6   Kinship and the Core House: Contested ideas of family and place in a Ghanaian resettlement township

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During the 1960s, over 80,000 people were resettled following the construction of the Akosombo dam in Ghana. The project created what, at the time, was the largest man-made lake in the world, a feat that was a source of considerable national pride. Although resettlement was seen by government officials and planners to entail 'sacrifice', relocation was presented as a positive step from 'tradition' to 'modernity'. From this perspective the extended family was equated with 'tradition' and although the potentially integrative social function of such kin relationships was sometimes positively acknowledged, their weakening remained an explicit goal. Though often relatively small, resettlements were explicitly conceived as 'towns', a terminology that itself engendered the modernising aspirations of the project (Chambers 1970). In these purportedly more urban and cosmopolitan settings, planners, politicians and state officials hoped that the political and economic functions of kinship would diminish as people engaged in more diffuse relations on the basis of common nationality and citizenship. As Diaw and Schmidt-Kellert observe, 'resettlement was to produce nationalists in an urban environment rather than myopic and inward-looking tribal communities' (1990: 19). To this end, movement from the 'traditional' extended family system to the nuclear family system was an explicit goal of many of the planners and government officials involved (Obusu-Mensah 1980).

Focusing on one of these resettlement communities, this paper examines how understandings of kinship, home and belonging have been reconfigured in response to forced migration and the aggregation of previously distinct groups that resettlement entailed. Whilst the

persistence and continued centrality of kinship has been noted in these communities, this has tended to be regarded as a 'hang-over' from the more 'traditional' forms of social life that characterised pre-settlement communities (e.g. Diaw and Schmidt-Kallert 1990; Obusu-Mensah 1980). Yet even to the extent that people in these communities themselves view kinship as a domain of 'tradition', the social significance and effects of these discourses cannot be reduced to any straightforward connection with the past. When kinship is taken to be explained by 'tradition', we fail to appreciate the different meanings, values and explanations that people attach to this term.

The analytic equation of kinship with 'tradition' is therefore problematic insofar as it precludes ethnographic understanding of the different ways in which both planners and resettled communities understand the relationship between these domains. By contrast this paper explores how and in what contexts different people draw on ideas of kinship and tradition, and looks at the consequences of doing so. Rather than premis analysis on a distinction between 'tradition' and 'modernity', the paper examines the ways in which these terms are configured in relation to competing understandings of kinship and place.

The account illuminates these issues through Strathernian theorisations of kinship, but in re-routing these through a specific set of ethnographic issues, seeks to extend their theoretical scope. In *Kinship at the Core*, Strathern (1981) demonstrates how ideas of kinship are at the heart of English conceptions of place and belonging. In Elmdon, a rural village in Essex, being a 'real' villager is not simply a matter of locality or geography, but of having kin relations to a group of 'core' families, whose genealogies stretch back beyond living memory. Whilst such claims are naturalised by the apparently immutable fact of 'birth', Strathern shows how this idea in fact symbolises a relationship between an individual and his or her village. Since kinship is

reckoned in bilateral terms, individuals may locate their origins either maternally or paternally and hence the issue of 'birth' is partly a matter of choice. In this way, the distinction between 'real' villagers and 'outsiders' produces a provocative image of boundary that is in fact less absolute than it appears. In practice who is included and who is excluded changes with context. Classification does not simply delimit pre-defined sociological groups but highlights the interests by which they feel themselves to be united or divided.

Despite significant differences in kinship ideology and practice, this understanding of kinship as a 'boundary effect' usefully illuminates the forms of relationship and belonging that have developed in the wake of resettlement in Ghana's Volta Resettlement Project. The account focuses on the central concept of the 'home-town', suggesting that like the Elmdon image of 'the village' this arises from an equation of kinship and place. This is used to create a boundary that can then be utilised in the service of different interests, by those who were resettled as well as by those living in the towns to which resettlers were moved.

As the account demonstrates, however, the centrality of kinship was challenged by resettlers, claiming to belong on the basis of their unique historical circumstances. As a symbol of this difference, the 'core houses', to which re-settlers were moved, itself constitutes an image of boundary, delimiting resettlers from residents of the towns and defining particular rights. Extending Strathern's analysis, it could be said that rather than kinship, the core house was at 'the core' of what it meant to belong.

