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Johannes Knierzinger

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Local Development and Local Government in Ghana

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THE CHIEFS OF DEVELOPMENT

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Vorwort

Die neotraditionellen Systeme Ghanas – bestehend aus Chiefs, Queenmothers, Stool Fathers, Elders, Development Chiefs usw. – haben sich seit der Unabhängigkeit grundlegend verändert. Aus VermittlerInnen zwischen der Kolonialregierung und der afrikanischen Bevölkerung wurden oftmals private InteressensvertreterInnen. Das Engagement von neotraditionellen AkteurInnen im Rahmen der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit war und ist daher in diesem Kontext eine willkommene Möglichkeit, den verlorenen politischen Einfluss zu kompensieren. Trotz Kritik an den neotraditionellen Herrschaftsformen in Medien und durch eine kritische Zivilgesellschaft ist die ghanaische Bevölkerung immer noch stark in neotraditionelle Strukturen eingebunden und steht den neotraditionellen AkteurInnen überwiegend positiv gegenüber.

Johannes Knierzinger beschreibt, auf welche Weise neotraditionelle AkteurInnen in die ghanaische Entwicklungszusammenarbeit eingebunden sind bzw. diese mitgestalten. Es wird deutlich, wie diese AkteurInnen mit PolitikerInnen, Geschäftsleuten, NGO-VertreterInnen und RepräsentantInnen der großen Entwicklungsagenturen interagieren bzw. inwiefern sie selbst als solche agieren. Die vom Autor vorgelegten Ergebnisse sind sowohl für internationale AkteurInnen der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit als auch für lokale AkteurInnen von Interesse, da sie die gängige Rationalität von entwicklungspolitischem Handeln in Frage stellen.

Mit dieser Diplomarbeit legt der Autor eine hoch interessante Darstellung und Analyse der Rolle von „Entwicklungsbrokern" und lokalen Autoritäten in Ghana vor. Sowohl methodisch als auch theoretisch – vor allem im Hinblick auf die Kenntnis der historischen und sozialwissenschaftlichen Situation in Ghana – überzeugt der Autor, der sich bewusst abseits des entwicklungspolitischen mainstreams bewegt.

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Contents

1. Introduction:

In this diploma thesis I will try to show how neotraditional actors (e.g. chiefs, queenmothers, stool fathers, elders, 'linguists' and development chiefs) are involved in the Ghanaian development arena. This goal will be tackled by carrying out a comparison of neotraditional actors (NTAs) and politicians as the major agents of development, a study of the roles of NTAs, both by means of a survey and a media analysis, reflections on the different sources of power of NTAs on the basis of a short history of chieftaincy and development in Ghana, and a detailed study of the development arena in Hagodzi, a small village in the Volta Region. The results of the research done in Hagodzi will be put in relation to different concepts around the term development broker, or courtier, which was coined by Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan in the 1990ies.

I have created the new and unhandy short cut NTA (neotraditional actor) for two main reasons: Firstly, it is simply wrong to talk of chiefs when all the actors of the neotraditional system are concerned: there are many important offices, some of them only assigned to women, and the term 'chief' obstructs a clear view of these offices. And secondly, there exists no alternative to the problematic term 'traditional' for designating actors such as chiefs. I am aware that, by using the term 'neotraditional', I am not proposing a 'sustainable' solution to this problem. If the 'neo' in 'neotraditional' designates the changes that started in the period of colonisation, there are many aspects of neotraditional rule which would be in fact 'traditional'. This is maybe the reason why Carola Lentz uses the term '(neo)-traditional'(see e.g. 2006: 917). However, it is quite visible in the north of Ghana that European colonisation was not in fact the first one. And could not the expansion of the Asante Empire also be described as a form of colonisation? Having attached the prefix 'neo', the word 'traditional' somehow loses its right to exist. But I think it is neither possible to clear the term 'tradition' of these problematic implications nor to replace it by another term. The word 'neotraditional' should therefore rather be considered a pragmatic workaround than a new, viable proposal.

Because of the broad scope both of the term development and of the neotraditional sector, it is necessary to specify the fields involved. The erosion of the former position of the chief as the overall leader since World War II has led to a situation where many of the roles of neotraditional actors (NTAs) have become the object of vivid discussions. This involves roles in connection with land, law, culture and identity, politics and party politics, conflict and development. The present thesis will focus on the role of NTAs in politics, party politics, the

development business and – to a lesser extent – conflict. This will involve a close examination of two intersections: the one between chieftaincy and politics, and the one between chieftaincy and the development business.

The outcomes of the thesis can be useful both to NGOs and public development associations of the North, which are quite hesitant to collaborate with NTAs, and to local public actors. The guiding questions of my studies in the last four years have circled around the power, the resilience and the malleability of neotraditional institutions and the consequences of these qualities for the place of NTAs in the political system. Since independence, the traditional arena has been a scene of conflict about identity and resources, partly because its place in Ghanaian society remained unclear. In spite of being officially excluded, chieftaincy is an important part of the political system. NTAs are strongly involved in party politics and party politics is strongly involved in neotraditional systems. In the phase of state decay in the 1970s, NTAs regained political ground in the local arena. In the 1990s, this struggle in the political field encroached on the development arena. NTAs began to invest in the development sector. With the turn of the millennium, the international community also focused on governments as the primary stakeholders of development in the South again. This reinforces the necessity to clarify the relation between the state and neotraditional institutions in Ghana.

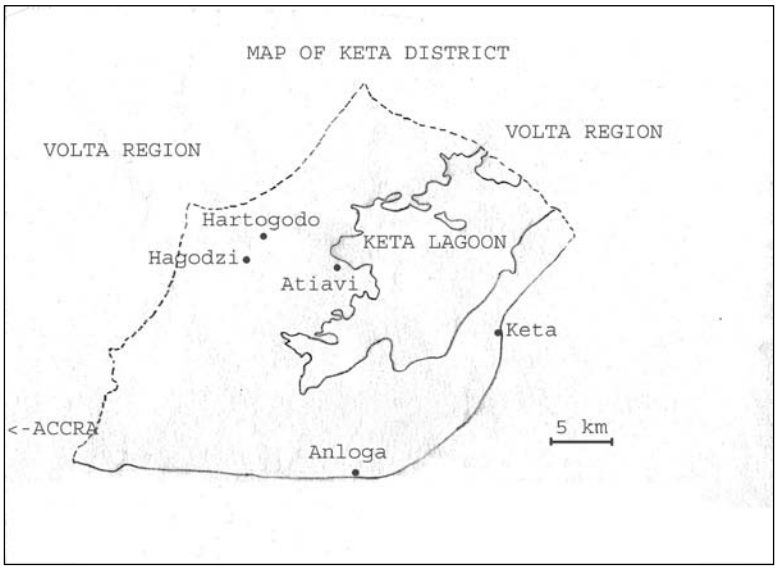
NTAs are not only gold-draped paramount chiefs, ruling over thousands (sometimes even millions) of people. Paramount chiefs (about 200 throughout Ghana) are only the tip of the iceberg of much larger neotraditional systems with long lists of offices reaching down to the village level, where the formal political system has not yet arrived. This has forced all political leaders since colonialism to deal with NTAs – with different effects on research in the social sciences. One strong theoretical current, which is linked to the traditional elite, still describes the ‘traditional’ system as a more or less consensual political system, a form of African democracy, which should be used to develop Africanised forms of government. This old discussion has been picked up in the phase of democratisation and mingled with the term ‘civil society’. The rare empirical works available (see Ubink 2008) do not support these theories, normally circling around the idea of consensual decision making in neotraditional settings. Neotraditional systems are neither a form of civil society nor a substitute for it, as they are structured hierarchically, traditionally based on descent and age. But they are still the most visible political institutions on the village level, partly because of the lack of formal political institutions on this level and partly because of their malleability. The village level is particularly affected by permanent negotiation processes over land and status. These processes

lead to violence in the higher tiers of chieftaincy, but also to participation, especially in the lower tiers. If the population doesn't accept a chief, the various courts involved cannot change the situation (Interview Daanaa).

In the development arena, this has led to a situation where the neotraditional system is increasingly being used as a cultural asset to attract investment both from the state and from private institutions. The example of Hagodzi will show the resulting flexibility of this system. For fifteen years, a mechanic who acts as a development broker for this village has been regarded as a chief by the district administration and the media, although all of the higher chiefly tiers concerned reject him. He has never been formally installed and has never tried to declare his descent. Both careers, his career as a 'royal' and his career as a development broker, started with the swift repair of a Jeep owned by a German NGO.

1.1 Hagodzi

Right from the beginning of my field work in the Keta District, I always described my intentions with the same words: 'I want to know how development works at the interface between the government, NGOs and private actors like churches and chiefs.' To enlighten this relationship, I focused on the official structure of development on the local level on the one hand and on the specific make-up and work-flow of projects and the background of certain brokers on the other hand. The outcome of this field work accordingly consists in a detailed picture of the local development arena and a variety of more or less congruent 'stories' about projects and the actors involved. In this chapter I will give a short characterisation of the area and the method applied. In chapter four I will go on to describe the different projects and trajectories.



Hagodzi is situated in the Keta District, about 150 km to the east of Accra. Because of its proximity to the Volta Delta, most of the year it is surrounded by various distributaries of the Volta River and forms an island together with two other small villages, Mamime and Lawshime. Only during two months of the dry season it is possible to access these three

villages by foot. In the rainy season, lasting from May to July, the water even separates Mamime from the other two villages. The island is not connected to the power grid and possesses no public or commercial facilities besides a church and a school. To reach the next market in Atiavi, the villagers have to walk about two hours and to cross several rivers by canoe. The next small clinic can be reached in one hour, but due to a lack of canoes and ferrymen it may also take hours to cross the river in the direction of the clinic. This often leads to deaths because of snake-bites and particularly in cases of birth complications.

The changing water level and periodic bushfires force most of the residents to grow sugar cane for the production of schnapps. Most of the schnapps is then sold on the local market to buy maize, which is the most important staple food aside from cassava. According to *Kwame Layisi* (all names marked in italics have been changed), a former assemblyman of the village, most of the crops are regularly destroyed by fire. One of the roughly ten English-speaking persons who permanently stay on the island (out of about 1000 registered residents), *Layisi* sells about 400 litres of schnapps per year, generating a profit of about 240 Ghanaian cedi (= US$240). The average population is likely to earn even less (interview *K. Layisi*). Virtually all of the income from the distillery is spent on food, particularly maize, fish, salt, onions and even cassava dough. In May, June and July, when the rainy season starts, the population also sells fresh fish on the local market. Subsistence production mainly consists of cassava, and to a lesser extent of chicken, fish and goat.

The majority of young people who finish JSS schooling go to Accra, Kumasi, Takoradi and Tema to become carpenters, masons, tailors and hairdressers. Because of the difficult situation in the village, most of them stay there. These persons have often been depicted as ‘volunteers’ because they are expected to send money home for Christmas and Easter and for burials.

During a two-week stay, I permanently did interviews on three topics: I asked (1) how the interviewees defined development, (2) which development projects were under way or planned and who participated in planning and implementation and (3) I also asked the interviewees to specify the five most important development actors.

I asked the people to define development mainly to avoid an additional section on current definitions of development in the present thesis. *Kwame Layisi* defined development simply as a process of change which involves communal participation to achieve better education and health. For him, the development of the village would be catalysed by the construction of a feeder road to the island, which would particularly enable better health care (interview *K. Layisi*). Other interview partners also mentioned the connection to the power grid, the building of bridges and the creation of self-confidence as important steps towards

development. Development thus wasn't exclusively defined as material development, but mainly so.

The only building projects carried out in the village so far have been the construction and maintenance of a school and a kindergarten (which is at the same time a catholic church), the supply of pipe-borne water to the village and the construction of a wooden bridge. Apart from that, we made out four projects that had not been realised or had been stopped because of insufficient funding: a KVIP (Kumasi Ventilated Improved Pit) latrine, a foot bridge, a plan to irrigate certain parts of the island and a fish-pond. We focused on the water project because it had been completed only recently and involved a considerable number of stakeholders, particularly on the island.

This thread will be taken up again in chapter four. After an outline of the history of chieftaincy and development and a chapter on current intersections between chieftaincy and development in Ghana, I will then come back to Hagodzi as a case study for chiefly engagement in development.

2. History of chieftaincy and development

In this chapter I will try to give an overview of the history of chieftaincy in Ghana with a special focus on the role of the NTAs as agents of development. Geographically, I will focus on the Volta Region, as it is the centre of attention of this thesis. However, repeated references to the Ashanti Region or even smaller units like Akyem Abuakwa, a paramountcy in the Eastern Region, cannot be avoided because of their far-reaching influence on national politics, particularly concerning chieftaincy. The meaning of the term development will change in different contexts throughout this brief historical outline, but in the end it should become clearer why the roles of chiefs are currently constrained to certain specific notions of development.

This historical overview will deal in depth with the relationship of NTAs and (local) politics. Most of the senior chiefs in Ghana have quite an interesting political background. Metaphorically speaking, they have danced through history: they had to turn round and round again, if they didn't want to miss the tune (cf. NRR 2004: 8.12.4). From 1951-1966, it was up to Kwame Nkrumah to call the tune: Contrary to his initial belief in the continuity between African 'communalism' and modern communism, he eventually changed the whole structure of chieftaincy by making sure that virtually all paramount chiefs of Ghana were party stalwarts. The following regimes with K.A. Busia and Edward Akufo-Addo as the leading

proponents of the chiefly elite again started a sweeping programme of conversion. In spite of the descent of these leaders, the way how they instrumentalised chiefly power remained the same. The long rule of Jerry Rawlings – from 1979 to 2000, with a short break from 1979-1981 - was rather ambiguous in its effects on chieftaincy. Despite verbal assaults in the revolutionary beginning, the regime didn't readopt the policies of Nkrumah. In 1992, after nearly one decade of structural adjustment monitored by the World Bank, it drafted the Constitution of the Fourth Republic, which is still valid today and wasn't changed significantly by the pro-chief NPP government (2000-2008).

2.1. Ghana under Nkrumah

The fight for independence in Ghana took place on two fronts: the exterior and the interior. Most of the chiefs were against independence, because they expected their position to be less powerful afterwards. During the Second World War, they stood against a more or less united front of educated and wealthy elites from the coastal area, which had been neglected by the British and as a consequence started to agitate against the colonial power. The reasons for this total disregard were to be found in systematic racism, based on the belief that the chiefs were some sort of natural rulers, while the elite was designated as 'deracinated, anomalous and self-seeking'. Most of the chiefs were illiterate (as many chiefs in the North still are), and as such, they were seen as unprogressive. Because of their role as middlemen between the colonial power and the population they were in a certain sense doomed right from the start of the nationalist movement: they had to carry out the repressive policies of the British with little funds and as a consequence lined their own pockets if they didn't exploit the population for the colonial power. In spite of many officials secretly being of the same opinion as the nationalist elite, no changes took place until the Second World War. On the contrary, British reliance on chieftaincy virtually turned into sacralisation. A transformation, it was argued until the Second World War, would be far too dangerous,[1] since the chiefs were performing the tasks of a non-existing British administration (Rathbone 2000: 7-15).

In the area on which I will focus in the next chapters, the financial situation of the colonial administration was even worse. The Volta Region had been under a mandate of the League of Nations and later was a United Nations Trust Territory. The only investments in this region resulted in the construction of a few feeder roads. In practice, as Nugent puts it, 'colonial administration was an exercise of fire fighting' in these areas (Nugent 1996a: 206). Contrary

[1] This argument is still very important for the policies concerning chieftaincy today.

to the South-West, the chieftaincies of the North and the Volta Region were quite small before the coming of the colonialists and the amalgamation policies introduced by the British in the Volta Region to reduce the number of chieftaincies were not successful. In 1922, the southern part of British Togoland consisted of 68 divisions, which were again divided into a huge number of subdivisions. All of these subdivisions had their own courts. In the District of Ho alone, Nugent counts 234 courts for this point in time. Out of this chaos, the colonial power created six states: Buem, Avatime, Akpini, Asogli, Krachi and Anlo. Both these new prescribed geographic affiliations and the new confusion about who was to rule over whom fuelled conflict and discontent (Nugent 1996: 207-211).

The turnaround of the colonial regime during the Second World War again primarily had economic reasons. It became clear that the high demand for raw materials (vegetable oils and fats) during the war could not be met by the chiefly institutions and that they were not capable of earning more foreign exchange by selling cocoa, gold and diamonds either. Hence the starting point of the new development paradigm in Ghana, which was strongly associated with economic growth and modernisation at that point in time. And of course, the ‘traditional authorities’ didn't yet fit in this concept (Gocking 2005: 77).

As soon as in 1943, the colonial power enacted a new constitution, which was to guarantee a transformation towards something like a constitutional monarchy, with a majority of non-officials in the Legislative Council. In the coastal areas, this new Legislative Council was elected directly, in the other areas, the two most influential Councils of Chiefs, the ‘Asanteman Council’ (for the Ashanti Region) and the Joint Provisional Council (Eastern and Western Region) functioned as electoral councils. The riots of 1948, which marked the rise of Kwame Nkrumah, were partly triggered by these ‘elections’: seven out of nine selected representatives of the Joint Provisional Council in the Legislative Council were chiefs, although the colonial administration and the modern elite advised the Councils of Chiefs to send also non-royals to the Legislative Council (Rathbone 2000: 19f).

Subsequently, the so-called Coussey Committee was set up, which consisted of Africans only and worked out a new constitution. That was already the start of the process of formal depolitisation of chieftaincy: in 1952 the powers of the State Councils, the most important councils of chiefs on the district level, were restricted to tasks concerning chieftaincy matters and were replaced by Local Councils, where only one third of the members could be chiefs or people appointed by them (Thomi 1999/2000: 104).

2.1.1 Confrontations on the national level

The conflict between the chiefs and the modern elite, which was in fact already on its way to become the new ruling class, reached its first peak in 1949 with the separation of the Convention Peoples Party (CPP) from the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), which had previously been home to the elite. The stalwarts of the CPP were often depicted as 'small boys' or 'veranda boys' (see Nugent 1996a), who were not related to the royal families and had often been fighting directly against chiefs in their areas. The former conflict between a new bourgeoisie and a 'feudalist' class now transformed into a Marxist struggle for independence against the collaborators of the colonial power. The CPP became the party of the 'workers and peasants', but even more importantly that of the 'youth'. This word has a very particular, specific meaning in the African context. In Ghana the word 'youth' most of the time indicates people who are not part of any royal family. Accordingly, nobility also has a different meaning in the African context. The members of 'royal' families enjoyed some privileges, for instance in connection with the administrative apparatus of chieftaincy. Police and jail staff, for instance, usually only consisted of kinsmen of the chief (Rathbone 2000: 21f). Contrary to the European notion of nobility, Ghanaian royals can be found in every village. Normally, the 'royal' family in a village is the one said to have founded the village.

This wide definition of nobility also is an explanation for why the UGCC, representing the old educated elite, and the chiefs forged an alliance prior to the election. Faced with the rise of the CPP, they were pragmatic and buried the hatchet. In the north, even CPP members hardly had any conflicts with chief, because virtually all educated citizens came from royal families (Drah 1992: 15).

When Nkrumah was sworn in as prime minister[2] in 1951, the power struggle between the chiefs and the CPP was already decided on the national level. The new government was to be a diarchic regime, its executive powers should be shared between the colonialists and elected Africans. Because of the striking victory of the CPP, governor Charles Noble Arden-Clarke decided to give a majority of the seats in the executive council to the CPP and only a minority to the different Councils of Chiefs (Gocking 2005: 97f). As the chiefs pushed for four ministerial posts and the governor stood firm again, the Territorial Council of the chiefs threatened to form a 'shadow government', 'ready to be called on when the CPP failed'.

[2] He was formally to be made prime minister in 1952.

Finally, Arden-Clarke agreed to give two ministerial posts to the chiefs. At that time, one could probably still speak of two systems of government, which also resulted in open hostility between the two factions (Rathbone 2000: 29f). The most famous statement of Nkrumah concerning chieftaincy describes this relationship very good:

> Those of our chiefs who are with us […] we do honor […] those […]who join forces with the imperialists […] there shall come a time when they will run and leave their sandals behind them; in other words chiefs in league with imperialists who obstruct our path […] will one day run away and leave their stools. (*Accra Evening News* , 5 January 1950, q.i. Gocking 2005 : 94)

Both the stool and the sandals are part of the chiefs' regalia. To appear barefooted in public is a taboo for chiefs and normally results in the destoolment, the dethronement, of a chief. The invitation of chiefs to join forces with the CPP is often cited as an example of the dual strategy that characterised all governments after the independence in their relationship with chiefs: their active involvement in party politics was formally condemned, but secretly encouraged, if it seemed to be useful.

In 1954 the CPP already held all portfolios in an entirely African cabinet. 'In many respects', Rathbone remarks, 'the struggle against colonial rule was over' (2000: 83f). The achievement of independence was no more a political issue, but an administrative and constitutional exercise and the important conflicts were already those between different African factions.

With the foundation of the National Liberation Movement (NLM), the defence reactions of the chiefs now seemed to be bolstered by a political party. However, the formation of this movement was partly a result of the chiefs being more and more excluded from national decision making and, as would especially become evident after the fall of Nkrumah in 1966, the NLM didn't prove to be an effective advocate for all chiefs. It was more or less confined to what is today the Ashanti Region (Hadjor 1988: 62).

Until 1954 the Councils of Chiefs had served as 'electoral councils' which were able to nominate a certain percentage of the legislative assembly. From then on this assembly consisted exclusively of elected members, which led to a significant loss of seats for the Ashanti Region. This induced a rare example of regional unity: Both the Asante Youth Associations and the CPP branch of the Ashanti Region called for a stronger representation of the Ashanti Region in the Legislative Council together with the newly formed NLM (Rathbone 2000: 64). This also led to the formation of the Northern People's Party, whose stalwarts often came from the CPP (Hadjor 1988: 61).

By 1954 it had already become clear that Ghana would be independent a few years later. the

British were considering 1956 as the potential year of independence, which led to widespread debates about a new constitution. The NLM naturally demanded a federalist system of government. Because it was not yet represented in government, the stalwarts tried to push their agendas via lobbying in London and through an enforced polarisation on the local level, which again led to more local wrangles in connection with enstoolment and destoolment conflicts (Rathbone 2000: 70f). Because the achievement of independence was finally still dependent on the consent of the British, the CPP had to deal with these aspirations. Additionally, British citizens had voted for conservative governments since 1951. This meant that there was no way to smash the NLM by mere force (Hadjor 1988: 63).

The chiefly faction of the NLM even went a step further and again demanded the establishment of a second legislative chamber for the chiefs, which had already been rejected in 1951. Nkrumah was bound to negotiate again and suggested to establish an 'impartial committee' instead, which should deal with appeals from the Territorial Councils (the regional councils of chiefs) and the State Councils (the Local Councils of chiefs). Neither the second parliament nor the 'impartial committee" were established, however, because the CPP stopped to negotiate after independence (Rathbone 2000: 83, cf. Botwe-Asamoah 2005: 33).

Despite the NLM's capability of establishing stable relations with the British, they were still more in favour of the CPP. The constitutional advisor, who was commissioned to make an inquiry into the regionalist demands of the NLM, even came out with another unfavourable proposal. He suggested establishing Regional Assemblies and Regional Houses of Chiefs, both of which were endorsed, with the effect that chieftaincy became even more constrained to the regional field and had very limited functions on the national level from then on. The Regional Houses of Chiefs could only consider matters referred to them by the government and were called upon to advise the government on African social customs and customary law. These tasks were already quite similar to the tasks of the National House of Chiefs today. Additionally, the CPP was not content with the establishment of the Regional Assemblies and abolished them after independence. Thus, the overall effect of these two measures was a further balkanisation of the institution of chieftaincy (Rathbone 2000: 79-87).

In 1956 the CPP again had to call elections, because the NLM had successfully convinced the secretary of state that the support of the population for the CPP – and therefore for independence - was unclear. The CPP won again and most of the chiefs subsequently accepted the supremacy of the CPP. The opposition, however, tried its best to postpone independence. Kofi Busia for instance, the leader of the NLM, told the British public: 'Sometimes I wonder why you are in such a hurry to leave us. Your experiment in the Gold Coast is not complete.

We still need you – our country is not ready for parliament democracy.' (Nkrumah 1959: 181, q.i. Hadjor 1988: 63).

Also the NLM chiefs in the Ashanti Region under the leadership of the Okyenhene revolted. They wanted to introduce separate national flags and coats of arms for the Ashanti and the Northern Territories. Apart from the Northern Territories being not very enthusiastic about this idea, Rathbone also questions whether constructing such a nation without access to the sea would have been reasonable. He assumes that only the extremists of the NLM really believed in this idea, which for the rest of the movement rather was a bargaining exercise (Rathbone 2000: 96f).

