

Insights from the Cocoa Regions in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana: Rethinking the Migration–Conflict Nexus

Matthew I. Mitchell

Abstract: Although many scholars have noted the salience of mobility throughout the African continent, there has been little systematic investigation into the link between migration and conflict. Most scholarship has tended to see migration as primarily a by-product of conflict and not as a security issue in its own right. In analyzing and contrasting the different migration–conflict trajectories across two similar case studies—Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana—this article attempts to develop an empirically informed theoretical framework for understanding the nexus between migration and conflict in Africa and to shed light on key intervening variables linking migration processes with violent outcomes.

Résumé: Même si plusieurs spécialistes ont remarqué la saillance de la mobilité à travers le continent africain, il y a eu peu d'investigations systématiques sur les liens entre les phénomènes de migration et de conflits. La recherche a eu tendance à considérer la migration comme effet secondaire des conflits, et non comme un problème de sécurité en lui-même. À travers l'analyse et la comparaison de trajectoires différentes du lien migration-conflit à travers deux études similaires sur le Ghana et la Côte d'Ivoire, cet article tente d'établir un cadre théorique basé sur une étude empirique pour comprendre le lien entre les processus de migration et de conflit en Afrique, et afin d'essayer de mettre en lumière les éléments clé contextuels reliant les phénomènes de migration avec des aboutissements violents.

While numerous factors contribute to producing violent conflict in Africa, there is general agreement that the origins of political disorder are mostly internal to the nation-state and that the greatest source of insecurity in Africa

African Studies Review, Volume 54, Number 2 (September 2011), pp. 123–44

Matthew I. Mitchell is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Studies at Queen's University, Canada. His research examines the relationship between migration and violent conflict in the cocoa regions in West Africa. His work has been published in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Regionalisms* (forthcoming). He is currently working on a book manuscript that examines governance strategies in mining sectors. E-mail: matthew.mitchell@queensu.ca.

is intrastate conflict, as shown by the prevalence of civil war in recent decades (see Bates 2008; Collier et al. 2009; Sambanis 2002; Williams 2007). Central to many internal conflicts in Africa are the roles of interethnic tensions and the exploitation of natural resources. The literature on ethnic conflict has explored the multiple ways in which such tensions can lead to internal conflict—through heightened insecurity (Posen 1993), through the psychology of group juxtapositions (Horowitz 2000), or by virtue of the instrumentalist roles of elites in provoking ethnic violence (Fearon & Laitin 2000). Yet many scholars have cautioned against overemphasizing the role of ethnicity in contributing to violent conflict, noting the importance of alternative explanations (Fearon & Laitin 2003) and warning against ethnic bias that may result in an overestimation of incidences of ethnic violence (Brubaker & Laitin 1998). Recent scholarship has gone so far as to challenge the usefulness of the concept of ethnic conflict altogether, taking aim at the notion of ethnic warfare (Mueller 2000), the merits of the “ethnic conflict framework” (Gilley 2004), and the emphasis on ethnic groups as a unit of analysis (Brubaker 2004). The role of natural resources in contributing to internal conflict is equally contentious. While armed conflicts and natural resources can be directly related in two main ways—“armed conflicts motivated by the control of resources, and resources integrated into the financing of armed conflicts” (Le Billon 2001:580)—there is no consensus on the actual dynamics involved in such a link, as demonstrated by the diverging literature on natural resources and conflict.¹ Thus, while ethnicity and natural resources remain important variables in explaining internal conflict, they tell only part of a complex story. What other variables, then, might be important in contributing to the outbreak of internal conflict in the African context?

Although many scholars have noted the salience of mobility throughout Africa, there has been little systematic investigation into the link between migration and conflict.² Migration has generally been seen as a by-product of conflict and not as a security issue in its own right. Much of the literature on civil war, for example, has had very little to say about this relationship (see, e.g., Sambanis 2002), and works that do explore migration as an explanatory variable generally focus on a narrow category of migrants—*involuntary* migrants.³ They consider, for example, refugees and internally displaced persons, but they fail to capture the potential role of the millions of *voluntary* migrants who are also part of the migration–conflict nexus. They also tend to explore issues of national security and international migration, which bear little relevance to the African context in which internal security and internal migration are much more prominent issues.⁴ Consequently, very few studies flesh out the migration–conflict nexus in Africa. This gap is alarming, especially when one considers the connections between migration processes and two ubiquitous variables in internal conflict—interethnic tensions and natural resource extraction.⁵

This article examines the migration–conflict nexus in Africa and explores the dynamics and mechanisms that link migration processes with

outbreaks of violent internal conflict. The objective in examining migration as a causal variable is first and foremost to highlight the increasing importance of migration as a security issue in its own right. A secondary objective is to enrich the existing theoretical literature by developing a model of the migration–conflict nexus. In so doing, the article identifies crucial intervening variables that are central components in explaining the relationship between migration and violent conflict: differences in state–society relations; divergent land tenure regimes; variations in state capacity/exogenous shocks; and contrasting experiences with autochthony discourses. While the generalizability of this model may be limited, it provides an important starting point for strengthening our understanding of the causal pathways through which migration may contribute to creating fertile conditions for outbreaks of violent conflict.

