftermath of political independence has resulted in endemic corruption and institutional failure. The dialogue takes place between the main character, a clerk employed at a railway station (simply called 'the man' throughout the novel) and a messenger:

> 'You look happy', the man said to him.
>
> The messenger continued to smile, in the embarrassed way of a young girl confessing love. 'I won something in the lottery', he said. […]
>
> 'I hope you have a nice time,' the man said.
>
> The messenger frowned. 'I am happy, but I'm afraid,' he said.
>
> 'Juju?' the man smiled.
>
> 'No, not that,' said the messenger. 'But you know our Ghana.'
>
> 'Ah yes.'
>
> 'And everybody says that the Ghana lottery is more Ghanaian than Ghana.'
>
> 'You're afraid you won't get your money?'

[59] Indeed the novel makes references to the cedi as the currency of Ghana: this was introduced in 1965, thus after the launching of the plan in 1964. Symbolically, the novel ends on 24th February 1966, the day of Nkrumah's overthrow.

> ‘I know people who won more than five hundred cedis last year. They still haven’t got their money.’ […]
>
> ‘What will you do?’ the man asked.
>
> ‘I hope some official at the lottery place will take some of my hundred cedis as a bribe and allow me to have the rest.’ The messenger’s smile was dead.
>
> ‘You will be corrupting a public officer.’ The man smiled.
>
> ‘This is Ghana,’ the messenger said, turning to go (Armah [1968] 1975, 18-19).

Yet, it would be historically inaccurate to reduce the contribution that economists were expected to play in guiding Ghana’s transition to socialism to the rise and fall of the 7YP and the possibility to forge a new economy. As Nkrumah himself noted when launching the plan, ‘A socialist State cannot come by itself, nor can it be established by the formulation of plans’ (Nkrumah [1964] 2009b, 351). In the last years of the regime, amidst an increasingly repressive political atmosphere, economists found themselves caught in a perilous battle for the construction of the regime’s official ideology and the creation of a *new man*.

7. The Struggle for the Economic Soul of the Nkrumaist State: Economists and the Regime

> But the doctrinaires of all types, whatever their practical disabilities, have certain aesthetic qualities that raise them high above the common run of political practitioners.
>
> *Joseph A. Schumpeter 'Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy'*

Development planning and the engineering of structural change in the national economy were far from being the only areas to which economic analysis could contribute to align Ghana with the visions of socialist transformation and modernization held by its rulers. Indeed, as this chapter shows, the apogee of economic analysis as a tool of political transformation relied in the construction of an official ideology that could consolidate the one-party state.

Although one-party states, regardless of their position in the socialist-capitalist divide, were the rule rather than the exception in 1960s Africa,[1] Ghana between 1960 and 1966 was different in her attempt to forge a more or less consistent ideological identity: Fabian socialist Margaret Roberts (1964, 92) rightly noted that the role envisaged by Nkrumah for the CPP was, compared with that of contemporary African leaders (with the possible exception of Sékou Touré), much closer to the 'Marxist conception of an ideologically elite party, specifically socialist, intended less as a unifying force than as an educative and disciplinary vehicle for government policy'.[2] The ultimate goal of 'Nkrumaism', the set of beliefs inspired by the teachings of Kwame Nkrumah, was the creation of a *new man*. According to Nkrumah

> Africa needs a new type of man; a dedicated, modest, honest and devoted man. A man who submerges self in the service to his nation and mankind. […] A new type of man whose meekness is his strength and whose integrity is his greatness (Nkrumah [1961] 2009c, 334-335).

[1] For further discussion on this aspect, and a critical appraisal of the similarities of party states in 1960s West Africa, see the classic study by Zolberg (1966). In this sense the comparison between 'capitalist' Ivory Coast and 'socialist' Ghana is particularly instructive. About this see the essays collected in Foster and Zolberg (1971) and Nugent (2004, 166-188).

[2] However it should be noted that the idea of 'an ideologically elite party' owns much more to Lenin than to Marx. For a more systematic comparison between the CPP and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union see Dowse (1969).

Unlike other examples of African socialism (such as Nyerere's *ujamaa*), Kwame Nkrumah and the CPP were less concerned with finding the roots of the postcolonial order in precolonial values. Instead the regime had a forward-looking orientation, in which the construction of the 'new man' was inseparable from modernization and economic development (Nugent 2004, 167). In this sense, a discussion of the role of economists and economic ideas is particularly relevant to deepen our understanding of the regime. However, far from being written in stone, the boundaries of Nkrumaism as a socialist ideology based on 'African conditions' had to be drawn and filled with content. How did economists contribute to shape the intellectual identity of the regime and the creation of its official ideology? The chapter addresses this question by reconstructing, as far as the fragmentary archival evidence permits, the ambivalent relationship between economists and the regime. This is done by focusing on the trajectories of two pivotal institutions for research and teaching in economics and political economy: the University of Ghana and the newly founded Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute.

The chapter offers two main contributions. Firstly, in contrast with existing literature on 1960s Ghanaian history, content with dismissing the inconsistencies of the regime's official doctrine and ignoring the role played by social scientists in its formation, the chapter uncovers the multiple voices, intellectual genealogies and interpretations of 'socialism' co-existing among economists working in Nkrumah's Ghana. This diversity emerges clearly when in the contrast between the University of Ghana, disseminating the work of Polish economists arguing for decentralised market socialism, and the Marxian labour theory of value taught at the Ideological Institute.

Secondly, the chapter analyses the political implications and rhetorical strategies of contemporary economists' debates about the 'right' socialism for Ghana. It is argued that the volatile political climate of the 1960s, in which the struggle for the soul of an official ideology was accompanied by increasing repression, forced economists to find new ways of articulating their support for the regime as well as deploy novel rhetorical strategies to voice their dissent. This is illustrated with reference to the re-invention of Marx: while the Ideological Institute was attempting to construct 'Marxism-Leninism-Nkrumaism' as a form

of scientific socialism and consolidate the official doctrine of the regime, the University of Ghana hosted an appeal to Marx's own words to criticise the party-state's economic ideology and its excessive reliance on socialism.

The chapter is divided into four main sections. The first provides a brief overview of the rise of the 'Nkrumaist state', defined as a system of political relations and structures centred on the personality cult of the leader, and as a set of beliefs inspired by Nkrumah's writings which was desired to be the official ideology of the state. The second and the third sections are devoted to the Department of Economics at the University of Ghana and at the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute respectively. The fourth section discusses the fate of some of the characters and institutions discussed in this work in the aftermath of Nkrumah's fall.

7.1 Sites of the Nkrumaist state

On the political front, as we saw in chapter 5, the passing of the Preventive Detention Act in 1958 (and its extensive use since the early 1960s) and the new Republican constitution in 1960 already represented marked steps towards the establishment of a one-party state. In February 1964 the constitution was amended again, this time *de facto* making all political opposition illegal. Parliamentary debates 'were often preceded by unsolicited adulation of the President'; those members of the Parliament 'who found courage to give utterance to their conscience […] either fled the country or were detained or unseated in Parliament' (Ayensu and Darkwa 2006, 113). This is for example the fate met by P.K.K. Quaidoo, the Minister of Trade who in April 1961 publicly defended the role of traditional values and the institution of chieftaincy against the relevance of socialism for Ghana's development. Shortly afterwards he was removed from his seat and imprisoned within months (Rooney 2007, 254). With the weakening of parliament, Nkrumah and the party rose even more prominently as the main sites of political decision making: the slogan 'The CPP is Ghana, and Ghana is the CPP' captures well the atmosphere of the time. In fact the party managed to incorporate other significant social bodies that could have potentially represented a locus of opposition. Given the overall socialist orientation of the regime, it is not surprising that the incorporation of the trade unions was perceived as a priority in this sense.

On the other hand, as we have seen in chapter 6, the expansion of the role of the state and the party in all avenues of economic and political life opened up unprecedented spaces for patronage, abuse of power and dissipation of public money. In the famous 'Dawn Broadcast' of April 1961 Nkrumah ([1961] 2009b) severely condemned the widespread corruption of party members. In the aftermath of the Dawn broadcast, which in hindsight has been read as an excuse to get rid of the more conservative and business oriented party members and consolidate Nkrumah's personal authority rather than a serious attempt to deal with corruption (Omari [1970] 2009, 146), the more pro-Marxist and radical wing of the CPP rose to prominence. This included recent self-declared converts to Marxism, like trade unionists John Tettegah and Kodwo Addison, as well as long-time communists like journalist Kofi Batso.

In order to achieve the transformation envisaged by Nkrumah and his radical entourage, a systematic effort was needed to shape the intellectual landscape of the country, and bring it together under the banner of Nkrumaism. As it can be expected, a first important source for the development of the official state ideology was the corpus of the political leader's writing. The four basic text of Nkrumaism were *Towards Colonial Freedom*, penned in 1947 but published in 1962 (Nkrumah [1947] 2005), *Africa Must Unite* (Nkrumah [1963] 1985), *Consciencism* (Nkrumah [1964] 2009a), and *Neo-colonialism: the last stage of imperialism* (Nkrumah [1965] 1970). If *Africa Must Unite* and *Neo-colonialism* presented a mixture of Leninist insights to develop a critique of neo-colonialism and a plea for a continental African political and economic union, the most ambitious work published under Nkrumah's name was *Consciencism*. The book's aim was, as stated by its subtitle, to create the ultimate 'philosophy and ideology for de-colonization and development' (Nkrumah [1964] 2009a).

While all the other volumes written by Nkrumah deal with the politics and economics of imperialism, *Conciencism* explicitly discusses metaphysical, epistemological and ontological issues, with references to, among others, Thales, René Descartes, Friedrich Nietzsche, Immanuel Kant, Gottlob Frege, St. Augustine, as well as Marx and Engels. 'Philosophical consciencism' was defined as a materialistic philosophy that 'taking its start from the present content of African conscience, indicates the way in which progress is forged out of the conflict in that conscience' (Nkrumah [1964] 2009a, 79). Besides uncovering the

social and political implications of different Western philosophical traditions from a postcolonial standpoint, this obscure book can be read as an attempt to build a system of thought that can simultaneously incorporate idealism and spirituality within a materialistic framework, and inform revolutionary action. If on one hand *Consciencism* marks an expansion of the ground covered by Nkrumah in previous works, on the other hand the book also presents the reiteration of previous ideas in new guises. The argument for a continental socialist union developed in *Africa Must Unite*, for example, is presented in *Consciencism* with a bizarre mathematical proof. To give a sense of the kind of reasoning involved in the 'proof', in Nkrumah's framework *S* (socialism in general) was the sum of ϕ (conditions required for development) and *UGi* (indicating that the territory g is united), with ϕ being in turn the sum of m (materialism), C (consciencism in general) and D (dialectical movement in general). The conclusion of lengthy proof was that

> by means of the foregoing set theoretic methods the necessity of a union of independent African states is established, a union integrated by socialism, without which our hard-won independence may yet be perverted and negated by a new kind of colonialism (Nkrumah [1964] 2009a, 118).

Leaving asides the leader's writings, the construction of Nkrumaism in the public sphere became a dominating feature of Ghanaian social and cultural life through the cult of Nkrumah's personality. Very often this had less to do with the explicit acknowledgment of the necessity to assimilate and reinterpret Marxism-Leninism, and more with a religious, and occasionally mystical iconography. In the press, in public speeches as well as in official correspondence, Nkrumah was very often referred to as the *Osagyefo*, literally 'the redeemer'. Public meetings sometimes 'began with such songs as *If you follow him* [Nkrumah], *he will make you fishers of men'*, with an obvious reference to the Gospel (Omari [1970] 2009, 85).[3] An article appeared on the daily *Evening News* in 1961 made the analogy between Nkrumah and the Messiah even more explicit:

[3] On the other hand it should be noted that the blending of sacred and secular was something that had characterised Nkrumah's rhetoric well before the consolidation of the socialist one-party state: not only one of slogans in the fight for independence was 'Seek ye first the political kingdom, and all else shall be added onto you' (a reference to the gospel of Matthew, 6:33) but Nkrumah ([1957] 1971, 12) famously said about himself 'I am a non-denominational Christian and a Marxist socialist and I have not found any contradiction between the two'.

> From time to time individuals have caught glimpses of the Christ or the true idea of God. […] This demonstration by no means ended with Jesus. Why! Karl Marx demonstrated the Christ, and so did Lenin of USSR, Gandhi of India, Mao of China and in our midst is Kwame Nkrumah.
> When our history is recorded, the man Kwame Nkrumah will be written of as the liberator, the Messiah, the Christ of our day (quoted in Omari [1970] 2009, 116).

Not surprisingly, this state of affairs strained the relationship between the state and religious institutions: unpublished government correspondence reports 'that some Churches in Ghana were surreptitiously undermining the Government by preaching against socialism'.[4] The tension culminated in August 1962 with the expulsion of the Anglican bishop of Accra who, had explicitly criticised the Young Pioneers for confusing 'the work and example of a great man with Divine Acts which are unique in history' (quoted in Sundkler and Steed 2004, 945). Yet, and this is an important difference between the development of socialism in Ghana compared to other historical experiences where socialism tried to completely replace religion with secularism, the construction of Nkrumaism never assumed a strictly materialistic and atheistic outlook.[5] For example in 1962 Kofi Baako, who at different points had been Minister of Education and Minister of Defence and one of the main party ideologues defined Nkrumaism

> as a non-atheist socialist philosophy which seeks to apply the current social, economic and political ideas to the solution of our problems, be they domestic or international, by adapting these ideals to the realities of our every day [sic.] life. […]
> Nkrumaism is not a religion, and has not come to replace any religion, but it preaches and seeks to implement all that true religion teaches. I can safely therefore describe Nkrumaism as *applied religion* (quoted in Omari [1970] 2009, Appendix B, 194).

The formalisation of a distinction between 'religion' and 'applied religion', while apparently preserving the intimacy of the spiritual sphere, simultaneously

[4] Letter of J.B. Odonton to the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Education, 27th February 1964, PRAAD RG 3/1/72/1.