Resettlement as Modernisation

The construction of the Akosombo dam and the Volta Resettlement Project that accompanied this, were iconic of globally fashionable developmental ideals of Modernisation Theory and also

acted to concretise the specific 'Pan-African' visions of the post-independence government (Diaw and Schmidt-Kallert 1990; Miescher 2007). As such Kwame Nkrumah, Ghana's first independent president, lauded the project as 'one of the major engineering feats of the world' (Obeng 1979: 37), presenting it as central to the realisation of rapid development of a modern economy through a process of industrialisation. The physical construction of the dam was therefore inextricably linked to the symbolic construction of the post-independence nation as an independent and explicitly 'modern' entity (Miescher 2007; Shapiro 2003).

As part of the process of resettlement, around 740 villages were re-located at fifty two resettlement towns, built around the newly formed Volta lake (figure one). Whilst some of these were constructed as completely new towns, others were attached to existing settlements. In all cases planners, influenced by more widely fashionable theories of Central Place Theory, sought to centralise services in a relatively small number of towns in order to minimise costs of infrastructural development and maximise access to services (Huszar 1970). Attempts were made to resettle neighbouring villages together but in practice the project often resulted in the aggregation of people from different ethnic backgrounds and language groups with no prior relationship (Chambers 1970; Dodoo 1970).

Those forced from areas inundated by the lake were frequently presented in state discourses as 'sacrificing' for the greater good of the nation. Nonetheless in public discourses of the time, resettlement was itself portrayed as a form of development and a step towards modernity. As Shapiro puts it, 'the government was not only moving people out of the way of the encroaching waters, but it was turning would-be refugees into model citizens and spearheads for development.' (Shapiro 2003:1). In a similar vein Diaw and Schmidt-Kallert suggest that resettlement towns 'were seen as bridgeheads of modernisation in a sea of rural backwardness

and underdevelopment.' (1990: 12)

While the discourses of planners and bureaucrats emphasized the need to be sensitive to the customs and traditions of these different populations, the process was ultimately conceived as a movement from 'tradition' to 'modernity'. In this vein newspaper reports of the time explicitly portrayed the journey that resettler communities made as the literal movement from one state to the other. Similar ideas of the relationship between tradition and modernity underscored public discourses that contrasted the 'backward' forms of planning and construction of the inundated villages, with the forms of 'modern' planning and architecture in the resettlement towns.

Central to this vision of development was the 'core house' that resettled families were given as part of (or more often in lieu of) monetary compensation for houses, land and possessions submerged by the lake. Although 'core houses' took three different forms (named R-type, P-type and D-type respectively), all were underpinned by the basic idea that a common 'core' or 'nucleus' was to be given which could then be expanded according to pre-determined plans and construction techniques (figures two and three), supposedly to incorporate infinite variability in family size and cultural preference (Danby 1970). David Butcher, a British social anthropologist in charge of the social survey described how 'like an organism', the houses were to be 'capable of growth as the requirements of the householder increase, along with his prosperity' (Butcher 1970: 88). In this way the core house's potential for physical expansion was more generally seen by government planners and architects to anticipate the economic expansion they assumed would result.

While these economic benefits have failed to materialise in the terms imagined (Diaw and Schmidt-Kallert 1990; Tsikata 2006), the process of resettlement has had profound and long-lasting effects both on those who were moved and on those communities to which resettlement

townships were attached. During the 1950s and 1960s, large-scale technocratic development interventions and the resettlement schemes that accompanied these led to a profound shift in the relationship between the state and rural communities throughout Africa (Bernal 1997; Bonneuil 2000; Mitchell 2002). As in other schemes undertaken on the continent during the middle of the twentieth century (Bonneuil 2000; Escobar 1995) the Volta Resettlement Project entailed attempts to re-design rural life and agricultural production. These shifted the balance of power between state and agrarian communities through making the former increasingly legible to the latter. In particular this entailed the 'domestication' (Bonneuil 2000) of communities that formerly had little, if any, relationship to the state, and their subjection to various forms of scientific, technical and social scientific 'expertise'.