The article begins by examining the literature on migration–conflict linkages, and then highlights those dynamics that are most salient in the African context. It then presents a comparative analysis of two West African countries—Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana—which have both been marked by migration into their natural resource sectors, with significantly different political outcomes: civil war in the former country versus relative peace in the latter. The article then compares these divergent outcomes in order to highlight the intervening variables that may account for them. In analyzing and contrasting the different migration–conflict trajectories in these cases, the article generates an empirically informed theoretical framework for examining migration–conflict dynamics in Africa and beyond.

Rethinking the Migration–Conflict Nexus

Although migration is often recognized as an important factor in the development process (see Castles & Miller 2009; Skeldon 1997, 2008), it also must also be regarded as a heavily politicized phenomenon in both sending and receiving regions.⁶ Surprisingly, though, as Hollifield (2008) points out, while the social sciences have for some time recognized the importance of migration, “the politics of migration” remains relatively underexplored and systematic investigation into this subfield emerged only in the late-1980s and 1990s.⁷ The relative absence of migration as a topic of inquiry in political science was arguably the result of the primacy of the state as a unit of analysis and the longstanding failure of theories of international migration to consider the agency of the nation-state in influencing the volume and composition of these demographic flows (see Massey 1999). Although migration did gradually come to be recognized as an important phenomenon in political science, it remained for some time a marginalized topic of inquiry in international relations, and only recently (in the mid-to-late 1990s, and then more definitively after September 11, 2001) has the relationship between migration and security captured the attention of international relations scholars.⁸ A burgeoning literature has

now emerged that explores the security implications of migration, demonstrating that migration may indeed be an important political concern.⁹ Yet most of these works tend to focus more broadly on security issues without fleshing out the conditions that might lead to violent conflict. They also focus on international migration and national security, without specifically exploring internal migration and internal security. Consequently, most of the recent research on the migration–conflict nexus fails to look inside the state and focuses instead on the potential threat of international migration to the state.¹⁰ The existing literature also tends to focus on developed, as opposed to developing, countries, although the unique security agendas in the latter warrant separate in-depth analysis.

What, then, do we know about the relationship between internal migration and internal security? In his influential work on migration and security, Myron Weiner (1992–93) presents a useful framework for understanding the avenues through which migration can contribute to producing violent conflict. Although Weiner's analysis primarily examines interstate relations and international migration, some aspects of his framework are consistent with the logic of exploring internal migration and internal security. For instance, Weiner argues that when migrants are perceived as a threat to the cultural identity of the group or as a social or economic burden, there is an increased likelihood that migration will contribute to outbreaks of violent conflict. Given the cultural and ethnic diversities within African states, this observation is as important in understanding migration within Africa's borders as it is between them. In investigating the link between climate-change-induced migration and violent conflict, Rafael Reuveny (2007) also highlights some important channels through which migration can contribute to outbreaks of violence, particularly in the context of auxiliary conditions such as economic underdevelopment, political instability, and civil strife. Of the dynamics that he outlines, the following are most relevant for an exploration of the linkages between internal migration and internal conflict: (1) competition over resources in a situation of increased scarcity; (2) ethnic tensions, particularly when residents fear the threat of separatism stemming from in-migration; and (3) the presence of fault lines between existing socioeconomic groups, such as migrant pastoralists and resident farmers.

Although the above examples provide some insightful explanations of key processes linking migration and internal conflict, they do not provide us with a coherent theoretical model of this causal relationship—a complex matter that undoubtedly features numerous intervening variables. Given the complexity and the diversity of migration processes, it is unlikely that we can arrive at an all-encompassing theory of the migration–conflict nexus. This article, however, attempts to develop a framework for better understanding the relationship between migration and conflict by systematically comparing and contrasting insights from two West African countries—Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana serve as excellent case studies for comparative analysis because both have a great deal in common in terms of their natural resources, geographies, cultures, and relations to the world market.¹¹ They also provide fertile ground for comparison because their similar migration histories have had fundamentally different outcomes. While unprecedented levels of both international and internal migration into Côte d’Ivoire’s cocoa regions contributed to the “Ivoirian miracle” in the postindependence era, these migrations became a source of tremendous friction between “autochthonous” communities and migrants, eventually contributing to the outbreak of civil war in 2002. Although Ghana witnessed similarly impressive levels of migration into its cocoa regions, migration has failed to become a serious source of tension and has contributed only rarely to instances of violent conflict. A number of questions therefore suggest themselves. What explains the different outcomes in these relatively similar cases? Why has migration into the cocoa regions been such a contentious issue in Ivoirian politics and a relatively obscure one in Ghana? Since migration alone does not “cause” conflict, which intervening variables help explain how and when migration contributes to outbreaks of violence? In the following sections I examine these questions.