[5] This led some anti-communist authors to minimise the possibility of an authentic socialist transformation in Africa. For example journalist and pamphleteer Walter Kolarz (c.1962, 4) wrote that 'Africa's religious values […] form a major obstacle to the victory of Communism'. This perhaps makes the experience of Nkrumaism more similar to that of Italian fascism, characterised by the coexistence of Mussolini's cult with Catholicism. For further discussion on this, see Gentile (1993).

reified the monopoly of Nkrumaism as the only possible source of truth in the political, social and economic realms, *de facto* destroying the legitimacy of individual religious beliefs as a source of guidance for human behaviour in the social sphere.[6]

As suggested from the quote from the *Evening News*, the press played an important role in construction and dissemination of Nkrumaism. Indeed Nkrumah shared with Lenin the notion of the press as a 'collective agitator' and 'collective organiser' (Ansah 2001, 91). As early as 1948 (the year of the Accra riots) Nkrumah defined the daily *Accra Evening News* 'the vanguard of the movement and its chief propagandist, agitator, mobiliser and political educationist' (Ansah 2001, 90), but by the early 1960s a tight system of censorship was put in place. A 1965 editorial of *The Ghanaian Times* clearly stated that

> Our socialist society cannot, and would not, tolerate the publication of any newspaper in Ghana which departs from the ideologies and loyalties demanded from the press in socialist and Nkrumaist Ghana. Under these circumstances, there cannot be any real competition or difference in fundamental views between the *Graphic*, the *Ghanaian Times*, the *Evening News* (quoted in Bretton 1967, 130).

The most visible attempt to create an ideological press found expression in the weekly *The Spark*.[7] In an article written by Nkrumah to celebrate the 100th issue of the magazine in 1964, the leader justified its foundation claiming that 'Africa needs a new ideology, socialist in content and continental in outlook. The propagation of such an ideology demands an ideological journal […]. Hence *The Spark*' (quoted in Batsa 1985, 20). Looking back at the 1960s Kofi Batsa, an old time Ghanaian communist who directed the magazine recalled that 'Our job at *The Spark* was to crystallize Nkrumah's thinking in terms of specific policies and to describe the issues of each week in a way that reflected his thinking' (Batsa 1985, 15). But the act of 'crystallization' of the leader's ideas was much more than a simple act of mirroring: it was instead a systematic act of refinement and development, involving the minimization of the contradictions contained in Nkrumah's writings. Specifically it aimed at the construction of Nkrumaism as a

[6] For a concise review of literature on the concept of 'political religion'see Gentile (2005).
[7] The name was the English translation of *Iskra* ('spark'), the Marxist journal established by Lenin in 1901 (Mazrui [1966] 1997, 106).

form of strictly secular scientific socialism (thus dropping the religious iconography characterising other publications): *The Spark* 'proved to be more purist in its Marxism than Nkrumah was himself' (Mazrui [1966] 1997, 106). In *The Spark* Nkrumah was presented as 'an architect and an engineer, a seer and a leader, a thinker and a builder' (*The Spark* 1964, 3), rather than a Christ or a God. This apparently insignificant detail is in fact crucial to understand the relationship between economic analysis and the ideological machinery: Nkrumaist Ghana was as a one-party state in search of the definitive ideology, where different epistemologies co-existed, crossing conventional boundaries (in this case, the one dividing the sacred and the secular), finding new ways of contributing to the enrichment of the ideological identity of the regime.

The regime identified in the country's libraries another strategic target for socialist construction. In 1964 the Ghana Library Service was asked to prepare a comprehensive list of all the books on socialism available in the country as a first step towards their dissemination. The list amounted to 21 pages, including mostly texts on Russia and China supplemented by a few texts on Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. There was also a section devoted to socialism in Africa, but it included only eight volumes.[8] Yet a closer look revealed that the list contained, as rightly noted by the Ministry of Education, 'titles that are biased against socialism', while it did 'not contain enough books simply written for use by the general public'.[9] The presence of *Socialism: An Economic and Sociological Analysis* by Ludwig Mises ([1936] 1951) and a collection of *Economic Statistics of Mainland China, 1949-1957* (Yin and Yin 1960) confirms that the fears of the Ministry were indeed grounded.

The developments described in this section show that the regime was seriously committed to reconfiguring the relationship between the political realm and the creation of knowledge in line with the party's outlook. Not surprisingly, this attitude had a deep influence on the style and content of economic discussions in the institutions of higher learning that were perceived as key sites for the making of the Nkrumaist state.

[8] The list, titled 'Your Books on Socialism', pp. 1-21 can be found in PRAAD RG 3/1/72/12-31.
[9] Letter of A.G.T. Ofori, Library Services to the Principal Secretary, Ministry of Education, 12th August 1965, PRAAD RG 3/1/72/43.

7.2 Teaching and researching economics at the University of Ghana

7.2.1 The regime and the university

Thandika Mkandawire (1997, 17) claimed that 'African universities, for all the joyous celebrations at their birth, were born in chains. [...] In the postcolonial period one set of chains was created by the dominant perceptions of the new authorities of what were the imperatives and exigencies of nation-building'. These words describe well the Nkrumaist state, where the leader and the party tried to increase their control on the activities of the University of Ghana in Legon.

Beside explicitly declaring the death of the concept of 'ivory tower' (Nkrumah [1961] 2009d, 405), Nkrumah stated that 'true' academic freedom was meant to be 'always fully compatible with service to the community; for the university is, and must always remain, a living, thinking, and serving part of the community to which it belongs' (Nkrumah [1963] 2009, 146). Specifically, this amounted not only to 'feel the pulse and intensity of the great African revolution' but, more importantly, in making 'a contribution of its realisation, progress and development' (Nkrumah [1963] 2009, 147). What these words meant in practice was that academics and students alike should, if not actively claim to support the regime, at least restrain from criticising explicitly its policies. Those who dared such actions ended up deported, as it was the case of six foreign lecturers, or detained, as it happened in January 1964 to J.C. de Graft-Johnson, a Ghanaian lecturer in the Department of Extra-Mural Studies.

The CPP's distrust of the commitment of academics and students to the casue of the socialist and Pan-African revolution found its most dramatic expression, and degenerated into open hostility, on the 8th of February 1964, when the government organised 'a mob of members of the Workers Brigades, rustics, party activists and innocent school children' to break into University halls and vandalise property (Agbodeka 1998, 148).

Nor was the attempt of the political machinery to control higher education limited to the University of Ghana in Legon, which represented the most important and prestigious educational institution in the country. This can be understood by looking at 'Ghana: A World Apart' (Brenner 2002), to the best of the author's knowledge the only autobiographical memoir written by an expatriate economist

about the Nkrumaist period. Its author, Y.S. Brenner, left Switzerland in 1962 and moved to Ghana with his wife, where he lived for five years and where he took the post of Director of Department of Economics at the recently founded University of Cape Coast. Although Brenner does not mention any occasion in which he was asked to make the content of his teaching explicitly in line with the socialist ideology of the government, he nonetheless recalled how one of his students was accused of being a spy of the American Central Intelligence Agency and summarily imprisoned (Brenner 2002, 125-128). He also offered the grim description of a country where people used the political machinery which had resulted in a great loss of freedom to promote their own social advancement: 'Like everywhere else in a dictatorship, so in Ghana, it was mainly the unimaginative careerists, and persons who will obey orders without questioning their ethical implications, who found their way into responsible positions' (Brenner 2002, 58).

But more frequently the party's attempts to control the University were reflected in the legislative framework and in appointment policies. In 1961 the Parliament passed the 'University of Ghana Act', making Nkrumah the Chancellor of every university in the country. Nkrumah's attempt to abuse of his position accounts for the quick deterioration in his relationship with Vice-Chancellor Conor O' Brien, an Irish academic who had worked as political adviser to the UN Secretary General in Katanga during the Congo crisis. Shortly after accepting the post in 1962 O' Brien found himself engaged in a constant battle to defend the independence of the university. For example O' Brien stood up against the 1964 campaign for the stuffing of bookshops and libraries with texts on socialism (Agbodeka 1998, 149) and he invited the students, contrary to Nkrumah's explicit invitation, not to expose the lecturers in which they detected 'reactionary' tendencies (Agbodeka 1998, 148). After opposing Nkrumah's decision to set up a special committee which, under his direction, would be solely responsible for all appointments in all Ghanaian universities, O' Brien was the victim of a threatening campaign in the press:

> Any Vice-Chancellor (who is but Osagyefo's caretaker) who exposes the Chancellor to unfavourable comment, criticism, or ridicule either in open convocation, in Committee, or private conversation, is guilty of disrespect to the Chancellor, and for that we have an Act of Parliament [the Preventive Detention Act] (quoted in Bretton 1967, 127-128).

Following the end of his contract in 1965 O'Brien left Ghana and was replaced as Vice-Chancellor by the Ghanaian William E. Abraham, head of the Department of Philosophy since 1964,[10] one of the main theorists of Nkrumaism and suspected of having been the ghost writer of *Consciencism*.[11] The climate of fear and paranoia prevailing at the University, especially amongst Ghanaian lecturers (who were much more likely than expatriates to be detained for political reasons) was well captured by Henry L. Bretton, a political scientist of the University of Michigan who conducted research at the University of Ghana in 1964-65: 'Among my Ghanaian colleagues, most of whom were under a cloud of political distrust and suspicion, very few braved the Nkrumaist injunction against socializing with foreigners' (Bretton 1967, viii).

7.2.2 The Department of Economics: socialism, Polish style

Following its establishment in 1948, since the late 1950s the Department of Economics had to face the new challenges raised by the daunting tasks of postcolonial economic development and by the consolidation of development economics as an autonomous branch of economic studies and, since 1960, by the new political circumstances of the socialist state.[12] In the economics community, the movement towards professionalization predated the shift to socialism, with the formation of the Economic Society of the Gold Coast in 1956 and the publication of the *Economic Bulletin of Ghana* in 1959, continued during the Nkrumaist phase, and survived the fall of the regime in 1966.[13] Yet, in spite of strong continuities, a closer look reveals significant evolutions in the relationship between economists and the regime.

[10] Minutes of the Appointments Board held in the Vice-Chancellor's Office on 25th March, 1964. Election to the Chair of Philosophy, PRAAD RG 3/6/189/file not numbered.
[11] On the other hand, Bretton (1967, 128) claims that 'in fairness to Professor Abraham, it should be recorded that he never gave me the impression that he really believed in the nonsense he propounded'.
[12] However when the University of Ghana was set up in 1948 (as the University College of the Gold Coast) there was no separate Economics department. Instead, its predecessor, the Department of Commerce, besides economics, statistics and economic history, was also in charge of teaching and research in accounting (Agbodeka 1998, 58).
[13] For further discussion on the relationship between the professionalization of economics and the 'institutional constellations' comprising learned societies and academic journals, see Fourcade (2010).

A key figure to understand these changes is Jan Drewnowski. Born in 1908, the Polish Drewnowski worked for most of his life at Central School of Planning and Statistics in Warsaw, before visiting in 1960 the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) as a Ford Foundation professor. At the MIT he was in contact with Paul Rosenstein-Rodan, another Polish national and a distinguished economist, author of much theoretical work on utility in the 1930s and considered one of the fathers of development economics for a seminal article on Eastern European industrialization (Rosenstein-Rodan 1943). In 1961 Drewnowski took up the post of Professor and Director of the Department of Economics at the University of Ghana. Although his contract was supposed to expire in 1964, he declared to be willing to keep serving the university for two more years.[14] Under his directorship the department experienced significant changes in both research and teaching.

Four new research units were established. One was, as we saw in chapter 3, devoted to the 'Economics of African Unity'. The other three are indicative of the attempt to deepen the understanding of Ghana's economic conditions with the incorporation of more sophisticated techniques of quantitative analysis; these were 'Econometric Model and National Income Studies of Ghana', 'Economy of Ghana I: Special Problems', focusing on fiscal and monetary policy, and 'Economy of Ghana II: Miscellaneous Problems', focusing on planning methods, the cocoa industry, labour issues and consumption expenditures (*The Economic Bulletin of Ghana* 1964b, 49-50).

In terms of teaching, the main problem faced by the economists in the department, and a concern largely shared by the development economics profession at large, was to find a suitable body of didactic material specifically suited for students of developing countries.[15] The solution adopted by the department was the publication of a series of 'Supplementary Readings in Economics', divided into three series: 'The Economy of Ghana', 'Planning for Development' and 'The Economics of Socialism' (*The Economic Bulletin of Ghana* 1964a, 58). Given the prevailing political atmosphere, where the word

[14] Extension of appointment of Professor Jan Drewnowski, PRAAD RG 3/6/185/file not numbered.
[15] Debates about teaching development economics were in fact conducive to a broader set of reflections, questioning the very assumption that the same body of economic theory was relevant and applicable to underdeveloped countries. To get a sense of contemporary discussions, see Martin and Knapp (1967).

'socialism' became pervasive in public discourse but was continuously subject to renegotiation and the acquisition of new meanings in different sites of the Nkrumaist state, this point requires further qualification. Indeed, in a context dominated by schizophrenic importation of concepts and ideas from the West and the East alike, in which the secular and the sacred interacted in unprecedented ways, the vague denomination of 'Economics of Socialism' could possibly mean very different things, including linear programming and discussions and Marxian labour theory of value.[16] Although in the 1960s the Soviet Union saw a marked resurgence of the 'economics of socialism' through a profound reconceptualisation of the relationship between Marxism-Leninism and economic research and the practice of planning, none of this had any impact on the intellectual landscape of economic research as practised under Nkrumah in the Economics department of the University of Ghana.[17]

Indeed the reading list included three items, all penned by Polish (rather than Soviet) authors: Drewnowski's article 'The Economic Theory of Socialism: A Suggestion for Reconsideration' published in the *Journal of Political Economy* (Drewnowski 1961), and two texts by Michal Kalecki, 'Investment and National Income Dynamics in Socialist Economies' (Kalecki 1956)[18] and 'Outline of a Method of Constructing a Perspective Plan' (Kalecki [1963] 1974). Polish socialism also dominated the teaching of the module on 'Planning for Development'. In this case, besides another essay by Drewnowski titled 'Planning for Growth' and two other contributions by Michal Kalecki ([1954] 1993, [1960] 1993), the recommended text was Oskar Lange's *Economic Development, Planning and International Cooperation* (Lange 1961), a series of three lectures delivered in 1960 under the auspices of the Central Bank of Egypt (*The Economic*

[16] Soviet economists tended to draw a line and establish a hierarchy between 'the political economy of socialism', concerned with the application of Marxian theory of value to the historical development of capitalism and socialism and considered the most prestigious area of economic research, and 'the economics of socialism', more directly concerned with studies of allocation of scarce resources and mathematical methods. Stalin ([1952] 1972) himself played a crucial role in consolidating this hierarchy (Kaser 2008). Sutela (1991, 17) claimed that Stalin's work reasserted 'a total rupture between all investigations of efficiency and the political economy of socialism'. See especially Stalin ([1952] 1972, 59-86).