In December 1956 the amalgamation of British Togoland (the western share of the former German protectorate of Southern Togoland) with the Gold Coast took place. In an election held under UN supervision only 58% of the registered voters opted for integration into the Gold Coast. At the same time the ruling government again tried to reopen the knotty issue of paramountcies in this area, which later came to be called the Volta Region. The Van Lare Commission (1956) recommended a working definition of paramountcy as a stool which did not owe allegiance to any other stool. This meant that only 7 areas enjoyed unambiguous status as paramountcies: Krachi, Peki, Anlo, Buem, Avatime, Ho, and Kpamdu. The status of the rest stayed unclear, because the Van Lare Commission had to draw distinctions between states which were made subordinate to another stool or which had successfully defended their independent status and those which had cooperated with the colonial powers. While the Germans forced the chiefs to swear binding allegiances, the British assured that the former ‘independent’ states were not tying themselves to the new paramount chiefs. This created different grades of resistance, which didn’t reflect the economic and historical backgrounds of these states. Additionally, the Van Lare Commission was already used by Nkrumah to transfer power to his allies in the Volta Region. These were particularly the states that had resisted the British amalgamation policies to the end – namely Anfoega, Gbi, Likpe, Ve, Nkonya and Santrokofi. All of these were accorded paramount status. As we will see, the chiefs of these states were downgraded again after the fall of Nkrumah, and in 1974 they were allowed to become full members of the House of Chiefs without being paramount chiefs. Since then the status of most of the chiefs in this area has been contested continuously (Nugent 1996a: 220-223). This has recently contributed to serious conflicts in Anlo, the paramountcy were I did research in 2008. The enstoolment of a new paramount chief (Awomefia) in the years to come could again lead to the creation of about 15 new paramountcies (interview Kumasah 2008).

2.1.2 Decentralisation in the 1950ies

After becoming prime minister in 1951, Nkrumah did not hesitate to circumscribe the power of the chiefs also on the local level. The State Councils were transformed into Local Councils that continued to consist of one chiefly third, but were to be financed entirely by the chiefs. In spite of these additional expenditures, the whole financial basis of chieftaincy in the Colony (the South) and the Ashanti Region (revenues from stool lands) now was to be raised by the Local Councils. Additionally, selling stool land was forbidden without the permission of Local Councils and also the revenue from "native councils" - the various councils of chiefs or traditional councils on different levels - had to go directly to them. In return, the local courts were to give out annual grants for the maintenance of the traditional councils (Rathbone 2000: 31f; Thomi 1999/2000: 104). According to Thomi, these rearrangements of 1952 can also be seen as attempts of the colonial power to reconcile the non-royal elite (Thomi 1999/2000: 104).

In the Volta Region, the traditional councils, except for Buem, never had control over the stool land. Until now, the government still has to negotiate with numerous families that possess the land. Together with the thoroughly weak neotraditional system in the Volta Region, this contributed to rather smooth processes of rearrangements (Nugent 1996a: 211).

In the South-West, in contrast, these measures constituted the basis for a shift of political power. In this respect Rathbone quotes J. Hagan, who was 'cheered loudly by his own benches' when he spoke during a debate on the Local Government Ordinance:

> For 107 years our chiefs have been exercising their rights […] but that privilege has been abused [...] our confidence is now gone […] their future is doomed […] we want them to abstain themselves from politics and wash their hands of financial matters. (Legislative Assembly Debates, 22 December 1951; q.i. Rathbone 2000: 32)

This statement was quite reasonable at that point in time. Many chiefs had abused their positions and exercised arbitrary power. Especially among Southern chiefs it had been common until independence to talk of chieftaincies as sovereign powers. The attempt to cut off their financial basis was nevertheless quite hard to carry out because it was the chiefs, who collected the money. They were thereby capable of hiding income or they openly defied the Local Councils. The result was a considerable amount of chaos that left the Ministry of Local

Government totally overstrained. Many Local Councils broke down entirely and were subordinated to committees of management, which were in turn under direct control by the Minister of Local Government. Rathbone calls these committees of management ‘systems of direct rule’ (Rathbone 2000: 43ff).

The bargaining power of the chiefs was high as long as the CPP had to be careful not to shock the colonial power. Additionally, it was afraid to lose already ‘converted’ chiefs and thus it used the existing Local Government Ordinance, which already allowed the cabinet to vary the proportion of traditional members in any local council. Pro-CPP chiefs could be kept, others could be fired. This led to a further disordered system of local government, which was transformed into a system of absolute control with the Staff (Local Government Council) Regulations of 1955. From then on, the government controlled the appointments and dismissals of senior local council officers (Rathbone 2000: 83ff).

This fierce enforcement of interests in the countryside also catalysed existing chieftaincy disputes. Until today, there have rarely been any succession cases which have passed off totally peacefully. A case of succession almost necessarily leads to the formation of factions if the town or village where the case arises isn’t already split up into permanent factions. This means that it was rarely the CPP leaders that created such conflicts to pursue their own interests, but they inevitably added fuel to the fire, e.g. by threatening the chiefs not to meddle with political parties, while at the same time trying by all means to secure their loyalty (Rathbone 2000: 34ff,45,64). The main reason for local actors to stick to a particular party was the well-organised machinery of such institutions. By doing that, the chiefs were able to use the partisan press, the party’s resources and, quite frequently, the gangs of bully-boys, who were paid on a daily basis and often worked for both the CPP and the other parties at the same time. Additionally, party politics was (and is still) seen as something like a horse gamble: if the right party was to win, the affiliation would pay off in terms of development projects (Rathbone 2000: 92ff). This way of thinking was to be generalised by the CPP in the years after independence.

In the Volta Region the chiefs realised very quickly that it was useless to fight the government’s plans on their own. Some chiefs, like the chief of Anfoega, had been able to resist the amalgamation policies of the British and were now welcomed with open arms by Nkrumah. Others became members of the Togoland Congress, a political party who fought for a united nation of the Ewe, by far the most dominant ethnic group in the Volta Region and in Togo (Nugent 1996a: 211).

The Handling of destoolment and enstoolment

In 1955 the CPP amended a law that regulated succession conflicts, which were called ‘constitutional matters’ in the Coussey Constitution of 1950. The idea behind this amendment is still upheld today: the task of resolving these sensitive issues should be removed from the realm of politics. At that time, this statement was not only hypocritical, as such statements still are today, but it was simply wrong: the CPP wanted to install a ‘local constitutional committee’, which was naturally appointed by the CPP and which should regulate such issues. These demands were based on the right of the governor under the 1944 legislation ‘to grant, withhold or withdraw recognition’ of paramount and other senior chiefs. Since 1944, no governor had exercised these powers, and due to the fact that the Gold Coast enjoyed self-government since 1954, it would also have been obligatory for a governor to ask the cabinet first. The new amendment of the State Councils Ordinance did little more than unify the laws of the entire Gold Coast, which included the downgrading of the rights of chiefs in the Ashanti Region and emphasizing the rights of the governor and his government. It basically allowed sub-chiefs to appeal over the head of their paramounts to appeals commissioners, which reduced the power of paramount chiefs (Rathbone 2000: 83f).

The Reformation of the Courts

In the 1950ies the native courts were described as an ‘intensely personal form of jurisdiction’, which was largely unregulated and scantily reviewed by the colonial state. Customary law was almost the only type of law that concerned the normal citizen, with the exception of major crimes, and it was often abused: crimes were frequently trumped up and the fine was shared among the chiefly members of the tribunals. The fact that matters like ‘market vending, hawking, letter writing, sale of ‘native medicines’ and the ‘operation of shrines’ had to be allowed by native courts often led to bribery (Rathbone 2000: 47ff).

Although the colonial government had also changed its mind about native courts in the 1940ies, no transformations took place until 1958. In 1953, the CPP started to replace chiefs with party stalwarts, without having a legal basis for these measures. In Anloga the Minister of Local Governance deleted six names from the old panel list of the Anlo Native Court, all of them chiefs. He then added the names of six members, none of whom were chiefs. In the Keta Court, three panelists’ names were eliminated, including that of a chief, and the names of

three non-chiefs were added. The same happened everywhere in the country. From 1958 on, the courts were called local courts, but apart from that, the old system was left intact almost entirely. It continued to be an intensely personal system of jurisdiction, now administered by government (CPP) nominees.

The reasons for this strategy of just changing the persons and not changing the rules were quite convincing. The government had not enough resources and not enough lawyers to construct something new. In 1946, out of 136 students in the UK, only 12 were reading law. In 1948 it were 29 out of 253. Only in 1958 the University of Ghana (Legon) established a law faculty. (Rathbone 2000: 52ff). Nkrumah therefore had no choice but to utilise a small group of specialists trained during the colonial area, which was quite critical of the CPP. As a consequence, the Native Court System survived well into the independence period, but without chiefly control (Hadjor 1988: 68).

2.1.3 Akyem Abuakwa: Seldom far from the centre of the frame

The Akan 'state' of Akyem Abuakwa has been one of the centres of power in Ghana until today and its history shows a startling amalgamation of 'modern' and neotraditional governance. The first relevant paramount chief of this area, the so-called Okyenhene, was named Nana Ofori Atta I, ruled from 1912 to 1943 and was loyal to the colonial power. The following Okyenhene, Nana Ofori Atta II, already fought on the side of the nationalists. This front was united until the foundation of the CPP, and Nana Ofori Atta II was considered one of the most radical elements. This also led the CPP to describe the Okyenhene as 'a chief of the people' in 1950. However, because of the Okyenhene's former political power and the involvement of many royals in party politics, Akyem Abuakwa became one of the most contested arenas of the struggle for independence from within. A few months later the party rivalry had already become so dominant that the Okyenhene declared himself an opponent of the CPP and started to intimidate citizens during elections and forbade the open display of the CPP flag. He also began to arrest CPP members and did not cooperate with the government in transforming the local political institutions. Minor chiefs, who declared themselves CPP sympathizers, were insulted, brought to court, fined and in some cases destooled. The most convincing reasons for these harsh actions are to be found in the kinship of Nana Ofori Atta II. Three of the famous 'Big Six', the founding fathers of the UGCC, came from the royal family of Akyem Abuakwa. One of the half brothers of the Okyenhene was J.B. Danquah, besides Nkrumah the most important of the 'Big Six'. Another founding father was Edward

Akufo-Addo, the son-in-law of the former Okyenhene (and the father of Nana Akufo-Addo, the presidential candidate of Ghana's New Patriotic Party for the 2008 elections). The third founding father from Akyem Abuakwa was W.E.A. Ofori Atta, a son of the Okyenhene (cf. Botwe-Asamoah 2005: 28ff).

But the family also produced a CPP leader: Aaron Ofori Atta was a nephew of Danquah and a half brother of W.E.A. Ofori Atta. He was going to be the Minister of Local Government and the elected representative for the Akyem Abuakwa Central constituency under Nkrumah (Botwe-Asamoah 2005: 29). His opponent in the election for the latter office was his uncle J.B. Danquah, who went abroad after this defeat. Before having been defeated, Danquah is credited with the following statement: 'He [Aaron Ofori Atta] run away from his father's house and is insulting those who gave him his education' (Rathbone 2000: 62).

Naturally, the CPP cracked down on Akyem Abuakwa quite resolutely. Nkrumah accused the leaders of Akyem Abuakwa of planning his assassination, which led to riots all over Akyem Abuakwa. Almost every week one sub-chief or another was attacked by 'his' people.

2.1.4 The defeat of the chiefs

The official prostration of the powerful chiefs in the Ashanti Region happened already in October 1957, seven months after the declaration of independence. Nkrumah announced a cabinet reshuffle in which Krobo Edusei emerged as Minister of the Interior, whose responsibilities included police and internal security matters. Edusei was a well-known hardliner whose sister had been shot in her yard by NLM supporters when preparing food for her children (Botwe-Asamoah 2005: 114). By virtue of his new office he began to visit paramount chiefs. On the 10th of October he arrived in the extremely hostile territory of Akyem Abuakwa where he talked with the Okyenhene and his council. The following public speech by the Okyenhene was commented as 'amusing, cowardly and ridiculous' by the Akyem Abuakwa CPP executive. The Okyenhene stated, that 'he could not give support to one political party against another' and that 'it will be the constant care of the Okyeman Council and myself to see to it that the government of Ghana as by law established receives our co-operation.' He went on that the council members would now go about 'forgetting their party affiliations to take part in a re-dedication of ourselves to service in the interests of our land and people'. Rathbone is sure, that this statement is the product of at least serious intimidation and could have been drafted in its entirety by the CPP. The same spectacle took place a few weeks later in the palace of the Asantehene. Krobo Edusei also had a discussion

with the so-called king of the Ashanti, who stated afterwards that chiefs should not take part in party politics, although he had 'been no other than the president of the National Liberation Movement', as the Ashanti regional CPP executive noted quite accurately. In this process both of the two 'monarchs' had been seriously humiliated in public. But the government hadn't yet finished and went on with the withdrawal of official recognition of the Okyenhene because he didn't accept the appeals commissioners' judgements in traditional succession and destoolment disputes. It even contemplated the use of violence against gatherings of Akyem Abuakwa people in front of the palace, accompanied by drumming and the singing of war songs throughout the night of withdrawal of the official recognition of the Okyenhene (Rathbone 2000: 112ff).

It was obvious that it would have been far too dangerous to remove the Asantehene, but apart from that, the government deconstructed the Ashanti Confederacy at the stroke of a pen. According to Rathbone, the amount of public rage against these decisions was remarkably low. Eight new paramount chiefs were enstooled and two were degraded. The chiefs wore black 'mourning cloths' during their following meeting in the Asanteman Council, but they passed a decidedly mild resolution. They did not accept the exclusion of the degraded chiefs, but 80 policemen hindered them from entering the hall. In response, J.B. Danquah again argued for secessionism and rejected the authority of the state concerning the stool revenues. In the meantime, the political career of the Okyenhene came to an end. The government set up a commission of inquiry which again concluded that he had abused his powers and ought to be removed permanently. But still, the second most powerful chief of Ghana didn't want to move out of his palace. While wearing his traditional battledress, he was thus forcibly ejected from his palace by the police, and was excluded from the whole 'state' of Akyem Abuakwa. Being a trigger for the destoolment of over hundred minor chiefs in Akyem Abuakwa, this case was clearly used as an example for all the other chiefs who didn't want to cooperate (Rathbone 2000: 123-30,146).

At the same time, the government went about to implement the constitutional plan to establish Regional Houses of Chiefs. The difference between 'paramount' and 'divisional' chiefs was officially abolished and the government was to ordain the hierarchy from now on. Additionally, all State Councils (minor councils of chiefs) had to confirm their affiliation to a particular Regional House of Chiefs. If they didn't take orders, they were destooled. Chiefs who had lost government recognition were ultimately forced to leave their towns. The example of the Okyenhene was enough to convince a number of other chiefs who were not recognised in this process (foremost because they were NLM sympathizers) to leave their

palaces and to surrender their stool regalia (Rathbone 2000: 130f).

On 13 February 1959 the government passed the Chiefs (Recognition) Bill, which formalised all the measures which had already been taken. From now on, (1) no destoolment or enstoolment was effective if the government didn't agree, (2) a chief could lose his position without being formally destooled if the government wanted to do so and (3) chiefs could be ordered into internal exile. This bill was the manifestation of a total reconstruction of the bases of chieftaincy. Customary laws, like enstoolment or destoolment procedures, which normally involved a considerable degree of participation of the population concerned, were now virtually outlawed. Chiefs now were clients of the government. During three long cabinet meetings on 4, 5 and 25 September 1959, the government 'recognised' the enstoolment of 84 and the destoolment 32 chiefs. This scale of reconstruction by far exceeded the internal changes made in colonial times. According to Rathbone, the colonial predecessors were much more nervous and less powerful than the CPP. Virtually all paramount chiefs were CPP sympathizers at this point (Rathbone 2000: 141-45).

After his enstoolment, the new Okyenhene acted out the new role of chiefs in the upcoming decades: after stressing his complete loyalty to Nkrumah, he pointedly asked for government-funded development in the area. Given the behaviour of the government concerning local development, this was a very promising strategy. Nkrumah is told to have said the following at a CPP rally in Agona Nyakrom on New Year's Day in 1958:

'If you continue to be loyal to me, I will consider extending amenities to you. I will extend electricity and pipe-borne water to all the towns and villages.' In a run-up to a by-election in Aflao, about 50 kilometres to the East of Keta, Krobo Edusei was even more direct: 'You think I am a fool to give you water to drink and you vote against me? After the election if you vote CPP, I will give you water to drink.' The voters of Aflao didn't seem to like this statement and voted for an independent candidate. And as predicted, the piped water supply was not forthcoming (Rathbone 2000: 148).

But after all, the Volta Region was able to profit a lot from this type of bribery. The chiefly resistance in this Region was not as strong as in the Akan-speaking areas and especially in the urban centres their power was quite small. Consequently, Nkrumah used public funds a lot to tranquillise the secessionist aspirations of the Voltarians. The most impressive of these efforts is without doubt the Akosombo Dam, the biggest and most expensive development project ever realised in Ghana. Since these development efforts mainly focused on urban areas, the chiefs were mostly spectators of this process (Nugent 1996a: 212).

Centralisation and Authoritarianism

After independence, the CPP also started quite a disconcerting process of centralisation, which also included a considerable amount of suppression and the intensified use of force (Rathbone 102ff, Botwe-Asamoah 2005: 124f):

- It created very powerful regional commissioners as representatives of the government and political commissioners in each district as political 'eyes' for the regional commissioners.
- It began to openly fight against oppositional movements by virtue of a Preventive Detention Act, which allowed for the establishment of powers to remove or detain those who indulged in unconstitutional and subversive actions against the government, bypassing ordinary courts.
- And it started a long series of deportations, based on the right to deport anyone who was not of African descent or married to a Ghanaian, although he or she held a Ghanaian passport. This was implemented in accord with pan-Africanist aspirations and permitted racist violence against minorities like the Muslim Association Party or the Libanese community, which often were allies of the NLM.

Naturally, these deportations mostly affected people without passports. Already in 1958 it was openly admitted that there had been orders for opposition members without passports to be deported. Particularly in the Volta Region, these strategies of illegalisation were successful because the Togoland Congress had many contacts with Togolese. But Nkrumah also adopted classic strategies like the uncovering of 'conspiracies': in 1958, for instance, 43 people were alleged to have plotted the assassination of Kwame Nkrumah, Krobo Edusei and Kofi Baako. According to Rathbone, this incident was also used to 'nail' Modesto Apaloo, a prominent Anlo Ewe member of the NLM (Rathbone 2000: 138).

Within less then two decades, overt chiefly influence on national politics had been virtually extinguished in Ghana. According to Rathbone, these changes made by Nkrumah were unprecedented in Ghanaian history. The whole legal basis of the neotraditional states had been eroded and substituted by a governmental system of command. Nugent, in contrast, who focuses on the Volta Region, criticizes Nkrumah for not having implemented his radical plans concerning chieftaincy. Nkrumah only tinkered on the colonial heritage of chieftaincy and

carried out modifications only for his own (the CPP's) purposes. As will be seen in the following chapters, many of the powerful chiefs who had been deposed under him were to resurrect during the following regimes (Nugent 1996a: 213).

These antipodal conclusions become less confusing if one takes into consideration the different focus of the two scholars. Nugent focuses on the Volta Region, where chieftaincy is traditionally weaker than in the Akan-speaking areas. The amalgamation policies of the British in the interwar period were not successful and thus created a rather artificial caste of paramount chiefs in the Volta Region. In the Ashanti Region, on the contrary, the neotraditional states were probably as powerful as in pre-colonialist times and based on well-established laws and customs. Especially in these regions, the take-over of power by the government was set to run counter to the interests of a mighty elite. Given the political landscape after the departure of the British, something like a revolution had to take place.

However, the new situation of the NTAs of the Volta Region was totally different, too, because officially the position of a chief was no longer a political one. The old functions had to be replaced by something new, also on the local level. By 1959, the previous mandatory reservation of one-third of the seats of Local Councils for nominees of traditional councils had been statutorily removed. On the national and regional levels an even stronger erosion took place: in 1964 the Eastern House of Chiefs literally fell down and lay in ruins for nearly two years (Rathbone 2000:155f).

2.2 After 1966

The fall of Nkrumah in 1966 naturally led to a big turnaround, and also the chiefs had to turn around again if they didn't want to be deposed. The newly established National Liberation Council consisted mainly of NLM and UP members and proscribed the CPP.

With the NLC Decree No. 112, the first attempt was made to remove all those chiefs who had come to power only because of the CPP. Also the sub-chiefs, who had been made paramounts before, were degraded again. Well over 100 chiefs were destooled. Of course, the new Okyenhene was among them and the former one, who had resisted the CPP regime for quite a long time, was enstooled again.

However, in spite of the huge support of the former neotraditional elites for the new regime, their political functions were not restored. This is particularly interesting because one of the most prominent figures of pro-chief academia in Ghana, the sociologist K.A. Busia, already had a say in the new government and was to become president for more than two years later

on. He wrote one of the most influential books on chieftaincy in Ghana (‘The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti’), for which he was still cherished in 2001 by the former Ghanaian president John A. Kufuor. During his opening address at the 'International Conference on Chieftaincy in Africa. Culture, Governance and Development' in Accra in January 2003, Kufuor described the relationship between Busia and most of the chieftaincy scholars from Ghana:

> ‘Fifty years ago in 1953, one of the founding fathers of our nation and an eminent academician in his own right, Dr. Kofi Abrefa Busia, published an important work [...]. This work generated considerable discussion and encouraged African academics to examine native institutions and make recommendations towards strengthening them. This conference is part of that distinguished record of contributions.’ (Conference Papers)

Kufuor is totally right insofar as until now there is hardly any keenly pro-chief scholar who publishes without referring to Busia - which often leads to idealised and anachronistic portrayals of chieftaincy.

Additionally, the neotraditional leaders of Akyem Abuakwa were back in government. Edward Akufo-Addo, one of the six founding fathers of the UGCC, was appointed chief justice from 1966-70 as well as Chairman of the Constitutional Commission for the Second Republican Constitution of 1969. From 1969 to 1972, he even became Ceremonial President of Ghana, alongside Busia, who held all the executive powers as Prime Minister.

This means that the very clan who had fought fiercely against Nkrumah and for an independent Akyem Abuakwa under the Okyenhene Nana Ofori Atta II now ruled the country. Nana Ofori Atta II was back as the leader of the Akyem, whereas Edward Akufo-Addo, the son-in-law of the former Okyenhene Nana Ofori Atta I, became President and Chairman of the Constitutional Commission.

But even this constellation didn’t lead to a reassertion of chieftaincy in national politics. The idea of a second chamber of parliament for the chiefs, which had been demanded by the NLM in the years before independence, was rejected again and substituted by the so-called Council of State. This Council exists until today and is claimed to be the ‘modern’ version of the ‘Council of Elders’, which served as a ‘cabinet’ in pre-colonial societies like the Ashanti Federacy. The Council of State is portrayed as an example of the inclusion of ‘traditional’ ideas in ‘modern’ government. However, this council hardly bears any resemblance with ‘traditional councils’ because the president is not forced to obey any advice given by the Council of State. In contrary, the traditional councils of elders are said to wield as much

power as the chief, if not more (s. Busia 1951: 14; Kludze 2000: 54). Until today the government describes the Council of State as a substitution for the idea of a Second Chamber for Chiefs.[3]

The Constitutional Assembly also decided to create a National House of Chiefs, which hasn't changed its functions until today. It was to consist of five members from each of the Regional Houses of Chiefs; it should advise the competent authorities on matters relating to chieftaincy and undertake a progressive study, interpretation and codification of customary law. Interestingly enough, the right to withdraw recognition from a chief, which Nkrumah had used to crush the chiefs, wasn't abolished by the NLC regime and the following government under Busia. According to Brempong, the following military government, the NRC-SMC junta (National Redemption Council/Supreme Military Council), which wasn't interested too much in chieftaincy, changed this important point in the 1979 constitution:

'Parliament shall have no power to enact legislation which confers on any person or authority the right to accord or withdraw recognition to or from a chief; and which in any way detracts or derogates from the honor and dignity of the institution of chieftaincy.' (Art. 172 (6) q.i. Brempong 2006: 33).

Generally, Nkrumah's harsh actions against chieftaincy were slowly attenuated. With the Chieftaincy Act of 1971, which introduced the National House of Chiefs, Busia and Akufo-Addo already significantly reduced government intervention in chieftaincy affairs, but they also disallowed the former chiefly influence on the national level (Boafo-Arthur 2006: 156).

The new political structure was to be more regionalist and chiefs got back their third-part share in Local Councils, but they still had no direct access to stool revenues. The idea of an upper house for chiefs was quietly sidelined and there was no restoration of real access to power and wealth (Rathbone 2000: 163).