Côte d’Ivoire: Migration, Cocoa, and Conflict

Côte d’Ivoire’s fortunes and misfortunes have been closely connected to the rise and fall of its cocoa sector. The origins of this sector date back to the colonial era, when French authorities promoted large-scale migration from the poorer parts of its colony and northern regions in order to provide the necessary labor for developing the cocoa sector in the south. Although this migration was a crucial factor in the development of this sector, it soured relations between Africans and colonial authorities, who exploited any land for which there was an “economic justification” for doing so (Crook 2001:39–40) and overrode the landholding customs of indigenous populations. The resulting local anger led to the creation of the *Syndicat Agricole Africain*, which sought to further the interests and opportunities of Ivoirian coffee and cocoa farmers against the French colonial authorities. Under the leadership of Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the organization became the base for the country’s first governing party—the *Parti Démocratique de Côte d’Ivoire* (PDCI). Recognizing the economic potential of the cocoa sector, however, Houphouët-Boigny quickly adopted French colonial strategies, taking advantage of a “fragmented and atomised” southern peasantry (Boone 1998:22) in order to accelerate labor migration into the cocoa regions. Houphouët-Boigny’s strategy was famously institutionalized by his controversial 1963 policy which declared that “the land belongs to those who cultivate it.” This policy facilitated the “Ivoirian miracle,” as cocoa production rose dramatically during the postcolonial period, making Côte d’Ivoire the world’s leading producer of cocoa. Yet it led simultaneously to the politicization and clientelization of

land relations at the local level, intensifying the already strained relations between host and migrant populations (see Crook 2001).

The issue of migration became further politicized with the introduction of multiparty elections in 1990, which provided the main opposition party—the Front Populaire Ivoirien (FPI) under Laurent Gbagbo—with the opportunity to reopen a debate on Ivoirian citizenship rights. Gbagbo attempted to mobilize support by “arousing an Ivorian xenophobic nationalism” (Crook 1997:223) against the PDCI’s supposed favoritism toward foreigners, and his campaign—although ultimately unsuccessful—transformed electoral politics by putting Ivoirian identity at the center of future political and economic debates. Due to a faltering economy and the collapse of commodity prices, Côte d’Ivoire’s miracle officially ended during the late 1980s. Many Ivoirians sought security by attempting to regain control over land, basing their claims on narratives of origin or ancestry. Using the language of autochthony—literally meaning “emerging from the soil”—local citizens attempted to reappropriate the land in the southern cocoa regions from migrant farmers who were now viewed as illegitimate occupiers, even though many of these farmers had been working in these regions since the colonial period. Autochthony served here, as it has elsewhere in Africa, as a powerful discourse for asserting a primordial sense of belonging to the land, threatening the rights and livelihoods of migrants.¹²

Even though debates and violence related to autochthony had occurred during the colonial and early postcolonial periods (see Yéré 2007), it was the introduction of the concept of Ivoirité by Henri Konan Bédié in 1993 upon the death of Houphouët-Boigny that dramatically heightened tensions between hosts and migrants (see Dozon 2000a, 2000b). This inflammatory concept, which attempted to define Ivoirian nationality and distinguish “true Ivoirians” from foreigners, was intensely politicized by the passing of a new electoral code in 1994 which required that all candidates for the presidency and for deputy in the National Assembly be Ivoirians by birth, of Ivoirian parentage, and have no history of having renounced Ivoirian citizenship or taken the nationality of another state. Many interpreted the law, which disenfranchised nearly two million Burkinabe (and other migrants), as a strategic move to exclude Alassane Ouattara—a Muslim with alleged Burkinabe origins and political support from northerners—from the upcoming elections in 1995. This perceived tactic alienated the Muslim majority in the north and also created a “tidal wave of xenophobia” (Toungara 2001:68) against both foreigners and northerners, whose close association in the public imagination with migrant labor, Islam, and the Voltaic language allowed them to become identified with each other in political discourses. Political entrepreneurs at both the national and local levels employed these discourses as a means to exclude these groups from the political and economic arenas, culminating in the violent targeting of both groups and the exodus of thousands of migrant cocoa farmers in 1999 (see Bossard 2003; Chauveau 2000).

Over the course of the following years, the political situation in Côte d’Ivoire deteriorated further. On December 24, 1999, retired General Robert Gueï led a bloodless coup that overthrew President Bédié. Rather than cede power to a democratically elected leader in the upcoming elections in 2000, Gueï, too, would invoke Ivoirité in his bid for the presidency, although he was eventually forced to recognize Gbagbo’s electoral victory. Ouattara had once again been excluded from participating in the elections, and the routinized electoral discrimination against northerners, as well as ethnic violence targeting them and the purging of northerners from the army, the police, and the civil service, culminated in a failed coup on the part of northern rebels on September 19, 2002 (see Chirot 2006; Woods 2003). This coup eventually led to the outbreak of a nationwide civil war that would further divide northerners and southerners and threaten to destabilize an already precarious subregion. Interestingly, although the civil war pitted northern forces against the national army, the worst violence was in the western cocoa regions, where tensions between ethnic groups over land ownership, control of property, and Ivoirité exploded, resulting in numerous deaths, mass expulsions, and the exodus of tens of thousands of migrants.¹³

On November 28, 2010, Côte d’Ivoire, after a five-year delay, held the second round of its much anticipated presidential election pitting the incumbent, Laurent Gbagbo, against the opposition leader, Alassane Ouattara. The United Nations certified the elections as free and fair, but the pro-Gbagbo president of the Constitutional Council canceled more than six hundred thousand votes from the northern regions, overturned the Independent Electoral Commission’s results, and proclaimed Gbagbo the winner with a slight margin of victory (UNOCI 2010). Both leaders therefore claimed victory, and over the following months the political stalemate intensified, resulting in increased episodes of violent conflict. Heavily backed by the international community—including the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union, France, and the United States—Ouattara’s camp was gradually able to weaken Gbagbo’s control over power. And yet despite numerous attempts to resolve the crisis peacefully through political channels, a breakthrough would come only through a military solution. After a series of violent skirmishes between pro-Ouattara and pro-Gbagbo forces, Ouattara’s troops advanced on the south and eventually on Abidjan. The five-month crisis came to a dramatic end when forces loyal to Ouattara arrested Gbagbo on April, 11, 2011, after heavy fighting in Abidjan and a ten-day siege on the presidential palace.