[17] On the impact of mathematical economics on Soviet planning see Ellman (1973).

[18] However this essay appeared in 1956 Polish and the author has not found evidence that had already been translated into English by the mid-1960s.

Bulletin of Ghana 1964b, 48). Interestingly a copy of these lectures was personally donated by Lange to Nkrumah (figure 7.1).[19]

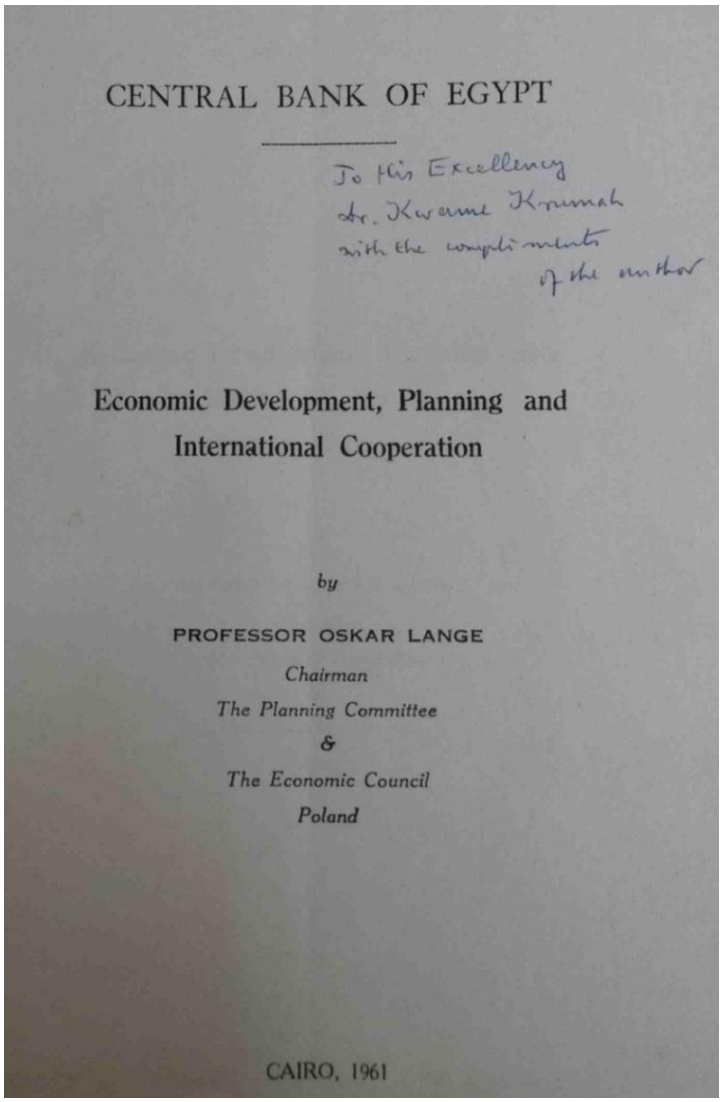

Figure 7.1: Front page of the copy of Oskar Lange's 1960 lectures donated by the author to Kwame Nkrumah. Source: PRAAG RG 17/2/461/ file not numbered.

Unfortunately, given the absence of additional evidence on the matter, the historian is left to speculate about further connections and implications of this encounter, and if Nkrumah himself played a role in including this text in the reading list of the Economics department. Without going into too many details on Kalecki and Lange (on which in any case already there already exists a considerable literature),[20] and at the cost of brutally oversimplifying the ideas of two distinguished theorists, the socialism propounded by Kalecki, Lange and

[19] Thanks to Samuel Misteni for helping me retrieve this archival folder.
[20] On Kalecki, see the collection of essays edited by Blaug (1992).

Drewnowski himself had a distinct reformist and democratic character. This had two main implications.

The first was methodological: while often still based on Marxian categories, the Polish tradition actively tried to integrate the techniques and methods of analysis of what the Soviets called 'bourgeois' economics. This is particularly evident in the case of Lange, who since the 1930s 'socialist planning debate',[21] was attempting to combine Marxism with neoclassical economics. Defined 'an harmonizer and synthesiser […] between the world of Marx and that of Walras' (Fisher 1966, 736), in 1935 Lange contended that while Marxian economics provided a better account of the structural evolution of capitalism, 'there are some problems by which Marxian economics is quite powerless, while "bourgeois" economics solves them easily'. Specifically, if 'people want to anticipate the trend of Capitalism over a very long period, then a knowledge of Marx is a much better departure point […] But Marxian economics would be a poor basis for running a central bank or anticipating the effects of a change in the rate of discount' (Lange 1935, 191-192).This is also evident in Drewnowski's article, in which, taking as a departure point the 'market socialism' of Oskar Lange and Abba Lerner, he suggested a reclassification of economic systems in neoclassical fashion, based on different types of interaction between individual preference functions and state preference function. Even the state preference function had 'the same formal features as does the individual preference function': so it was convex to the origin and 'may be represented by an indifference map' (Drewnowski 1961, 347). Drewnowski's deep engagement with 'bourgeois' economics is also proven by several approving references to authors like Paul Samuelson and Kenneth Arrow.

The second implication of teaching Polish socialism in Ghana was political. Indeed most of the writings in the reading lists belonged to a specific social and political project: the attempt of the Polish economists to react against the Stalinization imposed from the Soviet Union since 1948. As noted by a British observer in the late 1950s, Polish economists 'hated Stalinism, but not Marxism' (Wiles 1957, 197). Indeed since the 1950s Polish economists were searching 'for another version of socialism, non-totalitarian and free from the other pathologies

[21] See especially the articles in Lange (1938).

of the Soviet model' (Porwit 1998, 91).[22] Drewnowski himself, accused in the late 1940s of having contributed to the dissemination of 'bourgeois economics' became a victim of Stalinization, facing the expulsion from the Polish socialist party and the loss of the chair of planned economy at the Warsaw School of Statistics and Planning (Drewnowski 1979, 38). In a moving memoir published in 1979, he offered a vibrant first-hand account, in his triple role as a professor of economic planning in Warsaw, as a member of the Polish Socialist Party, and as Director of the Department of Long-Term Planning of the Polish Central Planning Office, of the pro-Soviet Polish Workers Party's humiliating 'trial' of the planning office, defined by Drewnowski (1979, 33) as 'the first full-scale presentation of the Stalinist mode of public life in Poland'. The well-known features of this mode included the fact that for the first time 'the terms "Marxist" and "anti-Marxist" were used […] as labels which automatically "disqualified" opposing argument' while 'quotes from Marx, Lenin and Stalin were used out of context as magic formulae guaranteeing victory in a debate' (Drewnowski 1979, 33).

It is certainly ironic that it was the Polish interpretation of the 'economics of socialism', partly developed as a reaction to a state that was showing some of the tendencies of Nkrumaist Ghana, to fill the void in socialist economic theory at the University. However, as far as it can be seen in the publication output of the *Economic Bulletin of Ghana* discussions of socialist economics, even in its Polish variety, did not figure prominently.[23] Yet, the journal ended up hosting what emerged in the period under consideration as the most explicit expression of dissent written by an economist.

7.2.3 Invoking Marx to express dissent: J.H. Mensah's presidential address

If the case of Drewnowki shows how what emerged as dissent in Stalinist Poland could become 'orthodoxy' in socialist Ghana, J.H. Mensah authored what remains the most interesting expression of dissent in the Ghanaian economics community. Following the completion of his education at the LSE, where he obtained a BSc in

[22] In the case of Kalecki, this was particularly evident in his support of workers councils since he thought 'provided an opportunity to promote authentic democracy, self-government and the strife for humanist aims at the microlevel' (Porwit 1998, 91).

[23] One of the few papers published by an Eastern European economist was by Joszef Bognar (1963), who as we saw in chapter 6 took an active role in advising the government at the initial stage of the 7YP.

Economics, and some work experience at the ECA, Mensah went back to Ghana where, as we saw in chapter 6, he became the main author of the 7YP. The main concern here is not documenting Mensah's contribution to the plan, but rather analysing his intellectual identity within the Ghanaian economics community and his relationship with the regime. In their role as indigenous technocrats in authoritarian states people like Mensah were subject to a good deal of pressure from the political elite.

Although Mensah's economic strategy for Ghana's development was based on a marked expansion of the role of the state (Mensah 1963; Green 1971, 246), at an early stage of the preparation of the 7YP Nkrumah criticized him 'for lacking ideological purity' and forced him 'to affirm in writing his commitment to socialism' (Tignor 2006, 185). Kwesi Amoaka Atta, at the time Minister of Finance, went through the draft of the plan, ensuring the consistency of Mensah's claims with the Ghanaian socialist strategy. 'Although Mensah put up no fight', remarks Robert Tignor (2006, 185), 'he was far from happy'. It is possible to speculate that Mensah was hinting at this unfortunate state of affairs when, in a review of the United Nations 1961 *World Economic Survey*, he complained that 'so much of contemporary economic discussion is befogged by the vapours of ideological steam-blowing', making particularly valuable 'to have one source where the facts are set out in cold statistical form' (Mensah 1963, 26). In any case the difficult relationship between Mensah and the party apparatus provides the background for his controversial 1964 presidential address to the Economic Society of Ghana.

Mensah's speech was published in *The Economic Bulletin of Ghana* with the subtitle 'The Relevance of Marxian Economics for Ghanaian Development Planning' (Mensah 1965). The 15 pages article represented the most significant attempt in the period under consideration to discuss within the Ghanaian university economics community the applicability and relevance of Marxism to the tasks faced by the new state. As shown by the case of former Minister of Trade Quaidoo, in the Nkrumaist state Marxism was a delicate topic, and denying too explicitly its validity could easily lead to deportation or imprisonment. Furthermore the scope of the article, directly engaging with the applicability of a specific body of theory to the realities of underdeveloped countries, was the exception rather than the rule in the landscape of 1960s Ghanaian economic research. Possibly this had

something to do with the 'global' division of labour that emerged in 1950s and 1960s development economics. While theorists in the West were busy rediscovering the lessons of the great classical political economists (as well as the 1920s Soviet debates on industrialization and Keynesian insights) to construct grand narratives of capital accumulation and technological progress, practitioners in West Africa were struggling to produce useful empirical studies that could have an operational impact on the planning and policy design of their young nations (Austin and Serra 2014, 249).[24] This is certainly mirrored in the *Economic Bulletin of Ghana* between 1959, year of its foundation, and 1966. The great majority of papers published, focusing on issues like household budget studies (Golding 1962, Davey 1963), wages (Birmingham 1960) and cost of living indexes (Lawson 1962, Kundu and Quashie 1965) and discussions of the balance of payments (Rado and Birmingham 1959; Killick 1962a; 1962b) was centred around the construction new facts about the Ghanaian economy, rather than theoretical speculation.[25]

If we combine the intellectual atmosphere prevailing in economic research with the authoritarian tendencies of Nkrumaist Ghana, the choice of focusing on empirical studies could be reasonably expected to be, especially from the point of view of Ghanaian researchers, a reaction to the oppressive political climate.[26] Then how did Mensah approach the delicate topic that he set to explore in his presidential address?

While paying lip-service to the idea that socialism was indeed the path of development purposefully chosen by independent Ghana, Mensah, always careful not to make any direct reference to Nkrumah's government, tried to detach the objective requirements of Ghanaian economic policy from the teachings that could be derived from Marxism. Specifically, Mensah claimed that 'the Ghanaian planner' found that socialist theory did not deal satisfactorily with many of his

[24] This does not imply that the 'third world' was not producing distinguished economic theorists: the cases of Hla Mynt and W. Arthur Lewis suffice to prove the point. Rather, the point is that economists like Lewis and Mynt published their most important theoretical contributions on Western journals.

[25] Occasionally the *Economic Bulletin of Ghana* hosted also economic history articles (Bevin 1960, Harrop 1964). Nor was this a merely Ghanaian phenomenon: in his 1962 presidential address at the Nigerian Economic Society J. Amadi-Edina (1962, 3) explicitly urged Nigerian economists to 'Spend little time in theorizing […] [and] engage more in fact finding […] spend less time in abstractions, more in observation, less time in analysis and model making'.

[26] The similarity should not be overstressed, but also in Stalin's Russia many economists chose deliberately to turn to statistics (and mathematical economics) because they were perceived as less 'political' (Barnett 2006, 114).

‘theoretical and conceptual problems as well as many questions of social organization’, and thus failed him ‘on many points as a guide to action’ (Mensah 1965, 3).

Mensah’s rhetorical strategy relied on two sets of considerations, one stressing the historicity of Marxism itself, and one concerned with the practical implications of a given body of theory (in this case Marxism) for economic policy. In order to show the limited applicability of Marxism to developing countries Mensah referred to Marx’s harsh appraisal of the work of contemporary German economists, relying too much on the theories produced by British economists to account for British realities, and unsuitable to explain Germany:

> Marx said of the theoretical works of German economists: ‘The theoretical expression of a foreign reality was turned, in their hands, into a collection of dogmas, interpreted in terms of the petty trading world around them, and therefore misinterpreted’ (Mensah 1965, 4).