Especially in the Volta Region, the following decade was marked by a decay of political institutions and corruption. The developmentalist vision of Nkrumah failed, the financial crisis became severe and local development ceased to be of primary concern. In the 1960ies it was still widely believed that everyone would have access to running water, electricity and roads within a few years. With projects like the deepwater harbour in Tema, the Black Star line, a merchant shipping fleet, the Akosombo Dam and the foundation of Ghana Airways,

[3] http://www.ghana.gov.gh/council_of_state (0109)

Nkrumah set the bar too high and left the level of liquidity too low for the following regimes.[4] Despite continuing developmentalist rhetoric in the 1970ies, the local administration became ineffective and the police became more and more corrupt. Rural communities were increasingly forced to establish their own institutions. This led to the reactivation of the local government structure of the Nkrumah regime, but without the control of the state. Particularly in the Volta Region, the former Village Development Committees (VDC; or TDC, for town committees), which had formerly been appointed by the District Councils, now consisted mostly of representatives of the different clans of one village. These committees organised much of the communal labour, like cleaning the streets, maintaining the markets, repairing public buildings like schools, but also more ambitious development projects. Here the chiefs played a significant role, also in the management of these bigger projects. They had to beat the gong-gong to summon the people on communal labour days and they also fined people who didn't come to work (Nugent 1996a: 214). In the Keta District, many of these committees still exist and now are to be replaced by the 'new' decentralised structure, which was officially introduced in 1992 (interview Dagbui).

For Nugent it is 'tempting to interpret these developments in terms of a reassertion of traditional authority in the face of state paralysis', but he also alludes to the fact that this was not a conscious turning away from the state and that there is no proof of a 'neat' comeback of traditional practices. It was on the contrary rather a 'reconstituted role for chiefs, departing in significant respects from pre-colonial, colonial and early post-colonial precedents' (ibid.). Nugent also points out that the description of the relation between the state and the chiefs as a zero sum game can be misleading. In this regard Rouveroy van Nieuvaal also provides examples of a loss of influence in both spheres at the same time (Rouveroy van Nieuvaal/Dijk 1999: 8-9).

The dependence of NTAs on the government in crucial matters like enstoolment and destoolment led to a conscious and systematic distortion of facts because the government didn't and couldn't oversee all the local allegiances in Ghana. Chieftaincy disputes were still solved by the government, mainly because the rural communities had no accepted mechanisms for settling claims, but the government wasn't able to be objective. This situation prevails until now. Contestants in chieftaincy disputes are fully aware of the fact that the arbitrators don't know enough about the history of their village or town and normally cannot refer to any significant information. The outcome is the permanent attempt of NTAs 'to

[4] e.g. Time magazine, 10 November 1961. Online: http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,938253-3,00.html (1108).

conjure with history in order to improve their standing within an existing hierarchy' (Nugent 1996a: 214).

At this point it is probably useful to question the basis of this analysis. Nugent records a comeback of actors who designate themselves as traditional actors but he denies the rise of traditional authority. According to him, these actors didn't reject interference by the government but rather tried to improve their standing with the government by twisting history. A 'neat' comeback would have consequently been a reassertion of traditional authorities who derive their power solely from pre-colonial times. But especially in the Volta Region, allegiances have changed continuously, also in pre-colonial times. The tiny word 'neat' already shows that even a brilliant scholar like Paul Nugent has some problems with the term 'tradition'. If 'traditional' concepts and institutions didn't come back neatly, there should also be a neat, if not to say a 'true' (and unchangeable?), past out there that could have come back. This inevitably points to an essentialist understanding of tradition, which is said to be obsolete.

However, the revitalisation of chieftaincy took place mainly on the village level. Probably the most important contribution of the higher tiers assembled in the Regional House of Chiefs was the commitment of its members to fight the secessionist movement. Here again, the instrumentalist character of chieftaincy is quite evident: the Togoland Congress was a former ally of the NLM and had been put under serious pressure by Nkrumah. The chiefs, who had been in power already before the Nkrumah era, mostly supported the Togoland Congress. With Nana Kwadjo Darko, a chief and prominent figure of the Togoland Congress was already condemned in 1959 for his open support of the party (Rathbone 2000: 152). After rising to power, the former NLM stalwarts were no longer interested in secession and supported (and enstooled) those chiefs who were against a united Togoland.

This means that the role of the higher-ranking chiefs remained the same as under Nkrumah: those who were stubborn had to go and the turncoats could stay. While the paramount chiefs of the South-West became very powerful again because of their relatively tight relations with the national elite and also because of continuous popular support of chieftaincy in these regions, the posts of their counterparts in the Volta Region remained rather ornamental offices. On the village level, in contrast, the reassertion of chieftaincy was apparent, simply because there was a lack of other actors. The chiefs supported the self-sufficient T/VDCs by enforcing taxes and communal labour, they served as mediators or judges and they provided a police force and jails for minor offences like theft. If they were educated, they already served as development brokers. If they were business men, they often launched 'community projects'

on their own (Nugent 1996a: 215).

Nugent describes this development as a ‘reassertion of village sovereignty’. According to him, a revival of chieftaincy as a whole didn’t take place in the 1970ies because the higher tiers of chieftaincy did not rule over sovereign territories in the Volta Region. The state controlled enstoolment and destoolment and served as a mediator in chieftaincy conflicts (Nugent 1996a: 217). This judgement strongly depends on the definition of chieftaincy that is applied and, as I have pointed out above, on the definition of tradition as such. If there had hardly been any offices in the Volta Region similar to the colonial term ‘paramount chief’, how could there be a reassertion? If traditional rule is something which changes all the time, why should it be less ‘neat’ if it is linked more strongly to modern political institutions than to other traditional systems, for instance, like the Arabic cultures in the north of Ghana?

2.3 Ghana under Rawlings

Rawlings came into power in times of severe economic crisis. Like Nkrumah and contrary to the other rulers in between and before them, he was a ‘small boy’ and a spokesman of the youth and the poor. As a consequence, his speeches were quite radical, as were his measures in the beginning. Both this revolutionary rhetoric and the radical actions, however, remained superficial. Rawlings’ main enemy was corruption, or ‘Kalabule’, as it is called until now in Ghana. This word is still linked to the challenging of authority and excessive wealth and it created an effective climate for change in combination with the proclamation of a revolution from below.

Apart from these comparatively populist policies, Rawlings had much in common with Nkrumah, particularly his disaffection of chieftaincy. Rawlings found most of his supporters in the Volta Region, where he himself had grown up. Until now, more than 80% of Voltarians are continuously voting NDC, the party he founded in 1992. Based on the low status of chieftaincy in the Volta Region, Rawlings’ agitation against chieftaincy was at the same time a regionalist strategy against the powerful elites in the Ashanti Region. He portrayed them quite burlesquely as feudal rulers, which was particularly not true for chieftaincy in the Volta Region. But also in the rest of Ghana, the ‘royal’ families probably accounted for half of the population and thus differed considerably from their European counterparts (Survey 2005).

According to Ray, the radical rhetoric of Rawlings was contradictive, insofar as the Constitution of the Third Republic (1979-81) marked a significant shift in the relation between the state and the chieftaincies. Since Nkrumah, the government had a final say in

who was to become a chief. This was neither changed by the anti-Nkrumah military government of the National Liberation Council nor by the Constitution of the Second Republic (1969-72). In 1979, this power was constitutionally removed from the control of the government and handed over to the chiefs, who controlled the House of Chiefs. Only in certain legal matters the Ghanaian Courts and finally the Supreme Court could be consulted (Ray 1996: 189). Brempong credits the NRC-SMC junta with the amendment of this law. To him, this regime was responsible for the 1979 Constitution, and not Rawlings (2006: 33).

Rawlings also created a new system of local governance, with the Peoples Defence Councils (PDCs) as a core institution. These small units on the grassroots level should replace the T/VDCs of Nkrumah and the chiefly institutions at the same time. When it became foreseeable that the strategy would fail, he called to account the chiefs (Nugent 1996a: 217), although there was no proof of them behaving counter-revolutionarily. In many areas, the chiefs actually helped in the construction of the PDCs, partly because of the strong regionalist component of Rawlings policies and partly because many of the youth groups in the Volta Region were very actively involved in 'economic crimes' like smuggling. Since the fight against such crimes was one important reason for creating the PDCs, many of the youth leaders were excluded from them. Additionally, people in the countryside tended to consider the formation of PDCs as a task prescribed by the government. As a consequence, PDC members were often selected even in the chief's palace. The chiefs were then accused of trying to hijack the PDCs, even though most of them just tried to avoid the accusation of obstructionism (Nugent 1996a: 218).

In the urban centres, the PDCs were much more intellectually oriented. Various fragmented left-wing movements contributed to a vibrant revolutionary atmosphere. But soon these movements became too radical for the government and in various cases their actions were even called infantile. The radical PDCs attacked everything that had the slightest touch of bourgeoisie, such as public institutions (the military, the police and the courts), private companies, shops and religious bodies. Chieftaincy also figured among the attacked institutions. Ninsin even described the PDCs as a parallel government, which was to be deposed quickly by Rawlings (Ninsin 1993: 103).

The Marxist rhetoric of the PNDC also accented the difference between commoners and royals, because the conventional differentiation into classes didn't make sense in Ghana, particularly on the countryside. Nugent criticises the simple equation of the neotraditional hierarchy with classes: 'Big men' often became chiefs because they were 'big' and not inversely. There are numerous examples where chiefly assets were used to accumulate of

wealth, but on the whole ‘there is no evidence to suggest that most chiefs were substantially wealthier as a rule than their subjects’ (Nugent 1996: 75). My own empirical data collected in 2005 suggests the same conclusion. About half of the interviewees in the statistical population of Greater Accra depicted themselves as royals, but there was no significant difference in the reported income levels. Only their educational background was slightly higher. However, these differences are certainly higher if we take a look at the small elite of the around 190 paramount chiefs. Here lies one of the big differences to European feudal systems. Royals exist even in the smallest and most remote villages in Ghana. Hence, the difference between chiefs and commoners mostly manifests itself in terms of status, but not wealth (see chapter 3.2).

The prevailing Marxist ideology nevertheless led to the substitution of the class conflict with the far older conflict between royals and commoners. The PDCs mainly consisted of teachers, traders and unemployed persons. But in spite of this obvious line of conflict, there were many instances where PDCs cooperated closely with NTAs (Nugent 1996: 76).

One reason for these contested alliances was the new place of chieftaincy in the political system. Chiefs had already been officially out of the political business before independence, and as I have pointed out above, Nkrumah also tried to make sure that they didn’t meddle with national politics anymore. The phase after Nkrumah, however, was characterised by state decay, which resulted in the restoration of the power of smaller chiefs, particularly in the Volta Region. By then, chieftaincy was a more variegated and a more legitimate institution compared to the colonial situation (ibid, Nugent 1996a: 214).

But the PDCs also had to contest against the T/VDCs, which were introduced by Nkrumah and revitalised during the crisis of the 1970ies (s. Nugent 1996a: 214f). They were true institutions of community self-help, as they were reintroduced by the people themselves and they almost had the same relationship with chieftaincy as the PDCs. Where NTAs and T/VDCs were at odds with one another, the PDCs put their foot in the door by supporting the NTAs. Only in very few cases where the chiefs were very unpopular, the PDCs and the T/VDCs established effective alliances. Most of the time, the PDCs were confronted with existing local institutions and brought little change to the situation of the rural population (Nugent 1996: 77). By the mid-1980ies, the CDRs (Committees for the Defence of the Revolution), the successors of the PDCs, already were empty shells without members or even leaders on the local level (Nugent 1996a: 218).

Consequently, the PNDC regime changed its policy concerning chieftaincy in the second half of the 1980ies. Neotraditional institutions should contribute their part to achieving the aspired

egalitarian social order. The intellectuals involved harked back to the ideology of colonial rule (see e.g. Gyekye 1988) and called for Ghanaian tradition to become the basis especially of local political systems instead of importing foreign models of government. Both the minimalist state and the insistence on hatching organic political institutions out of indigenous traditions was reminiscent of speeches made by many a colonial governor and even made it necessary for PNDC members to openly draw a distinction between indirect rule and current policy (Nugent 1996a: 219).

That is to say, the leftist movement, the party of the non-royals, suddenly set out to find tradition and it had to use former arguments of both the colonial elite and the colonial administration. The reason for this change as well as for the turnaround in economic policy at the same time can be found in the severe economic crisis and the following intervention of the World Bank. Already the change from PDCs to CDRs was the result of a coup attempt by military exiles from Ghana in 1983, the third coup attempt in 1983. The military was as desperate as the whole population because of a famine crisis, which was aggravated by the expulsion of one million Ghanaians from Nigeria in 1983 (Ninsin 1993: 103).

The leading exponent of this new neotraditional outlook was the National Commission on Democracy (NCD) and the name of the new paradigm was ‘true democracy’. Democracy also was to become the hobby of the World Bank this time around, which makes it tempting to interpret the neotraditional turnaround as anticipatory obedience. This impression is backed by the fact that Rawlings still tried to exclude the chiefs from politics. Only two chiefs played a visible public role and on the district level they were only one of the groups to be covered by the clause permitting the government to appoint one-third of the assemblymen (Nugent 1996a: 220).

The National Commission on Democracy also served as a discussion forum for the establishment of a second chamber of parliament for traditional rulers. Once again the outcome was rather blurry, and once again Nugent detected a ‘certain ambivalence across the political spectrum towards an enhanced political role for the chiefs’ (ibid.).

This discussion is alive until today and most of the participants mention two reasons for their indifference. First of all, NTAs have since independence profited from their role beyond the sphere of the state and would attract more of the blame for the malfunctioning of the state if they were to be officially incorporated. Secondly, the contest for chiefly offices is already quite tough and would lead to more serious conflicts if the chiefly offices would import even more power. During my field work in 2008, I encountered another striking argument against a second parliament: the paramount chiefs of the South are almost as educated as members of

parliament, while about 51% of the paramount chiefs of the North have no formal education (all uneducated paramount chiefs in Ghana live in the Northern Regions).[5] A stronger inclusion of paramount chiefs in national politics would therefore again penalise the North, which is already lagging behind in terms of development.

On Independence Day in 1984 Rawlings formulated his new policy:

> Our government believes that this is the time to start formulating and discussing the basic outlines of the new political system that we aim to build. Such a system must drive its validity and strength from our own historical process, the realities of our own situation and the intellectual values of our own traditions and cultural heritage[...]. (Ninsin 1993: 104)

The consequences of this change of mind were not all too visible. Instead, it became clear, that the regime erected a quasi-colonial system of administration. Like Nkrumah's District Commissioner, the PNDC District Secretary wielded almost exclusive executive authority in his area. The CDRs, instead of getting closer to the people, increasingly served as political instruments of the District Secretaries. They became the eyes and ears of the administration by passing on information through the District Secretaries to the government (Nugent 1996: 154f). Because certain chieftaincy disputes seemed to be irresolvable within the liberal framework of the Constitution of the Second Republic, the PNDC again cancelled the nomination rights of the House of Chiefs in 1985 (PNDCL 107) by prohibiting treating any person as a chief without recognition by the PNDC Secretary responsible for Chieftaincy Matters (Ray 1996: 188). To Boafo-Arthur this amendment was an expression of the world-view of the PNDC. 'In its attempts to *tame* the chiefs,' Boafo-Arthur notes, the PNDC regime amended the Chieftaincy Act of 1971, Act 370, which guaranteed the independence of enstoolment and destoolment processes from party politics. Thereby the PNDC regime re-introduced the gazetting of the chiefs, which was started by the CPP government through the Chieftaincy Act of 1961 (Act 81) and abolished by the NRC-SMC junta in 1979. PNDCL 107 amended section 48 of the Chieftaincy Act of 1971, Act 370, by noting in subsection 2: 'no person shall be deemed to be a chief [...] under this Act or any other enactment unless he has been recognised as such for the existence of that function by the Secretary responsible for Chieftaincy Matters by notice published in the Local Government Bulletin' (q.i. Boafo-Arthur 2006: 157).

In any case, the PNDC really involved the NTAs in the district assemblies (DAs). In contrast

[5] Source: National House of Chiefs 2008, African Trade Project 2007.

to the situation today, the PNDC resisted the temptation of packing the one-third of the DAs reserved for appointment with party stalwarts. One fifth of the appointees were chiefs (Ayee 1994: 122, q.i. Nugent 1996: 177). The DAs sometimes even worked together with traditional councils, especially when it came to the 'threat of moral degeneration', as Nugent puts it. At the same time, Rawlings attended chiefly durbars throughout the country and identified publicly with the concerns of the chiefs (Nugent 1996: 205).

Another instrument of the District Secretary was the 'People's Militia', which was mainly created to fight smuggling. Here again, the new traditionalist rhetoric was applied. Brigadier Tehn-Addy, the head of the Civil Defence Organisation (CDO), was fond of likening the People's Militias to 'Asafo Companies', the most important traditional institution for commoners (non-royals) in Akan societies. But still, the militias were not very popular in rural communities, particularly because of their aim of fighting smuggling (Nugent 1996: 155).

Through these structures the PNDC did establish contact with the countryside, but it never achieved as much participation as the CPP. The T/VDCs of the CPP era were still active, cooperated sporadically with the district and were often geared with the NTAs. Whereas the CPP maintained a strong presence at the countryside through countless party branches, the PNDC much more resembled the colonial regime by focusing on the district (Nugent 1996: 156).

2.4 'Democratisation'

Since 1992, elections have continuously taken place in Ghana. The decision to hold elections, however, wasn't solely made by the PNDC. As Boafo-Arthur points out, the shift of the World Bank to 'Good Governance' in 1989, just in time with the downfall of communism, became a showcase for the power of the international financial institutions (Boafo-Arthur 2003: 247). Between 1983 and 1993, the total amount of foreign aid quadrupled from US$130 million to US$510 million. The share of multilateral aid to Ghana doubled from 1983 to 1984 to 79,1% and hasn't fallen under 71% ever since (s. Tsikata 1999: 3, 38, 43). Additionally, the other major donors followed the lead of the World Bank and tied foreign assistance to the practice of good governance too. Thus, a departure from this narrow, predetermined path to 'democracy' would have been disastrous both for the regime and the whole population of Ghana.

The new constitution of 1992 brought two major changes for NTAs. First of all, the chiefs were banned from active party politics, and secondly, the gazetting of the chiefs by the

government, which had been re-introduced by the PNDC, was re-abolished again. Article 270 (2) (a) of the 1992 constitution amends PNDCL 107 by stating that Parliament shall have no power to enact any law which 'confers on any person or authority the right to accord or withdraw recognition to or from a chief for any purpose whatsoever.' (Republic of Ghana 1992) Instead, the National House of Chiefs, the Regional Houses of Chiefs and the local Traditional Councils had to determine the validity of chiefly status and succession from then on. The gazetting of the chiefs (the publishing of official recognition) and the register of chiefs were taken over by the National House of Chiefs. The decisions of the judicial committees of the NHC, however, could still be appealed to the Supreme Court of Ghana. The Consultative Assembly, which drew up this constitution, was selected by the PNDC and contained a considerable number of NTAs, who seemed to have pushed for this amendment (Ray 1996: 190).

The on-and-off control concerning this law is a good illustration of chiefly influence on the different parties in power in Ghanaian history. Nkrumah switched the light off by introducing the gazetting, the NRC-SMC (1975-79) junta turned it on again (Akufo-Addo and Busia needed it to reverse the situation created by Nkrumah), Rawlings switched it off again in 1985 and turned it on again in 1992 to meet the good governance requirements. The end result (until now) was a recovery of power on the part of the NTAs in national politics, which was partly counterbalanced by the exclusion of chiefs from party politics.

I have used the word 'partly', as the chiefs didn't just stop to influence party politics because of a new law. Without the support of the chiefs, as the former presidential candidate G.P. Hagan pointed out in an interview in 2005, it is hard to win elections (see chapter 3.1.4).

In addition, there is no official control of whether the chiefs really abstain from holding offices in political parties and all the other neotraditional actors, like queenmothers, elders, 'linguists', etc. can legally take part in party politics (interview Odotei 2008). Particularly on the countryside, the population is still very attentive to the political preferences of the chiefs. Kwesi Jonah studied this chiefly interference in politics and found different strategies, ranging from intimidation of possible opponents of the favoured candidate to the instrumentalisation of ethnic differences. However, according to Jonah, chiefly interference, being a matter of fact for the bulk of the Ghanaian scholars, is not strongly felt by the population. From a total of 1806 people questioned, only about 20 percent thought that NTAs were influencing the outcome of 2002 DA/UC elections. Jonah explains this discrepancy with the feeling of the interviewees that they themselves thought that they decided freely and that many of them tried to protect the integrity of their chiefs (Jonah 2003: 220f).

Although they were banned from party politics, the chiefs were accorded diverse political functions. They were represented in the Council of State (the highest advisory body to the Ghanaian President), the Lands Commission (i.a. responsible for the allocation of public lands for private use)[6], the Regional Co-coordinating Council and the Prison Commission (Brempong 2006: 33).

The representation of chiefs in the DAs worsened, although the pertinent law (Article 242, ibid.) remained almost unchanged. The president can appoint thirty percent of all the members of the district assembly in consultation with 'traditional authorities' and other interest groups. According to Brempong, the 'other interest groups' consist mainly of the party in power and virtually all appointed assembly members are party stalwarts. Thus, the clause meant no consultations with chiefs or at most only with chiefs of the appropriate affiliation (ibid.).

Since 1992, the legal situation of NTAs has not changed anymore and it is not likely to change significantly in the near future. Article 270, providing for the official separation of chieftaincy and formal politics, could only be amended after consultations with the Council of State, the NHC and an approval by a national referendum with voter turnout of forty percent and an approval rate of seventy-five percent (Ray 1996: 190). But as I have already suggested, the factual political influence of NTAs doesn't seem to cease. After a short abstract of the history of NTAs as facilitators of development, I will therefore focus on the actual relation between the NTAs and formal political actors. After all, local politics is (or should be) concerned mainly with local development.

2.5 History of chieftaincy in Ghana: from intermediary power to interest group

All of the regimes covered had one thing in common concerning chieftaincy: after a phase of power struggle, the regimes used NTAs for their own purposes. Naturally, this had to be accompanied by an adequate rhetoric. Nkrumah, Rawlings and the colonial regime all started a very critical discourse on chieftaincy and only began to cherish chieftaincy after they had incorporated it in their political system. The NLM came the other way round, but with the same outcome: politically stubborn chiefs had to go, turncoats could stay.

The term 'development' has shaped this relationship thoroughly right from the beginning. When Nkrumah came into power in 1951, the Bretton Wood Institutions already began to

[6] http://www.ghana.gov.gh/ghana/lands_commission.jsp (0109)

focus on so-called ‘underdeveloped’ countries, thereby creating the new paradigm of development in these regions. After WW II, the British colonial power also changed its course from the support of minimalist states led by chiefs to the emphasis of economic development, which could be more easily accomplished with the help of the educated elite (s. Rathbone 2000: 19f). The NTAs didn’t yet have a place in this notion of development. Particularly with the rise of Marxism, development was equated with economic, social and cultural progress. Marxist developmentalism was a teleological ideology which derived its power from the pre-paved path of European history. Despite Nkrumah’s initial belief in the continuity between African ‘communalism’ and modern communism, the chiefs were mainly seen as obstacles to development. Because of their low level of education, most of the chiefs at that time were merely spectators of development. They could not compete with huge construction projects like the Akusombo Dam, the Tema deepwater harbour and the promise of running water and electricity for all Ghanaians.

This picture changed in the 1970ies, when the failure of the ideology of development became apparent. Because the state virtually ceased to exist on the countryside, the population had to reactivate various institutions of the past. Many villages reintroduced the local structures that had been created under Nkrumah. The majority of the Ghanaians however saw a revival of neotraditional structures.

If we exclude the short revolutionary phase under Rawlings, lasting from 1979 (1981) to 1983, during which NTAs were again demonised as the ambassadors of the bourgeoisie, the history of the chiefs of development could start in the phase of state decay. That time also marked the birth of many an NGO, which created state-like structures, sometimes whole states within the state, which are now hindering meaningful processes of decentralisation (see e.g. Reijne 1999, quoted in Trotha 2001). Being often opponents of the state, the neotraditional actors sometimes use these zones to erect their own local systems of governance. Trutz von Trotha calls this closing of ranks ‘parastatism’ (‘Parastaatlichkeit’, s. Trotha 2000). Until now, no scholar has applied this concept to Ghana, and because of insufficient data, I will only be able to make a few points.

The phase of ‘democratisation’ was again marked by the overwhelming influence of the World Bank. As ‘Good Governance’ became en vogue in the 1990ies, the NTAs became en vogue, too. Already in 1985, the late Asantehene[7], Otomfuo Opoku Ware II, discerned this trend and created the title ‘development chief’ (Nkosuohene), which could also be used for non-royals and foreigners (Steegstra: 2006: 603). This title has been in heavy use ever since

[7] ‘Hene’ normally means ‘chief’, and the prefix usually refers to the location.

and has provoked countless calls against the 'misuse' of the term 'tradition'.[8] At the same time, there is a discernible shift in the role of chiefs from purely political figures to private persons with enhanced social status. A big part of the Ghanaian population is still hardly connected to 'modern' political life and thus still relates strongly to the chiefs. In urban areas, however, NTAs had to find ways of compensating their loss of influence in politics. These NTAs often turned into 'courtiers en développement' or 'development brokers' (for the concept s. Bierschenk et al. 2000).