Yet though the military battle was won, the political battle is far from over. The renewed violence has left an estimated two hundred thousand people displaced in western Côte d’Ivoire and one hundred and fifty thousand refugees in neighboring Liberia (UNHCR 2011). Moreover, up to a million people are believed to have fled Abidjan after weeks of bloody street clashes. One of the obvious challenges is the restoration of peace and order

to enable the return of the displaced. Yet another challenge is the reconciliation of a country that remains heavily divided. This is perhaps nowhere more important than in the western cocoa regions, where some of the worst violence occurred during the postelection crisis.¹⁴ In the weeks leading up to the first round of elections, many migrants in these regions had received threats from “autochthons” that if Gbagbo were to lose the election, their land would be expropriated (Airault 2010). Therefore, although migration alone does not explain the collapse of Côte d’Ivoire in recent years and the renewed political violence, it has played an underlying role in the outbreak of civil war and the enduring crisis. Nevertheless, migration does not lead inevitably to such a violent outcome—as the following case study reveals.

Ghana: Migration, Cocoa, and Peace

As in the case of Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana’s history has been marked by both migration and transformation of its cocoa sector. As early as the late nineteenth century, Akwapim farmers in the southern forest belt established experimental coffee and cocoa plots, which soon led to larger-scale growing operations in neighboring regions. As land became scarcer, farmers migrated to relatively uninhabited areas of neighboring regions, often purchasing land under the control of chiefs who, according to Hill (1961:211), “were only too willing to dispose of their southern lands outright to strangers.” Although the early years of cocoa development involved short-distance migrations, the rapid growth in this sector and ensuing labor shortages heightened by the cocoa booms of the 1930s brought about large-scale immigration from both neighboring countries—such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), Togo, Côte d’Ivoire, Mali, Bénin, and Nigeria—as well as Ghana’s northern regions. As Anarfi et al. (2003) note, Ghana continued to attract migrants up to the early years of postindependence, given the relative affluence of the country and the prevailing pan-Africanism that reigned during this period. A half century of labor migration would leave a lasting legacy, and by 1960 non-Ghanaians accounted for at least 12 percent of the population. While migration had rarely been conflictual throughout the colonial period, the introduction of a series of new laws in the late 1960s targeting migrants, coupled with a deteriorating economic and political environment, ushered in a new era in Ghanaian attitudes and policies.

As the world’s leading producer of cocoa, a key exporter of gold, and a country blessed with a solid infrastructure and a relatively educated and skilled workforce, Ghana was seen as a “bright and promising star of Africa” at the outset of independence in 1957 (Konadu-Agyemang 2000:473). However, Ghana’s economy soon fell upon hard times and the country was quickly transformed into a low-income nation. While the cocoa sector had played a seminal role in contributing to its impressive growth throughout the first half of the twentieth century, accounting for more than 70 per-

cent of the country’s export earnings, such overdependence on a single export crop proved calamitous during later years.¹⁵ As early as 1919 the Gold Coast governor, Gordon Guggisberg, lamented the monocrop-based economy, pointing to the dangers of “putting all our eggs in the cocoa basket” (Konadu-Agyemang & Adanu 2003:519).

Ghana’s founding father, Kwame Nkrumah, saw in cocoa a means to promote rapid development and modernization. However, in adopting a predatory strategy to monopolize the cocoa rent and channel the financial resources into industrialization projects, Nkrumah affected the two crucial factors of production in cocoa—land and labor. As Woods (2004:234) explains, the government created “disincentives” to further expansion of cocoa farming and to investment in fertilizers and other improvements that would increase output on existing farms. Therefore, by the 1970s Ghanaian cocoa production was stagnant and started to decline.

Nkrumah’s politicization of cocoa exacerbated local ethnic and regional cleavages, and these policies, along with the sharp drop in prices in cocoa in 1964–65, contributed to his downfall in 1966. In the following years Ghana’s cocoa sector became increasingly politicized, as President Kofi Busia’s 1969 “Aliens Compliance Order” (an attempt to scapegoat outsiders for the country’s economic woes) led to the forceful removal of foreigners from the country and further deprived an already labor-starved sector. The emergence of a virulent disease affecting Ghanaian cocoa trees, increasingly stiff competition from Côte d’Ivoire, stagnating international cocoa prices, and the overvalued exchange rate and heavy taxation of cocoa in the 1970s and mid-1980s damaged it even further. This significant decline, alongside worsening economic and political conditions in the 1970s and 1980s, also resulted in a migration “turnaround,” and Ghana went from being a country of immigration to becoming one of emigration. It also resulted in a dramatic change in patterns of seasonal migration, as a sharp drop in demand for labor on cocoa farms shifted seasonal migrants to informal sectors in urban centers or neighboring plantations in Côte d’Ivoire and Togo.