In the context of the Volta Resettlement Project, this has taken a variety of forms. Though short-lived, domestic science programs sought to ease the 'transitional' period through the regulation of household activities in line with an 'ordered', 'hygenic' and explicitly 'modern' set of practices (Shapiro 2003). Similarly both the introduction of Town Managers and the later incorporation of resettlement towns within local government (via District Assemblies) have been associated with new forms of planning regulation (figure four). Most resettlement townships have only been connected to mains power lines, through rural electrification projects undertaken over the last decade. Although many households have since been disconnected as a result of non-payment of bills, this development also engenders a new relationship to the state. Rural electrification programs both depend on a more individualistic relationship between the state and 'consumers' and technically inscribe it, setting up new relationships between households and electricity suppliers that bypass representatives of wider communities. Because relationships with the state are almost invariably textually mediated, resettlement and subsequent

administrative and technical changes that have accompanied this therefore tend to shift power from chiefs and elders to younger, more educated members of these communities (Obusu-Mensah 1980). In various ways the material, conceptual and political changes that accompanied resettlement have therefore extended the reach of the state, resulting in new, if sometimes precarious, forms of governmentality and citizenship.

Resettlement in Apeguso

The following account focuses on Apeguso, a town of around 2500 people located on the main road between Ghana's capital, Accra, and the regional capital of Volta in Ho, using this as a lens to explore broader issues of kinship and belonging. The majority of residents are Akwamus, one of the clans of the twi speaking Akan, that predominate in Southern Ghana. Although the economy is predominantly agriculturally based, people from the town are employed in a range of occupations including as subsistence farmers, traders, and labourers at the nearby textiles factory at Akosombo.

Within the Akwamu paramountcy the chief of Apeguso occupies the position of *adontehene*, making him second in command to the Akwamu paramount chief, and giving the town a politically important position within the region. As part of the Volta Resettlement Program people came to Apeguso from a variety of places as the level of the lake rose between 1962 and 1963. Of those resettled, most were Ewe speaking Tongu fishermen who had earlier migrated along the Volta river from places such as Bato, Mepe and Tefle in South East Ghana . Although seasonal migration often led to increasingly permanent residence and infrequent return, connections to these home-towns remained symbolically important (Lawson 1958).

Following the construction of the dam, some of these people returned to their original

home-towns but most chose to move to resettlement townships, seeing this as a preferable option in terms of housing and economic opportunity. Those resettled in Apeguso all retain active connections to lineage members in what they continue to refer to as their 'home-towns'. As for other Ewe groups (Nukunya 1969) these connections are patrilineally defined and entail a range of ongoing rights and duties, including financial obligations, the desirability of building and maintaining a 'family' house and the expectation of the return of the corpse at death.

The Apeguso resettlement 'quarters' (as they continue to be referred to) were comprised of fifty four P-type houses, along with a purpose built primary school and central lavatory block. Initially 181 people were resettled there making Apeguso one of the smallest of the fifty four resettlement towns (VRA 1970). Originally the site was set apart from the main town of Apeguso, connected by a single un-paved road. Although the subsequent construction of buildings – mainly by residents of the 'old town' – has acted to erode this gap, a distinction remains evident both in terms of the type of building and layout of the town.

In the old town, 'compound' houses predominate, comprising rooms arranged around a central courtyard, built either of mud blocks or cement and roofed with thatch or iron sheeting. A number of un-paved roads cross-cut the town and a network of back routes weave between the haphazardly arranged houses. Few plots are fenced, but women and children take pride in the neatness of the patches surrounding their houses, sweeping up leaves and debris in a daily ritual that delimits the extent of the compound.

By contrast the resettlement quarters are centrally planned with houses ranged in linear rows around a central open space occupied by the school and the football pitch. The original resettlement houses were built of 'landcrete' (a mixture of lateritic soil and cement) and roofed with iron sheeting. In common with planners original conceptions of the houses, residents

sometimes positively connect their uniform appearance to their 'modernity'. However in general resettlement houses are un-popular, as evinced by occupants' frequent complaints concerning their inadequate size and poor state of repair. Lacking the funds to purchase cement, and with the relaxation of an initially stringently applied set of planning laws, core houses have generally been extended through the addition of temporary 'swish' constructed bedrooms and kitchens. Though the original plans show a clear demarcation of roads and plots, subsequent developments have acted to blur these boundaries. As in the 'old town' most people navigate through the network of paths that weave between the houses.