3. Overview: chieftaincy and development in Ghana

3.1 The roles of the NTAs

To find out more about the different roles of chiefs, their relationship with the 'modern' political sphere and their sources of power, I applied various empirical approaches. In 2005, I conducted a survey with over 1000 participants, with the aim of comparing paramount chiefs with MPs. The results thus obtained will be enriched with statistical data on all paramount chiefs (level of education, profession, links with NGOs, age), gathered in 2008. The aim of the analysis of these figures will be a more precise picture of chiefs as political actors. Since the Nkrumah era, chiefs have not been part of the formal political system anymore, but the interviewed population of Accra still considered them to be more powerful than MPs. This outcome will be the starting point of an inquiry into the different sources power of the chiefs.

In the research project of 2005, I also asked a representative sample of the Accra population to describe the functions of chiefs. The results of these interviews will be compared to the picture of chieftaincy conveyed in the media by means of a media analysis which I conducted in 2008/9.

To get a better picture of the practical side, I also conducted field studies in the Keta District in the southern part of the Volta Region. Because I doubted the level of engagement of NTAs in development as depicted in the media and in the scientific literature, I didn't ask directly about the contribution of the NTAs. I asked my interview partners to list the main actors of development on the different levels and to describe their role in development.

[8] cf. Ghanaweb 17 February 2009 Online: http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=157818 (0509)

3.1.1 Brokers, patrons and the great hunt for projects

There is a considerable number of concepts for describing local actors at the interface between donors and the recipients. I will use the terms ‘development broker’ (also ‘courtiers en développement’ or ‘Entwicklungsmakler’, s. Bierschenk 1998), ‘gate keeper’ (Long 2001), ‘entrepreneur’ (Boissevain) and ‘patron’ (Bierschenk et al. 2000) to describe and distinguish this position from others and to draw attention to certain attributes of these actors.

Bierschenk defines the local development broker as an intermediary who contributes to the influx of external resources from the development sector to a locality, where he plays a significant political role or where he is trying to establish a political standing. The ideal type is running ‘projects’ at the interface between the donor (public, private, multilateral and bilateral) and the ‘target group’. Brokers act as legitimate representatives of the ‘target groups’ and are said to be able to articulate their needs (Bierschenk/Olivier de Sardan 2002: 2). This picture of an interface between the outside world and the villagers is certainly simplified. As Norman Long points out, social interface situations are complex and multiple in nature, although they may convey the image of some kind of two-sided confrontation (Long 2001: 243). In addition, the practice of development projects consists of a multitude of social actors, many of whom can be described as development brokers. Normally, there are chains of agencies and agents involved in the transfer of resources, for instance from bi- or multinational donors over national governments to local services of project administration to ‘target groups’ (Bierschenk/Olivier de Sardan 2002: 2). This list could be extended and complicated ad libitum, for example at the level of the ‘target group’. Most of the time, it is not one person who attracts investment, but a group of people with contacts to different milieus. The same issues have to be considered with respect to the dissemination of the funds, the recruitment of free labour force and so on. The mobilisation of people is normally still done with the help of the chief. But he often doesn’t speak the colonial language and has to be approached traditionally by a ‘linguist’ (Tsiami), who normally acts as a mouthpiece of the chief. This could therefore create a chain that already involves many actors in the local field: the local representative of the NGO on the district level, the broker between the district and the village, the linguist, the chief, and finally the gong-gong beater, who will assemble the people. Whether an actor is a broker, a gate keeper or just a messenger mainly depends on the cultural, social and informational distance he has to bridge.

Thus, the required competences of a 'broker' vary with the particular position in the development arena.[9] Particularly vis-à-vis official actors, the broker depends heavily on capacities like the use of certain voguish key words of the dominant discourse and the knowledge of programme foci and procedures of allocation (Bierschenk 1998: 322ff). But these requirements multiply if we define the term 'discourse' as openly as Norman Long, namely as 'a set of meanings embodied in metaphors, representations, images, narratives and statements that advance a particular version of the 'truth' about objects, persons, events and the relations between them' (Long 2001: 51f). The qualification of a broker then no longer depends only on his or her technical knowledge, but also on his or her behaviour, world-view, appearance and so on. Brokers must be able to speak at least three 'languages': the one of NGOs, the one of African government officials and the one of the rural communities. This does not only literally mean to speak different languages, but also to use the appropriate words, cadence etc. Additionally, brokers need to have their feet in the doors of most of the important organisations in all social fields[10] where they operate, and they need to be sociable and eager to play to the gallery (Bierschenk et al. 2000: 26). In short, this means that they have to possess social and cultural capital that is convertible in all social fields.

Bierschenk differentiates between three main positions for brokers: firstly, the patron or big man himself (who is often an NTA) can act as a broker to protect his position. According to Blundo and Edja, the village chiefs normally don't possess the required competences and need 'brokers' clubs' often brought into existence by themselves (Blundo 2000, Edja 2000; q.i. Bierschenk/Olivier de Sardan 2002). Secondly, outsiders often try to establish a position in a particular community and 'pay their entrance fee' in the local arena through their activity as brokers. These can be missionaries, researchers, regional or national political leaders or migrants (Bierschenk 1998: 322ff). In this context, the title Nkosuohene (development chief) will become important in the case study. Nkosuohenes are often politicians or tourists and they don't have to belong to the royal family. The fluidity of the neotraditional system also allows outsiders to become part of the family, for instance by declaring the outsider to be the

[9] 'Arenas are spaces in which contests over issues, claims, resources, values, meanings and representations take place; that is they are sites of struggle within and across domains." (Long 2001: 242)

[10] According to Long 'social fields constitute ,open spaces' composed of distributions of heterogeneous elements (material resources, information, technologies, institutional components, discourses and sets of social relationships of various kinds) wherein no single ordering principle prevails … any order that does emerge is the result of struggles, negotiations and accommodations that take place between competing parties" (Long 2001:241). I will also draw on the definition of Bourdieu, who depicts social fields as 'systems of social positions organised around power relations where agents seek to achieve and claim different forms of capital (Bourdieu 1971).

grandsons and –daughters of a chief or queenmother, but this case involves more discursive activity and often leads to conflicts (cf. Steegstra 2006).

In most of the cases the broker already belongs to the local political arena, but he holds a marginal position. He thus uses his capacity as a development broker to climb the local social ladder. In this regard Bierschenk brings up the case of many school and university drop-outs, who return to their village and try to establish NGOs and thereby become small 'entrepreneurs of development' (Bierschenk 1998: 322ff). This group often has travelled a lot, sometimes to the US and Europe.

All three types of brokers – the big man, the outsider and the social climber – hold positions that overlap with those of established local politicians. This inevitably often leads to configurations where the broker acts against the interest of local politics (Bierschenk et al. 2000: 31). The same applies to the relationship between the broker and the neotraditional system.

Interestingly, both the concept of 'social interfaces' and that of 'development brokers' have evolved from the description of the chiefly position in the colonial (and also in the pre-colonial) state (Long 2001: 66; Bierschenk et al. 2000: 15ff). Bierschenk describes the 'bearers of local positions of power' (who also encompass NTAs) as middlemen who are able to benefit from their position but who are mostly excluded from the profit gained from development projects (Bierschenk 1998: 322ff). As the overview and the case study will show, this exclusion of NTAs from the development arena is not true for Ghana. More and more NTAs have started to act as development brokers since the 1970ies, due to various reasons.[11]

Already in colonial times, the chief was a perfect example of an intrapersonal role conflict (for this concept s. Merton 1973). As a representative of his community to the government and vice versa, he was both a victim and a beneficiary of both systems. As shown in the historical overview, his relation with the government stayed almost the same after independence. In this sense, the neotraditional development broker is one of the roles that evolved from the neotraditional intermediary of colonial times.

Another role is the 'political entrepreneur', who competes for the favour of the population (see Bierschenk et al 2000: 17f). On both sides, in the political arena as well as in the development arena, the number of actors, and thus of competitors, has augmented. This increasing competition leads to a situation where many brokers are at the same time

[11] Bierschenk belongs to APAD (Association euro-Africaine pour l'anthropologie du changement sociale et du développement) and focuses mainly on the francophone countries.

‘entrepreneurs’ who manipulate persons and information for profit. To Boissevain, the maxim of such an ‘entrepreneurs’ goes: ‘Communicate now and pay later!’ (Boissevain 1974; q.i. Bierschenk et al 2000: 20) The remuneration for the manipulative services of the entrepreneur is not fixed; it is not clear when and how he or she will receive a remuneration. In fact, this uncertainty is part of the system because it perpetuates the relationship. The outstanding debts and credits of a broker create and perpetuate his social network and his service normally depends on his access to this very network. Boissevain thinks, in other words, that the successful broker also tries to accumulate social capital composed of subprime credits, because for him, transforming social capital into economic capital is easier than it is for other actors. He thus accumulates relevant information and contacts and has to protect them by keeping partners in the dark concerning the actual extent of his network (cf. Bourdieu/Steinrücke 2005: 63).

However, this argument is problematic insofar as it assumes that all social relationships of brokers are results of rational choices. The broker is not a profit-maximizing machine, but a human being with friends and relatives to whom he or she rather relates according to the concept of generalised reciprocity. Thus, the actor sometimes does not expect to get any compensation at all.

The primary asset of the broker is certainly his position at the interface. Compared to the intermediary of colonial times, he is able to make more use of this position because he is not bound to this role as a middleman due to his office. He can withdraw at any time with less ‘social costs’ than a colonial chief. Such an interface normally lies between different social fields or levels of social organisation, where ‘social discontinuities, based upon discrepancies in values, interests, knowledge and power, are most likely to be located’ (Long 2001: 243). The broker is thereby also a ‘gate keeper’ who always controls two gates at the same time: the government (or donor) believes that the population listens to the broker and the population believes that the government (or donor) listens to him. This means that both sides only listen to him because they think that the other one listens (Bierschenk et al. 2000: 19).

One of the most important differentiations for neotraditional brokers is the one between patrons and courtiers/brokers (Boissevain 1974, q.i. Bierschenk et al 2000: 12). Boissevain suggests to call actors ‘patrons’ if they control resources of ‘first degree’ (land, money, labour force etc.), and ‘courtiers’ if they control resources of ‘second degree’, which are strategic contacts with patrons (ibid.). This differentiation will help a lot in defining the specific role of Ghanaian NTAs in the development arena. NTAs normally have much influence on resources like land and manpower, but they actually don’t control them (interview Odotei). Compared to

the government, the NGO sector and the churches, they do not control a lot of resources in terms of money either. To shed some light on their particular condition in this respect, I will try to make use of the concepts of economic, social, cultural and symbolic capital as formulated by Pierre Bourdieu (see chapter 3.2).

With the concept of the 'development broker', Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan allowed for a prolific perception of the relations between NTAs and local development and politics. Its focus on actors enables a detailed view of social relations. The specification of actors – like the outsider, the patron and the social climber – as well as the specification of functions and characteristics – like the gate keeper, the entrepreneur and the patron – provide an elaborate framework which can be of great use in the assessment of field work such as the research I carried out. However, the great usefulness of this approach could also be criticised because of its strongly classifying nature. Norman Long, for instance, also uses the idea of the interface, but he applies it very prudently. He tries to avoid the codification of social reality and a predeterminative view on human agency, and thus his definitions are quite blurry (see e.g. Long 2001: 18). Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan rather focus on the usefulness of classifications by sharpening the terms. From my point of view, the resulting exaggeration is quite helpful to get a better understanding of the social relations concerned.

Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan can also be criticised for having a rationalist understanding of human agency. Development brokers are portrayed as egoist individuals, permanently busy optimising and corrupting information. Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan themselves have also taken notice of this side-effect and try to reduce this 'normative confusion' by stressing the difference between scientific analysis and the consciousness of the persons concerned. According to them, most of the actors described do not see themselves as brokers, even though they can be de facto described as such (Bierschenk/Olivier de Sardan 2002: 19f).

3.1.2 NTAs in public: what the people think of the chiefs

As the historical overview has shown, Ghanaian society is still in search of a new place for NTAs. Their importance in politics and administration has been reduced significantly since independence, but a lot of the functions ascribed to them can still be considered political. Brempong tries to reduce this ambiguity by differentiating between statutory and non-statutory functions. Non-statutory functions are those that are carried over from the past, mostly in modified forms, and thus they are not easy to define (Brempong 2006: 36). The statutory functions can be found in the 1992 constitution: the paramount chiefs are there to

advise the government on chieftaincy issues, to create a standardised customary law and to eliminate 'customs and usages that are outmoded or socially harmful' (Article 272). Additionally, the chiefs act as 'caretakers' of the land (interview Odotei). About 80% of Ghanaian land is administered by the NTAs on behalf of the population. Almost anyone who needs land therefore has to bargain with the NTAs concerned (see Republic of Ghana 1992, Articles 36 (8) and 267 (1)). Perhaps with the exception of their role as facilitators of development, all the other roles that are currently assigned to them are non-statutory:

Table 1:

What are the functions of a chief?	Number	Percent
Settles disputes, cares for law and order, peace and discipline	377	0,38
Brings development	251	0,26
Cares for well-being of the people and provides jobs	196	0,2
Mobilises, gathers and organises	138	0,14
Rules	120	0,12
Custodian of the land	65	0,07
Maintains tradition	41	0,04
Don't know	34	0,03
Total	982	1,24

The answers to the question in table 1 were not already mentioned in the form. The interviewees were able to give up to three answers (normally they just mentioned one function) and I tried to group the answers together afterwards. All in all, the interviewees didn't mention more than 20 terms.[12]

As can be seen, the above-mentioned statutory functions are only reflected in the group 'custodian of the land' and partly in the group 'settles disputes etc.', the rest could be classified as non-statutory. All the other functions interfere with one official body or another. In this configuration, the most important role of chiefs ('settle disputes etc.') clearly overlaps with the judiciary and the executive, although the role of chiefs as arbitrators is mentioned in the constitution. Their role as social agents and as agents of development ('brings development' and 'cares for well-being etc.') could again be aggregated and equalised with the diverse social activities of the government. Lines four and five ('mobilizes etc.' and 'rules'), finally, are functions that are normally ascribed to politicians. According to the representatively selected informants, NTAs would therefore mainly be judges, administrators

[12] Additionally, I sorted out very rare answers.

and politicians if they weren't part of the neotraditional system. A glance on the private jobs of paramount chiefs confirms this assumption: 17% are lecturers or teachers, 18% are other civil servants, 5% (9 persons out of 185) are lawyers and 35% are farmers, the majority of whom are again to be found in the Northern Region (National House of Chiefs 2008; African Trade Project 2007). As the paramount chiefs constitute the highest tier of chieftaincy, the formal job situation of the majority of the chiefs (divisional chiefs and sub-chiefs) is certainly different.

This considerable amount of informal judges, administrators and politicians draws attention to the formal actors in these fields. It can be assumed that the services of these actors are either not available to most of the respondents or that the formal actors are competing with chiefs over 'clients'. Particularly concerning politics and social welfare, the responses could be considered alarming. It could be argued that the transformation of chieftaincy since independence has been accompanied by a process of 'informal decentralisation', which in turn has led to an 'informal dispossession' of the state. Trotha mentions this process as one of the most important components of 'parastatism'. However, another important feature of parastatal groups is their capability to dismantle governmental authority, sovereignty and jurisdiction in their area of control (Trotha 2000: 269). Contrary to this situation of conflict between the state and neotraditional systems, the chiefly elites in Ghana are integral parts of the national elite (s. chapter 3.2). Additionally, the chiefs are fairly dependent on the state. Besides the fact that chiefs depend on small stipends from the state and on the different governmental development funds, roughly 35% of paramount chiefs are civil servants and thus directly depend on the state for their livelihood.

In a similar survey (conducted almost at the same time) with 242 participants in peri-urban Kumasi, Ubink came to similar results. She also asked, 'What are the main functions of a chief?' to be able to compare the opinion of the population to the statements of experts. The function of 'dispute settlement' was mentioned most frequently, followed by 'ensuring community participation in development', 'ensuring peace in the community' and 'looking after the physical development of the town' (Ubink 2008: 141ff).

As I will point out in detail later, most of the development activities come directly from the state or are controlled by the state. Most of the chiefs don't posses the required liquid funds to carry out development projects on their own and therefore act as development brokers if they are involved in the development business. This is also a function that should normally be carried out by area council members and unit committee members. In the area studied by Ubink, this often led to tensions between chiefs and local politicians, particularly when the

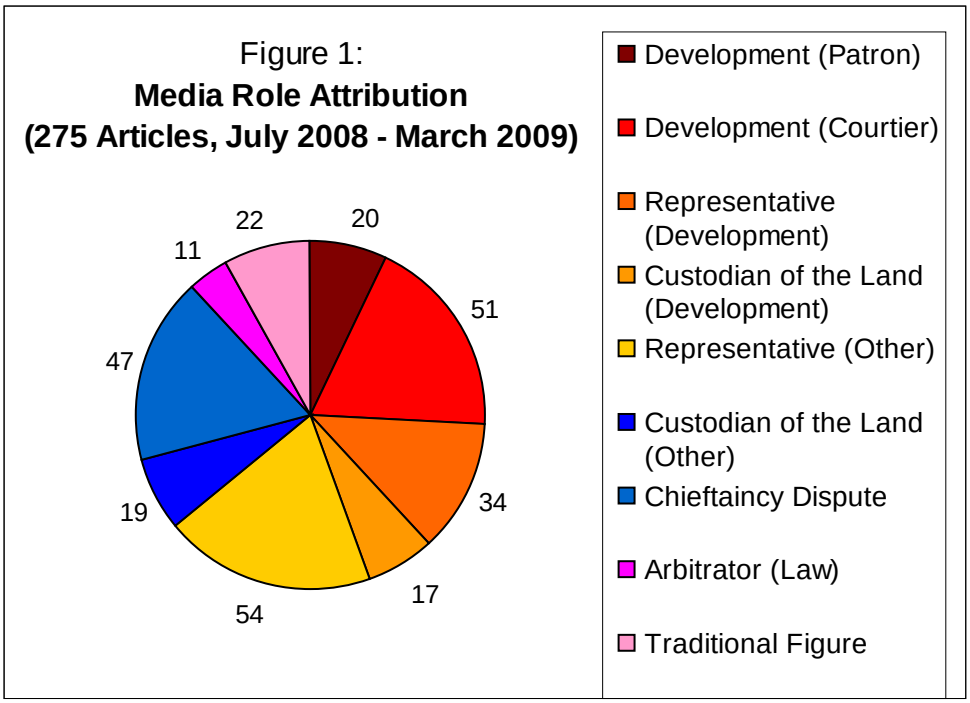
chiefs didn't spend the resources of the community on development (ibid. 148). As the chiefs normally don't hold stool land in the Volta Region, the situation was different in the area I studied.

3.1.3 Role attribution to NTAs in the media

The outcomes of an analysis of 275 articles in the Daily Graphic, published on the homepage of the Ghanaian government (www.ghana.gov.gh) and on Ghanaweb (www.ghanaweb.com), are coherent with the findings from the 2005 survey. NTAs are mainly mentioned in connection with development, land, politics, conflict (both as sources of conflict and as mediators) and tradition. The articles on development constitute about two fifth parts of all the 275 articles on NTAs, two further fifths deal with chieftaincy conflicts and with the role of chiefs as rulers.

I again grouped the articles on development into 51 stories about NTAs as development brokers, 20 stories about development patrons and 51 articles describing the result or the start of development efforts (like the building of a school or the donation of materials) where chiefs were not visibly involved in the project cycle but acted as passive representatives of the

Figure 1:
Media Role Attribution
(275 Articles, July 2008 - March 2009)



beneficiaries or as caretakers of the land. Ubink also refers to this last category by stressing the passivity of NTAs in a considerable number of development projects. Because of their role as representatives of the community and as administrators of the land, they are often invited to attend project events, even if they hardly participate in the project at all. The headlines in

newspapers can thus be fairly misleading concerning the actual role of NTAs in development (Ubink 2008: 148). This group of articles was often accompanied by photos that showed the NTAs taking part in an inauguration or a charity event. In about half of the articles in the Daily Graphic with photos (64), the NTAs were depicted in such a way. In general, NTAs seem to be very popular motives for pictures in Ghanaian newspapers.

One fifth of the articles showed NTAs solely as representatives of the population, who express their concerns, hopes and wishes concerning the development of their community, political stability, educational, hygienic and moral standards, etc. Sometimes they side with particular groups, like fishermen, galamsey (the 'illegal' gold miners), companies or political parties. They mostly do this at durbars, festivals and political rallies. In the 54 articles, NTAs are therefore more or less clearly depicted as local politicians.

The biggest difference between the articles of the Daily Graphic and the role attributions of the city dwellers lies in the judicial function of NTAs. Only 11 of the 275 articles describe NTAs as arbitrators, mediators or judges. In contrast, about 400 of the 1000 polled city dwellers saw them as arbitrators who settle disputes, bring peace and care for 'law and order'. Until now, I have no explanation for this outcome, as the chiefly function as a dispute settler would involve a lot of catchy stories about conflicts. Maybe this function is too 'localised' to get much attention nationwide. In any case, it is clear that the agents of neotraditional mediation compete with conventional forms of advocacy. In this regard, Ubink mentions an appeal by the Asantehene at his inaugural meeting with the Kumasi Traditional Council in 1999 to the chiefs to withdraw cases pending in the state courts and in the Houses of Chiefs and bring them to his court for settlement (Ubink 2008: 153).

The remaining articles portray NTAs as custodians of tradition and of land, and as (potential) troublemakers in the course of destoolments, enstoolments and land issues. Surprisingly, the ornamental function of NTAs as representatives of tradition is rather unimportant both in the survey and in the media analysis. In the Daily Graphic, NTAs are associated with tradition (no other discernible role) in articles about funerals, durbars and festivals. Their useful function in tourism as well as the chance of the government to push them softly into an apolitical corner by declaring them custodians of tradition would suggest a stronger emphasis on this role (see Rouveroy van Nieuvaal 1996).

In the total of 275 articles, I was able to identify 23 courtiers and 12 development patrons. Most of the patrons have set up or co-founded NGOs or foundations, which include the Asantehene Educational Fund, the Ga Educational Endowment Fund, the Kwahu Educational Fund, the Tema Education Fund, the Ogyeman Environment Foundation, the Forest

Plantations Development Fund, the Cyber Sister-Cities Project (between Agogo in the Ashanti Region and Fort Lauderdale, Florida) and Life for Africa (education and health). This list is by no means complete but it shows the areas in which neotraditional development patrons are involved: education, environment and, to a lesser extent, health and IT. All development patrons come from the southern part of Ghana (Greater Accra, Eastern, Western and Ashanti Regions) and only seven of these NTAs are registered paramount chiefs, the others either describe themselves as paramount chiefs but can't be found in the register of the National House of Chiefs or they are queenmothers and development chiefs (Nkosuohene). The lowest academic degree among the seven registered paramount chiefs is a bachelor's degree. The development patrons are therefore well educated and come exclusively from the southern part of Ghana.

From the 23 development brokers, only two come from the Northern Regions of Ghana. They meet patrons in Ghana and abroad, set up conferences and durbars to attract public and private investment, help to construct and maintain libraries, school buildings, internet facilities, police stations and mobilize people for reforestation, health issues and development projects. The mobilisation of people could also be seen as the task of a patron, but in most cases NTAs don't actually control labour forces (for discussion see 3.2).

This attempt to single out highly active NTAs showed that the media focus on paramount chiefs as development brokers and patrons and neglect the village level, due to the smaller readership on the countryside and the bigger impact of the measures of high-ranking NTAs. The same can be said of the Ghanaian north-south-divide concerning neotraditional development brokers and patrons. Because of their lower level of education, it is likely for lower-ranking chiefs and chiefs of the North to be less involved in development projects; their rare appearances in the media, however, don't suggest that they are not involved at all. It can be assumed, on the contrary, that their political importance is even higher in the deprived areas.

The strong connection drawn between NTAs and development in the media can partly be explained with normative strategies pursued by pro-chief newspapers like the Daily Graphic and the NPP government from 2000-2008. Many articles about NTAs are actually calls of politicians, intellectuals and powerful chiefs (mostly the Asantehene or the Okyenhene) upon NTAs to participate more in development. In turn, a considerable number of chiefs also pick up the rhetoric and use durbars or other public meetings to call upon politicians to build roads, hospitals etc. or 'instruct' the population on certain issues, for instance health issues. The discourse of chiefly development thereby created, however, seems to be larger than the actual

‘contribution’ of NTAs to development projects. The 23 neotraditional development brokers (courtiers) not only talked about development during events but also initiated projects together with politicians and NGOs and brought in their knowledge, particularly on the local arena.