The events of the first few decades of Ghana’s postindependence period therefore represented the “politically unstable and economically unviable opposite of the political continuity and economic prosperity of Côte d’Ivoire” (Tsikata & Seini 2004:3). And yet although Ghana’s economy collapsed during this period and the country witnessed nine changes of government between 1957 and 1983, including four military coups, it largely escaped the violence witnessed in most other African countries, including Côte d’Ivoire. Furthermore, although economic and political crises contributed to the implementation of anti-immigration laws in the late 1960s, migration does not appear to have contributed to producing violent conflict in the cocoa-growing regions, nor have political parties mobilized against migrants along ethnic lines at the national level. To be sure, Ghana has not been immune to violent conflict, particularly in recent decades in

the northern regions.¹⁶ However, while these conflicts gravitate around host–migrant tensions and struggles over land, they have failed to generate the same intensity of violence as in Côte d’Ivoire, and they have not affected the cocoa-growing regions. While increasing land scarcity and falling world prices eventually contributed to producing violent conflict between hosts and migrants in Côte d’Ivoire’s cocoa regions, these underlying structural problems did not result in the outbreak of similar violence in Ghana. How can we account for such different outcomes in relatively similar cases? In the following section, I compare and contrast the different migration–conflict trajectories in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana in order to explain these different outcomes and develop a model for better understanding the relationship between migration and conflict.

“State–Society” Relations

The most notable distinction between Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana’s migration–cocoa complex is arguably the longstanding differences in their state–society relations, whose origins lie in the colonial period, and the unique relations between colonial and local traditional authorities in the cocoa regions. As scholars have noted, the French had a much more “interventionist and restrictive policy” compared to the British (Chauveau & Léonard 1996:176). Whereas the colonial government in Côte d’Ivoire claimed ownership of all unoccupied land, the customary rights of the indigenous communities in Ghana had been legalized by the British, and traditional chiefs had the upper hand in determining landholding policies.¹⁷ The result, according to Crook (2001:41), was that in Ghana “the influx of foreign migrants was generally absorbed within the context of land use and production relationships set by the indigenous communities” and “the worst aspects of a land free-for-all as experienced in Côte d’Ivoire” were avoided.

The fundamental differences between these countries in the colonial era translated into similarly distinct state-led strategies in the postcolonial period. Since civil society was weak in the Ivoirian south, Houphouët-Boigny was able to impose a radical land property rights regime in which the land was said to “belong to those who cultivate it.” By contrast, the existence of a strong rural elite in Ghana prevented a similar state-led strategy.¹⁸ As Boone (1998:23) argues, attempting to impose such a strategy “would have been political suicide for Nkrumah in Ghana.” Thus, while the indigenous populations of the cocoa-growing regions in Côte d’Ivoire felt increasingly “unprotected and aggrieved,” migrations were “absorbed relatively peacefully within the context of control by host communities” in Ghana (Crook 2001:37–38). Although the Ivoirian state-led approach contributed to the Ivoirian miracle by guaranteeing the requisite factors of production for expanding the cocoa sector—land and labor—while the Ghanaian state’s failure to control land policy stunted economic growth

in the short term, the long-term effects would differ. Ultimately, the different relations between state and local authorities in the cocoa regions have favored Ghana, as deteriorating host–migrant relations in Côte d’Ivoire became a focal point for outbursts of violent conflict, culminating in 2002 in civil war. Meanwhile, although Ghana’s cocoa sector was prevented from developing as quickly as Côte d’Ivoire’s, vastly different host–migrant relations in the former helped avert any major outbreaks of violent conflict. Thus it would seem that different experiences in what might be referred to as “state–society” relations across these cases help explain the different migration–conflict trajectories.

Land Tenure Regimes

There is widespread agreement that in Africa—and arguably elsewhere—“nothing excites deeper passions or gives rise to more bloodshed than do disagreements about territory, boundaries, or access to land resources” (Shipton 1994:347). It is no stretch to argue, as many scholars do, that of all of Africa’s resources, land is the principal source of conflict (see Alao 2007; Lund 2008). Yet while disagreements about, and competition over, land are particularly salient in Africa, it is important to examine how differences in land tenure regimes can heighten or mitigate the likelihood of conflict.

Differences in land tenure arrangements in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana contributed to shaping markedly different relations between hosts and migrants in the cocoa-growing regions. In Côte d’Ivoire, migrant farmers obtained permission to farm from individual residents in return for “gifts of gratitude” through the institution of the *tutorat* (guardianship), and they eventually were able to appropriate the land that they cultivated or to purchase new land to develop new plantations.¹⁹ As conditions worsened in the cocoa-growing regions and migrant farmers came to outnumber and outproduce their hosts, relations soured, and local farmers came to feel exploited by the migrants, who had effectively come to control much of the land. In Ghana’s cocoa regions, by contrast, migrant farmers were exploited by local authorities and the balance of power tipped the other way. Since migrants obtained their farming rights from local traditional authorities, they were subject to the extraction of substantial amounts of rent. When conditions worsened and virgin forest land dwindled, these chiefs increased their demands, and as Berry (2009:27–28) notes, the category of “stranger” was expanded to include the descendants of “immigrants” who had settled there long before the expansion of cocoa farming had begun. Since migrant farmers were rarely considered “owners of the land,” they were not perceived as exploiting local host populations and instead were increasingly exploited by chieftaincies (see Woods 2004). Ultimately, these different perceptions accounted for the different treatment of migrants in the two cocoa-growing regions.²⁰