Resettlers and residents from the old town both commonly describe the differences between these places in terms of the Quarters' relative 'bushiness', 'weediness' and lack of order. Similarly general consensus has it that houses in the old town are bigger, better maintained and more desirable. These differences are explicitly seen to concretise a relative difference of 'development' and 'modernity'. Underlying these shared ideas, however, are competing explanations of this difference. On the one hand people from the resettlement quarters' relate problems of housing to economic difficulties deriving from the historical circumstances of their resettlement and hence to broken promises on the part of government and VRA. On the other hand old town residents more commonly relate this difference to resettlers' 'mentality of dependency' and to their lack of willingness to help themselves.

As in Elmbdon (Strathern 1981), so too in Apeguso, descriptions of differences in housing and infrastructure are used to lend sociological boundaries an immutability and permanence that is more imagined than real. Ideas about the distinctive characteristics of resettlers and old town residents are in this way literalised in terms of different but overlapping understandings of the physicality of the places they live. Distinctive forms of planning,

architecture and environment themselves participate in the imagination of the differences of identity and social composition explored below.

Kinship and Place

Although resettlement took place over forty years ago, a distinction between 'resettlers' (also referred to as 'VRA people' or 'government' people) on the one hand, and 'old town residents' on the other remains salient in a variety of different contexts. Ideas of kinship and relatedness are central to the way in which this boundary between the original residents of Apeguso and resettlers is defined and understood (cf. Strathern 1981).

In claiming Apeguso as their 'home-town' Akwamu residents assert connections to the place on the basis of matrilineally defined family membership. Following Middleton (1979), it is possible to construct an ideal type of the ways in which these connections are understood. Focusing on the predominantly Akan town of Akropong, Middleton describes how membership of particular 'houses' (*efie*) confers membership of larger sub-clan units. Ideally each 'house' literally occupies a 'family house' and acts as a corporate unit to allocate and distribute collectively owned property, including farming land and access to the house itself. According to Middleton:

Akropong is thus the nucleus of a complex network of relations between members of its population who are migrants of various kinds who, wherever they move and work, regard it as their 'home-town' (1979: 251).

People define 'home' on the basis of family ties which may have nothing to do with their actual place of birth. Moreover the places that people refer to as 'home' are frequently not the places in which they permanently reside.

Similarly in Apeguso the definition of a person's 'home town' ideally derives from membership of matrilineally defined descent groups which need not relate to the actual place a person lives or was born. Akwamu residents of Apeguso see migration to large urban cities as part of the normal life-cycle. When young men and women move away to gain education and employment, they continue to see themselves as part of their *abusua* (family) and by extension their home-town, a phenomena that occurs more widely in Ghana (Hill 1970; Manuh 2003; Oppong 1981) and Africa more generally (Geschiere and Gugler 1998; Gugler 1997; van Santen 1998). Indeed, far from weakening ties, such migration is often seen to strengthen them. By going away young men – and increasingly young women – gain wealth that can be distributed amongst kin or used for the construction of family houses within the home-town. While not all return, most express the desire to do so and hope to become respected in this context as elders and heads of families.

On return, migrants may occupy the room allocated to them within their 'family house'. However if the family house is small or in poor repair, or if the person is rich, they will often choose to build a new house. As for Akans more generally, building a house is considered to be one of the most important things that a man can do (Geest 1998). People who migrate to find work in larger cities or abroad (Manuh 2003) often send money back to their home-towns for relatives to build on their behalf. In doing so, people literalise ties to 'home', and seek to realise the common ideal of retirement spent as a respected elder surrounded by relatives. As Geest puts it:

'A house stands for successful life, for respect, love, happiness and security in old age. It is a thing of beauty and it provides a sense of belonging to 'home' both physically and symbolically.' (1998:336).

Ideas of 'home' as a physical space are thus inextricably linked to the social possibilities that this realises (Corsin-Jimenez 2003). The twi proverb 'Ye bias wo fie, ye mmisa wo sika' (we ask about your house, not about your money), articulates this idea, implying that houses, by contrast to money, are of inherent social worth (Geest 1998).

In this light, enduring ties to family constitute the basis upon which Akwamu residents of Apeguso claim it as their home-town. Although detailed knowledge of actual genealogical ties is often lacking, the image of connection between family and place forms the basis upon which belonging is asserted and boundaries are drawn.