This discrepancy between the target scenario and the actual situation of neotraditional development brokerage also became apparent in the 2005 survey, where 251 of 982 valid respondents in Greater Accra stated that the chiefs were there to ‘bring development’. 196 respondents additionally were of the opinion that chiefs ‘care for the well-being of the people and provide jobs’. These outcomes should rather be seen as expectations and not as perceptions of the population.

The diverse newspapers of Ghana draw different pictures of the chiefs. The Daily Graphic is considered to be close to the NPP. I chose this newspaper as the only ‘material’ source, because it was the most comprehensive paper and the easiest to be acquired. With the exception of one category, the outcome was the same for the Daily Graphic, Ghana web and the website of the Government of Ghana. This exception was the category of ‘chieftaincy conflict”, which could be found about twice as often on Ghana web than in the Daily Graphic. This can be attributed to the different political positions of the two newspapers.

3.1.4 NTAs as politicians

From an actor-centred perspective, NTAs are involved in Ghanaian politics (1) trough their non-statutory function as leaders of communities, paramountcies or, in the case of the Asantehene, even regions, (2) through their involvement in party politics and (3) because development and politics are overlapping arenas and thus chiefs who facilitate development also do politics.

Systemic discussions about the relation between chieftaincy and the state gravitate around the question of whether chieftaincy should be considered a separate sphere in the political system or not. Conservative media like the Daily Graphic often use the expression ‘the chiefs and people of...’ when they mention the population of a certain area. This expression was already used by the UGCC, the rival of the CPP before independence (Rathbone 2000: 22). Similarly, chiefs are often referred to as ‘the embodiment of the people’s culture’ or as the ‘fathers of the nation’. This perception of an embeddedness of chieftaincy in Ghanaian culture is shared almost across all political currents – the differences mostly emerge in discussions about the

future of chieftaincy – which makes it very hard to describe the general relation between chieftaincy and politics. This situation is additionally complicated by the fact that the powers and the embeddedness of NTAs vary largely from region to region. Ray nevertheless applies a very specific concept, called 'divided sovereignty', to the whole nation: due to the different bases of legitimisation of the neotraditional and the modern political systems, the postcolonial state could be considered as divided. He argues that 'traditional authorities' draw their roots from the pre-colonial period, while the postcolonial state is mainly 'a creation of, and a successor to, the imposed colonial state.' (Ray 1996: 181-184) Odotei underscores this thesis by stressing that a huge part of Ghanaian society still perceives the government as an 'external body', with whom the representatives of the neotraditional system have had to deal since the advent of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. This 'external body' is called 'aban' in Twi, which means 'fort' or 'castle' in English:

> Aban is the external body the institution of chieftaincy has been relating to for more than five centuries; it is represented by a slave trader, a colonial governor, a president, a head of a military regime – all of them ironically ruling the affairs of the country from the same structure, the fort and the castle. (Odotei 2001: 324)

Twi is the language of the Akan, the biggest ethnic group of Ghana, and the second most important language after English. The current president still resides in an old European fort, Osu Castle, built in the 17th century by the Danes, which since 1920 has been the official seat of government.

This continuity both in language and the use of colonial buildings is striking, but it doesn't mean that the chieftaincy systems are still seen as the most important political systems or that the population opposes the formal system of government. Stressing the strong deformation of chieftaincy in colonial times, one can even argue that chieftaincy is an integral part of the post-colonial regime (s. Rathbone 2000). Trotha fine-tunes this view with the concept of 'administrative chieftaincy'. The processes of succession and the hierarchical relations between the chiefs were actually controlled by the colonial state. Additionally, the colonialists successfully introduced the territorial principle. These three main features (succession, hierarchical relations, and territorial principle) of administrative chieftaincy were again boosted under the post-colonial regimes (Trotha 1996; cf. Rathbone 2000: 100-160) and led to an indispensable combination of neotraditional and modern politics. A direct result of the concrete presence of administrative chieftaincy is the perception of chiefs as intermediaries. This function has in turn led to numerous discussions about chiefs as representatives of 'civil

society', particularly with the beginning of 'democratisation' in the 1990ies. Scholarly interest in chieftaincy began to grow significantly with the new conditionalities of 'good governance', often with overly optimistic conclusions, however (Rouveroy van Nieuvaal 1996: 58; see also Nugent 1996; Lentz 2006: 918).

The concept of 'divided sovereignty' and the notion of the chief as a representative of civil society, both problematic, were taken up by the World Bank in 2003 on the occasion of the 'Promoting Partnership with Traditional Authorities Project', the first big project of the World Bank with NTAs (World Bank 2007; s. chapter five).

The idea of using neotraditional ideas and institutions in nation-building already started to gain momentum before independence and is indispensable in some respects. The Ghanaian government needs some sort of vague pre-colonial legitimacy to create a national identity both to the exterior and on the interior. Chiefs are at the same time the remaining representatives (the living fossils) of a mythically charged history and colourful tourist attractions. Rouveroy van Nieuvaal called the latter process folklorisation and also identifies a tendency of the state to use it for reducing the direct political influence of NTAs (Rouveroy van Nieuvaal 1996). Nkrumah, for instance, used the chiefly regalia during public speeches, while at the same time announcing the end of chieftaincy as it was known (Adjaye/Misawa 2003). But this instrumentalisation of 'tradition' was also turned into outspoken strategies for the construction of identity and the reconstruction of westernised political systems (cf. Eze 1997; Gyekye 1988: 27; Nugent 1996: 205; Wiredu 1995).

NTAs are also active cultural brokers between different world-views and between different political practices. Hagan shows the power of this discursive function by describing the prevailing political concepts in the rural areas of Africa:

> Throughout Africa, large numbers of people who are active actors in the political struggle, in the political institutions and so forth, are illiterate or barely educated. They continue to live within the domain of their traditional social and political institutions. They continue to use symbols of authority, ideas about power, ideas about the sharing of power, about consultation, participation, many of which are found in traditional sayings and proverbs. Now it is this populace that political life is for. The educated, who appear to be very competent, confident in their knowledge of Western institutions, form a minority and in any case the mandate that they exercise derives form the majority, who are not as educated as they are. (Interview Hagan 2005)

These 'ideas about the sharing of power, about consultation, participation' etc. are praised in

many recent works (cf. polylog vol. 2, 2000)[13], but these often refer to the idealised accounts of chieftaincy given by K.A. Busia (1951) and J.B. Danquah (1928). The portrayal of the pre-colonial condition of chieftaincy is thus overlaid by diverse political and philosophical currents and should be interpreted cautiously (for discussion see Ubink 2008: 90). At the interface of these two political spheres, chiefs not only transfer values and ideas, they also connect two fundamentally different modes of politics: on the one hand a strongly person-centred way of ruling that often ignores formal rules and laws or is involved in a permanent negation about these laws – Trotha/Klute referred to this personalistic model as 'concentric order' (2001) – and, on the other hand, a universalistic attitude concerning political life that was introduced by the colonialists (Rouveroy van Nieuvaal 1996: 63). In this respect it is quite revealing that virtually all actors who are confronted with neotraditional rule opt for a stronger codification. But the constitution of 1992 is the best example of this diffidence concerning chieftaincy. Besides the fact that the codification of customary law is an enormous task because of the multiplicity of neotraditional systems in Ghana, this could as well be linked to the 'personalistic' character of chieftaincy (see Trotha/Klute 2001). Another sign for an overall immunity of chieftaincy to the Western type of legislation are the ample discrepancies between constitutional provisions and the actual conditions of chieftaincy. This is evidenced by party politics, the tasks of the National House of Chiefs, the involvement of chiefs in the DAs, and chieftaincy conflicts. 'In other words, things are not quite what they seem,' as Nugent pointed out (1996: 204).

The political landscape of Ghana is therefore mainly officially separated in two spheres. The metaphor of a 'sedimentation' of political institutions of various epochs – Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan also call it 'institutional addition' (1999: 52) – gives a better understanding of the actual situation. This sedimentation has led to a situation of polycephaly and thereby generated a degree of 'flexibility and malleability in these institutions …, leaving ample room for negotiation, usually informal, for the different actors who must define required competences and rules of the game' (Bierschenk/Olivier de Sardan 2002: 4). This involves a permanent process of reactivation of institutions, ideas and agreements from different epochs and of rearrangement according to prevailing power configurations. In Ghana, this also led to the re-emergence of T/VDCs from the Nkrumah era in the late 1970ies. From this point of view, the neotraditional institutions can thus be regarded like any other political institution that is not promoted by the actual government in power anymore. Thus, one of the most important reasons for the resilience of chieftaincy is its practicability on the local level.

[13] Online: http://them.polylog.org/2/index-en.htm (0209)

Rouveroy van Nieuvaal ties in here by quoting Mbembe: contrary to dichotomic models (e.g. urban-rural), the postcolony is made up of different interacting spheres that are of importance only in particular situations. For specific needs, specific social purposes and specific moments of identification, the postcolonial subject therefore seeks 'chiefing'. 'For other facets of life, the current fractured state of African societies and identities provides the subject with a wide array of opportunities to 'opt out' and turn to other models of power brokerage.' (Rouveroy van Nieuvaal/Dijk 1999: 8-9; Mbembe 2000). According to Mbembe, chieftaincy is an integral component of the post-colonial regime, as this regime can be considered a legal successor to the colonial regime (cf. Mbembe 2000; Trotha 1996).

Chieftaincy and formal politics are not 'divided' insofar as the two spheres are interwoven to a considerable extent through personal union and kinship. The current tendency to fill chieftaincy positions with highly educated professionals blurs the traditional distinction between the state elite and chiefs additionally, and creates new alliances between these two groups (Ray 1992: 109-113, q.i. Ubink 2008; interview Odotei 2008; interview Adotey 2008). Furthermore, in the 2005 survey, the education level of NTAs was shown to be significantly higher than that of non-royals, while differences in income were not significant.

At the same time, leftist movements as well as conservative parties derive much of their legitimacy from pre-colonial times and the chiefly systems were formed – and above all standardised – to a large extent in the colonial period.

NTAs as political leaders

The involvement of NTAs in development projects and their participation in the development discourse make them important stakeholders in politics. The mobilisation of development aid is one of the most important tasks of politicians in Africa, especially in highly aid-dependent countries like Ghana. Politicians, in this respect, are actually colleges of neotraditional development brokers on the national level (Bierschenk/Olivier de Sardan 2002: 6). This closeness and overlapping of the two arenas also shows in the history of chieftaincy. Chiefs assumed their role as agents of development partly because of their reduced influence in formal politics since the 1950ies. As we have seen in chapter two, it was mainly the view on and the rhetoric concerning chieftaincy that have changed and not the measures themselves. Even the NLM movement, which was headed by the Asantehene himself, didn't allow too strong an involvement of other chiefs in politics. The same applies to the New Patriotic Party (NPP), which ruled from 2000 to 2008. It stands in the tradition of the UGCC, which sided

with the chiefs against Nkrumah's CPP. The traditional stronghold of the NPP is the Ashanti Region, which is also the region with the most powerful chiefs. In spite of losing the last elections in December 2008, the NPP won 31 of 36 seats in the Ashanti Region. Yet, plans to lift the ban on the chiefs' participation in party politics have never gained considerable support. This mixture of traditionalist make-up and the official separation of the two spheres is not likely to change significantly with the NDC being in power since 2009. This party won 21 of 22 seats in the Volta Region while altogether it got only 111 out of 230 and has created the formal separation of chieftaincy and politics with the constitution of 1992. However, the run-up to the elections also showed the need of the NDC to pay attention to chiefly interests. In January 2009, Togbui[14] Mawufeame Fugah, the head of the Ewe community in the Ashanti Region, was made 'life patron' of the newly founded Atta Mills Foundation. In one of his first speeches, he demanded that the government consider chiefs for ministerial posts.[15]

As shown above, NTAs lost their place in direct decision-making processes, which led them to assume positions that should normally be occupied by civil servants. In spite of this situation of 'informal dispossession' of the state (Trotha 2000: 269), the governmental actors and the media perceive the chiefs merely as substitutes (as the minimalist colonial state did) and not as a threat to governmental authority in particular fields. This attribution is discernible everywhere in Ghana, and particularly on the countryside. My field work in the Keta District clearly showed that many political functions performed by NTAs arise out of an ongoing lack of capacity on the part of local governments. The outcome of a comparison of chiefs and MPs in 2005 was nevertheless surprising:

Table 2:

Comparison Chiefs - MPs	Chief	MP	Equal
Who takes more care of your well-being?	42,39	28,46	29,15
Who encourages more participation in public affairs?	44,71	45,30	9,99
Who is more important in your everyday life?	49,06	31,52	19,43
Who needs the consent of the people more often?	54,53	38,31	7,16
Who is more trustworthy?	53,55	21,99	24,46
Who is more powerful?	59,35	36,80	3,86

(Survey 2005, valid cases: 1005)

The representatively selected respondents in Greater Accra (1005 valid cases) are predominantly of the opinion that chiefs are more trustworthy, more caring and more

14 Togbui (also Togbe or Torgbui) is a chiefly title in the Ewe-speaking areas.

15 http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=157384 (0409)

powerful than MPs. I asked the respondents to give the answers with respect to their chief as well as their MP, and failed to ask them to specify the rank of the chief they were thinking of when filling in the forms. Particularly concerning the power of the chiefs, this outcome was questioned by consulted Ghanaian experts. But the responses to the other questions also challenge the sovereignty of formal politics and can clearly be linked to the term 'informal dispossession of the state', mentioned by Trotha as one of the main elements of 'parastatism' (Trotha 2000: 269). The sample seems to attach greater political capacity to the chiefs than to the MPs in the domains concerned. This can be explained (1) with the inertia of cultural values, as can be seen everywhere in the world, (2) with the economic structure and the infrastructure of Ghana as important fundaments for the structure of politics, (3) with deficiencies of the political system and (4) with amenities of the neotraditional system.

Without any coordination, Ubink again formulated comparable questions in Kumasi at the same time. The outcomes of this survey clearly show that the relatively good results of chiefs in comparison to MPs should rather be seen as relatively bad results of the MPs. In a comparison with the assembly members and the unit committee members (for a specification of their tasks see chapter 4), the surveyed population in peri-urban Kumasi assigned both greater importance and better performance to the local politicians. The facilitation of development projects, being described as one of the major tasks of the chiefs in both of the surveyed areas, was ascribed thrice as often to the local politicians. Assembly members were mainly mentioned when the mobilisation of material resources was concerned, while the unit committee members seemed to supersede the chiefs totally in the mobilisation of communal labour:

Table 3:

Which actor(s) should perform certain tasks?	UC	Assemblyman	Chief
Ensuring community participation	59.1	36.0	15.7
Physical development of the town	24.8	58.3	16.9
Organisation of communal labour	87.6	18.6	7.0
Promotion of economic development	27.3	43.0	20.7

(Ubink 2008: 150)

The importance of unit committee members in the mobilisation of communal labour is especially surprising. Ubink noted that unit committee members still use the gong-gong to summon people, but without involving the chief (Ubink 2008: 151). This means that the surveyed people do regard chiefs as agents of development, but not as the most appropriate

ones. Accordingly, the neotraditional system cannot be described as a substitute for local politics in this area. The outcomes of my field work in the Volta Region are different insofar as chiefs traditionally don't hold stool lands in this area and have thus acquired other functions. Additionally, my experiences don't indicate such a good performance on the part of the unit committee members (s. chapter four).

It could thus be argued that chiefs are strongly involved in politics and are perceived as powerful players. Their actual performance on the local level seems to be strongly linked to the availability and performance of formal political actors and, to a lesser extent, to the regionally variable importance of neotraditional systems as a whole. Ubink made her comparisons in Kumasi, in the stronghold of chieftaincy in Ghana, and came to a more critical evaluation of the chiefly position in politics than I did in Accra and the Volta Region, where chieftaincy is traditionally weak. While Ubink seems to have researched areas in peri-urban Kumasi, where local politics is functioning, I compared the NTAs to MPs, who don't seem to have a lot of credit in the population, and also to local political institutions in the Volta Region that where not yet working. The results are consistent with Nugent's observation that chieftaincy was used in the 1970ies to fill political gaps in the Volta Region, but never became self-reliant in such a way that it would have been a rival system to formal politics (Nugent 1996a: 215).

Chiefs as party stalwarts

The complicated relationship between the state and NTAs described above also shows in the strong involvement of chiefs in party politics and, vice versa, of party politics in chieftaincy matters like destoolment and enstoolment. George P. Hagan, presidential candidate in 2000, described this relationship quite bluntly:

> You cannot win an election in Ghana if the chiefs do not support you, because while you are asleep, they are with the people. A chief said to me you cannot win, you have no money to give to the chiefs. If you give me money I can go from village to village in my domain and tell people to vote. At times the voting is done even in the chief's palace. And people go to the chief's house to greet him in the morning and ask him how they should vote. He would not open up his mouth; he would give them a sign. [...] So let's be realistic: The theory is that they should not participate, and that is the idea. (Interview Hagan 2005)

The character of Ghanaian election campaigns also makes it very hard for NTAs not to meddle with party politics. Many of the campaign events take place in neotraditional settings,

at traditional festivals and at chiefly durbars, where the chiefs often declare their preferences openly.[16]

Beside these circumventions of constitutional provisions, there is also a considerable number of chiefs who bluntly ignore the ban on participation in party politics. In a recent article in the Daily Graphic, the political scientist Kumi Ansah-Koi singled out the Omanhene of Agogo Traditional Area, Nana Akuoku Sarpong, the late former Speaker of Parliament, Peter Ala Adjetey, who also was the Akyempimhene of Abiriw, and the former Chief Director of the Ministry of Health, Lepowura M. N. D. Jawula, as chiefs 'who defied the constitutional injunction to openly engage in politics'.[17] In a reply to this article, the chief of Akyem Nkwantanang in the Eastern Region, Barima Adanse-Akyem Omane, again called for the amendment of article 276 of the Ghanaian constitution, which prohibits chiefs from actively engaging partisan politics.[18] Boafo–Arthur conducted interviews with chiefs about article 276 and found that they were divided on this constitutional provision. The most important reason in favour of article 276 was their fear that they would compromise their role as 'father of everybody' in their respective communities (Boafo-Arthur 2001; q.i. Odotei 2003: 339). This role of the chiefs as 'fathers of the people' emerges very often in connection with discussions about the involvement of chiefs in politics and is mostly regarded as an imperative. Ayee, for instance, demands that NTAs 'see themselves as *fathers* [accentuation by Ayee] of all their people to whom they are ultimately accountable. Without these, the appeal by traditional authorities to be directly represented in Ghana's local government structure will not receive any sympathetic hearing.' (Ayee 2007) The patronizing character of this role description is not criticised in these papers, nor do they mention the fact, that chiefs are almost exclusively 'fathers' of their own ethnic groups. In multi-ethnic settings, e.g. in bigger towns, this 'fatherhood' is far from all-embracing.

The chieftaincy conflict in Anloga

But also on the countryside, the strong linkages between NTAs and political parties turn out to be utterly destructive in chieftaincy conflicts over land and over succession. In all of the three bigger recent conflicts in Ghana, in Bawku, Yendi and Anloga, party politics played an

[16] e.g. A. Kofoya-Teteh: Mrs. Akofo-Addo tours Okere, Tarkwa. In: Daily Graphic, 17 September 2008.
[17] Kumi Ansah-Koi: Take Firm Decision on Chiefs Involved in Politics. In: Daily Graphic, 27 August 2008.
[18] Samuel Kye-Boateng: Amend law banning chiefs from active politics. In: Daily Graphic, 19 September 2008.

important role.[19] Particularly Anloga is a showcase of these interrelations because a huge majority of the population supports the NDC, which was in opposition until 2009. Even the founder of the NDC, J.J. Rawlings, was born in this area, more precisely in Atiavi, not far from Hagodzi.

With the death of the paramount chief of the Anlo Traditional Area (locally referred to as the Awomefia), a lengthy dispute over the enstoolment of a new paramount chief started that resulted in claims by Francis Nyonyo Agboada, aka Regent Togbui Sri III, over the stool. This claim was opposed, however, by clans in the community who insisted that the Regent didn't belong to the appropriate clan (interview *Boateng*). This dispute also resulted in court cases where an injunction, pending suit, against any enstoolment of a chief before a final ruling on the matter was made (CHRI 2008).

In spite of this ruling, the Regent attempted to approach the traditional shrine to perform the cultural rituals for his installation on November 1, 2007, accompanied by a police force. As a consequence, a violent clash was sparked off in the course of which three civilians and a policeman were killed and 20 other victims, including three police officers where brought to hospital (CHRI 2008). Following the death of the policeman, the police started a house-to-house arrest in an attempt to track down the people responsible for the police officer's death and to recover a missing weapon. On the same day, a curfew was declared by the Minister of Interior and an Executive Instrument issued restricting the carrying of arms to authorised persons only. In a random raid, the police went from house to house, breaking into people's homes, vandalising property and arresting any male youth in sight, brutally beating them up (ibid.). 74 out of 94 arrested people were then sent to the Ho police station, the very station where the deceased police officer had been attached. According to the District Chief Executive Mr Edward Kofi Ahiabor, the transfer of the suspects was necessary for security reasons. It was reported, however, that the suspects were mistreated and detained under inhuman conditions at the Ho police station (ibid.).

The importance of party politics in the conflict became clear with the partisan behaviour of the police force and the DCE. At the same time, Kwabena Bartels, Minister of the Interior, explained the rejection of Agboada with his party affiliation: 'Intelligence indicated that Togbui Sri III and his followers/supporters are true followers of the NPP in the Anlo Constituency and that is the reason why he is hated.'[20]

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[19] e.g. http://www.theghanaianjournal.com/2008/03/17/dont-meddle-in-bawku-conflict-nayiri/ (0409) and http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/politics/artikel.php?ID=69326 (0409)

[20] Kobla Kwawukume: Petition to Parliament by the Clan Heads & Chief of Anlo. Online: http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=134192 (0409)

3.2 The power of NTAs

This chapter was triggered by an outcome of the survey conducted in Greater Accra in 2005, with about 600 people out of 1005 (valid cases) stating that chiefs were more powerful than MPs (about 370 were convinced of the opposite, the rest thought they are equally powerful). A glance at the constitution would have suggested a totally different outcome: as we have seen in the previous chapters, chiefs are banned from party politics and can't actively take part in national politics. Also, their political involvement on the local level is weak if we focus on the modern political sector. To clarify this disparity, I will take a closer look at the different sources of power of NTAs.

Particularly concerning chieftaincy, it would be too simplistic to define power in Weber's terms as any chance to enforce one's will in a social relation, even against the will of other actors (see Weber 1985: 28). In contrast to coercion or force, power also goes along with a certain amount of liberty. Power is more effective if the 'subject' of power decides, or believes to decide, freely (Han 16-23). Long therefore uses the concept of 'power configurations' meant as interlocking actors' projects made up of heterogeneous sets of social relations. In such power configurations, power is not a zero-sum game: having power does not entail that others are without it (Long 2001: 242). This concept of power is based on Foucault, who argues that, although power seems to be far away of the arena of social interaction, it actually reproduces or transforms itself in workplaces, families and other organisational settings of everyday life (Foucault 1981: 94; q.i. Long 2001: 64).

The power of the neotraditional system is thus both a consequence of the good relations of certain NTAs with people in positions that reach far into the political establishment as well as its availability and influence even in the smallest village.

3.2.1 Bourdieu: social, cultural and economic capital

Before we dwell on the different forms of power of the NTAs, I would like to tie in with the theoretical section on development brokers by introducing Pierre Bourdieu's concepts of social, cultural and economic capital. These concepts will be able to bridge the theoretical gap between the actor-oriented models of Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan and general reflections on the power of NTAs. Bourdieu himself stresses the point that the transformations of capital can at the same time also be described as transformations of power

(Bourdieu/Steinrücke 2005: 52). Similarly, the act of transformation from one form of capital into another can also be linked to the Long's interface theory (2001). The role of NTAs as 'converters' (from one social field to another) is similar to their 'mutational work', the transformation of one form of capital into another (s. Rouveroy van Nieuvaal, E. A. B. van/ Dijk, Rijk van 1999: 5).

Bourdieu's definition of the different forms of capital is quite simple and seems to be perfectly adaptable for the study of the social fields of NTAs. Economic capital is directly convertible into money, whereas social and cultural capital are convertible only under distinct conditions. For all the three forms of capital, Bourdieu mentions prototypical forms of institutionalisation: for economic capital these are property rights, cultural capital can be institutionalised through academic degrees and social capital can be institutionalised in the form of titles of nobility (Bourdieu/Steinrücke 2005: 52). The term 'symbolic capital', also coined by Bourdieu, has an special position insofar as it is not convertible into other types of capital. Instead, the other three forms of capital can also have symbolic value. A tractor, for example, may have both economic and symbolic value. Symbolic capital is always defined by the system in which it is valued. For some, a tractor as economic capital has less symbolic value than for others (Calhoun 2002).[21] Given the assets of NTAs, I will focus on cultural and social capital.