State Capacity/Exogenous Shocks

Although Côte d'Ivoire's and Ghana's colonial histories of migration and cocoa development are relatively similar, the state capacity in these countries to manage the migration–cocoa complex was affected differently by “exogenous shocks” in the postcolonial period. While host–migrant relations had not always been peaceful in Côte d'Ivoire, they rarely led to outbreaks of violent conflict, as the central state apparatus was largely able to mitigate conflict. However, with the sharp decline in the cocoa sector and the ensuing collapse of the economy, the financial resources required to maintain the patron–client networks in the cocoa regions dried up. Alongside the economic crisis emerged a political one, as increasing pressure from international donors and domestic constituents resulted in the introduction of multiparty elections in 1990. These elections ended up ethnicizing politics and provoking deeper cleavages between hosts and migrants in the cocoa-growing regions, while reinvigorating explosive questions about Ivoirian identity.²¹ As if adding fuel to the fire, the longstanding president died in 1993, and his death ushered in a new period of uncertainty and insecurity in Ivoirian politics. This “perfect storm” of conditions resulted in the heightening of migration as a political and economic issue, providing the spark for outbreaks of violent conflict in the cocoa regions. As the state's capacity to meet the needs of all groups faltered in this precarious political and economic climate, migrants became an expedient scapegoat.

Whereas the above political and economic conditions culminated in a perfect storm in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana was able to “weather the storm” of exogenous shocks that would challenge the state's capacity to manage host–migrant relations in its cocoa regions. Ghana also witnessed significant political and economic transformations linked with the cocoa sector in the postcolonial period, but the exogenous shocks did not occur simultaneously. Ghana's cocoa boom had occurred much earlier than Côte d'Ivoire's. Since the mass expulsion of foreigners in Ghana had preceded the decline in the cocoa sector (and in many respects, the expulsion itself was a leading cause of the decline), migrant workers simply were not available for scapegoating by host populations.²² Furthermore, when Ghana's cocoa sector, and consequently its economy, began to collapse, the country was under the control of a military government; in other words, the economic uncertainties in the cocoa sector did not coincide with a period of political uncertainty. Finally, whereas Côte d'Ivoire became increasingly dependent upon revenues from the cocoa sector in the postcolonial period, there was a shift away from cocoa dependence in Ghana, as the country was able to diversify its economy.²³ Although this shift was in large part the result of the decline in the cocoa sector and not necessarily a progressive shift away from cocoa dependence, it has ultimately translated into a less volatile economy.

Fundamentally, then, the capacities of the Ivoirian and Ghanaian governments to weather the storm of exogenous shocks have differed. While

this difference can be explained by a number of socioeconomic, institutional, and structural factors, it is clear that the coalescing of both political and economic problems in Côte d’Ivoire finally overwhelmed the government’s ability to manage the already precarious relations in the cocoa regions.

Autochthony Discourses

The recent upsurge in autochthony discourses in Africa are another important element in the migration–conflict nexus. These discourses have resulted in increasingly hostile relations between such dichotomous groups as “natives” and “settlers,” “locals” and “strangers,” and “hosts” and “migrants” in multiple and diverse settings throughout the continent.²⁴ It is clear that autochthony has been an important and central component in explaining the outbreak of violent conflict in Côte d’Ivoire’s cocoa regions, whereas such discourses have not materialized in Ghana’s cocoa regions.²⁵ In Côte d’Ivoire, autochthony has been mobilized by political entrepreneurs at both local and national levels. Many scholars have noted that the Ivorian civil war is ultimately a war of identification, since it concerns the fundamentals of nationality and citizenship.²⁶ The appropriation of autochthony as an ideology and the status of autochthon as a political identity has been a particularly useful strategy for the combatants in this conflict, since the notion of autochthony is a highly flexible construct. And yet as flexible and as powerful as the ideology may be, it does not emerge on its own and must be manipulated by political entrepreneurs who see it as a useful and strategic device for mobilizing individuals and groups. I contend that the differences in the other variables in these two cases—state–society relations, the land tenure regime, and state capacity/exogenous shocks—help explain why autochthony discourses have been so easily mobilized in Côte d’Ivoire’s cocoa regions and not in Ghana’s. In other words, the nature of state–society relations in Côte d’Ivoire’s cocoa regions made migration a much more contentious issue, the issue was compounded by the nature of the land tenure regime, and the situation as a whole made the nonmigrant farmers susceptible to the appeal of autochthony discourses. And yet it is important to note that in Côte d’Ivoire another key difference has been the skill with which political elites have mobilized these discourses. The government’s policy of *Ivoirité* and resulting electoral and land laws all served to mobilize “true Ivoirians” against foreigners, turning migration into a deeply politicized issue at both the national and local levels.

