

Contesting the State in Ghana's Cocoa Trade

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This paper examines how power relations between the state and non-state actors in post-liberalized Ghana shaped the cocoa trade. It explores how cocoa producers contested the state's stranglehold and negotiated new power relations within the cocoa supply chain. Although the mainstream literature extols the power of market liberalization to curtail the hegemonic power of the state, Ghana is an exception to this development. This is because the Ghanaian state has a paternalistic hold on the local cocoa network, which curtailed the agency of cocoa producers. The paper adopts a qualitative research strategy based on a global commodity network perspective to analyze the Ghanaian cocoa trade. It argues that through the revival of the cooperative model, embodied in Kuapa Kokoo Farmers' Union, the adoption of fair trade practices, and the empowerment of female cocoa farmers, Ghanaian cocoa farmers challenged the hegemonic hold of the state and provided an alternative model of wealth creation from production to export in order to re-energize the rural economy and alleviate rural poverty.