Cultural capital

Bourdieu modelled the concept of cultural capital out of his thoughts on the structure of the French educational system. Contrary to the institutionalised cultural capital already mentioned, he stresses the importance of incorporated cultural capital for academic (and economic) careers. A big proportion of cultural capital is not easily transferable from one person to another because it involves unconscious, complex forms of behaviour, whose transfer is very time consuming or even confined to early childhood. This incorporated cultural capital encompasses the personal manner of speaking, posture, opinions, etc. Contrary to the theories of human capital, Bourdieu stresses socialisation as a phase of informal learning that predetermines success in school even in subjects like mathematics.

Because it is as such very often closely attached to persons, cultural capital often has scarcity

[21] Rouveroy van Nieuvaal/Dijk also give examples of conversions from symbolic capital into other capital types. The examples of symbolic capital given could also be described as social capital (s. Rouveroy van Nieuvaal, E. A. B. van/Dijk, Rijk van 1999: 5).

value. An enterprise or a public institution that wants to acquire such values often has to share power with actors who possess these values because they can't teach them and as such can't transfer them (Bourdieu/Steinrücke 2005: 53-58).

Cultural capital can also exist in the form of objects, like paintings or machines, but the use of these objects again requires know-how, thus incorporated and institutionalised cultural capital. According to Bourdieu, this gives the possessors of cultural capital a distinct position. On the one hand they do not necessarily possess the productive forces and are thus part of the working class, on the other hand they draw profit out of the productive forces, which makes them members of the ruling class (ibid: 58-60).

In comparison to other actors, the cultural capital of NTAs is certainly higher than their economic capital, both in terms of institutionalised (e.g. academic degrees) and incorporated (e.g. behaviour) cultural capital, which means that they are again caught between two stools when it comes to their position in society. They are not the owners of the productive forces, but the high accumulation of incorporated cultural capital also makes them profiteers of the productive forces.

Because of the strong intersection between institutionalised and incorporated cultural capital, NTAs were able to preserve their dominant position in society even in times when their political and economic power was cut back, as was the case under Nkrumah and later under Rawlings. When looking at those times, one could even talk of 'capital flight' from economic to cultural and social capital because these forms allowed camouflaged modes of heritage (ibid: 58). NTAs were not only among the first people to recognise the growing importance of academic education; they also held 'pole positions' because they possessed high amounts of incorporated cultural capital.

This 'pole position' also led to an advantageous 'rate of exchange', another term coined by Bourdieu (ibid: 62f). The number of African academics was very low in early postcolonial times and has been rising steadily until today. Only in 1958, for instance, the University of Ghana established the first law faculty (Rathbone 2000: 52ff). If the costs of academic education from the 1950ies until now haven't changed too much, it can be assumed that the rate of exchange between economic and cultural capital has worsened for the holders of academic degrees. Thus, the earlier a particular group was able to secure academic degrees, the higher was their pay-off, because cultural capital in Africa was subject to a high rate of 'inflation'[22].

[22] Bourdieu didn't use this term.

Social capital

In the words of Bourdieu 'the social capital is the totality of the actual and potential resources that are connected with the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relations of mutual acquaintance and acceptance' (ibid: 63). The size of the social capital depends on the extent of the social network and of the cultural, economic and symbolic capital of this network. No social network is naturally given – it has to be created through rites of institutionalisation. This involves conscious or unconscious strategies of investment that will be of use sooner or later. Accidental relations like neighbourhood or even family relations are thereby transformed into special and essential relations, which result in permanent obligations, based on emotions (acceptance, respect, friendship) or institutional guarantees (entitlements). This relationship is to be maintained by permanent exchange of words, presents etc.

Incorporating new members is dangerous for the group because it can change the entrance criteria and thus also the borders of the groups, which in turn define group identity This is why marriage in most societies is a matter of the whole family.

The reproduction of social capital requires work on relationships, which also involves the use of economic capital. To carry out this work, one needs the knowledge of genealogical interrelations and real relationships as well as the competence needed for making use of them. The competence, the knowledge and the readiness to use both of these factors constitute social capital and are distributed quite unequally in society. Additionally, the profit from social capital rises proportionally to its size. One could talk of increasing returns to scale[23] in this respect: a famous person has to work less on the expansion of his or her relationships because he or she already is attractive due to her bigger social network (ibid: Bourdieu/Steinrücke 2005).

In virtually all groups that reach a certain size, social capital can also be accumulated through delegation. This allows for the concentration of the social capital of a group in one person or group, to represent the group to the exterior. This often leads to misuse, sometimes even to the detriment of the group concerned. Here again, the example cited by Bourdieu is nobility. NTAs can correspondingly be described as model cases of holders of social capital. As will be shown in detail in the case study, the bestowment of titles of nobility is not yet bureaucratised in Ghana, particularly in the local arena. In Hagodzi, a mechanic based in Accra, who is (or was) not related to any other royal, became the village chief 'only' because he acted as a

[23] Bourdieu didn't use this term.

development broker. In this case, it was not the status of nobility that generated the social and cultural capital needed to become a development broker, but vice versa. The title of nobility was clearly a product of the institutionalisation of social capital.

On the national level, the best example for a chiefly holder of social capital is certainly the Asantehene. Besides his good relation with the president of the World Bank (s. chapter 5.2), he also seemed to act as if he was some sort of a constitutional monarch since his enstoolment in 1999. Both the state visits of John A. Kufuor (NPP) as well as the arrivals of foreign representatives seemed to be coordinated with the Asantehene.[24] The non-Akan societies in the North and in the East of Ghana were of course displeased with these developments, the strong linkages between the NPP and chiefly clans in the South-West however already indicated these developments when Kufuor came into power in 2000. Already John B. Danquah, the most important figure of UGCC (the precursor of the NPP), was a chief himself and belonged to the royal family of Akyem Abuakwa (Rathbone 2000: 79). Under the Okyenhene Nana Ofori Atta II, this family was the fiercest domestic adversary of the regime of Kwame Nkrumah (s. chapter 2.1.3.). The nomination of Nana Akufo-Addo as the presidential candidate of the NPP for the 2008 elections proved that the influence of this family has remained the same until today. Nana Akufo-Addo is a son of Edward Akufo-Addo, who in turn was the son-in-law of Nana Ofori Atta I.

J.A. Kufuor, Ghanaian president from 2000 to 2008, is also connected to the royal family of the Asantehene through marriage. His sister was married to Prempreh II, the Asantehene from 1933-1970 (Agyeman-Duah 2003: 8). In matrilineal societies like the one of Asante, the children of the sister are traditionally more important to men than their own children. Many other members of Kufuor's government, up to high levels, were royal family members in their hometown (Ubink 2008: 98).

3.2.2 The 'capitalisation' of NTAs

The economic capital of NTAs is considerable, too: traditionally, chiefs are in charge of the land and of communal labour. But a considerable number of paramounts, particularly in the South, are also rich in terms of monetary wealth and are highly educated. As such, they are theoretically in charge of all the classic factors of production. This situation already was

[24] see http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/artikel.php?ID=152331 ; http://www.ghana.gov.gh/ghana/asantehene_holds_durbar_malian_president.jsp ; http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/artikel.php?ID=79234&comment=1406064#com (0409)

similar in colonial times, with the difference that chiefs were mostly uneducated.[25] In spite of this, the chiefs were not able to meet the increased demands of the British in the Second World War (Rathbone 2000: 17f). As a consequence, they missed the train of 'development', which was born out of the demands of the colonialists. Today, most of the high-ranking chiefs of the South are highly educated – the special character of chiefly control over land and labour, however, is still a hindrance to most of the chiefs becoming entrepreneurs in the Western sense of the word. Chiefs are not the owners of land and labour in a capitalist sense, but rather caretakers (interview Odotei). The neotraditional fabric is communalist or pre-capitalist insofar as it doesn't allow for individual ownership of land and the exploitation of labour to obtain surplus value. Land and labour cannot be considered as economic capital if they are only convertible into money under distinct conditions, e.g. corrupt elders in the traditional councils who allow the selling of land for personal gain (cf. Bourdieu/Steinrücke 2005: 52).

In addition, in most of the societies – and particularly in those where chieftaincy is still very important today – chiefs are not able to inherit at all or only on matrilineal lines (interview Odotei). Naturally, the prefix 'neo' is also valid concerning the communalist character of African societies: especially the societies in the current territory of Ghana have been in contact with Europe since the beginning of the modern age and have participated strongly in triangular trade, which made them integral parts of the capitalist world system already at that time. The capitalist deformation of the 'traditional' systems, as it is bemoaned today, has therefore already been taking place for about 500 years. Today, this deformation is bemoaned mainly in connection with the countless succession conflicts, the multiple instances of stool land being sold for personal gain (chiefs often sell their land twice or thrice) and the personal enrichment of 'royals' through royalties. Odotei estimates that the government pays about 5-10% of the revenue it receives from mining companies (and the exploitation of other natural resources like timber) to traditional councils. However, these payments are not accounted for, no-one knows how much the traditional councils actually get and how the money is divided within the councils. Constitutionally, stool land revenues, which also comprise rents, dues, revenues or other payments, are to be disbursed as follows (q.i. Boafo-Arthur 2006: 151):

- Ten per cent shall be paid to the Office of the Administrator of Stool Lands to cover administrative expenses (Republic of Ghana 1992, Article 267 (6))
- Twenty-five percent to the stool through the traditional authority for the maintenance

[25] According to Odotei, chiefs were even openly referred to as 'dummies' by the educated elite (Odotei 2003: 335).

of the stool in keeping with its status (ibid., Article 267 (6) (a))
- Twenty percent to the traditional authority and (ibid., Article 267 (6) (b))
- Fifty-five per cent to the district assembly, within the area of authority in which the stool lands are situated (ibid., Article 267 (6) (c))

The use of these resources is therefore disputed: constitutionally, the royalties are not meant for development, but the media and the population often demand that these resources be spent on education, infrastructure and health (interview Odotei). Besides several paramountcies of the South, which are richly endowed with natural resources, however, the huge majority of chiefs are not able to spend significant amounts of money on development (Interview Daanaa).

If anything, the majority of the NTAs therefore possess economic capital because of their role as custodians of land (cf. Nugent 1996: 75). Also the summoning of the people is still made by beating the gong-gong, which is controlled by NTAs, but the possibility to make profit out of this function is rather low. As I will show in the case study, the function of the chief as the custodian of the land is also still institutionalised through rituals today. Each time when land is given out by the stool, the chief has to perform rituals. Even when someone dies on a particular piece of stool land, the chief is to be called to perform rituals (interview Odotei).

3.2.3 The 'neotraditional veil'

H.S. Daanaa, the Principal Research Officer of the Chieftaincy Ministry also mentions this divine or spiritual power – which could be classified as symbolic capital as its validation varies considerably – as one of the most important sources of power of NTAs. According to him, the fear of ‘divine power’ often brings the wrong persons to power (interview Daanaa). This religious protection of chiefly power also affects the value system concerning chieftaincy. Chiefs are to be addressed with great respect, even if they rule over small communities and are dressed like ordinary citizens. This is a fundamental difference to the modern political system, where the status of a politician is constantly measured by his performance. Chiefs are dealt with differently insofar as most of the media and even scientists try to protect the privacy of the holders of chiefly offices in a complaisant manner.

In an interview with one of the most influential experts on chieftaincy at the University of Ghana, I explained that chieftaincy is often described on the basis of Western concepts of

nobility in Europe and even in Africa and that it would therefore be interesting to compare the two institutions to identify the differences. The answer was interesting: ‘It looks exciting, but keep away, it is dangerous. If you go and compare chieftaincy with the royals in Europe, you are going to get in big time trouble. Don’t even dare!’ Concerning the personal wealth of paramounts the expert referred to the traditional concept of not showing the private background of a chief because he could be ‘of humble origin’ when asked about the economic assets of the paramount chiefs. Many chiefs are traditionally ‘big’, but in terms of money and education they are not. This leads to problems within the chiefly hierarchy, for instance when a divisional chief like the late chancellor of the University of Ghana is in fact more powerful than his paramount chief.

When I asked about the personal wealth of chiefs as compared to MPs, the answer was similar. In spite of my insistence on material wealth, the respondent started a long digression concerning the traditional concept of wealth. In contrast to chiefs, MPs have to disclose their personal wealth every year (interview Adotey). This special treatment of NTAs creates a highly attractive veil of unaccountability and invulnerability and makes it nearly impossible to assess the volume of their personal wealth.

This general masking of the private persons behind the neotraditional offices and values makes chieftaincy a perfect instrument for elite formation. But in spite of the official picture of chieftaincy as an exclusive club of royals, the system is at the same time easily accessible to non-royals. This is on the one hand criticised by arguing that succession lines are undermined through the growing importance of education and (reportedly) of wealth (interviews; Boafo-Arthur 2006:150), as has already been mentioned, but it is also officially encouraged through newly created titles for non-royals. The most important title in this respect is called ‘Nkosuohene’ in Twi (development chief) and has already more than 100 foreign holders (Steegstra 2006). Steegstra also highlights the fact that such titles for foreigners already existed in colonial times. The number of these enstoolments, however, has increased tremendously (ibid.) and NTAs seem to be quite creative in continuously inventing new titles: in Tamale, the leader of a sister-city team from Lousville, Kentucky, was recently named ‘chief of companionship’ (Zo Simli-Na), and in Apam (Central Region) an American visitor was recently made Apowmudzenhen, which means ‘health-promoting chief’ (Daily Graphic, 17.08.08; Daily Graphic 18.09.08).

The neotraditional system is thus very open to non-royals if they can compensate their lack of institutionalised social capital with cultural and economic capital, that is to say, with money, academic degrees or brokerage. In return, the neotraditional system beckons with some sort of

immunity. This impression of chiefly offices as neotraditional veils that cover the past of their holders is again amplified by the importance of cultural capital for NTAs. One of the reasons why NTAs were able to ride out the attacks of Nkrumah and Rawlings was their combination of institutionalised and incorporated cultural capital (s. chapter 3.2.1.).

This combination of the openness of the traditional system and its tendency to form and sustain social elites would also allow for an application of Bierschenk's concepts of the social climber and the outsider (1998: 322ff). These actors use development brokerage as a means to ascend the social ladder or to 'pay their entrance fee' to a particular community. Besides its obscuring character, membership in the neotraditional system also enhances social status, facilitates contact to politicians and foreigners, increases the possibility of going abroad, etc. Obtaining of a neotraditional office is therefore a rational and frequently envisaged stage in economic as well as political careers.

From this point of view, chieftaincies in Ghana can be described as relatively open power configurations that are protected by cultural values and based mostly on cultural capital (academic degrees; special knowledge and know-how; (unconscious) behaviour; stool regalia) and social capital (titles of nobility, achieved through delegation or negotiation; big circle of acquaintances with high capital; knowledge about genealogy and social networks).

4. Neotraditional development brokers: the case of Hagodzi

In this chapter, I will move from the general to the specific level by applying the concepts outlined above to a case study. Together with my girlfriend Lucile Dreidemy, I stayed in Hagodzi, a deprived village on a river island in the Volta Region, for about three weeks to record all development activities and especially the functions of NTAs in these projects.

The Water Project

When we visited the island in August 2008, the three villages of the island had just received pipe-borne water. Every village already had at least one water tap. Some people still fetched water from the river, because they couldn't afford the small fees. Additionally, the dangers connected with the water from the river were not clear to the majority of the population. The Catholic catechist, *Dan Lawson*, for instance, stated that there were no problems with the quality of the river water before pipe-borne water had been extended to the island. It is thus very likely that Participatory Rural Appraisals would have resulted in other development

measures. The same can be said of a KVIP latrine in Lawshime, which hasn't been completed until now.

To the majority of the small English-speaking elite of the three villages, the water project nonetheless constituted a feasible and desirable objective. The first endeavours to achieve this goal were already made in the mid-1990ies by a group led by then-Assemblyman *Kwame Layisi*. *Layisi* reported to the district assembly and wrote a letter to the District Water and Sanitation Team in Keta. These demands were not met until water was extended to Devenu, a village near the island. *Kwame Layisi* then again wrote a letter to the district assembly and one to the regional manager of the Ghana Water Company in Ho. The administrators in Ho referred *Layisi* and his team to the office in charge of the District, which is situated in Sogakope. After another letter to the district assembly, *Francis Bedzra* , the head of the District Water and Sanitation Team in Keta, was sent to survey the area. In both cases where the request was successful – in the letter to the DA and to Ho after the extension to Devenu and in the letter to the DA to start the survey – *Layisi* managed to get assistance from outside for formulating the letter: firstly from one Mr. Kata Djegbo and secondly from Mr. Koshi, the sanitary inspector for the Shime Area, an area adjacent to Atiavi. Funding by the Ghana Water Company was then approved under the condition that additional sources of funding had to be found. These resources were provided by the Dan Abodakpi, at the time MP of this area, and by the Catholic Church. Dan Abodakpi had been incarcerated in 2007 because of the misuse of funds as minister of trade and industry under the NDC government in the 1990ies and was still in custody when the project was he was asked for a contribution. In spite of being in jail, Dan Abodakpi was able to release his proportion of the so-called Common Fund for the water project. The release of this fund also had to be approved by the District Chief Executive.

Other actors from the village involved in the project were the new AM *Ben Makulay*[26], the so-called chief of this area, *George Benyefia* , the stool father *Baako Tamoafo* and several elders from all of the villages. The stool father was important for the mobilisation of communal labour. He holds the highest neotraditional office on the island – *George Benyefia* lives in Accra – and had to authorize the beating of the gong-gong for summoning the people for the organisation of communal labour. A preliminary trench for the water pipes had to be digged by the villagers themselves.

Our experiences on the island suggest that the role of the stool father was very limited, but nevertheless crucial. Although we never revealed our focus on NTAs in our field studies, we were sent to the stool father's house almost every day to greet him. Because of his inability to

[26] He became AM in 2006. Between 1996 and 2006 the AM of this area didn't come from the island.

speak English, these ‘courtesy calls’ were either translated by others or they took place in relative silence. The observations of Blundo and Edja concerning the relations of NTAs to development brokerage can therefore also be confirmed in the case of Hagodzi: particularly old chiefs continue to be the centre of the political system in the village, but they have to acquire various assets such as language skills or bureaucratic knowledge and contacts by sharing power with a so-called ‘brokers’ club’ (Blundo 2000; Edja 2000; q.i. Bierschenk/Olivier de Sardan 2002). Such a brokers’ club also existed in Hagodzi. It centred around *Kwame Layisi* and *George Benyefia* . In the Ewe-speaking areas, the stool father (Zikpuito) is regarded as the owner of the stool (the symbol of neotraditional power in the Southern parts of Ghana) who has the right to nominate a new chief and to represent the chief in case of his absence (Kludze 2000: 58f). *Baako Tamoafo’s* link to the brokers’ club of *Kwame Layisi* is *Oswald Ndo*, who holds the office of neotraditional linguist (in Ewe: Tsiami). Almost all ethnic groups in Ghana know this position and usually describe it as the office of the speaker of the chief. Particularly high-ranking chiefs are traditionally not supposed to speak directly to the population. The Tsiami (in Twi: Okyeame) has to embellish the chiefly words and to enrich them with metaphors and sayings (Simensen 1975: 11; Kludze 2000: 64-68). In Hagodzi, the position of the Tsiami additionally comprises the tasks of the so-called Secreto. This office can also be found in the neotraditional setting of the Ga of Accra and is similar to a shorthand secretary. *Ndo* is the only ‘royal’ in the brokers’ club of *Layisi*.

The preparatory digging of the trench took about one week and only involved communal labour mobilised with the help of the stool father and the elders. Afterwards, the workers from the Water Company took over and had to be fed by the community. Since the island’s agriculture is far from self-sufficient, the required food had to be bought outside. The money needed came from so-called ‘volunteers’, the youth of the island, who mostly live in Accra, Kumasi and Takoradi, and from *George Benyefia* .

He was probably the second most important person for the water project, because he was regarded as the chief of the island by most of the stakeholders. We came to the island with the help of *Theophilus Boateng*, the manager of an important radio station based in Keta, who had rallied support for this project on the radio and had also tried to involve more NGOs by creating a website. Boteng called *Benyefia* ‘Togbe’, which means chief in Ewe. During our two-week stay on the island, everybody referred to *Benyefia* as the chief of the village. Only in one interview, the new AM *Ben Makulay* used the term ‘development chief’. This title is quite new and is usually given to non-royals who are engaged in development. When we

confronted him with this contradiction, he stated, that *Benyefia* was both the chief and the development chief of the island, which was later confirmed by other villagers. *Benyefia* came to the island when *Francis Bedzra* , the head of the District Water and Sanitation Team in Keta, was sent to survey the area and he established contact with the radio station. From this time on, if not earlier, he was the central contact person for the project and thus acted as a development broker.

For this project, we can therefore identify at least three brokers: *Layisi*, who started the project by appealing to the DA and who involved specialised stakeholders in these appeals; *Benyefia*, who established and maintained contact to the radio and the District Water and Sanitation Team; and *Oswald Ndo*, who served as a link to the stool father and the elders. Additionally, one could also add *Theophilus Boateng*, who had been on the island four times, although it is rather difficult to reach. Most of the time, the paths to the villages are so muddy that one has to go barefooted. Therefore priests, nurses and teachers are often reluctant to come in times of rain. It is very likely that we were not the only foreigners who were brought to the island by *Boateng*.

As I have pointed out, two out of the three main actors in this project were neotraditional actors. In other projects, like the construction and maintenance of the school, the neotraditional actors were less involved because the assemblymen in this area are quite active and the neotraditional system on the island as a whole is very weak. Officially, the island is under the jurisdiction of the paramountcy of Anloga, the most powerful federation of the Ewe in Ghana, extending far beyond the borders of the Keta District. The Traditional Council of Anloga is currently mired in a severe chieftaincy conflict involving several deaths in the last few years. According to the stool father of Anloga, the lack of a paramount chief has led to a huge chaos in the region's neotraditional system. Since it is traditionally very fluid, the neotraditional structure now has become totally unclear because disputes about enstoolments, destoolments and allegiances cannot be solved by the paramount chief in the last instance. The situation on the island is additionally complicated by the fact that the family of the legitimate chief does not live on the island.

George Benyefia: The case of a social climber

After our sojourn on the island, we finally met *George Benyefia* in Accra and heard that the legitimate chief lived in Ho and didn't know much about the island. *Benyefia* was declared development chief, chief and, as I will point out later, the 'owner' of the island without the

consent of the higher ranks in Anloga and other authorities (divisional chiefs) in between. Only the stool father, *Baako Tamoafo*, and the Tsiami, *Oswald Ndo*, seem to be accepted by the higher ranks, and they also maintain contact to the formal chief. Because of his engagement in development, both as a broker and as a patron, they accepted the swindle and protected *Benyefia*. Also the majority of the other villagers is likely to have accepted him when he became development chief in the early 1990ies as no stakeholder from outside knew about the 'complot'.

The case of the 'enstoolment' of *Benyefia* as development chief is particularly interesting, as it is a good illustration of the concept of the 'gate keeper', who always controls two gates at the same time: the donor believes that the population listens to the broker and the population believes that donor listens to him (Bierschenk et al. 2000: 19). *Benyefia* made use of this information gap by telling the story of his enstoolment in two different versions that were designed for the two sides of the interface he controlled. One version was for the people in the village and one was for outsiders. In the story for his people, Hildegard Thielmann, the vice chairperson of a German NGO, invented this title (he called it in Ewe: Ngor Gbe Yiyi Fia) for him and gave it to him in consultation with the 'stool fathers' of the area because of his support of her NGO. In the story for outsiders, the 'stool fathers' of the island had to confirm his title before Ms. Thielmann accepted him as an adviser for the establishment of a clinic at Tregui, a village not far from the island. *Benyefia* used the term 'stool fathers' instead of the appropriate term 'elders', probably to enhance the status of the elders and of himself. I don't think that he would have used this term face to face with other neotraditional actors. The island only has one stool and can therefore only have one stool father. Additionally, it was not clear who was to be called an elder in the village and who not.

Ms. Thielmann has been working for the Ghanaian Ministry of Health and for the German 'Kinderhilfswerk' for many years and became 'queen mother' of Abomusso (close to Nkawkaw in the Eastern Region) in 1992. She was also told by *Benyefia* that he had been enstooled by his 'stool fathers' and she believed him. The queen mother is very powerful in Akan societies and normally has to be a member of the 'royal' family.

Benyefia was brought up in Hagodzi and is likely to have started his neotraditional career as a 'volunteer'[27], someone who lives outside the island and sends money from time to time. As the owner of a car repair shop in Accra, called 'Bavaria City Motors', he is without doubt the richest person from the island that still maintains contact with the people on the island. Together with other, wealthier volunteers and with the group around *Layisi* he formed the

[27] This term has been used by many interviewees on the island.