Although Ghana has by no means been immune to internal conflict between diverse groups, in more recent decades it has done a much better job of managing ethnic diversity, immigration questions, and identity politics than Côte d’Ivoire. When one considers the nation-building efforts in Ghana that aim to check ethnic and north–south polarization, as well as the governance reforms, electoral rules, and public policies that aim to pro-

mote national integration, it is not surprising that autochthony discourses have not been salient at the national level. As Nordås (2007:15) points out, this may be in part a function of the 1992 Constitution, which “requires the state to actively promote national integration by prohibiting discrimination and prejudice on the grounds of such factors as place of birth, origin, ethnicity, and religion.”²⁷ These profoundly different institutional features in Ghana may explain why political entrepreneurs have not turned to autochthony as a strategy for mobilizing groups. Thus while historical and structural forces can create fertile conditions for autochthony discourses, institutional differences at the state level also highlight why political elites may be able to mobilize these discourses more easily in some political contexts than in others.

Conclusion

The recent explosion of literature in the field of international relations on migration and security is a testament to the importance of migration as not only a by-product of violent conflict but also a potential contributor to it. This recognition of migration as an explanatory variable has resulted in a body of literature that considers the potential security implications associated with multiple forms of migration. However, this literature has tended to focus on international migration, involuntary migration, national security, and the situation in developed countries. In concentrating on these narrow dynamics, scholars have failed to provide insights into the migration–conflict nexus in Africa, where internal migration, voluntary migration, and internal security are more pressing issues.

This article has attempted to address this gap in order to improve theoretical knowledge of this neglected and yet tremendously important relationship. However, we must not exaggerate the causal role of migration in contributing to outbreaks of violent conflict; migration alone does not cause conflict. Rather, migration can act with a series of intervening variables to increase the likelihood of violent conflict. The comparative analysis of migration–conflict linkages in Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana provides insights into the key intervening variables linking migration with violent conflict. Although these variables—the nature of state–society relations, the land tenure regime, state capacity and exogenous shocks, and experiences with autochthony discourses—help explain the different outcomes in the two cases and serve as important elements in a model of the migration–conflict nexus, there are arguably other factors at play linking migration and conflict. Given the complexity of migration processes and the diversity of contexts in which migration occurs, it is unlikely that any one theory will be able to explain the causal processes linking migration and conflict. However, by combining empirical insights with existing theoretical knowledge, we can begin to develop better frameworks for understanding the relationship between migration and conflict.

Indeed, much more thinking about this relationship needs to be done.²⁸ As the cases under review reveal, while migration can contribute to violent outbreaks of conflict, migration itself is influenced and shaped by other processes. Consequently, while we must consider migration as a security issue in its own right, we need to continue exploring those factors that continue to drive migration processes, whether they are related to state, market, environmental, or other forces. Greater understanding of the causes of migration will arguably provide us with improved knowledge of the potential consequences of migration, one of which—violent conflict—remains seriously underexplored and undertheorized.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Bruce Berman, Peter Geschiere, J. Andrew Grant, and Chris Samuel for their helpful comments on this article. I would also like to thank the participants at the Canadian Political Science Association Annual Conference in Montreal (June 2010) and the Conference of Defence Associations Institute's Graduate Student Symposium at the Royal Military College of Canada in Kingston, Canada (October 2010) for their questions and suggestions on preliminary versions of the article. This article has also benefited from the insightful suggestions of the editors and anonymous reviewers of the *African Studies Review*. I gratefully acknowledge the financial support from the Africa Initiative Program, the Ethnicity and Democratic Governance Project, the International Development Research Centre, Queen's University, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

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Notes

1. See Collier and Hoeffler (2004); Fearon (2005); Ross (2004).
2. On the subject of mobility in Africa, see Adepoju (1995); Bakewell and de Haas (2007); Van Dijk et al. (2001).
3. See, e.g., Lischer (2005); Martin (2005); Salehyan (2008); Salehyan and Gleditsch (2006).
4. I use the term *internal* to refer to processes that occur within the boundaries of a state. "International migration" refers here to migration that takes place between states. In much of the literature, by contrast, these two definitions are often used interchangeably.
5. The best example of these interconnections is arguably the violence that has plagued the eastern regions of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where historical and contemporary migrations are deeply connected to widespread violent conflict in natural resource sectors (see Jackson 2006).
6. There is a vast literature exploring the linkages between migration and development. The above references provide only a cursory glance into some of the debates and dynamics.
7. Gary Freeman's (2005) excellent synthesis of migration as a topic of inquiry in political science captures the essence of this failure. According to Freeman, "immigration has been mostly ignored by the best minds in political science. . . . The literature tends to be a-theoretical and descriptive, to consist of ad hoc case studies that are difficult to aggregate, and to display a strong normative content with a tendency toward advocacy and celebration rather than rigorous analysis" (117).
8. Hollifield (2008) argues that migration was largely ignored for most of the latter part of the twentieth century due to the Cold War's theoretical dominance in the field of international relations. As "migration did not directly affect the

balance of power, the East–West struggle, or the nature of the international system, with the exception of refugees,” it did not warrant special attention during this period (183). Goldstone (2002:14–15) notes some demographic trends that highlight the increasing importance of population movements as a catalyst for violent conflict: “expanding agrarian population running up against land that is controlled or being expanded for exclusive use of large landlords . . . [,] expanding urban population in an economy that is not providing commensurate economic growth . . . [,] expanding population of higher-educated youth facing limited opportunities to obtain elite political and economic positions . . . [, a] large youth bulge . . . [,] especially where political institutions are weak. . . . [, and] migration of populations into regions already settled by a population with a distinct ethnic or political identity.”