‘Similarly’ continued Mensah ‘Socialism in Ghana cannot be content to follow the prescription of the political economy derived on the basis of European experience without substantial modifications’ (Mensah 1965, 4). With this short passage, Mensah legitimised his own potential expertise as a Ghanaian economist in identifying, or possibly producing, the ‘relevant’ theories for the edification of Ghanaian socialism. Furthermore, he hinted at the possibility of deferring the time when the political apparatus could have said to have found *the* right answer, since this would have led to a further exasperation of dictatorial tendencies. A literal application of Marx to developing countries ended in a paradox, since

> the man who employs labour but does not make a profit does not by definition exploit labour: there is not surplus value for him to expropriate. But the capitalist who makes profits exploits labour by definition. […] The unsuccessful capitalist consumes his capital and does not add to the national income. What then should a planner do about private people who put their capital to productive use and manage it successfully? (Mensah 1965, 8).

A similar set of considerations was applied to the issue of private property of the means of production, which ‘becomes capitalistic when it employs wage labour and appropriates surplus value’ (Mensah 1965, 7). But, argued Mensah,

> In a developing country where the aim of economic policy is to promote a maximum growth of national output it is to be presumed that capital which employes [sic] labour and generates productivity over and above the subsistence wage rate is preferable to private property which does not employ labour (Mensah 1965, 7).

As a consequence, if a developing country like Ghana had both economic development and socialism as objectives of economic policy, the country was 'led to a paradoxical situation: the capitalist is both to be preferred and not to be preferred to the holder of passive property!' (Mensah 1965, 8). By trying to expose the limited applicability of Marxism to developing countries, Mensah entered the ambiguous, undetermined space in which the relationship between Nkrumaism and Marxism-Leninism was being discussed. After all, the official definition provided by Kofi Baako of Nkrumaism as 'basically, socialism adapted to the African social milieu' shared with Mensah's argument the focus on adaptation, in turn requiring a consistent creative effort. Last but not least, there were practical grounds on which Mensah limited the applicability of Marxism to the developing world: the possibility to satisfy Ghana's developmental needs invalidated the notion of class struggle since a 'country like Ghana cannot afford the luxury of not utilising some of its available trained manpower' (Mensah 1965, 15).

Mensah's dissent did not go unnoticed. Colonel Akwasi Afrifa, one of the six main organizers of the military coup which ousted Nkrumah in 1966 recalled how, around the time when he was delivering the presidential address, Mensah became victim of a denigratory campaign in the press (Afrifa 1966, 91); 'By June 1965 he had abandoned his career in his own country's civil service and returned to the United Nations' (Afrifa 1966, 91). In the disparaging account of the regime published by Afrifa in the aftermath of the coup, the tale of Mensah, called 'a brilliant economist' (Afrifa 1966, 87), was appropriated to symbolise all those highly educated Ghanaians who left for fear of political repression and imprisonment.

7.3 Towards 'Marxism-Leninism-Nkrumaism': The Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute

The apogee of personality cult, authoritarian rule and appeal to the insights of the social sciences to forge the ideal citizens of the new one-party state found its most relevant expression not in the University of Ghana, but in a newly founded

institution: the Kwame Nkrumah Institute of Economics and Political Science (figure 7.2), also known as the Kwame Nkrumah Institute of Ideological Studies, or the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute (KNII hereafter). Although the institute is mentioned or discussed very briefly in several accounts of Nkrumah's rule, there is no detailed account based on archival sources which analyses its actual structure, orientation and functioning. [27] What follows is then the first systematic attempt to fill this gap.

The foundation stone of the Kwame Nkrumah Institute of Economics and Political Science was laid on the 18th February 1961 in the presence of Leonid Brezhnev. The location selected for the Institute was Winneba, a small coastal town not far from Accra, where since 1959 the CPP had organised a party's education college (T. Jones 1976, 60).[28] In his inaugural speech, Nkrumah recalled the trajectory of the CPP from 1949 on:

> For twelve years, twelve long years, […] no conscious, consistent effort had been made to provide party members with the requisite education in the party's ideology of socialism – socialism based on the conditions, circumstances and peculiarities of our African life (Nkrumah [1961] 2009a, 269).

The creation of the KNII was the most significant institutional embodiment of this conception. Indeed this is how Nkrumah summarised his expectations in the inaugural speech:

> I see before my mind's eye a great monolithic party growing up of this process [the foundation of the institute], united and strong, spreading its protective wings over the whole of Africa – from Algiers in the north to Cape Town in the south; from Cape Guardafui in the east to Dakar in the west (Nkrumah [1961] 2009a, 276).

The evocative image of a 'monolithic party' is very powerful in suggesting the importance of the institute as both a site for nation and continent-making: Nkrumaism had to emerge as the ideological glue keeping together fragmented

[27] See for example T. Jones (1976, 60-62) and Rooney (2007, 240-241). The only study devoted to ideological education in Ghana is Agyeman (1988), but it is mostly based on a questionnaire distributed to Ghanaian students to compare the impact of nationalist education under Nkrumah's and Busia's governments. Here the KNII is explicitly discussed only in one page (Agyeman 1988, 11).

[28] More broadly the Central Region, where Winneba was located, had been an important CPP constituency since the early 1950s. For further discussion on this, see Owusu's (2002) excellent micro-study of politics in the Agona area.

identities marked by class, gender, nationality in the name of a common African revolution, socialist in outlook and continental in scale.

Unlike the 'neo-colonial' University of Ghana, where the elites faced the danger of detaching themselves from the masses, the potential students of the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute included '[E]veryone of us, from members of the Central Committee to the lowest propagandist in the field', non-violent positive actionists, such as 'Party Vanguard activists, farmers, co-operators, trade unionists, and women organisers' (Nkrumah [1961] 2009a, 273), as well as militants from other African countries, preparing 'for the great freedom fight against imperialism and colonialism old or new' (Nkrumah [1961] 2009a, 276). The 'inclusiveness' of the Institute is consistent with the fact that its direction was entrusted to Kodwo Addison, not an academic but a former trade unionist and a prominent member in the CPP Marxist wing. While his communist sympathies had placed him during the struggle for decolonization at the margins of the party, from the late 1950s he became a key figure in supporting the country's shift to socialism.[29]

It seems that enrolment in the institute, in the volatile political climate of the Nkrumaist state, did indeed represent a shortcut to a more prestigious and better paid job without undertaking lengthy training at the University. Nigerian Samuel Ikoku, a key figure in the regime's ideological machinery and a lecturer at the Institute, enthusiastically described how the first cohort of KNII graduates smoothly found their way 'in the civil service, the ministries, the State corporations, the party press and radio' (Ikoku 1971, 89). By January 1964 the KNII had among its students Nana Wetey Agyeman Larbi II, Omanhene of Owutu and the first traditional chief to obtain admission at the KNII (Da Pilma-Lekettey 1964, 28).

Different sources present incompatible estimates on the number of students enrolled, but in response to a parliamentary enquiry, Kodwo Addison declared in 1965 that the total enrolments figures were 75 students for the 1962-1963

[29] The high esteem in which Addison was held in Ghanaian radical circles is possibly confirmed by his appointment in 1963 as Honorary President of the Ghana-U.S.S.R. Friendship society. Ghana-U.S.S.R. Friendship Society – A Public Organisation Functioning Under Ghana-U.S.S.R. Cultural Pact, Minutes of National Executive Meeting of Ghana-U.S.S.R. Friendship Society held on Sunday, the 30th of June, 1963, p. 6, PRAAD RG 17/2/466/ file not numbered.

academic year, 133 in 1963-1964, 239 in 1964-1965 and 250 in 1965-1966.[30] The admission criteria were also very different from those prevailing at the University. Indeed in the case of the KNII these did not focus on academic merit, but rather included 'Many factors […], such as Party membership, educational background, ability to pass the Entrance examination, experience in life, character, etc'.[31]

The vague academic status of the KNII led to a heated debate between the Ministry of Education, which pointed out how the KNII did not fall within the UNESCO definition of higher education or the the Ghana Education Act,[32]and Kodwo Addison, who instead wanted the institute to acquire University status. This ambiguous character was reflected in the variety of the teachers employed. While, to the best of the author's knowledge, there is no comprehensive list of lecturers, names that recur in the archival sources include West African militants like Nigerian Samuel Ikoku, and expatriate Marxists from both the West and the East. A revealing impression of the Institute was provided by Tibor Szamuely, a Hungarian historian and polemist who was part of the staff of the Institute before defecting and becoming a source of information about the regime's shortcomings. He described the KNII as 'a kind of cross between Socratic Athens, the London School of Economics and the Moscow Institute of Marxism-Leninism. While not quite up to those standards, it was a very odd hybrid indeed' (quoted in Omari [1970] 2009, 121). Regardless of quality considerations, the KNII represented the most substantial institutional embodiment of the notion that social sciences could create the 'new man' needed for the construction of a socialist state in Ghana and the achievement of continental African Unity. Economics and political economy were expected to play a pivotal role in bringing about this radical transformation.

7.3.1 Teaching political economy: Marxism and beyond

[30] Letter of Kodwo Addison to the Principal Secretary, Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 1st December 1965, PRAAD RG 11/1/148/6. However, these figures should be read with caution, as there is much disagreement on the actual number of students who passed through the Institute. For example, PRAAD RG 17/2/30, although only presenting a list of final year and graduates, present a much smaller number.
[31] Letter of Kodwo Addison to the Principal Secretary, Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 1st December 1965, PRAAD RG 11/1/148/6.
[32] Letter of E. Quist-Therson, no date (presumably 1963), p. 1, PRAAD RG 11/1/153/25.

An early version of the Institute weekly timetable, prepared in 1962 and following the Institute's decision to establish a two years Diploma in political science, reveals that the focus at this stage was on seven subjects: English, French, economics, political theory and practice, African studies, civics (although to this was devoted only one hour per week), and a more practical module in which book-keeping and accounting were taught.[33]

If the 1962 timetable shows that the institute offered a mixture of subjects aiming at promoting the party's ideology while simultaneously teaching a series of skills and notions considered necessary in the running of the Ghanaian economy, (such as office management, state enterprises and book keeping), a comprehensive prospectus published in 1963 reveals that there was much more stress on the consolidation of two educational paths, the first exclusively concerned with practical subjects like trade unionism, state firms and book-keeping, while the second, which found its clearest expression in the two years diploma in Political Science, focused on the teaching of the social sciences. These were supplemented by short courses for freedom fighters, typically radical militants from other African countries who wanted to receive training in nationalism and Pan-Africanism. The weekly timetable for the 1st year of the Diploma in Political Science is presented in table 7.1.

[33] Kwame Nkrumah Institute of Economics and Political Science Time Table, PRAAD RG 17/2/884/5.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
8.00 - 8.50	Political Science	Statistics	Applied Economics	Philosophy	Private Studies
9.00 - 9.50	Political Economy	Political Science	Government	Philosophy	Government
10.00- 10.30	Break				
10.30- 11.20	History	Constitutional Law	English	African Studies	Nkrumaism
11.30- 12.20	History	Contemporary African Politics	French	Political Economy	Nkrumaism
12.30 - 13.20	Nkrumaism	Contemporary African Politics	French	Political Economy	Applied Economics

Table 7.1: 1963 weekly timetable for the first year of the Diploma in political science at the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute. Source: GPRL BAA/437/file not numbered.

In 1963 several innovations were introduced. Nkrumaism, which in 1962 was still part of the 'Political theory and practice' module, became in 1963 a separate subject to which 3 hours per week were devoted. This course consolidated the party's ideology and the cult of the leader, through the transmission of the content of Nkrumah's writings and a highly idealised presentation of his life (largely based on Nkrumah's autobiography). This can be seen for example in the first term exam (December 1963) paper for the course in 'Nkrumaism –I':

1. 'Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah has lived a full life'. Discuss.
2. To what extent do the social effects of colonialism influence the building of a newly independent state?
3. 'Africa Must Unite'. Prove it.
4. Show as fully as possible how a Party Vanguard Activist can be fully loyal to the Party and Government.
5. Write a short essay on Collective Responsibility.[34]

From the exam sheet it can be inferred that the study of Nkrumaism not only included teachings on political practice and Nkrumah's life, but even in this case, where the link between training in the social sciences and reinforcement of the leader's personality cult was at its most extreme, there was the inclusion of

[34] Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute, First term examination, first year, Examiner: M.K. Agituah, 10th December 1963, GPRL BAA/437/file not numbered.

economic knowledge. For example questions no. 2 and 3 were reasonably expected to be answered on the basis of the Leninist political economy presented by Nkrumah in *Africa Must Unite*.[35]

In spite of many changes introduced in 1963, like the reduction of the number of hours devoted to 'African Studies' from two to one per week, and the introduction of a very elementary course in statistics,[36] the teaching of economic issues (divided into an 'applied economics' and a 'political economy' course) maintained its privileged status as a key component of the ideological training, still accounting for 25% of the total weekly teaching. Although unfortunately no evidence has survived of the content of the course in 'applied economics', for the 1963-1964 academic year we can gain a fairly precise picture of the course in 'political economy'. Table 7.2 shows its syllabus.

[35] Note that the necessity of a continental African union was expected to be 'proved' even before the formal proof provided by Nkrumah in the last chapter of *Consciencism*, published the following year.

[36] Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute, Statistics, First and second year, lecture 2-3, GPRL BAA 437/46.

1	General Introduction	17	The Deepening of the General Crisis of Capitalism and the Advance to Socialism
2	Economics of Capitalism	18	The Main Feature of the Socialist Mode of Production
3	Economics of Socialism	19	The Development of the Capitalist Mode of Production
4	The Place of Capitalism in Human History	20	The Basic Economic Law of Modern Capitalism
5	The Objective Character of Economic Laws and the Social Forms preceding Capitalism	21	Commercial and Loan Capitalism
6	Pre-Monopoly Capitalism	22	Ground Rent and Agrarian Relations Under Capitalism
7	Commodity Production	23	Average Profit and Production Price
8	The Origins of Capitalism	24	Principles of Economics
9	The Essence of Capitalist Exploitation	25	Money
10	Capital and Accumulation	26	Structure of Industry
11	Distribution of Surplus Value	27	Economics of Agriculture
12	Rent and Capitalism in Agriculture	28	Theory of Economic Development
13	Reproduction of Capital and Crisis	29	Economic Planning
14	Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism	30	The Economy of Ghana
15	The National Product and Its Distribution	31	The Economy of Other African Countries
16	The General Crisis of Capitalism		

Table 7.2: Syllabus of the course in political economy offered by the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute in the academic year 1963-1964. Source: PRAAD 11/1/357/file not numbered.