HALAM Association (Hagodzi – Lawshime – Mamime), a club for development activities and for the contribution to burials, which meets on a monthly basis. There are several other associations or 'societies' on the island that also collect money, usually in connection with traditional drumming, but this money is used almost exclusively for burials.

As a mechanical engineer, *Benyefia* also is the person with the highest educational level that is still in contact with the island. Consequently, *Benyefia* used his position as a patron to convert economic capital into social capital and his position as a broker to convert cultural capital into social capital, which was then institutionalised in the form of his different neotraditional titles. The transformation of money or other economic resources into neotraditional titles was definitely normal at all times, even if many experts in Ghana bemoan growing corruption in this regard. The conversion of education into neotraditional titles is relatively new, but education already seems to be more important than money. In this regard, Odotei described the current situation of the chiefdom in Legon, the locality where the University of Ghana was constructed in 1948. The former divisional chief of this area was at the same time the chancellor of the university (the new chancellor is Kofi Annan). Based on lineage, a bus driver from the United States should now become divisional chief, but the population concerned rejects him (interview Odotei).

Broker careers usually are at the expense of established actors like local politicians and chiefs, who can be seen as informal politicians (Bierschenk et al. 2000: 31). As can be seen in the case of *Benyefia*, the neotraditional offices in Hagodzi seem to be contested more fiercely than the political ones. This can be attributed to the relatively low standard of living in the area. Assemblymen have to stay permanently in one of the concerned villages, chiefs can also live in town or even abroad. Because of his rather blunt coup without any rituals or discussions about descent and with very loose interpretations of customs (e.g.: his use of the term 'stool father'), *Benyefia* could be described as a 'secular' development broker who disintegrates the neotraditional system for his own profit. However, bearing in mind my (limited) experience and knowledge about the flexibility of chieftaincy, I rather prefer to refer to *Benyefia* as a (typical) neotraditional actor.

The 'real' chief

After the interview with *George Benyefia* , we also tried to find the formal chief, which turned out to be difficult because *Benyefia* refused to give us his name and his telephone number. In the end we got the number and the name from *Kwame Layisi* and eventually met the formal

chief. His name is *Richard Gekem* and he is a quantity surveyor in Ho. *Gekem* already knew that *Benyefia* decorated himself with his own title, 'Togbe Aklorbor II'. He had even attended a neotraditional meeting in 2002 where this fraud was discussed and had written a letter to the DCE, calling upon the DCE not to recognise *Benyefia* as a chief. At the time of our interviews, however, he already seemed to have accepted the role of *Benyefia*. *Gekem* has never lived on the island and has no relatives and no house there. He visits Hagodzi very rarely and only for ritual purposes. He is convinced that these rituals are very important for the well-being of the villagers. With a percentage of traditionalists of at least 50%, this is in all likelihood coherent with the perception of the villagers themselves. *Gekem* grew up in Anloga and began a nomadic life after completing senior secondary school: between 1985 and 2001, he lived in Cape Coast, Takoradi, Accra, Atiavi and Kumasi. From 2001 until now, he has been living in Ho and working as a municipal engineer with the Public Works Department of the district.

Despite his educational background and his good connections to the neotraditional elite, *Gekem* is not engaged in any brokerage activity for the island. He hardly knows any of the names of the villagers and told me in the interview that he wanted to construct boreholes and bring potable water to the village, even though potable water already was accessible and the digging of boreholes is not possible in the area because of the salt water of the Keta Lagoon. According to August Niadzi, a catechist in the Atiavi Area, the Catholic Church had experimented with boreholes in the area already in the 1980ies. This was also the reason why pipe-bourne water has been extended to the island – boreholes would have been much cheaper (Interview Niadzi).

Gekem is nevertheless vividly engaged in quarrels about allegiance that had evolved already before the death of the late paramount chief of Anloga, Togbui Adzaladza, in 1998. In 1979, as a young boy, he was made the chief of the island, but his stool remained in Atiavi, a market town on the coast of the Keta Lagoon. When his stool was transferred to the island in 1990, *Gekem* claimed to have become a Dufia (divisional chief) and to be directly subordinate to the paramountcy of Anloga in this capacity, but he didn't succeed to assert this claim in the traditional council of Anloga. In the first interview, *Gekem* nevertheless stated that he was a Dufia and that the traditional council in Anloga had made him a Dufia. Only when I called the stool father of Anloga – or rather a man who is regarded as the stool father of Anloga by a part of the population of this paramountcy – to confirm this information he admitted that this was not true. I only mention this episode because white lies have been part of every interview with NTAs until now. The supposed stool father of Anloga, *Benjamin Tunyo*, is one of the most

powerful NTAs in Anloga and stated that *Richard Gekem* was his nephew.

The French NGO

The career of *Benyefia* as a neotraditional development broker reached its peak when a French NGO grew interested in the island as a potential place for cash crop farming and fish farming. *Benyefia* showed me documents about the leasing of 116 acres of land on the island to this NGO, signed by the District Chief Executive and by the High Court Registrar of Lands. Due to unclear reasons, the NGO never started its work after it had paid a considerable amount of money for the land. It is possible that the bad accessibility (no road) forced the NGO to stop the project. Other reasons may be the foul play of the elite of the village, who declared *Benyefia* also the owner of the land. *Gekem* didn't know that the land was to be sold and stated that he was the lawful the owner of the land, which should even have been gazetted by the Regional House of Chiefs in 2000. It is therefore possible that the French NGO got wind of this trouble and backed out. Although I made copies of all official documents and was provided with the name of the NGO and a French telephone number, I have not been able to verify the existence of this NGO.

Other tasks of NTAs

Apart from *Ndo* and *Benyefia*, NTAs only played their traditional roles in development projects as custodians of the land and as community mobilizers. The actual involvement in these tasks can vary, depending largely on to the abilities and the commitment of the NTA concerned. When asked about the important actors of development in the village, the group of brokers headed by *Layisi* (mainly *Oswald Ndo*, *Ben Makulay* and *Hormeku Bandua*, whose position on the island will be discussed later) nevertheless mentioned the elders at first – even though the group then discussed about who was to be called an elder and who not. The mobilisation of labour mainly happens through the beating of the gong-gong, which is still very common. Just three days before the interview, the group went from village to village to impregnate mosquito nets. To summon the people they had to involve the gong-gong beater, who is authorised by the stool father and the elders.

The group also stated that land issues on the island were normally decided by all elders together, which is unusual for the Volta Region because the land in the Ewe-speaking areas is

usually owned by families. This statement would thus surely be contested by *Gekem* and his family.
The third important task of the elders is dispute settlement and mediation in minor cases. This task is also performed regularly. The group stated that the last case had been settled three months before the interview.

The brokers' club[28]

In connection with other projects, a considerable variety of other private and (semi-)political actors were mentioned: opinion leaders, youth organizers, volunteers, community-based volunteers, teachers and catechists. These roles were connected to the following institutions: the Catholic Church, the Evangelic community, the Charismatic community, the Africania Mission, the 'societies' (drumming groups for burials), the HALAM Association, the unit committees, the area council, the kindergarten, the primary school and the JSS.
The group of brokers headed by *Layisi* had its foot in the door of each of these institutions. *Kwame Layisi* himself had been Assemblyman, member of the Executive Council in Keta, Head Christian or Christian Father and teacher at the kindergarten. *Ben Makulay* was Assemblyman and had been teacher at the primary school. *Hormeku Bandua* was the leader (Osofo) of the Africania Mission on the island, opinion leader and area council member. Interestingly, *Oswald Ndo* was occupied only with his neotraditional job as a Tsiami, besides farming and fishing, like the others. Additionally, the brokers have since 2002 been working as 'Community Based Volunteers', for which the district assembly pays small allowances. It is their task to record births, deaths and sicknesses and to carry out certain measures against diseases like polio or malaria.
The posts of the youth organizers were not directly occupied by the brokers themselves, but they were awarded to close friends and relatives. The youth organizer for Lawshime is *Dan Lawson*, the catechist of the island. He also teaches at the kindergarten and is a close friend of *Layisi*. The youth organizer of Hagodzi is *Kwame Layisi*, a son of *Kwame Layisi*. Just as the term youth as a whole, the actual function of the youth organizer is quite unclear because the term is both used in the field of party politics and in the neotraditional setting. According to *Ben Makulay*, the assemblyman and the elders of the village are involved in the formation of youth groups and select the youth leader or organizer in consultation with the population. These groups, consisting both of women and men, would gather 2-4 times a year to contribute

[28] This term was not used by the population of Hagodzi, it was coined by Blundo (2000) and Edja (2000).

to development. This meaning of youth is certainly related to the neotraditional division of the community into 'royals' and commoners or youth. In this setting the youth organizer is also called 'Asafo atse' and represents the non-royals in the community (s. Wilson 2000; Oakley/Clegg 1999: 75-77). According to Kludze he also has the right to destool the chief and is thus a symbol of the 'supremacy of the people' (s. Kludze 2000: 52-81). In Hagodzi the youth organizers are thus on the one hand representatives of political parties who disseminate messages and have to mobilize the population for the unit committees. On the other hand, they are often at the same time the gong-gong-beaters of the village, who also spread messages from the elders and the stool father.

Opinion leaders are the heads of the unit committees, which are supposed to be the units of local government on the village level, but they are largely inoperative (Ubink 2008: 149). According to *Norman Layisi*, another son of *Kwame Layisi*,[29] the last elections for the unit committee didn't take place in Hagodzi. As a consequence, the current unit committee only consists of 5 appointed members, all of which seem to be NPP members, although the NPP only gets about 10% of the votes in this constituency. *Norman Layisi* is one of these appointees – but he neither knew that he would be nominated before the official proclamation nor who had nominated him. De jure, the DCE has to appoint one third of the members of the unit committees on behalf of the President and in consultation with the opinion leader and any traditional authorities and organised productive economic groupings in the unit (Ayee/Amponsah: 2003: 69). It was in all likelihood the AM who listed the names after (short) consultations with the elders and the stool father. Various important stakeholders on the island thought that the constitution prescribed the appointment of NPP members, while others stressed the need to cooperate with the DCE, who also belonged to the NPP.

Religion

Besides its leading role in development, politics and in the neotraditional system, the 'brokers' club' also occupies leading positions in the fields of religion and education. Except from *Ben Makulay*, who is younger, all members of the 'brokers' club' (*K. Layisi*, *O. Ndo* and *H. Bandua*) went to school together. *Norman Layisi* stated that only 5 persons on the island were able to speak English as well as these three persons.

Religion is a particularly interesting topic in Hagodzi because Christianity did not come to the island until the 1980ies. The majority of the population still believes in traditional religion and

[29] All in all the *Layisi* family consists of four generations comprising about 100 people in Hagodzi (interviews).

opposes Christianity. This is also important for politics and medicine because these areas of life are dominated by Christianity in Southern Ghana. Almost all of the hospitals and clinics in the area were built by Christians and remain Christian institutions until now, and everyone who is familiar with the public devoutness of politicians will admit that traditionalists are seriously underprivileged in Ghana.

Besides the traditional priest and the traditional healer on the island, this discrimination is keenly criticised by the Africania Mission in Lawshime, a relatively new movement, also called Sankofa, which means ‘go back and and take’. When we arrived in Hagodzi we were seen as Christians, and therefore traditional religion was hidden from us. Only at the end of our stay we discovered that one of the brokers, *Hormeku Bandua*, was the leader of the 3-year-old Sankofa movement with about 100 active members. The Africania Mission itself was founded in Accra in the 1980ies. *Bandua* is an Osofo, a ‘pastor of tradition’, as we were told by *Norman Layisi*. The congregation was founded as a project for the preservation of traditional beliefs. The meetings are mixtures of traditional drummings, the ‘societies’ or ‘Bobobo’, and Christian worship (see Witte 2005). After our stay on the island, we also visited the headquarters of the Africania Mission in Accra and met the head of the congregation, who wasn’t very cooperative because he was also convinced that we were Christians. The books we were allowed to acquire conveyed the picture of a new type of syncretism rather than a ‘resistance project’ against Christian hegemony as it was portrayed in the community. .The second biggest religious group is the Catholic Church with more than 150 members, as we were told. Only ten people attended a mass we visited, however, and we heard that most of the Christians from the island lived outside. The amount of economic capital controlled by the Catholics is nonetheless by far the highest of all 'non-political' organisations. Catholicism was introduced in the 1980ies by Italian Comboni missionaries, who constructed a church in Lawshime in 1984. In the dry seasons, a Comboni missionary also brought a car to the island, the only one that has entered the island until now. The Church was soon used as a kindergarten. Until now, the Catholic Church pays the wages of the teachers (150 GHC for 20h a week) and feeds the pupils of the kindergarten. It was only in 2002 that the parish was taken over by Africans.

Other projects: school, KVIP latrine and bridges

The first teacher was already sent to Hagodzi in 1962, long before Christian missionaries started to come to the island regularly, but the government only provided material for sheds

and pavilions. In this context, *Benyefia* assisted, probably for the first time, by winning a raffle for the inland. He was awarded 250 bags of cement and provided them for the construction of walls for the school. The cladding was then financed by MP Dan Abodakpi.

Abodakpi had been coming to the island every three months for 16 years until he was incarcerated in 2007. On these occasions, the gong-gong was beaten, the whole population gathered in the school compound and he reported on the national assembly. Afterwards, the representatives of the village were able to ask him for assistance. The MP also used his Common Fund to pay part of the wages of the teachers on the island.

Abodakpi was also involved in the construction of a KVIP latrine in Lawshime in 2000. This project can be seen as a model case for the lack of involvement of local actors. The local representative for the project was the then Assemblyman, who didn't come from the island. Communal labour was organised to dig a hole and to carry the material from Hartogodo (the next village that is connected to the road) to the island. When construction was almost finished – only a shed was missing – it was suddenly stopped. Even the Planning Officer of the Keta District could not give any reasons for this abrupt stop of the funding, but many other projects in the District were affected too. Although the construction was almost finished the population has never used the KVIP latrine. A similar case is the construction of a footbridge between Lawshime and Mamime, which was started in 2006. Only the pillars were erected, then the contractor stopped.

Until now, the only project which has been fully financed by the (former) residents of the island is a wooden footbridge to Hartogodo, which is flooded about 4 months of the year and won't resist the drift for a long time. It was constructed at Easter 2008 with the financial assistance (about 200 GHC) of *Benyefia*, the 'societies' and the youth from outside. The next aim of the group of brokers is upgrading this footbridge to a fixed bridge.

Résumé:

In the interviews we always asked the interviewees to list the five most important actors in the field of development. *Baako Tamoafo* (the stool father) and *George Benyefia* were mentioned by almost everyone, *Ndo* (the linguist) and some elders were mentioned by two thirds, and *Bandua*, *Layisi* and *Makulay* were mentioned by one third. This was quite surprising because from my point of view the participation of the stool father and the elders in development projects was marginal. This outcome could thus be explained with the high status of the NTAs or with my inability to speak Ewe, which made interviews with the NTAs impossible. When

we asked them to mention the roles of the stool father and the elders, however, the interviewees only listed their neotraditional functions as custodians of the land and as leaders of the community. Due to their inability to speak English, the stool father and the elders were hardly involved in the coordination of the development projects with actors from outside the village.

As can be seen in the case of *Benyefia*, involvement in the neotraditional system can nonetheless boost the bargaining power of a development broker. This is caused (1) by the quasi-automatic loyalty of the population discussed above, but (2) also by the fact that the formal political institutions like DAs and other developmental institutions de facto treat neotraditional heads in the villages as political leaders. This can be attributed to a folklorist understanding of the countryside both by Ghanaian city dwellers and by foreigners, but also to defunct formal political institutions in the villages and to the factual functions of NTAs in the fields of customary law and land rights.

In addition, the case of Hagodzi once again shows the importance of 'royal' networks in the development arena. Both Dan Abodakpi, the former MP, and *Theophilus Boateng*, the manager of Jubilee Radio, claim to be part of 'royal' families in Anloga. Their assistance could therefore also have evolved out of discussions in neotraditional settings (like the 'traditional council' in Anloga) or of interests of the neotraditional elite in Anloga. But these are mere speculations.

The egoist and calculating smack of the concept of development brokers as a whole (cf. Bierschenk/Olivier de Sardan 2002: 19f) could also be confirmed in Hagodzi, hadn't the population of the island been part of the 'invention' or 'imagination of tradition'.[30] In spite of the whole village knowing that the lawful chief of the island was *Richard Gekem*, all political stakeholders from outside, to whom I have been talking, have believed *Benyefia* for more than 15 years now. The fluidity of the neotraditional system of Hagodzi comprised the following areas:

- Free interpretation of descent or invention of descent: once a chief is installed – which could be seriously challenged in the case of *Benyefia* – it is against tradition to look into his past (interviews).

30 Ranger modified the concept of the 'invention of tradition': 'Some traditions in colonial Africa really were invented, by a single colonial officer for a single occasion. But customary law and ethnicity and religion and language were imagined, by many different people and over a long time. These multiple imaginations were in tension with each other and in constant contestation to define the meaning of what had been imagined – to imagine it further. Traditions imagined by whites were re-imagined by blacks: traditions imagined by particular black interest groups were re-imagined by others. The history of modern tradition has been much more complex than we have supposed.' (Ranger 1993:81-82)

- Invention/imagination of new neotraditional positions (‘stool fathers’)
- Reinterpretation of competences: in the Volta Region, the chiefs normally don’t administer the land, it belongs to families.

By confirming *Benyefia* as development chief, land owner and chief, the villagers probably made the best out of their situation. The flexibility of the system made it possible to bypass the formal chief. Without *Benyefia* becoming the chief, the village probably wouldn’t have received pipe-borne water and brick school buildings.

5. Institutionalised cooperation

Despite their increasing role in development, it is in fact totally unclear why chiefs should be officially entrusted with development activities. The colonial position of the chief as development facilitator has been replaced by three public offices: the District (or Municipal) Chief Executive (DCE or MCE), the assemblyman and the unit committee member (cf. Ayesu 2006: 500). While the former two offices have successfully replaced the neotraditional system on the district level, the sub-district level is still inactive due to shortages of resources and capacities. The systematic entrustment of chiefs with development funds would therefore secure their position on the sub-district level and re-establish their authority on the district level, where it would inevitably come into conflict with the locally elected DAs.

In 2003, the World Bank, the Asanteman Council and the Akyem Abuakwa Traditional Council launched a pilot project that ignored this problem and assigned tasks to NTAs that were normally carried out by local government personnel. As a result, parts of the new government initially refused to approve the project. After a short aside about aid dependence and the role of private aid in Ghana for assessing the possible influence of private actors (like NTAs) in the Ghanaian development arena, I will focus on this project.

5.1 Aid dependence

According to Withfield/Jones (2007), foreign assistance in Ghana was marginal before the beginning of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) under the ‘revolutionary’ regime of J.J. Rawlings in 1983. The transformation of this regime into the ‘darling’ of the World Bank is a startling example of the power of the international financial institutions: between 1983 and 1993, official development assistance (ODA) quadrupled from US$130 million to about

US$510 million (cf. Tsikata 1999: 38, 43). Lindauer et al., however, also give striking examples of the compulsion to act. In 1983, for instance, senior civil servants in real terms only earned 11% of the money they had earned in 1975 (Lindauer et al. 1988). Osei shows that the GDP per capita for Ghana fell from roughly US$300 in the mid 1970ies to less than US$200 in 1983 (2000 prices). Since then is has steadily grown and is currently about to reach the levels of the 1970ies again (Osei 2008: 12).

With the beginning of the democratic reforms in 1989 and the debt relief in 2002, the cash flow increased additionally. Only in 1992, assistance was slightly reduced, according to Whitfield/Jones because of 'donor fatigue' and excessive expenses in the run-up to the first democratic elections since 1969 (Withfield/Jones 2007: 7).

This means that aid dependence began to be important for Ghana with the beginning of the structural adjustment programmes. According to Osei (2008), aid to GNI ratios for the period between 1989 and 2003 are about twice as high as the average for sub-Saharan Africa. Additionally, this rise of ODA was accompanied by a brain drain from the public administration to the private sector, which was to be compensated by outsourcing policy making to think-tanks. These think-tanks were extremely dependent on the ruling parties and were mostly fired when the government changed. The result were incoherent policies, reinforcing the power of the foreign donors (Withfield/Jones 2007: 7). Despite the stagnation of ODA inflows in the 1990ies, the influence of the donors has been growing continuously on various institutional levels. Already in 1996, a World Bank report cautioned against so-called 'donor-driven agendas' concerning aid dependence in Ghana (Armstrong 1996: 53, q.i. Withfield/Jones 2007: 8).

In 2004, Ghanaian aid dependence reached its numeric peak with 73 percent 'Aid as % of central government expenditure' (Banque Mondiale 2006: 348). Although the term aid is to be understood as ODA in this regard, the phrasing 'aid as % of' only suggests a comparison of two numeric values (ODA and central government expenditure). Figures about the actual share of ODA in the national budget are not available in most developing countries due to shortcomings in budget management, particularly in the field of information management (Leiderer 2004: 21). Nevertheless, other estimates by the World Bank about the actual share of ODA in the national budget of 2002 come to similar results. 2004 saw the highest numeric aid dependence in Ghana because of the tremendous debt relief granted in this year. According to Withfield/Jones, the aid to GNI ratio was about 22% in 2004, but without debt relief it only amounted to 8%. A combination of the two figures given by the World Bank and that provided by Withfield/Jones would therefore suggest a share of ODA in the Ghanaian

budget ranging between 30-40% in 2004 without debt relief (Withfield/Jones 2007: 7,25; Banque Mondiale 2006: 348-50; World Bank 2003).

The amount of private development assistance is hard to assess, a glance on the overall composition of development aid of the donor countries concerned suggests, however, that apart from the USA private money flows are comparatively low (s. Adelman 2003). Important donor countries are Japan, Great Britain, the USA, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, France, Canada, Italy and Spain (Tsikata 1999: 3). Sometimes, remittances are also included in these figures.

In Ghana, the amount of remittances has already exceeded the value of official ODA. According to the Bank of Ghana, remittances[31] have increased from US$200 million or 3.3% of the GDP in 1990 to over US$1 billion or about 11% in 2003 (Addison 2004). If remittances are considered as private development aid, these figures would therefore be even higher than the official inflows. It would be of great interest to find out how much of these resources could be attributed to the neotraditional system. However, from my current point of view, such an undertaking is hardly feasible.

Other private aid flows, like those of churches and charity organisations, are significantly lower than ODA and remittances. In Germany, for instance, the overall equity capital of NGOs added up to 0.9 billion euro in 2005, which is approximately a quarter of the total spending of the BMZ (Ministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung). If the sponsorship of the BMZ is added, private capital already accounts for one third of the total amount of development aid (BMZ 2006: 78). Of course, the borders between the public and the private are blurry in such calculations.

It is not clear whether the stunning rise of remittances since the 1990ies has been accompanied by a steady increase in private development aid as compared to official development aid. The rise of Southern NGOs in the 1990ies certainly came along with the contrapuntal growth of budget support and administrative capacity building. 2003 budget support already accounted for 39% of ODA to Ghana; in 2005 it was down to 27% again (Lawson et al. 2007, q.i. Withfield/Jones 2007: 12). The most important actors in the development arena since the 1980ies are certainly the World Bank and the IMF. With the start of the SAPs, in 1984 the share of multilateral aid doubled in the course of only one year to 79.1% of total ODA, and since then it has never fallen under 71%. In 1996, it even reached

[31] There are various definitions of remittances. With ‘private unrequited transfers’, Addison used one of the narrowest definitions.

85% (Tsikata 1999: 3). This means that more than US$1 billion is controlled by these two organisations alone.

In summary, it can be stated that the rise of neotraditional development brokers and patrons was certainly fuelled by growing remittances and institutionalised private aid flows. After the state and religious organisations, NTAs in all probability constitute the third richest group of development actors. Compared to their social and cultural capital, their economic capital is nevertheless relatively small.