9. See Adamson (2006); Castles and Miller (2009); Choucri (2002); Dannreuther (2007); Rudolph (2003, 2006).
10. This gap has been noted by many migration scholars (e.g., Skeldon 2008; Van Dijk et al. 2001; Rudolph 2003). Van Dijk et al. (2001:23–24) note that “little systematic knowledge is available about intra-national movements,” a notable concern since “these movements can be as long and as important in their economic, ecological and political consequences as international migration and can just as well break with the past because it takes people into unknown territory, socially, ethnically, ecologically and culturally.” A rare example of a recent work that does examine the differences between international and internal migrants and the link with civil war is that of David Laitin (2009), who finds that the latter are much more likely to set off violence that can escalate into civil war.
11. See Berry (2009); Boone (1998); Crook (2001); Langer (2008); Morris Maclean (2010); Nordås (2007); Woods (2004).
12. See Bøås (2009); Dunn (2009); Geschiere (2009); Berry (2009). It is worth noting that while autochthony has been at the heart of many conflicts in Africa, it has reared its ugly head in other contexts as well. For an analysis on autochthony in Europe, see Ceuppens (2006); Ceuppens and Geschiere (2005); Geschiere (2009).
13. According to a United Nations Population Fund estimate, Côte d’Ivoire’s civil war has resulted in the internal displacement of more than one million people, with approximately 80 percent of those taking up residence in Abidjan (Chirot 2006:72).
14. For a detailed account of the violent attacks committed by both pro-Ouattara and pro-Gbagbo forces in these regions, see Human Rights Watch (2011a, 2011b).
15. See Aryeetey and Fosu (2005); Konadu-Agyemang and Adanu (2003).
16. See Jönsson (2009); Lund (2008); Tsikata and Seini (2004).
17. The British colonial authorities not only recognized and supported customary law over land tenure, but also helped reinvent it during the colonial period, as Amanor (2007) explains.
18. The strength of the rural elite is the subject of Richard Rathbone’s (2000) book on the internal power struggles between Nkrumah and the chieftaincy. According to Rathbone, Nkrumah’s struggle against the chieftaincy was as dramatic and important as that with the British.
19. The *tutoral* is best understood as “an agrarian institutional device for regulating first comer–late comer relations” (Chauveau & Richards 2008:525). The

practice is commonly found in rural societies in West Africa and involves a reciprocal relationship through which “strangers” are integrated into the host community in exchange for providing perennial gratitude to the *tuteur* (guardian). For rich description of this complex social institution, see also Chauveau (2006); Colin et al. (2007).

20. It is interesting to note, however, that while differences in land tenure regimes in the cocoa-growing regions help explain different political outcomes, there has been much violent conflict linked with disputes over land tenure in Northern Ghana. However, as Christian Lund (2008) notes, the land tenure regimes in the northern territories differ markedly from those in the south, and in many respects they resemble land tenure in neighboring Côte d’Ivoire, since land was vested principally in the crown and not controlled by powerful local traditional authorities. See also Amanor (2008:130–34).
21. The relationship between democratization and nationalist violence is well-established (see, e.g., Snyder 2000). The case of Côte d’Ivoire provides a clear example of how democratization can heighten tensions between different groups and trigger divisive debates over such contentious issues as citizenship and belonging. Writing about the Ivorian case, Crawford Young (2007:259) says, “Democratisation clearly raised the stakes of citizenship. Both locally and nationally, the return of the electoral competition meant that the entitlement of belonging affected power relations, both nationally and locally.”
22. It is important to note that while the expulsions resulted in the mass exodus of migrants, many of whom worked in the cocoa sector, the new policy was not in fact directed at these workers. The resulting severe shortages in labor in the cocoa sector stemming from the forced emigration of migrant cocoa workers was thus an unintended consequence of the new law. Peil (1971, 1974) provides an excellent account of the context and impact of these expulsions.
23. This is observed with the decreasing importance of cocoa as a percentage of total exports in the postcolonial period and the increasing importance of other exports. The following numbers represent the value as a percentage of exports for cocoa during the postcolonial period: 59.6% (1960); 72.0% (1970); 65.0% (1980); 40.2% (1990); and 22.5% (2000). These numbers can be contrasted with the growing importance of mineral exports, from 24.5% (1960) of total exports to 40.0% (2000), and of “nontraditional exports,” which were virtually nonexistent in 1960 but represented 13.6% of total exports in 2000 (Konadu-Agumang and Adanu 2003:517).
24. See Crush (2008); Geschiere (2009); Geschiere and Jackson (2006); Green (2007); Jackson (2006); Mamdani (2001).
25. Again, this is not the case in the northern regions, where there have been numerous incidents that could be classified as “conflicts of autochthony.”
26. See Bah (2010); Banégas and Marshall-Fratani (2007); Marshall-Fratani (2006).
27. Ousman Kobo’s (2010) recent article on postcolonial citizenship in Ghana echoes this point. However, Kobo’s work reveals that postcolonial citizenship and autochthony in Ghana are still contentious issues.
28. Grant et al. (forthcoming) provide a comparative analysis of migration–conflict dynamics in different natural resource sectors in West Africa, namely Sierra Leone’s diamond sector, Côte d’Ivoire’s cocoa sector, and Ghana’s gold sector.