Topics like 'The Objective Character of Economic Laws and the Social Forms Preceding Capitalism', 'The Essence of Capitalist Exploitation', 'The Deepening of the General Crisis of Capitalism and the Advance to Socialism' and, especially, 'Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism' leave little doubt, (and in stark contrast with the higher pluralism prevailing at the University of Ghana), about the overall Marxian orientation of the political economy taught at the Institute.

Although nothing is known about the lecturer of the course in political economy, besides the fact that she was called Mrs Grace Arnold and she was an expatriate, the orientation of the course can be partly reconstructed by a few surviving teaching notes found in the George Padmore Library of African Affairs in Accra. These, dealing with 'Commercial capital and interest-bearing (bank) capital', 'The circuit and turnover of capital' and 'Average profit and price of

production' suggest that Arnold's course was entirely based on Marx's *Capital*, (including volumes II and III) from which all the direct quotes were taken.[37] In the broader context this implies that Arnold's course, in contrast with teaching and research at the University of Ghana, was almost certainly the only site in Nkrumaist Ghana where discussion of economic themes was based on the labour theory of value.

But it would be wrong to assume that Marx's *Capital* exhausted the whole range of economic 'textbooks' used at the KNII in 1963-64. For example on the 20th November 1963 a (presumably Polish) lecturer called 'Comrade Prof. Perczynsky' delivered a lecture on 'Supply and Demand' based on Paul Samuelson's *Principles of Economic Analysis*.[38] Maybe the lectures on themes such as supply and demand based on Samuelson were part of what the 1963 prospectus of the Institute labelled 'applied economics', but the evidence available is too sketchy to allow a deeper reconstruction of the role played by the coexistence of Marx's *Capital* and Samuelson's *Principles*, or by Perczynski himself, in defining the intellectual identity of the Institute. However, given the syllabus presented in the table 7.2, we can state with a certain degree of confidence that Marxism did indeed represent the main intellectual framework for the discussion of economic matters.

7.3.2 Pat Sloan: Nkrumaism as the la(te)st stage of Marxism-Leninism

The 1964-65 academic year envisaged discussions about the possibility of bringing the teaching of political economy at the Institute more in line with a purely Marxist-Leninist approach, possibly to the exclusion of all other perspectives. This took place within a broader and more explicit attempt to represent Nkrumaism as the 'natural' evolution of Marxism-Leninism, and thus as a form of 'scientific socialism' (rather than some odd, un-orthodox variety of 'African socialism' devoid of economic content). In these debates a significant role was played by Pat

[37] Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute, Political Economy, First year, 'Commercial capital and interest-bearing (bank capital) by Mrs Grace Arnold, 4th February 1964; Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute, Political Economy, First year 'The circuit and turnover of capital' First year lecture VII; Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute 'Average profit and price of production' by Mrs Grace Arnold, Lecture V111 [sic]. All teaching notes are in GPRL BAA 437/46.

[38] Reading in Political Economy selected from P. Samuelson 'Economics', Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute, First and second year, by Comrade Professor Percznsky [sic] 20th November 1963, Lecture 3 Political Economy: Demand and Supply, GPRL BAA 437/46.

Sloan, a British member of the Communist Party of Great Britain who joined the Institute as a Senior Lecturer in 1964. Although attempts to turn Nkrumaism into scientific socialism were not in any way unique to Sloan (people like Kofi Batso and Samuel Ikoku at *The Spark* had done just that for a few years), the focus on Sloan is motivated by three main factors: his role in the life of the KNII, his background in economics, and the survival of a folder containing his private correspondence and other unpublished writings in the Ghanaian national archives.[39]

Sloan first contacted Nkrumah in February 1964: in his letter he introduced himself as someone who had obtained a double first in Economics from the University of Cambridge, had been a Communist for thirty years, and had made a reputation as an expert on the Soviet Union, where he worked from 1931 to 1936, and on which he wrote many books and pamphlets.[40] Significantly, he listed as his referees Maurice Dobb, the most important British economist who was also a member of the Communist Party of Great Britain, and Denis Pritt, a former recipient of the Stalin Prize for Peace and a lawyer who had defended Kenyatta and other Kenyans from some of the trials following the outbreak of the Mau Mau revolution.[41] In his first letter Sloan depicts Nkrumah's Ghana as an exciting social experiment:

> As one who for thirty years has been actively interested in the development of Socialism, you will understand why, after such a long period of specialization on the USSR, I am eager to see how a new African country is exploring its own Socialist path in its own way.[42]

Sloan's intellectual trajectory, leading him to pen several pamphlets on the Soviet Union between the 1930s and the 1950s, can be understood within the context of that group of intellectuals who remained in the British Communist Party after the 'Bolshevization' and the introduction of Stalin's personality cult in the

[39] Many thanks to Frank Gerits for sharing with me this archival folder.
[40] Letter of Pat Sloan to President Kwame Nkrumah, 20th February 1964, p.1, PRAAD RG 17/1/448/ file not numbered. Among Sloan's publications on Russia see Sloan (1937; 1938; 1942; 1950).
[41] Sloan was also, in 1976, the author of Maurice Dobb's obituary in the socialist *Labour Monthly (*Shenk 2014, 216).
[42] Letter of Pat Sloan to President Kwame Nkrumah, 20th February 1964, pp. 1-2, PRAAD RG 17/1/448/ file not numbered.

late 1920s.[43] Sloan, who met Maurice Dobb in 1926 (presumably when he went to Cambridge to read economics) joined the party in that crucial period, precisely in 1930, aged 21 or 22, and remained a lifetime member (McIlroy 2006, 230). In response to Sloan's letter the Office of the President promptly invited Sloan to Ghana, and shortly afterwards he became a lecturer in 'Socialism' at the KNII.

A revealing example of Sloan's engagement with the shaping of official ideology can be found in a memo on how to reform the teaching at the KNII written in November 1965, in which he advocated a firmer grounding of the contents presented to students in what he called the tradition of 'Marxism-Leninism-Nkrumaism'. Besides fostering the teaching of Party organization, ideally by incorporating 'expatriate experience of Marxist parties abroad with lectures by CPP activists', the teaching at the institute should have followed more explicitly the three branches of Marxism: philosophy, scientific socialism and political economy.[44] With regard to the latter, Sloan claimed that

> Economics taught at the present is of the capitalist variety and in my opinion only causes confusion in the minds of the students. It may have been right when Marxism-Leninism-Nkrumaism had not so matured as the ideology of Ghana and the CPP, but not now.[45]

Perhaps here Sloan was referring to the uneasy co-existence of Marxian theory of value and the lectures based on Samuelson's textbook, perhaps there were other topics taught from a non-Marxian perspective about which no evidence survived. The second important element that emerges in Sloan's reform is his attempt to place Nkrumah's ideas as the latest stage in the progressive evolution of Marxist thought while simultaneously reinforcing the link between economic thinking and party ideology. The 'reformed' political economy syllabus had to be divided into four main parts, broadly mirroring the succession of stages in human history which were presented in Nkrumah's writings (as well as the historical structure of Soviet political economy syllabi): capitalism, colonialism, neo-

[43] Indeed these tendencies reduced dramatically the attractiveness of the Communist Party for intellectuals, and many who joined it at the time of its foundation in 1920 left shortly afterwards in disillusionment and disagreement (McIlroy 2006, 189).
[44] Memo. on Educational Plan for KNII, Winneba (for Council if approved by Osagyefo), Nov. 1965, PRAAD RG 17/1/448/ file not numbered.
[45] Ibidem.

colonialism, and socialism.[46] In contrast it should be noted that as far as we can see the 1962-63 political economy syllabus presented in table did *not* contain any explicit discussion of 'neo-colonialism', which eventually became a pillar in Nkrumah's writings and as part of the state imposed discourse. In fact it is very likely that the timing, in November 1965, of Sloan's suggestion to re-structure the syllabus in this way was not a coincidence, but rather a consequence of the fact that the same month Nkrumah published *Neo-colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism* (Nkrumah [1965] 1970). If *Consciencism* was an attempt to develop the ontological and epistemic basis of Nkrumaism, *Neo-Colonialism* provided Sloan with additional inspiration to construct Nkrumaism as part of a Marxist, and especially Leninist, tradition of economic analysis (and political practice).[47]

It was in an unpublished essay entitled 'The International Significance of Nkrumaism' that Sloan expressed most clearly his attempt to reconstruct Nkrumaism as a 'total' ideology, providing 'scientific' theoretical analysis and a guide to practical action.[48] The first step was to acknowledge that Nkrumah's own definition of Nkrumaism as the 'application of scientific socialism to our African social milieu' was too modest.[49] In the same way in which it was limiting to consider Leninism 'the application of scientific socialism to the Russian social milieu', similarly Nkrumaism' scope and depth went much further. Indeed 'in Ghana and in Africa, Nkrumaism provides the application of Marxism-Leninism to internal problems' while 'externally Nkrumaism provides an up-to-date analysis of the last stage of imperialism, NEOCOLONIALISM' as well as offering 'practical guidance in the organisational task of building up a world anti-imperialist front'.[50] The same attitude towards Nkrumaism as the late(st) stage of Marxism-Leninism can be found in his proposed reform of the Philosophy syllabus, which had to be divided into three parts: Dialectical Materialism,

[46] The last part would also include discussions of statistics and planning.
[47] The review of the book that appeared in the weekly *West Africa* went as far as to state 'It is surprising that Dr. Nkrumah sees the world in a far more Leninist way that is now fashionable in the Soviet Union itself' (D.P. 1965, 1250).
[48] As Marx (1959, 245) himself famously put it: 'The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to *change* it'.
[49] The International Significance of Nkrumaism – Pat Sloan, p.1., PRAAD RG 17/1/448/ file not numbered.
[50] Ibidem.

Historical Materialism and Conciencism.[51] In this case, Sloan pointed out that it was 'desirable that expatriate lecturers should always be aware of Consciencism, while lecturers on Consciencism should know the necessary minimum about Diamectical [sic.] Materialism'.[52]

Sloan's attempt to place firmly Nkrumaism within Marxism-Leninism did not simply represent the disinterested construction of a 'total' ideology that blended history and political economy: Sloan's appeal to the 'necessity' to combine an expertise in orthodox, Western, scientific Marxism (something fairly rare in Ghana) and economic analysis in the reinforcement of Nkrumah's analysis of neo-colonialism was part of a precise strategy to advance his position in the ideological machinery of the regime, and fight the increasing hostility that he was facing from Kodwo Addison and other ideologues. Although the evidence available is fragmentary and incomplete, it seems that the reasons for Sloan's resentment were *The Spark* editors' refusal to publish some of his articles, and Kodwo Addison's suspicions that Sloan wanted to replace him as Director of the KNII.

In an article on 'Categorial Conversion' that was probably written for publication in *The Spark*, Sloan discussed a review of *Consciencism* published by a certain writer, 'no doubt a Nkrumaist', in which it was claimed that Nkrumah's book introduced 'for the first time the concept of 'categorical conversion', defined as 'the quantitative changes which at some point become qualitative'.[53] According to Sloan this attribution of novelty was wrong. Indeed, he continued, the notion of 'categorial conversion'- as we saw one of the pillars of *Consciencism* - had already found its expression 'as an essential aspect of Dialectical Materialism' in the nineteenth century.[54] The reason for African ignorance of such matters was (perhaps unconvincingly) reduced to a consequence of the censorship imposed by

[51] II.Suggested grouping of necessary subjects (with possible subdivisions), p. 2, PRAAD RG17/1/448/file not numbered.
[52]Ibidem.
[53] 'Categorical Conversion' (Pat Sloan), p.2, PRAAD RG 17/1/448/file not numbered. Unfortunately the paper is not dated, but it likely that it was written in 1965. It is extremely likely that Sloan was referring to a short essay published anonymously by the Spark (*Categorial Conversion* 1964) in which Nkrumah was wrongly credited with inventing of the idea of categorial conversion.
[54] Ibidem. Indeed *Consciencism*'s treatment of categorial conversion is basically a reiteration of Engels' discussion of the first law of dialectics, 'The law of the transformation of quantity into quality and *vice versa'.* This, in turn, was derived by Hegel, as acknowledged by Engels [1883].

colonialism on socialist literature, but this exactly why in Sloan's view an expatriate Marxist could have provided a great service to ideological consolidation in Ghana: 'Authors who are not aware of this [scientific socialism] should not write on Nkrumaism. First, let them study Scientific Socialism and its development. Then let them turn to its application to the African social milieu'.[55]

But attempts to construct Nkrumaism as the evolution of Marxism-Leninism were not limited to public discussion and writings. Indeed, and in stark contrast with the 'silence' of Drewnowski and other University economists on Nkrumah's ideas and rule, among ideologues like Sloan and Addison, in a manner remindful of European dictatorial regimes, references to the teachings and the life of the Great Leader crossed the boundaries of official discourse and largely structured the narratives found in private correspondence, where they were used as a powerful device to prove one's righteousness. For example this is how a letter written by Sloan to Addison in 1965 began:

> Dear Comrade Addison,
> When I read in the AUTOBIOGRAPHY [of Kwame Nkrumah] the following words I felt they applied to me: 'They must have thought that I was either a pretty weird character or that in a shrewd way I was trying on something too clever for them to see'. In Osagyefo's case it was the lack of interest in money; in mine, my lack of interest in idleness.[56]

Although according to Sloan Addison had failed to make the KNII 'THE MODEL IT SHOULD BE IN GHANA AND IN AFRICA', there was scope for improvement if only he started adopting 'a real Marxist-Leninist-Nkrumaism line in practice'.[57] Addison's response to Sloan deployed the same basic rhetorical strategy: contrast the accuser's virtue with the opponent's individualism and inconsistency with the teachings of 'Marxism-Leninism-Nkrumaism':

> I have always remained a faithful Party member, believed in the Party's constitution, principles and teachings, with unstinted loyalty to the Leader, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah.[…]
> For all I know, there is a strong collective of comrades – lecturers, staff, students – working wholeheartedly without fear for the aims for which Osagyefo established the Kwame Nkrumah Ideological Institute. What I do not intend to

[55] Ibidem.
[56] Letter of Pat Sloan to Kodwo Addison, 9th October 1965, PRAAD RG 17/1/448/ file not numbered.
[57] Ibidem.