5.2 Development agencies and NTAs: relations and perceptions

Despite strong media coverage concerning neotraditional development brokerage, foreign development agencies and NGOs approach NTAs with caution (interviews with Vera Kotrschal, Nikolas Beckmann and Hildegard Thielmann). This has to do with a lack of knowledge about the neotraditional systems – most of the foreign representatives of NGOs don't stay in Ghana for a long time – but also with disappointing experiences with NTAs. Fluidity, flexibility and non-formalisation as general features of the neotraditional system often impede fruitful co-operation on the interface between local government, foreign development assistance and NTAs. NGOs don't know how to address NTAs in the local arena because the relation between the formal political and neotraditional systems is unclear. This also applies to the attitude of the government: in spite of the factual power of NTAs on the village level, the only constitutionally regulated instance of co-operation between NTAs and the DAs is the appointment of 30% of the assemblymen by the president in consultation with NTAs (Article 242 (d)). But even this consultation is done only very rarely. As a consequence, the success of co-operation depends enormously on the individual level of commitment and capacity of the NTAs concerned and is based only on confidence. The experiences of foreign NGOs and development agencies are therefore rather negative. NTAs are still rather seen as obstacles to development than development brokers. According to Nicolas Beckmann of the German GTZ (Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit), the permanent demands of chiefs for more public resources and influence don't match their actual contributions to development (interview Beckmann). Both in the USAID Ghana Strategy Paper and in the Ghana Joint Assistance Strategy, NTAs are only mentioned in connection with chieftaincy conflicts (GTZ 2007; USAID 2006). At the same time, pro-chief think-tanks like the Ghanaian CIKOD (Center for Indigenous Knowledge and Organisational Development) have turned out to comprise also quite radical proponents of the public

involvement of NTAs, with demands ranging from for the abolishment of elections (see Wiredu 1995) to a return to colonial systems. Officially however, CIKOD focuses mainly on the mobilisation of chiefly resources and a transformation of chieftaincy on the grassroots level[32] and is actually engaged in addressing the challenges of transparency and accountability in local governance, particularly concerning the relation between DAs and NTAs.[33] CIKOD is partly financed by the German KAF (Konrad Adenauer Foundation)[34], whose representative Johannes D. Rey is very hesitant to take sides, for instance concerning the banning of the chiefs from party politics: 'Frankly, up to now I have not found a clear position about the 1992 Constitution's attempt to free the chieftaincy institution from the gridlock of partisan politics.' (KAF 2004: 11)

The Promoting Partnership with Traditional Authorities Project

The first big project since independence that involved neotraditional authorities in development activities only began in 2003. Its somewhat curious starting point was a conversation between the Asantehene and the President of the World Bank (World Bank 2007: 42) – that is to say, between one of the most powerful representatives of the development arena worldwide and, to put it bluntly, a private person. The outcome of this high-level meeting was the 'Promoting Partnership with Traditional Authorities Project' (PPTAP), running from 2003 to 2007, which was officially awarded to the Republic of Ghana. In reality, the grant (US$5.05 million) was given directly to the Asantehene and the second most powerful chief in Ghana, the Okyenhene. Initially, a standard loan was scheduled, but because of resistance from parts of the new government and an intensive public debate, the project was re-modelled into a Learning and Innovation Loan, a cheaper form of credit. In the final project report the authors noted: 'The initial debate affected the government's level of commitment in project design, which led to a less than optimal level of interaction between local government and TAs [traditional authorities] during project implementation.' (World Bank 2007: 4)

This gradual exclusion of the state is mentioned as one of the reasons for an overall 'moderately satisfactory' (ibid.) outcome of the project. The argument of the critics was that the government should not take a loan that was mainly set to benefit one single NTA (the

[32] see www.cikodgh.org/about.html (0409)

[33] Nana Kokroko: Traditional rulers lack human and material resources. In: Ghanaweb, 14 February 2009. Online: http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=157707 (0409).

[34] The KAF depicts itself as a 'society for Christian-democratic education', has close relations to the German CDU (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands) party and is thus a typical supporter of NTAs.

Asantehene) while the burden of debt service would be on the whole nation.

The Asanteman Council, the neotraditional council of ‘elders’ of the Asantehene, was awarded US$4.5 million and the Akyem Abuakwa Traditional Council of the Okyenhene got US$0.5 million.. The bulk of this money was spent in the education sector (US$3 million), on infrastructure, scholarships, the elevation of the enrolment rate and incentives for teachers; the rest was spent on capacity building, an HIV/AIDS campaign and on cultural heritage activities, like the training of artisans and studies on opportunities in ecotourism (World Bank 2007: 10). Particularly in the health and cultural sectors, the involvement of minor chiefs and other NTAs was planned, but the outcome was rather modest because the neotraditional capacities were overestimated (World Bank 2007: 17). According to the report, capacity building was therefore given too little attention. The weak management capacities of the NTAs led to the formation of PIUs, Project Implementation Units, ‘to strengthen the AC secretariat and set-up the AATC one while implementing the project on behalf and under the oversight of the TAs.’ (ibid.: 5) This means that the implementation of the project didn't differ too much from conventional health or educational projects, where NTAs are included because of their position as authorities, but don’t get too involved because of their lack of capacities. Capacity building included workshops on conflict management, partnerships with local government, development planning, partnerships with the private sector in the field of ecotourism, sustainable rural development and land management. Given the fact that most of the tasks that should have been done by the NTAs themselves were carried out by professionals, a focus on administrative capacity building (institution building) would have been more promising (cf. ibid.: 8, 17). The use of PIUs limited the ownership of NTAs and impeded a structural change through the decentralisation of development activity (ibid: 12-14). This change was also made impossible by the comprehensible dissatisfaction of most of the formal political actors with the PPTAP. While the project aimed at testing ‘approaches to strengthening decentralisation through sustainable partnership between government and TAs in the delivery of selected social services’ (ibid.: 5), most local government officials still felt that they did not have sufficient comprehension of the project, nor were they sufficiently involved in the preparations, particularly the award and the supervision contract (ibid.: 6). On the other hand, the Asanteman Council declared to have prepared development plans for communities and paramountcies (ibid.: 10). Each of the 35 paramountcies and each of the communities involved was told to draw up its own development plan (ibid.: 23). It can be doubted that these plans really existed, but already the intention behind them suggests a clouded inter-relation with the DAs. The area councils, the first political subdivisions under

the DAs, are currently about to draw up development plans too. In the Keta District, for instance, four out of fourteen Area Councils have already developed such plans – with poor results, as was noted by the Planning Officer M. P. Dagbui. Additionally, the neotraditional areas don't match with the formal administrative divisions. Therefore, the paramountcy of Anloga is much bigger than the Keta District and the neotraditional sub-district of Hagodzi neither matches with the formal political area council nor with the unit committees. That is to say, the establishment of such chiefly development plans has created both rivalry and confusion in the DAs.

The report therefore urged to study the mechanisms of decentralisation more closely, particularly concerning the coordination between NTAs and DAs before similar projects are to be implemented: '[If] this project was to be replicated, the development of a relevant platform for mainstreaming TAs governance systems in [sic!] local government framework should be adopted as a specific, principal target. ' (ibid.: 16)

In the light of the modest outcomes, it is interesting how the World Bank justifies a project that aims at institutionalizing the influence of NTAs in local development. Besides the key factor for implementation, namely the high level of social and customary influence of the Asantehene and the Okyenhene (ibid.: 6), the project could also have been legitimised by attempts to minimise overlapping responsibilities and by the inclusion of chiefly resources and neotraditional social structures into participatory projects. This could have been accompanied by the attempt of a smooth transformation of hierarchical structures and male dominance in the neotraditional system. The outcome of the project, however, suggests that the institutionalisation of neotraditional brokerage rather led to the replacement of public organs in the PPTAP. Because of a lack of capacities in other areas, most of the NTAs were only able to act as leading figures, and as such were 'direct competitors' of formal political actors. This may also be a reason why the DAs have been bypassed in the process.

Instead of such a rather transformative approach, however, the World Bank described the neotraditional systems as 'active civil society organisations' (ibid.: 1) in the context of 'dual governance systems' (ibid.: 2). On the one hand, the NTAs were thus referred to as governmental representatives who were to 'support decentralised social and economic development initiatives in remote areas' (ibid.: 2), while on the other hand, they were described as members of civil society. The strict hierarchy of the neotraditional system and the paternalist attitude of most NTAs were never mentioned in the report.

The planning of the PPTAP thus had three shortcomings: (1) the management capacities of traditional councils were overestimated, (2) their paternalist structure was not even mentioned

and (3) no vision concerning the place of NTAs in the local development arena was developed. Given the current situation in the local development arena, the strongest emphasis of such a project should be put on the integration of the formal political and the neotraditional structures and not on the training of, after all, private actors in fields that are or should be under public control.

Apart from this project of the World Bank, the contacts of foreign development institutions and NGOs with NTAs are mostly informal in nature and often lead to misunderstandings because of the lack of established procedures and institutionalised relations, but also due to ignorance on the side of the NGOs. An analysis of the developmental resource inflow showed that the government and the World Bank control most of the resources. The startling rise of remittances in the last few years suggests, however, that private actors will become more important in the near future. Not least because of their privileged access to visas, the share of NTAs in private aid is only exceeded by that of the churches. NTAs will therefore be able to profit from this kind of globalisation and this will also affect their engagement in development aid.

6. Summary

The goal of this thesis was to provide an overview over the role of neotraditional actors (NTAs) in the development arena of Ghana. The guiding questions have circled around the power, the resilience and the malleability of neotraditional institutions and the consequences of these attributes for the structure of the political system and the development arena. I tackled this project by carrying out a comparison of NTAs and politicians as the major agents of development, a study of the roles of NTAs, both by means of a survey and a media analysis, reflections on the different sources of power of NTAs on the basis of a short history of chieftaincy and development in Ghana, and a detailed study of the development arena in Hagodzi, a small village in the Volta Region. The guiding theories were the concepts of social, cultural and economic capital of Pierre Bourdieu and concepts around the term development broker, or courtier, which was coined by Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan in the 1990ies. Apart from these actor-centred concepts I also discussed political concepts of Trutz von Trotha and Donald I. Ray (among others).

From an actor-centred point of view, NTAs are involved in development mainly as development brokers (also cultural brokers) and as development patrons (s. chapter 3.1.1).

Apart from the rather small elite of development patrons of the South-West, which is in possession of a considerable amount of material wealth, indirect political power and elite education, the majority of NTAs mainly rely on customary assets, namely the administration of land and manpower. The educational north-south divide concerning chieftaincy has 51% of northern paramount chiefs lacking formal education (all uneducated paramount chiefs in Ghana come from the three northern regions), while the majority of the paramount chiefs in the South can compete with MPs in terms of education. This education gap is a good indicator of the profoundly asymmetric distribution of chiefly assets (s. chapters 2.3 and 3.1.3).[35] On the village level, NTAs are political and spiritual leaders, mediators, custodians of the land and organisers of communal labour (s. chapter 3.1.2). Because of their socialisation and their experience as representatives and mediators, they already possess considerable amounts of cultural and social capital, which facilitates their entry into the development business. In comparison with urban actors, however, both the economic capital and the level of education of neotraditional development brokers on the countryside are rather low. At the same time, NTAs are confronted with increasing demands and appeals by the media, by politicians and by the chiefly elite to participate in and to spend on development. My experiences in the Keta District suggest that particularly the older, less educated generation of NTAs can't meet these demands. The outcome of this pressure is primarily excessive development rhetoric at chiefly durbars and traditional festivals, and to a lesser extent an increase in concrete development projects led by NTAs (s. chapter 3.1.3).

The fluidity of chieftaincy enables other development brokers like politicians, social climbers and 'outsiders' (Bierschenk et al. 2000: 31) to upgrade their status by becoming neotraditional development brokers. *George Benyefia* is just one example of countless cases where descent is renegotiated because of other assets. These actors use development brokerage as a means to ascend the social ladder or to 'pay their entrance fee' to a particular community. Besides the 'neotraditional veil' (see chapter 3.2.3) that endows new chiefs with some sort of immunity, membership in the neotraditional system also enhances social status, facilitates contact to politicians and foreigners, increases the possibility of going abroad, etc. The obtaining of a neotraditional office is therefore a rational and frequently envisaged stage in economic as well as political careers (ibid).

As a form of institutionalized social capital, chieftaincy has always been an instrument of elite formation. The current situation of comparatively easy accessibility of 'royal' offices, however, is (not yet) met by a complementary movement of de-mystification. Even a

[35] Source: National House of Chiefs 2008, African Trade Project 2007.

considerable number of Ghanaian social scientists don't dare to question chiefly power in terms of material wealth and biographical background of chiefly elites, while formal politicians are continuously confronted with these questions. The population seems to actively protect the status and the integrity of chiefs, as two disagreements mentioned in this thesis strongly suggest: First, the difference between the perceptions of experts and the population concerning the power of the chiefs. According to the experts, the population overestimates the power of the chiefs (cf. chapter 3.2). And second, the different perceptions of these two groups concerning the actual power of chiefs during elections - the population is said to underestimate the power of the chiefs (Jonah 2003: 220f). When power was perceived positively or neutral the population considered the chiefs powerful, when power was seen negatively the population rather considered them powerless (cf. chapter 2.4).

This has to do with the high level of inclusiveness of neotraditional systems. The increasingly uncertain modes of succession convey high conflict potential, but they also facilitate participation and not least a faster transformation of the neotraditional system. According to Nugent this malleability of chieftaincy increased considerably between independence and 1992 (with a phase of reasonable autonomy in this regard between 1979 and 1985)[36] when the NTAs depended heavily on the government in crucial matters like enstoolment and destoolment. Contestants in chieftaincy disputes knew that the arbitrators didn't know enough about the history of their area and thus permanently attempted 'to conjure with history in order to improve their standing within an existing hierarchy' (Nugent 1996a: 214). By inventing new titles that are not hereditary, like the Nkosuohene in 1985 (s. Steegstra: 2006), the chiefly elite also catalysed this process.

From this point of view, neotraditional systems in Ghana can be described as instruments of elite formation protected by cultural values and based mostly on cultural capital (academic degrees; special knowledge and know-how; (unconscious) behaviour; stool regalia) and social capital (titles of nobility, achieved through delegation or negotiation; big circle of acquaintances with high capital; knowledge about genealogy and social networks).

The chiefly elite can without doubt be considered as a part of the national elite, both in terms of money and in terms of political influence. The predecessors of the two mightiest chiefs today, the Asantehene and the Okyenhene, already were the main chiefly actors against the 'struggle for independence from within' (Rathbone 2000: 7-15) and are as such responsible for the split that runs across the whole scientific community regarding the question of neotraditional involvement in the formal political structure. The pro-chief position of the NPP

[36] see Boafo-Arthur 2006: 157; Brempong 2006: 33; Ray 1996:189

is highly visible and its current leaders can be linked to the pro-chief UGCC tradition of the late 1940ies even genealogically. Nana Akufo-Addo, the presidential candidate of Ghana's New Patriotic Party (NPP) for the 2008 elections, is the son of Edward Akufo-Addo, who was in turn the son–in-law of the Okyenhene. A sister of J.A. Kufuor, Ghanaian president from 2000-2008, was married to Prempreh II, Asantehene from 1933-1970 (Agyeman-Duah 2003: 8). Osei Tutu II, Asantehene since 1999, is closely related to Kufuor and acted almost like a constitutional monarch under his presidency. His good relations with the former president of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn, additionally backed his superior position in the political landscape of Ghana (World Bank 2007: 42). And last but not least, since Kufuor is an Ashanti and traditionally no Asante is to stand above the Asantehene, most of the Asante and a considerable proportion of the Akan rather considered the Asantehene to be the head of state.

These power configurations also prevent the mainstream media from addressing the hierarchical structure and the paternalist character of chieftaincy in Ghana. And it is particularly the lack of democratic legitimacy of the higher tiers of chieftaincy that impedes the integration into the local political structure. The growing importance of senior NTAs in the field of development at the same time raises the question of the neotraditional understanding of development. Given the paternalist attitude of most of the development patrons, as well as their involvement in business and banking, this influence should be observed critically.

Development brokerage is quite a recent phenomenon in the neotraditional structure. In other arenas, like politics and law, the NTAs have been competing with other actors for much longer. The struggle over authority and sovereignty, however, formally came to an end under Nkrumah and its repercussions trailed away by the mid-1980ies at the latest, when Rawlings changed his course concerning chieftaincy (Nugent 1996a). In the phase of state decay in the 1970ies, only the local actors of the neotraditional system gained strength (ibid.), which lead to 'integrated' neotraditional systems, where NTAs merely act as substitutes and ‘partners’ to governmental actors. These NTAs could take advantage of the fact that power in the villages is usually divided between different political institutions of various epochs. This ‘sedimentation’ of political institutions or ‘institutional addition’ (Bierschenk/Olivier de Sardan 1999: 52) leads to a situation of polycephaly and catalyses the general feature of flexibility and malleability of African institutions (Bierschenk/Olivier de Sardan 2002: 4). The NTAs, as well as other actors, were therefore able to reactivate institutions, ideas and agreements from different epochs, which had previously been outshined by others, and to rearrange them according to their own interests and the interests of their clients. In Ghana this

also led to the re-emergence of T/VDCs (Town/ Village Development Committees) from the Nkrumah era. Together with the increasing influx of foreign NGOs since the 1970ies, these institutions have created 'parastatal spaces' (in the sense of Trotha 2001) in cooperation with the NTAs, or, as other authors describe it, a 'realm of civil society'[37] (see chapter 2.1). However, the reassertion of governmental authority with the putsch of Rawlings inhibited the 'denationalisation' of aid on the part of the donors and the receptors, as it happened in many other African countries - in spite of the neoliberal turnaround in the mid 1980ies. Until today, chiefs cannot be seen as competitors to the state in terms of development, because (1) there are hardly any enduring relations with Northern NGOs, particularly not with development institutions (the PPTAP of the World Bank being an exception, s. chapter 5.2) and (2) NTAs mostly act and see themselves as integral parts of the local administration. Until today, about 80% of the ODA is controlled by the World Bank and the IMF (Tsikata 1999: 3) and therefore primarily used for bigger development projects where NTAs only play minor roles particularly in comparison with public actors.

The constitution of 1992 and the rising influence of the World Bank even formalized the practical experiences of the 1970ies by pushing forward the development discourse also in the neotraditional setting. This transformation of NTAs from political leaders to development facilitators was therefore rather induced from above and hasn't fully reached the local level yet. The expectations of both of the media and the population still cannot be met by local NTAs today. This can be attributed to (1) the slow personal turnover in the neotraditional system, (2) structural hindrances like the unregulated relationship between neotraditional and political actors on the local level, (3) an inadequate capitalisation of the majority of the NTAs, but (4) also to the inherent characteristics of chieftaincy (see chapter 3.2.2). The impressive rise of private remittances nevertheless suggests a stronger involvement of NTAs in development. According to the Bank of Ghana, private remittances have increased to over US$1 billion in 2003, already exceeding the value of official ODA (see chapter 5.1, Addison 2004). The proportion of these resources used for development depends mainly on the definition of development, but it is clear that this also comprises smaller construction projects like the construction of bridges, boreholes etc. In the years to come, the share of NTAs in development projects is therefore likely to rise compared to the state.

NTAs have profited from their role beyond the state since independence and as long as they are not formally integrated in the political system, they will continually improve in their

[37] for discussion see Bierschenk/Olivier de Sardan 2002: 5

relatively new jobs as development brokers and patrons. This is likely to catalyse the overall transformation of the neotraditional system from a parallel political system (s. Bierschenk 1999: 52) into a network of (more or less) private lobbying groups, strongly based on education. NTAs should therefore not be overestimated as building blocks of decentralisation. The idea that close cooperation with NTAs guarantees grassroots democracy is naive, as Lentz put it (2006: 918). The local level is certainly the most viable and vibrant level of the neotraditional system (see e.g. Nugent 1996), but the high political participation it conveys goes along with paternalism and uncertainty. A process of annihilation through integration, for instance by making the chiefly office eligible as recommended by Abotchie (2006: 169-183), however, would be a pretty bold step, given the fact that the formalized political structures still don't seem to work in the villages today.

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8. Appendix

8.1 Abbreviations:

CDO – Civil Defence Organisation

CDR – Committees for the Defence of the Revolution

CPP – Convention People's Party

DCE – District Chief Executive

NTA – Neotraditional Actor

NCD – National Commission on Democracy

NDC – National Democratic Congress

NLM – National Liberation Movement

NLC – National Liberation Council

NRC – National Redemption Council

PIU - Project Implementation Unit

PDC – People's Defence Committee

PNCD – Provisional National Defence Council

PPTAP - Promoting Partnership with Traditional Authorities Project

SAP – Structural Adjustment Programme

SMC – Supreme Military Council

TA - Traditional Authority

TDC – Town Development Committee

UGCC – United Gold Coast Convention

VDC – Village Development Committee

8.2 List of local actors (names changed):

Hormeku Bandua: Spiritual leader, Opinion Leader

Francis Bedzra: Head of the District Water and Sanitation Team

George Benyefia: Mechanic, 'development chief'

Theophilus Boateng: Manager of Jubilee Radio

Richard Gekem: Quantity surveyor, sub-chief

Norman Layisi: Teacher

Kwame Layisi: Member of the Executive Council in Keta, Head Christian, teacher

Dan Lawson: Catholic catechist, youth organizer

Ben Makulay: Assemblyman

Oswald Ndo: Tsiami (linguist)

Benjamin Tunyo: Stool father

Baako Tamoafo: Stool father

Abstract

Since independence, the neotraditional actors of Ghana (e.g. chiefs, queenmothers, stool fathers, elders, ‘linguists’ and development chiefs) have gone through a fundamental transformation from intermediaries (between the colonial power and the African population) to more or less heterogeneous interest groups. The engagement in development business is one successful strategy of retaining power during this ongoing transformation. Neotraditional actors try to compensate their reduced political power with developmental activities. At the same time, however, the media, the state and the civil society also portray neotraditional actors as development brokers and thereby push them into development aid.

The Ghanaian societies are still embedded in neotraditional structures, also in urban areas. Contrary to many prophecies of doom since independence, chieftaincy is still very popular. One of the reasons for this persistence is the remarkable malleability and fluidity of neotraditional systems. Especially on the local level, a considerable percentage of the population is permanently engaged in negotiations and disputes over neotraditional offices and corresponding claims. This leads to a high degree of political participation, but also to conflicts and to the abuse of chieftaincy as an instrument of elite formation. Membership in the neotraditional system enhances social status, facilitates contacts to politicians and foreigners, increases the possibility of going abroad and goes along with some sort of political immunity. The obtaining of a neotraditional office is therefore a rational and frequently envisaged stage in economic as well as political careers. The 'humble' decent of an aspirant can often be compensated with social, cultural or economic capital.

This diploma thesis focuses mainly on the intersections between the neotraditional systems and the development arena of Ghana. I want to show how neotraditional actors interact with (and act as) politicians, business men, NGOs and development agencies and how these intersections can be described on the national level. The outcomes of the thesis can be useful both to international development actors and to local (public) actors.

Zusammenfassung

Die neotraditionellen Systeme Ghanas (bestehend aus Chiefs, Queenmothers, Stool Fathers, Elders, Development Chiefs etc.) haben sich seit der Unabhängigkeit grundlegend verändert. Aus Mittelsmännern zwischen der Kolonialregierung und der afrikanischen Bevölkerung wurden vielerorts private InteressensvertreterInnen. Das Engagement von neotraditionellen AkteurInnen im Rahmen der Entwicklungszusammenarbeit war und ist in diesem Zusammenhang eine Möglichkeit, den verlorenen politischen Einfluss zu kompensieren. Gleichzeitig gerät aber auch die Verwendung der Mittel aus neotraditioneller Herrschaft immer stärker unter Beschuss durch die Medien und die Zivilgesellschaft, was gegenwärtig zu einer medialen Überbewertung des neotraditionellen Engagements in der EZA führt.

Die ghanaische Bevölkerung ist noch immer stark in neotradionelle Strukturen eingebunden und steht den neotraditionellen AkteurInnen überwiegend positiv gegenüber. Dieses Durchhaltevermögen der neotraditionellen Systeme lässt sich zu einem großen Teil auf seine Fluidität zurückführen. Vor allem auf lokaler Ebene befinden sich große Teile der Bevölkerung in einem permanenten Aushandlungsprozess über neotraditionelle Ämter und damit verbundene Rechte und Pflichten. Das Ergebnis ist einerseits ein hoher politischer Partizipationsgrad, der jedoch mit - bisweilen auch blutigen - Konflikten erkauft werden muss. Auf der anderen Seite führte diese Unbestimmtheit der neotraditionellen Strukturen verstärkt ab der Unabhängigkeit zu einer steigenden Instrumentalisierung durch lokale Eliten. Die Mitgliedschaft in neotraditionellen Systemen erhöht den sozialen Status, erleichtert den Kontakt zu Politikern, vergrößert die Chance ins Ausland zu gehen und geht auch meist einher mit einer Form von politischer Immunität. Neotraditionelle Ämter erweisen sich dadurch sehr oft als Sprungbretter für politische und ökonomische Karrieren. Eine nicht-adelige Herkunft kann dabei durch soziales, kulturelles oder ökonomisches Kapital kompensiert werden.

Mit dieser Diplomarbeit soll gezeigt werden, auf welche Weise neotraditionelle AkteurInnen in die ghanaische Entwicklungszusammenarbeit eingebunden sind bzw. diese mitgestalten. Es soll klar werden, wie neotraditionelle AkteurInnen mit PolitikerInnen, Geschäftsleuten, NGO-VertreterInnen und RepräsentantInnen der großen Entwicklungsagenturen interagieren bzw. inwiefern sie selbst als solche agieren. Diese Schnittstellen werden auch auf der nationalen Ebene abgebildet. Die Ergebnisse dieser Arbeit könnten sowohl für internationale AkteurInnen der EZA als auch für lokale AkteurInnen von Interesse sein.