Aged 63 Samuel Atara is a respected elder of Apeguso, where he lives in a large block-built compound house that he recently finished building. Born and raised in the town, he spent most of his adult life living and working away including as a watchman in Accra and later in the steel factory at Tema. Speaking of his decision to retire to Apeguso, he described his attachment to the place in terms of his own 'birth' and kin ties through both his mother and father. By contrast he explained the impossibility of resettlers ever integrating into the community:

To me as an Apeguso man I know that this place is not their home town, only that they stay here. If they die, they can bury them here or bury them there. But anything at all you do here, this place is not your home town

In this vein Akwamu residents more generally claimed 'real' connections in distinction to those who were resettled in the 1960s.

Since, in theory, 'home' is matrilineally defined, the Akan model of descent does not appear to provide the same grounds for equivocation as the bilateral model outlined by Strathern (1981) in the context of Elmdon. However recent studies of Akan kinship show how in practice similar kinds of choices can be made. As against earlier models of lineal descent Clark suggests that:

> A person can concurrently invoke distinct and contradictory sets of kinship and marriage rules from Akan matriliny, fundamentalist Christianity and Western romantic secularism. Each is widely enough recognised to make an effective bargaining chip without cancelling the others out. The ability to renegotiate and reinterpret obligations of kinship, marriage, chieftaincy, neighbourhood etc., in the context of frequent and dramatic changes in life circumstances seems ironically to be one of the most firmly held and persistent values. (Clark 1999:70)

Extending this point, it becomes apparent that if kinship idioms in fact constitute a set of plural ideological commitments from which people selectively draw, then the connections that these set up to different places are also negotiable. In Apeguso, as in Elmbdon, assertions of belonging routed through kinship are in fact more flexible than they appear.

In practice, 'home' was not simply defined through matrilineal descent but also, through other familial ties. In particular people with paternal ties to Apeguso sometimes emphasized the

importance of these relations and spoke of the significance of the role of the father as a spiritual guide to his children. Similarly the significance of such relations was often emphasized when allied to long-term residence.

Now in his fifties, Alex Oboubi, has lived and worked in Apeguso for most of his adult life. As the headmaster of the town's largest junior school he is a well respected member of the community. His mother's family live in the nearby town of Akwamu Fie, and accordingly he conceded that some would consider this to be his real home. Yet as he explained, this was not his own way of looking upon it:

> You see we [Akans] believe in matrilineal inheritance. I can say
> that strictly speaking I don't have my extended family here. […] But my personal belief,
> [and what] I normally write on forms, [is] that Apeguso is my home town because I was
> born and bred here.

In his view, matrilineal ties to Akwamu Fie were relatively insignificant when weighed against the various relationships that connected him to Apeguso. In particular he spoke of the fact he was born there and of family relationships on his father's side. He also highlighted the friendships he had made and the respect that people gave him as a result of a life spent living and working in the town. 'Home', from this perspective, was not simply a matter of inviolable ties of kinship but also of 'experience' and of the connections to people and place that develop through this.

In a more diffuse sense, Akwamus at times claimed Apeguso as their 'home' on the basis of a common ethnic identity. In the context of Northwest Ghana, Lentz suggests that:

'The effectiveness of ethnic discourses is based on the fact that they transfer the emotional power of categories such as 'family', 'village' and 'home' onto larger communities. By claiming to be primordial and non-negotiable, because defined through birth, an ethnic identity creates bindedness, permanance and thus security. But it also excludes producing need and insecurity.'

(2000:137)

In a similar way, people that migrated to Apeguso from nearby towns and villages drew on ideas of the Akwamu as a single family, with a shared set of beliefs and traditions. Drawing on these ideas of ethnicity and kinship, they claimed Apeguso as 'home' and asserting their rights to 'belong' there.

Images of Home

Idealised images of the 'home town' equate kinship and place with 'tradition' and 'custom'. Yet as Manuh (2003) argues in the context of Ghanaian migrants in Toronto, people relate to common images of 'home' in different ways. Manuh's own analysis focuses on the gendered implications of this difference, suggesting that whilst male migrants imagine 'home' as a secure place of family and friends in the midst of their own displacements, women tend to embrace the possibilities of freedom offered by migration and correspondingly view 'home' as a place of repression.