> tolerate is to allow the need for this collective approach to work to mean a license with which individuals can interfere in the administration of the Institute.[58]

Regardless of its outcome, the heated exchange between Sloan and Addison can be read as an important symbolic victory for the regime, with the shadow of the Osagyefo looming large in the construction of the self in private correspondence. [59]

When combined together, the microhistories of the University of Ghana and the KNII explored in this chapter allow a more precise understanding of the 'boundaries' of what could be said and written in Nkrumaist Ghana. They are snapshots of the evolution of a young authoritarian state in which, in the face of institutionalised political oppression, there was still much scope to negotiate the nature of the intellectual connection between Nkrumaism as an evolving official ideology and the Marxist-Leninist tradition.

The trajectory of Mensah, who subtly appealed to Marx's authority to express dissent, becomes more explicative of the intellectual context in which economists were working when contrasted directly with the experience of Reginald H. Green and Ann Seidman discussed in chapter 3. Like Mensah, the two American economists were questioning the applicability of Western economic theory (and acritical importation of Soviet style socialism) in order to find a way of conceptualising and designing economic institutions that were appropriate to the African context, but they did not have to endure any form of political prosecution or opposition. Indeed unlike Mensah, Green and Seidman genuinely shared Nkrumah's dream of a political and economic Pan-African union. Furthermore it is possible that from the government's point of view it was considered desirable to have foreign experts so sympathetic to Nkrumah's cause; it is not a coincidence that Seidman was part of the Ghanaian delegation at the 1964 Organisation of African Unity conference in Cairo, where for the first time

[58] Letter of Kodwo Addison to Pat Sloan, 26th October 1965, PRAAD RG 17/1/448/ file not numbered.

[59] Unfortunately the paucity of correspondence of this kind in the Ghanaian context does not allow the writing of systematic studies on the impact of dictatorship on the construction of the self, and its political uses. On the other hand there are excellent studies on this fascinating theme with reference to Fascist Italy (Duggan 2013) and the Soviet Union (Hellbeck 2000). On the impact of Soviet messianism on political accusations and narratives of guilt and redemption, see Halfin (2009).

proposals of African Unity were presented, refashioned in the language of contemporary economics, to other African leaders. Secondly, while Mensah wanted to 'de-politicise' economic thinking, Green and Seidman adopted the opposite strategy, carving a new role for the economist as a 'social engineer' who uses the tools of economic theory and institutional design to translate politicians' visions and make them operational.[60]

Although the University of Ghana and the KNII represented the main sites for the struggle for the economic soul of the Nkrumaist state, it is likely that the regime had not yet managed to shape so dramatically the intellectual landscape of other institutions of higher learning. The textbook *Theories of Economic Development and Growth*, published in 1966 by Y.S. Brenner (who at the time was director of the Economics Department in the small University of Cape Coast) and 'based on courses of lectures to university students in Ghana' (Brenner 1966, preface) offers an interesting piece of evidence in this regard. While devoting much attention to 'The Dialectical Materialists' Karl Marx and Frederich Engels and to Soviet theories of development, the textbook, which presumably was submitted for publication before Nkrumah's fall, falls neatly in the pluralist approach characterising much early thinking about growth and development, drawing inspiration from the classical political economists as well as from Keynesian and neoclassical theories.[61] *Pace* Sloan, who wanted Marxist-Leninist political economy to become the base of all economic teaching, from the University of Cape Coast Brenner wrote that since his students 'had unusual difficulty with the theories of the Neoclassical economists' he chose to expand their treatment in the book (Brenner 1966, preface).

In conclusion the intellectual co-evolution of economic analysis and the Nkrumaist state does not lend itself to any simplistic account of the subordination of economic thinking to political authority. Rather, a close inspection reveals the multiple possibilities open to economists to combine existing languages and intellectual traditions, and partly to reinvent their political meaning as tools of

[60] This can also be observed in the citation and referencing practices employed by the two authors. Seidman (1964) article on 'The Economics of Neo-Colonialism in West Africa' is the only article in *The Economic Bulletin of Ghana* for the period under analysis to start with a quote from one of Nkrumah's books. Similarly, Green (1965b) explicitly referred to Nkrumah's writings (as well as those of other African leaders) in his paper on the prospects of an African economic union.
[61] This is for example the strategy adopted in the classic textbook by Meier and Baldwin (1957).

government support or opposition. Some of these visions, deeply shaped by the volatile political context of the Nkrumaist state, faded away with the abrupt fall of the regime.

7.4 Epilogue: things fall apart

On the morning of the 24th of February 1966, a junta of six men from the police and the army conducted an almost bloodless coup, and declared on the radio the end of CPP rule. The reasons for this mentioned in the first broadcast of the National Liberation Council (NLC hereafter) included 'chaotic economic conditions; the concentration of power in the hands of one man, leading to the abuse of individual rights and liberties, and the capricious exercise of power by the former President' (Pinkney 1972, 1).[62] In his account of the coup Colonel A.A. Afrifa, one of the six men overthrowing the government, discussed how Nkrumah alienated the national army and started relying increasingly on his newly founded personal guard, staffed with trusted Russian soldiers, and provided a vivid description of the CPP:

> Its programme was based on deceit; its manifesto was a hotch-potch of political slogans and half-digested political theories snatched from discredited political philosophers. Its ideology, supposedly based on Marxism, was a confusion of half-truths about Africa, worship of personality, and the blurred vision of a socialist paradise (Afrifa 1966, 98).

Since the adoption of the Republican constitution in 1960 Afrifa recalled that

> We all lived in constant fear. We had to find a way out. For sixty-six months we tolerated a Constitution purporting to serve the people, but designed to hero-worship an over-ambitious individual and to create a myth around him. This myth we destroyed on the 24th of February, 1966 (Afrifa 1966, 64).

[62] Far from being an isolated phenomenon, the NLC coup was part of a much broader set of military coup d'etats which swept Africa in the 1960s and 1970s, usually marking the failure of the first generation of postcolonial governments to bring the expected results.

In the following three years, before returning the country to civilian rule,[63] the NLC embarked on a systematic dismantlement of the institutions and the icons of the modernization project attempted by the socialist regime.

The coup took place while Nkrumah was on a flight to China. He received news of what happened after he landed in Peking.[64] Nkrumah spent the last years of his life in another Mecca of West African socialism: Ahmed Sékou Touré's Guinea, where he was appointed honorary vice-president. During his exile in Conakry, Nkrumah's ideas became even more radical. In his last writings Nkrumah claimed that the wave of military coups shaking Africa proved that freedom from neo-colonialism could not be achieved peacefully: the African revolution had reached the phase of armed struggle. In the footsteps of leaders like Mao Zedong and Ernesto Che Guevara, Nkrumah, who unlike them had no military experience, went as far as to write a manual of guerrilla techniques (Nkrumah 1968). His other writings show a full embracement of 'orthodox' Marxism, rather than the attempt to develop a new theory of socialism grounded in African conditions (Biney 2009). This can be seen for example in the fact that, unlike many of the writings that were published while in power, Nkrumah now extensively employed class as a unit of analysis (whose relevance for the African context he had underplayed in the early 1960s): *Class Struggle in Africa* (Nkrumah [1970] 1980) is a good example of this.

Nor did he simply spend his last years writing political treaties. Between March and December 1966 from Radio Guinea's 'Voice of the Revolution' he gave a series of broadcasts in which he restated the neo-colonial nature of the NLC, appealed to his fellow countrymen, inviting them to riot and overthrow the government, and promised his eventual return as the only legitimate President of Ghana:

> Countrymen, I assure you, I myself am not resting. Victory is imminent and I will be back with you soon.
> Forward Ever, Backward never. There is victory for the Ghanaian Socialist Revolution and for the African Revolutionary Socialist Struggle.

[63] However, even this proved to be a short-lived experience. In 1971 the civilian government headed by Kofi Busia (a former opponent of Nkrumah's regime) was overthrown in another military coup. Ghana remained under military rule until 1982.

[64] Nkrumah's own account of how he received news of the coup when he arrived in China, and his analysis of what caused it and what to do about it, can be found in *Dark Days in Ghana* (Nkrumah [1968] 1973).

> Long live the people of Ghana
> Long live the African revolutionary Struggle
> Long live the Continental Union Government of Africa […] (Nkrumah [1967] 1973, 35).

But none of this happened, and Nkrumah died of cancer on the 27th of April 1972 in Bucharest, where he had gone to seek medical care.

The ideological apparatus set up to institutionalise the cult of Nkrumaism revealed its extreme weakness in the immediate aftermath of the coup. Some of the most vocal self-appointed theorists of the new doctrine turned their back to the Osagyefo. Kofi Baako, for example, who had called Nkrumaism an 'applied religion' now did not hesitate to define Nkrumah 'a fraud of the first order' (Ariga 2001, 226). Other key figures of the ideological apparatus, such as Kofi Batsa of *The Spark* and Kodwo Addison of the KNII were arrested. Nor did the KNII, which represented the regime's dream of creating the new citizen of the socialist state, oppose any resistance: 'when at last the coup came, not even the "trained revolutionaries" of Winneba were found upon the scene of battle' (Davidson 1973, 186). In a letter to Nkrumah dated 5th March 1966, Sloan claimed that a few hours after the people at the KNII heard of the coup and the arrival of policemen and frontiers guards, 'only about 40 students were left out of about 500' (Pat Sloan to KN, 15 March 1966 quoted in Milne 2001, 25). The Eastern European lecturers were summoned by their respective embassies and repatriated within 48 hours, while Sloan himself bought a flight ticket back to Kent even before the police officially handed him a note asking him to leave the country: 'We felt that it was cowardly to run away but folly to stay too long' (Pat Sloan to KN, 15 March 1966 quoted in Milne 2001, 25). The smooth and uneventful way in which staff and students abandoned the Institute, without even attempting to protest or fight back, left Sloan very disillusioned about the extent to which ideological education had actually rooted Nkrumaism in Ghanaian consciousness: 'The students showed no signs of morale, collective spirit or any form of resistance, and if this was their reaction, what of the rest?' (Pat Sloan to KN, 15 March 1966 quoted in Milne 2001, 25). Contemporary pictures of cheering crowds in Accra, smashing statues of the former leader, provide an immediate answer to the question. But the most revealing piece of evidence related to the dismantlement of the KNII, a precious testimony of the lack of ideological commitment of Ghanaian workers and of the

extent to which the institute came to represent the worst features of Nkrumaist rule, is a letter forwarded by the Ghana Trade Union Congress to the NLC, representing the instance of the employees of the former Institute. Its poignancy, its unusual literary quality, and its remarkable capacity to provide an allegorical representation of the fall of Nkrumah's regime make it worth quoting at length:

> We the entire workers of the former Ideological Institute numbering 474 do hereby pledge our unflinching and unwavering loyalty to the National Liberation Council and wish to present the following grievances […]:
>
> 1. That we want it made known that we worked at the former Institute as loyal citizens of the Republic of Ghana and basically to earn our living as honest and hardworking workers.
> 2. That the connection with the former Institute was non-political.
> 3. That the 474 workers were composed of all categories of workers viz. artisans, labourers, administrative staff etc.
> 4. We pray that the Council comes immediately to the aid of these workers who have been rendered jobless with the closing of the former Institute by providing them with alternative jobs within the shortest possible time. The February pay to the workers will also be welcome.
> 5. That the public be asked to refrain from molesting us for the simple reason that we were workers of the defunct Institute.
>
> We cherish to the hope that the patriotic feelings and national consciousness which moved the Armed Forces and the Police to liberate our dear Ghana from the clutches of tyranny and oppression would tamper any decision to be taken as regards the fate of the workers of the erstwhile Institute.
>
> At long last Ghanaians will breathe a true air of freedom. We once more convey our most hearty congratulations to the Chairman and members of the National Liberation Council for this timely action and pledge our fullest co-operation in joining the national crusade in re-building our dear country, Ghana, free from nepotism, dictatorship and political swindling […].
>
> LONG LIFE NATIONAL LIBERATION COUNCIL
>
> LONG LIFE GHANA.[65]

If the KNII students went back home without opposing resistance, students and faculty at the University of Ghana were overwhelmed with joy. 'During two weeks in Ghana' reported a journalist of the weekly *West Africa* in March 1966, 'the people I found most deeply relieved by the fall of Nkrumah (except for

[65] Letter of E.K. Acquah, F.A. Dontoh and B.K. Hansoh, signed on behalf of the entire workers, to the National Liberation Council, 4th March 1966, PRAAD RG 3/5/1636/344..

released detainees) were the University staffs', for whom 'it was constantly humiliating to find their newspapers full of rubbish', and 'to have to listen to party men of little education and less background laying down the law about economics and philosophy' (*West Africa* 1966, 349). Unlike the Eastern European Marxists appointed at the KNII, who were expelled from the country in the immediate aftermath of the 1966 coup, Drewnowski survived the fall of the regime. If anything the Polish component in the Department of Economics was strengthened by the arrival of Czeloslaw Bobrowski, who was the chairman of the Central Planning Office at the time of the trial described in Drewnowski (1979, 35), and Zadislav Sadowski: somehow then, in spite of the troubled political climate and the uncertainty surrounding the post-Nkrumah's period, Ghana continued to be a refuge for former dissidents of Stalinist Poland and Kaleckian economists.[66]

Reginald H. Green and Ann Seidman, the American 'rebels with a cause' who became the most articulated proponents of Nkrumah's brand of Pan-Africanism, following the publication of *Unity or Poverty?* abandoned their focus on continental planning. Yet, there are some interesting continuities in the evolution of their lives and careers. Green left Ghana at the end of 1965, and after a brief period at Makerere College in Uganda, where he co-organised a conference on African economic integration (Green and Krishna 1967), he became the adviser to the Treasury in what was another major icon of African socialist transformation: Julius Nyerere's Tanzania. Although Nyerere's socialism was very different from Nkrumah's,[67] and an attempt to understand Green's specific role in the making of socialism in Tanzania goes well beyond the scope of this study, his choice to go work for another socialist African government was not a coincidence, consistent with his claim that 'an economist is unlikely to accept a planning post with a government if he is basically out of sympathy with its aims' (Green 1965c, 260). Following his work in Tanzania since the 1980s, following the widespread adoption by African countries of 'structural adjustment policies', Green emerged as a vocal and incisive critic of the role played by the Wold Bank and the

[66] Sadowski for example has recently co-edited a volume reappraising the economic contribution of Kalecki: see Sadowski and Szeworski (2004).

[67] As we saw in chapter 3, Nyerere was very sceptical of continental union proposals, favouring economic integration on a smaller scale and with exclusive reference to East Africa. Furthermore his vision for the development of the Tanzanian national economy was more indebted to the experience of Maoist rural cooperatives than to Soviet emphasis on industrial planning.

International Monetary Fund, and of the 'free-market' turn in development policy, (Green 1985, Green 1998). In the 1990s, certainly Nyerere's words still rang true to Green: 'To plan is to choose, choose to go forward' (quoted in Ndegwa and Green 1994, 118).

Between 1966 and 1968 Seidman worked under the supervision of agricultural economist Kenneth H. Parsons on her PhD in Economics (major: development economics, minor: institutional economics) at the University of Wisconsin. The thesis, titled *Ghana's Development Experience 1951-1966*, treated the recent experience of Ghana as an empirical test for development theories, pointed out the limited applicability of Western economic theory (especially the doctrine of comparative advantage) to African conditions, stressed the influence of structural features inherited from colonialism, and emphasised that development required 'fundamental restructuring of the existing institutions in which are embedded the market forces shaped by the dead hand of the past' (Seidman 1968, 452). Between 1972 and 1974, like Green, Seidman moved with her husband to Tanzania, where she became a lecturer in Economics at the University of Dar Es Salaam. From the late 1960s, the focus of Seidman's work has become the use of democratic legislative tools, rather than planning, as the key to successful economic and political integration for developing countries. Although over the decades the geographical and conceptual focus of Green and Seidman's work changed, it still embodied a vision of economics as a toolbox to *imagine* and *design* institutions for policy-makers in developing countries, in the constant attempt to overcome the structural weaknesses in which they saw the burdensome inheritance of history.

But Green and Seidman were, after all, only foreign 'fellow travellers' (Caute 1988) of Nkrumah's Pan-African dream. Those who risked the most, and who had to think carefully about what to do next, were the indigenous technocrats who had filled the top posts in the regime's policy machinery. Mensah, who in spite of his role in drafting the 7YP emerged as the most articulate opponent of the regime in the economics profession and chose the way of self-exile after his presidential speech at the Economic Society of Ghana, returned home shortly after the fall of the regime. Once again he went back to be one of the country's top class technocrats, serving between 1969 and 1972 as Minister of Finance and Minister of Economic Planning. Omaboe, Census planner and then Government

Statistician, became in the aftermath of the coup a significant critic of Nkrumah's economic policy. In 1967, acting as Chairman of the Economic Committee of the National Liberation Council, he painted a grim portrait of the Ghanaian economy under Nkrumah's rule:

> A year ago Ghana stood on the verge of an economic and financial collapse. The economy was plagued by strong inflationary pressures, its foreign exchange reserves were exhausted, the balance of payments and shortages of essential commodities were creating serious hardships and economic dislocation (Republic of Ghana 1967, 2).

Leaving besides the differences in the individual trajectories of the characters described in the previous pages, it is clear that the last years of Nkrumah's rule did not see the rise of the new intellectual, social and economic order envisaged. An apt epitaph comes from Ghanaian writer Ayi Kwei Armah, who remains the most eloquent witness of the failure of the Nkrumaist state's dreams of economic prosperity and modernization:

> There should be dreams before returns, as before goings, before everything. That is only just. But these have been woven of such heavy earth that they will load his spirit down and after they touched him it will never fly again (Armah [1969] 1974, 3).

Part IV. Conclusions

8. Conclusions

8.1 Findings and historiographical implications

Whether to gather detailed knowledge on households (chapter 2), frame and operationalise alternatives to the nation-state and new patterns of economic integration (chapters 3 and 4), reconceptualise the relationship between state and citizens through statistics (chapter 5), engineer structural change in the economy through planning (chapter 6) or contribute to define a party ideology and create the ideal citizen of a one-party state (chapter 7), Ghana from the 1940s until the 1960s stands as an iconic embodiment of the high expectations placed on economic and statistical knowledge as tools for making a brave new world. The portrait of this new world emerged from the interaction of foreign and indigenous ideas, and from the encounter of economists, statisticians and politicians willing to re-imagine the role of the social sciences in politics and society. But where does this leave us? The study has contributed to three streams of literature: the historiography of Ghana and Pan-Africanism, studies of the African state, and the historiography of economics and statistics.

8.1.1 Contributions to the historiography of Ghana and Pan-Africanism

Although Ghana remains one of the most studied countries by Africanists, the thesis has uncovered previously neglected aspects of the country's past. Much recent scholarship of the history of Nkrumah's Ghana has been concerned with exploring the many sides and facets of the postcolonial state's attempt to 'construct' modernity.[1] In spite of their extreme usefulness, these accounts tend to neglect the role of economics and statistics in shaping the broader political project of modernization. A second stream of scholarship, mostly written by economic historians, economists and development scholars, has instead analysed the institutional evolution and the performance of the Ghanaian economy, or parts of it, in the decades under examination, and accounted for its spectacular failure in spite of the fairly rich (compared to other African countries) institutional, cultural and economic heritage left by British colonialism. What is missing from some of these otherwise excellent works is a more explicit discussion of why and how *beliefs* (and specifically ways of thinking

[1] See chapter 1.

about the economic and social world) transform the institutional landscape, impacting the structure and performance of the economy.

What this thesis has done is to bring these two traditions together by using the tools of the historian of ideas, interested in getting to know how certain beliefs come about, but applying them to the economic realm and its political ramifications. By doing so the thesis has rescued the history of people and institutions concerned with analysing the economy in order to change it. Some of these institutions, like the CBS and its predecessor, the OGS, have been completely ignored by historians. Others, like the KNII, which was simultaneously a lynchpin of state building, an icon of modernity, and a site for the dissemination and institutionalisation of economic ideas have been mentioned in several historical accounts, but never discussed in detail on the basis of surviving archival evidence. Hopefully the reconstruction of the history of the statistical institute, of the census machinery, of the planning commission and the KNII can make the historian of Africa more aware of the importance of looking into such institutions since, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, state building and economic development were the two pillars on which the postcolonial state tried to build its identity.

This study also helps refine the current understanding of the intellectual landscape of postcolonial Ghana. For example, in contrast with Iandolo (2012)'s emphasis on the the 'Soviet' model of development in West Africa, it has been shown that the intellectual landscape of Nkrumah's Ghana was much more complex: if Polish (rather than Soviet) socialism prevailed in the teaching at the University, the KNII was more inclined to find creative ways of linking Marx and Lenin (rather than the contemporary Soviet orthodoxy) and Nkrumaism. Even the 7YP, sometimes described as the template which would have led the country in the direction of a Soviet-style command economy (Ewusi 1973), occupied a much more nuanced space between the tenets of Western development economics and Eastern European varieties of 'democratic socialism'.

Building on some of these insights, the thesis offers a partial reassessment of the overall nature of the Nkrumaist state. As it is sometimes the case in the literature on authoritarian regimes, historians are divided between those who identify in the personality and the role of the political leader the most significant drive of historical change (in the case of Ghana a typical example is Omari [1970] 2009), and others that think that focusing on a single individual, no matter how charismatic or influential,

cannot explain the fate of a whole nation.[2] To what extent were the individual Kwame Nkrumah, his thirst for power and his pursuit for a totalising ideology responsible for the way in which Ghanaian history unfolded in the 1960s? Without entering into philosophical discussions on the role of individuals in history, the thesis has argued that in the context of a one-party state the ideas of the leader should be taken very seriously, as they are capable of directly influencing policy and represent an important input in the making of the nation's ideological profile. On the other hand the thesis has tried to enrich the set of characters that dominate most existing accounts of Nkrumah's Ghana: these typically include, beside the Osagyefo himself, the cocoa farmers squeezed by the Cocoa Marketing Board, Cold War allies and former rulers, and CPP politicians, usually depicted as greedy, incompetent and corrupt. This study has complemented these simple tales of 'bad' (Nkrumah, the CPP, the Soviets) versus 'good' guys (the farmers, the political opposition, the NLC) by focusing on how individuals in government departments and educational institutions actively tried to renegotiate and 'construct' Nkrumaism in order to improve their status, or at least avoid detention. An authoritarian state is always a site for experimentation in drawing the boundaries between what can and cannot be said.[3]

Furthermore, in contrast with the existing literature on the intellectual history of the Pan-African movement, chapters 3 and 4 have shown that, far from simply being filled by the pronouncements of politicians, in postcolonial Africa Pan-African discourse had deep implications for the making of economics and statistics. The trajectory of Green, Seidman and the 'Economics of African Unity' is a clear indication of how sympathy towards Nkrumah's goals inspired a radical critique of much contemporary development economics, and an attempt to construct a theory of market integration that was founded on the specificity of African conditions, and politically relevant for the rulers of the new states. Similarly, ECA's focus on statistical standardization carried an important political message, in direct opposition

[2] In the case of Ghana an excellent example of this is Ahlman (2011), explaining what it meant for the common people to 'live with Nkrumaism'.

[3] Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe made a similar point when one of his characters, a newspaper editor in a fictional West African military dictatorship, noted that 'Worshipping a dictator is such a pain in the ass. It wouldn't be so bad if it was merely a matter of dancing upside down on your head. With practice anyone could learn to do that. The real problem is having no way of knowing from one day to another, from one minute to the next, just what is up and what is down' (Achebe 1987, 45).

to Nkrumah's brand of Pan-Africanism, and in favour of economic (and not political) integration on a regional (rather than continental) scale.

This is a reminder of the fact that statistics, to which chapters 2, 4 and 5 are devoted, are not merely the potential input of an econometric model: they are historical objects grounded in their political context. The 'discovery' of their history in archival correspondence or in government publications does not merely satisfy a 'harmless' historical curiosity, but provides a solid point towards a more balanced and fairer use of quantitative evidence, preoccupied with data quality and respectful of source limitations.

8.1.2 Contributions to the historical sociology of the African state

Loosely fitting in the 'third wave' of studies of state formation, emphasising 'case studies, […] contingency and agency' (Carroll 2009, 553), the study broadens the scope of the historical sociology of the African state by problematizing the link between some structural institutional features of the African state and their impact on the construction of economic and statistical knowledge. While agreeing with Herbst (2000, 11) that the persistent problem faced by rulers and state-builders in Africa (whether precolonial, colonial and postcolonial) was to 'project authority over inhospitable territories that contain relatively low densities of people', this thesis has shown that, even within a limited time-span, the task of state-building was reified in a rich and heterogeneous set of cognitive tools, practices and ideologies. The history of household budget studies in the 1950s (chapter 2) has shown that the 'uneven institutional topography' (Boone 2003) of late colonial Ghana resulted in what I labelled an 'uneven statistical topography'. Given the lack of financial resources and trained personnel, the choice of the locations where the families 'deserved' to be studied had much to do with the changing political needs of the government, rather than with statistical representativeness. This is well illustrated by the fact that the first series of household budgets covered the cities of Accra, Kumasi, Akuse, and Sekondi-Takoradi. The only rural enquiry of the early 1950s was concerned with the Akim-Abuakwa area, and only because it represented an important source of food for Accra. The second wave of household budgets turned instead to the cocoa producing areas of Swedru and Asante. If in urban surveys the focus was on families' expenditures (an obvious point of interest for a government eager to satisfy the needs of urban

constituencies, on which its survival depended), surveys in the cocoa-producing areas were interested in determining the farmers' income, cocoa production figures, and measuring the amount of credit provided by the state versus that offered by other sources. Indeed the money levied on the cocoa producing areas by the Cocoa Marketing Board was used to finance development projects in the whole country, turning Asante in the core of political opposition to the CPP. The reaction of the CPP was to attempt a more pervasive penetration of the cocoa producing areas through political propaganda, incorporate hostile chiefs into the party, and providing credit. Following the 'journey' of household budget surveys in the 1950s reveals the deep impact of the political climate on the construction of statistical knowledge.

Perhaps this raises broader questions on the historical significance of decolonisation (and its aftermath) for African state-building, leading to a more nuanced understanding of the actors involved, their agendas, and the role of the cognitive tools provided by economics and statistics in shaping political outcomes.[4] Given that since the 1940s the notion of 'economic development' emerged as a platform of political negotiation between colonial rulers and African nationalists, and after independence between postcolonial governments, Cold War allies and international organizations (Cooper 2002, 156), and given the unprecedented expansion and increase in technical sophistication of economic statistics, it is appropriate to look for more historically specific patterns of state formation that are linked to these intellectual developments.