Similarly in Apeguso images of 'home' conflate ideas of kinship, tradition and place which people understand and relate to in different ways. In the old town elder men tended to view the home-town as a place of 'tradition', elucidated the virtues of 'respect', 'order' and

'tranquillity' associated with it. By contrast, younger residents sometimes spoke of 'tradition' in less positive terms, highlighting, the loss of freedom associated with life lived in close proximity to other family members. From this perspective kinship was regarded as a constraint and negatively contrasted with the more 'free' kinds of relationship that develop in the city. In a similar vein, Apeguso was sometimes described in derogatory terms as a 'village' (akuraa), lacking 'civilisation' (anibea) and 'development'.

A similar opposition between 'tradition' and 'modernity' underscores Ewe resettlers contrasting relationship to Apeguso. Resettlers imagine Apeguso as a place of 'modernity' and 'development' by contrast to the more 'traditional' home-towns from which their families originated. Amongst older residents Apeguso is often negatively contrasted with 'home', as a place in which the youth forget about family and think only of themselves. For many the desire to return home to build a house and ultimately to be buried remains an overriding preoccupation. Peter Domey, was a small child during the time of evacuation and suggested that despite having subsequently schooled and worked in Apeguso he was always made to feel a 'second-class citizen'. By contrast he related:

When we go [to our home town] it always feels like home. Because our family there want us to be there. The people there know our parents, so they feel we should come there often.

In this way sentimental descriptions of 'home' articulate antipathy both towards the process of resettlement and to the way in which they have been treated by Apeguso residents. Apeguso is cast as a place of failed modernity, in so far as resettlement, is seen to undermine their former freedom and turn them, as people sometimes claimed, into 'permanent strangers'.

By contrast a number of the younger and more educated resettlers draw on a similar opposition between tradition and modernity in outlining a more positive image of Apeguso. Aged thirty, Wisdom was born in Apeguso, where he spent much of his youth. Lacking his own house and farm in his home-town of Tefle he talked of feeling like a 'stranger' there, relating this to his own exposure to 'modern' ideas and ways of life:

When you come to modernisation and this kind of western life, sometimes we also look at them as people who […] have lost certain facts [and] values. It is like there is something missing in their life. Looking at their dress, the way they talk […] in that aspect we also find ourselves on top of some of them.

More generally, those born after resettlement tended to equate Apeguso with a 'modern' outlook and way of life, through which life in the home town comes to be seen in terms of deficit and lack as a place that is 'backward' and 'undeveloped'.

Amongst resettlers and old town residents alike, an apparently simplistic dichotomy between tradition and modernity in fact articlutates multiple interests and ideas, framing forms of discourse and relation that are not analytically reducible to these terms. Although kin relations are commonly elided with 'tradition', the ethnographic consequences of doing so are variable. As a form of tradition, kinship can be seen as 'backward looking' and 'regressive', or alternatively as integral to the maintenance of individual and social virtues such as morality and respect.

Contesting Place and Belonging

Whilst the idealised models of Apeguso residents imagine kinship to delimit discrete sociological groups, in reality such ideas create an images of boundary which are then utilised to different effect. As Strathern (1981) argues in the context of Elmdon, the key issue is not whether these ideas are objectively 'true' but why and in what contexts they matter.

In Apeguso, many of these issues derive from the fact of resettlement. From the perspective of Akwamus, Ewe resettlers are often regarded as taking scarce resources and impinging on the rights of 'old town' residents. For example, resettlers are said to put pressure on school places, as well as on public services such as water pumps and public toilets. In addition a perceived shortage of farmland is often blamed upon resettlers, who each received three acre plots as part of the compensation that accompanied resettlement. In the context of these issues, home-town connections are invoked as the basis upon which Akwamu residents claim differential rights. On these grounds, resettlers who have lived in Apeguso for over forty years, are sometimes denied rights given to more recent Akwamu residents.

For their part, Ewe resettlers voice concerns about the increasing number of people from the old town renting or buying core houses originally given to resettlers. Similarly a perceived shortage of housing is seen to be exacerbated by the differential and partisan manner in which people from the old town implement planning regulations. In voicing these concerns resettlers at times foregrounded their rights as citizens of the town, on the basis of birth or long term residence. Having lived and worked in Apeguso, resettlers make claims to equal treatment on the basis that the town was also their 'home'.