How did this new state of affairs influence the making of the Ghanaian state? It has been shown that the employment of cognitive tools offered by economics and statistics contributed to state-building in three main ways: by *reconfiguring political identities*, by *shaping links with the external world*, and by *inspiring change in administrative structures and processes*. Many of the chapters present instances of several of these aspects. Chapters 3 and 7 for example explored how economists of different persuasions, including American institutionalists and Marxists, helped 'invent' the Nkrumaist state. This occurred through a wide range of different processes which included the expansion and 'translation' of Nkrumah's ideas on African unity into the language of contemporary economics by Green and Seidman, the placement

[4] An explicit discussion of decolonisation is missing for example in Herbst's (2000) account, following the classical division of the African past into precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial.

of Nkrumah's ideas into Marxist-Leninist thought by Sloan, and the articulation of dissent, made sharper by appealing to Marx, by Mensah. On the other hand the appointment of Western-trained indigenous technocrats like Mensah and Omaboe in top places of the policy apparatus was interpreted by those most worried about Nkrumah's leftist tendencies as a signal of the fact that economic policies would not follow the radical pronouncements of the leader, and thus 'socialism' in Ghana would have remained an empty word devoid of consequences. In spite of the fact that its implementation turned into a spectacular failure, the specific ideas embedded in the 7YP (chapter 6), allowed the document not only to enter smoothly a cognitive space shared by both Western development economists and their Eastern bloc counterparts, but more broadly reified the presence of the state, and the legitimate role of Nkrumah's government, in modernizing the country. On the other hand, chapter 6 has suggested that part of the 7YP's impact on the Ghanaian economy has to be found in a series of power relations that were institutionalised and reinforced by the plan, but ultimately contributed to its subversion.

The population census described in chapter 5 is a simultaneous embodiment of all three aspects. It forged links with the external world by fully incorporating the 'transnational' statistical practices of the United Nations. It led, through the application of Gil's suggestions, to an unprecedented expansion of the census machinery, leading to the reinforcement of the statistical apparatus, and the creation of new synergies between different government departments. More importantly, the making of the 1960 population census had several implications for the reconfiguration of political identities. In contrast with Benedict Anderson (2006, 164-170), who simply described the contribution of population counting to nationalism in terms of construction and stabilization of ethnic and religious categories, the claim here is that the population census of Ghana contributed to state building through the institutionalisation of a new social epistemology, founded on an understanding of statistics as the outcome of a cooperative interaction between state representatives and counted subjects, and resulting in the creation of new social practices, as indicated by the Census Enlightenment and Education Campaign.

Overall it can be said that the Ghanaian state did not simply amount to the reification of the 'politics of the belly', in the famous expression of Jean-François Bayart (1993), but also a 'politics of the mind', importing, reconfiguring and inventing intellectual templates that were put to use in the construction of political and economic

realities. In the last years of Nkrumah's rule this 'politics of the mind' can be interpreted more broadly as the deliberate attempt, common to most authoritarian regimes, to intervene extensively on the intellectual development of its citizens in order to impose the official view of the world.

8.1.3 Contributions to the historiography of economics and statistics

The historical trajectory of Ghana has been used as a case study in a broader set of debates concerned with the history and sociology of economics and statistics. The first debate is concerned with the capacity of economics and statistics to 'create', rather than simply describe, the world. Much recent debate in the history and sociology of economics and statistics on the capacity of the social sciences to 'make' the world they are supposed to describe and analyse has been framed around the concept of 'performativity'. As shown by chapter 5, a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which statistics make nation-states require both an expansion of the field of historical enquiry, which does not only pay attention to the statistical templates adopted by statistical offices creating 'nations', 'states' and national economies as discrete objects. The 1960 *Population Census of Ghana* articulated representations of the Ghanaian nation-state through a reconfiguration of the relationship existing between the statistical office, in charge of specific decisions on the cognitive tools to be employed, and the field, where the raw data was collected. The Census Education Campaign embodied a systematic attempt to disseminate specific images of the state as a benevolent measurer.

The statistical standardisation promoted by ECA (chapter 4) as a precondition for supra-national planning and economic integration offers insights to think of different 'political economies' of numbers production and dissemination. In his fascinating study of markets, measurement and transactions in 19th century Britain Aashish Velkar (2012) noted with reference to coal, wheat and wire markets that measurement standardization, resulting in the establishment of a new set of institutions, was the outcome of a complex process of negotiation and interaction between different groups, rules and conventions. Similarly, ECA tried to locate itself as the core of an institutional web, in an attempt to coordinate the interaction of African states with conflicting views on matters of economic integration and production of statistics. The cases described by Velkar tend to show the capacity of

private agents and businesses to manage the creation of standardisation. Keeping in mind that the standardisation of economic statistics in countries with different institutional and administrative backgrounds is certainly more complex than, say, finding a common size for wire cables, the history of ECA in the context of the 1960s debate on market integration provides a very different political economy of standardization. From the point of view of ECA, the statistical standardisation across the continent was a device to show the unfeasibility of 'radical' Pan-African proposals contrary to the commission's view. At the same time statistics was for ECA a safe strategy: in a volatile and unpredictable political environment the focus on statistics was a way for the commission to gain reputation as neutral, technical expert body, increasing its reputation both with African states and with other international organizations (versus the 'partisan' and 'political' ECLA, associated with controversial grand narratives of development). However, from the point of view of African states, appeal to the 'neutrality' of the statistics produced by ECA, and to their paramount importance in order to reach informed policy decision, became an effective device in order to oppose a state of affairs contrary to the country's benefit, as shown with reference to the choice of the right location for an industrial plant serving the whole West African market. Standardization can occur only in the 'right' institutional environment: the fact that ECA did not have any power to bypass the will of African states led to the failure of its initiatives to take place. This analysis could be read as an invitation to write a history of statistics that takes seriously the institutional context and the political economy in which facts and theories are created.[5]

But writing the history of economics and statistics with a focus on institutional context does not imply that a 'political economy' perspective is the only viable one. Following the creation and circulation of economic ideas in different educational institutions, as it has been done in chapter 7, can be a fruitful way of problematizing the agency of social scientists in given political contexts, map emerging constellations of support and dissent, and more generally think of the extent to which the ideology held by political rulers can shape economic research. As rightly noted by Fourcade (2010, 237), it is not only economists who try to make the world more similar to that described in their theories, but also the institutional environment which has a deep impact on the form and content of research in the social sciences. In this sense

[5] The 'uneven statistical topography' described in chapter 2 is another example of this.

authoritarian regimes, as in Ghana from 1960 to 1966, offer a formidable setting to question the nature of the conceptual boundaries expected to separate genuine discovery and political imposition, science and non-science, tragedy and farce.

Whereas the KNII and the Marxists associated with *The Spark* were trying to construct Nkrumaism as a form of scientific Marxism-Leninism, a close look at the University of Ghana reveals a much more mixed picture. The socialist economics taught in the Department of Economics was mainly non-Marxist, as a consequence of Jan Drewnowski's reform. Whereas Drewnowski remained silent on the political implications of Nkrumah's regime, Reginald H. Green and Ann Seidman (chapter 3) explicitly attempted to refine and develop Nkrumah's ideas, but without attempting to build a bridge between Nkrumaism and Marxism-Leninism. Although Green and Seidman were armed with concepts and methods that were much more in line with those characterising American institutionalism rather than orthodox Marxism, they probably were the most 'Nkrumaist' among the economists working in the Department of Economics at the University of Ghana in the 1960s. Mensah represents the most interesting expression of 'dissent', choosing to appropriate Marx's own arguments to expose the inapplicability of Marxism to Ghana, and thus strike a blow to Nkrumaism as a form of scientific socialism. Rather than simply dismissing the overall ideological inconsistency of the leader and its followers, the study has mapped the multiple and diverse sources of intellectual inspiration for this socialist regime trying to build a new state. Far from representing the monolith to which one-party states are compared when it comes to the relationship between a specific doctrine and legitimation of the political project, the brief history of the Nkrumaist state offers the snapshot of a fluid state of affairs, in which meanings and intellectual traditions were reconfigured, rearticulating new categories of support and dissent, and eventually creating new roles for the economists and the statisticians in the creation of utopia on earth. This was the case because the boundaries of Nkrumaism had to be drawn, and then filled with content.

More broadly the thesis challenges what remains a recurring feature of the historiography on development thinking: the tendency to present the history of development as a series of paradigm shifts. For example, in his influential book on the history of development, H.W. Arndt (1989, chapter 3) defines the 1945-1965 period the era of 'Development as Growth'. On one hand this is certainly true: a high growth rates was indeed a policy goal shared by most of the developing (and the developed)

world. Chapter 6 has shown with reference to the 7YP that in this sense Ghana was no exception: the achievement of high growth rates was explicitly recognised as one of the main goals and a precondition for the socialist transformation of the country. It should also be noted that the use of the Harrod-Domar growth model, expressing the desired growth rate in terms of needed investments and savings, was a mark of the plan's 'modern' and 'scientific' nature for contemporary economists, and more broadly of the rise of growth economics as a template to visualise and reorganise the economy. On the other hand, the case of planning, but also the case studies of household budget surveys, the work of economists like Green and Seidman, the history of the first postcolonial population census and the experiences discussed in chapter 7, show that a more bottom-up perspective is likely to reveal rich material, helpful to understand how a widely accepted notion of economic 'development' was in the case of Ghana (and certainly other developing countries) embedded in a unique set of political, economic and intellectual constellations. It is time then for historians interested in the contribution of the social sciences to the 'making and unmaking of the third world' (Escobar 1995) to understand these ideas not simply as 'imported' and passively received by universities and governments in the developing world, but as co-constructed in a more localised context, where they acquired specific political and social meanings.

Finally this study has contributed to the closure of a geographical gap. Indeed historians of economics and statistics have paid only marginal attention to the African context. In this they are falling behind historians of other sciences (especially medicine and anthropology), who have already come to see Africa as a 'living laboratory' (Tilley 2011) where theories originated elsewhere were tested, and new ways of producing and applying knowledge emerged from the interaction with local political and epistemic conditions.[6] Since, as pointed out by Theodore Porter (1995, xi) 'geographical limitations are perhaps less forgivable than temporal ones, and the history of colonialism, of international organizations and of centrally planned economies all provide extremely rich material for the history of quantification', it is hoped that this study, exploring the co-evolution of economics, statistics and the state

[6] A fascinating example of this approach is Tousignant's (2013) ethnography of the Laboratory of Toxicology and Analytical Chemistry at Cheikh Anta Diop University in Senegal.

in a former colony dreaming of becoming a planned economy, represents a right step in this direction.

8.2 Possible directions for further research

There are several aspects that could have contributed to this narrative but did not find space in the previous pages due to time and space constraints, or source limitations. An obvious starting point would be the exploration of the role of economists and statisticians in the making of the Ghanaian state in the decades preceding and following those discussed here. An appraisal of the role of economists since 1928, when the Department of Agriculture set up a section for rural economics and statistics, when the Great Depression and the swollen shoot disease deeply impacted the economy and politics of the Gold Coast leading to the institution of the cocoa marketing board, could shed light on the political significance of the social sciences at a time when 'economic development' was detached from visions of independence, state building and industrialization. From the point of view of the history of the social sciences, it would have been interesting to explore the 'rise' of economic and statistical experts versus anthropology, which was considered in the 1920s the only social science capable of analysing African economic and social realities. Similarly, this narrative would have been enriched by an exploration of economists and statisticians in post-Nkrumah's Ghana. Turning its back to socialism, the NLC government tried to restructure the national economy and the Ghanaian state with heavy involvement of economists from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. How did the more 'conservative' doctrines embodied in these institutions impact statistical practice, development planning and the intellectual identity of the state? To what extent did this change under the civilian and military governments which held power from 1969 on, when development economics became to be more and more integrated into the neoclassical paradigm? Hopefully in a not too distant future the author will be able to address at least some of these concerns.

There are also interesting elements that could have been analysed in the current work, and were not due to space constraints, or source limitations. One is the discussion of economic themes in students' magazines at the University of Ghana: were the boundaries of dissent the same as in the professional economists' community? A second potentially fruitful line of inquiry is related to the role of non-

government actors in the making of statistics. This thesis, with reference to both the 1950s household budgets and the 1960 population census has stressed the importance of the subjects observed in the construction of statistical knowledge, but how about firms? To what extent was private business contributing to the making of statistics, either cooperating or resisting?[7] These are only some of the questions that could have been addressed in this thesis.

More generally a detailed exploration of a single case study (or rather of multiple case studies within a single nation) leaves the historian easily exposed to questions like 'to what extent was this unique?', 'does this help understand other cases?' or (in my experience, the most common of all) 'How about a comparative study?' In the previous pages several references have been made to other African experiences: after all the history of Ghana is not unique in its evolution from a largely agricultural, export based colonial economy, envisaging the creation of nationalist movements struggling for independence, and attempting to construct a socialist state. Looking at the Francophone world, Modibo Keita's Mali and Guinea under Ahmed Sékou Touré represent obvious examples.[8] But in the postcolonial era there were other visions of socialism, in turn requiring the creation of intellectual machineries and grounded in political economies very different from the Ghanaian one. These include one-party states led by military, rather than civilian, governments, as it has been the case in all of socialist Africa since the 1970s: potentially interesting cases include Somalia under Siyaad Barre, Ethiopia under Mengistu Heile Mariam, as well as the Lusophone countries of Angola and Mozambique. Nor can the approach employed in this study be applied only to African regimes of socialist persuasion: one-party states have been the rule rather than the exception in postcolonial African history. Although drawing inspiration from a set of ideas and practices partly different from those prevailing in 1960s Ghana, the trajectory of most 'new' African states in the 1960s can be read as a continuous struggle for modernization in the context in authoritarian rule.

[7] These fall within what D'Onofrio (2013) has called 'stakeholder statistics'.

[8] There were other countries were a formal adherence to the principles of socialism was not reflected in the realm of economic policy. Jomo Kenyatta's Kenya is perhaps a significant example of this. Finally there is Senegal under Leopold Senghor. In spite of the fact that to Senghor is credited the conation of the expression 'African socialism', and he wrote a great deal in order to promote a humanistic vision of socialism, if the actual economic policies implemented had anything to do with this ideology is questionable.

Although for now the history of economists, statistical offices, planning machineries and ideological institutes in the developing world remains largely to be written, the historian remains, in the words of Walter Benjamin (2002, 912), 'the herald who summons the departed to [the] banquet of spirits'. In hindsight many of the visions articulated by the economists, statisticians and politicians discussed in this study seem to have failed to shape reality according to their ultimate goals. Yet, regardless of their performance, this study has tried to 'resurrect' in the mind of the reader the voices of those who contributed to make Ghana in the period under consideration a place poignant with dreams of progress.

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