More commonly, however, the right to belong is asserted on the basis of resettlers particular history and the 'sacrifices' this entailed. In this way, resettlers seek to leverage a particular relationship to the state at times defining themselves as 'VRA people' or 'government

people'. For resettlers economic and political rights are therefore seen to derive from a form of belonging relating to historical circumstance rather than kinship. As a legitimating symbol of this particular history, ownership of a core house was often invoked as the basis for truly belonging as a settler.

In debates between resettlers and old town residents, a common boundary is therefore differently constructed in the service of competing arguments about the respective rights of resettlers and natives of Apeguso. Whilst the nature of this boundary is contested, the manner in which it is drawn is also open to negotiation. In this way an apparently static boundary between 'home-town' residents and 'strangers' is evoked in different contexts to define different groups of people. Akwamus living in the resettlement quarters seek to strategically leverage a position of ambiguity, at times claiming Apeguso as their home-town on the basis of ethnic and kin ties, whilst at other times foregrounding the historical circumstances through which they were resettled. Similarly the location of this boundary becomes problematic in the context of disputes about who can legitimately claim to be a 'real' resettler. To the extent that this identity was seen to relate to the historical circumstances of resettlement, this was contested in terms of competing versions of history. In particular contradictory claims were made regarding who was first to arrive, and who the quarters were 'really' intended for. Here, again, the significance of having been given a core house was often emphasized.

While a variety of people claim affiliation to the old town as the grounds for asserting a position of superiority over resettlers, it is important to note that ties to 'home' are not always privileged over other forms of relationship.. As Edwards (1998) argues, belonging to a locality is not always regarded as positive, and different elements of identity may be brought to the fore or suspended at different times. In Apeguso those who have lived and worked 'outside' foreground

a more cosmopolitan identity through talking of the relationships and resources that this gives them access to. The connection to people and things beyond Apeguso also at times privileges an explicitly 'modern' identity (cf. Ferguson 1999). By the same token resettlers turned their own status as 'strangers' to their own advantage. In this way resettlers justified lack of participation in communal labour and communal events on the ground they were not 'really' part of the town. Similarly relationships to home-towns beyond Apeguso were used to argue for greater political autonomy in the form of an independently recognised chief.

Although kinship was in this way used as the basis upon which to draw a range of distinctions, ideas of kinship were also employed in the imagination of a more inclusive future. Both Ewes and Akwamus at times asserted their hope that inter-marriage would lead to a situation in which all would become one. Talking of the ways in which conflict has afflicted the town, Alex Oboubi, an Akwamu, thus suggested:

> We are all brothers, we are all black. Forget about the dialect, forget about the ethnic background. When we begin to inter-marry, our offspring, when we are dead and gone will become one

Wisdom, a junior school teacher from the resettlement quarters similarly invoked kinship in his more positive assessment of the existing situation:

> You will not even identify one from the other. When you move round you will hear people speaking twi as if they are twis – Ewes sitting down and speaking twi. It does happen here.

And the Ewe guys are marrying the Twi ladies […]. So that cooperation is there. You will

not see any difference.'

Despite differences of perspective, both Ewes and Akans imagined the development of kin

relations between resettlers and old town residents to provide the grounds for an un-divided and

prosperous community. While kinship was invoked in the assertion of social and ethnic

difference, it was also invoked as a means of erasing these.

Conclusion

In her recent discussion of a compensation dispute between two Minj tribal groups in Papua New

Guinea, Strathern (2005) suggests that the judge's Euro-American equation of kinship with

tradition, concealed actor's own capacities to reflect on the fact of their relationships. Indigenous

ideas of kinship and relatedness, she argues, constitute an important intellectual resource that is

concealed when kinship is understood to occupy the domain of tradition.

As elucidated above, a similar Euro-American understanding of kinship underpins the

approach of the planners and state officials responsible for implementing resettlement.

According to this logic, as resettlement brought modernity, so the importance of kinship would

diminish. In the event, however, changes brought about by this process have intensified interest

in kinship as a means of defining and contesting access to a variety of resources. Following

Strathern these ideas about kinship and relatedness can be seen to constitute a significant

intellectual resource that cannot be comprehended in the limited analytic terms of an opposition

between tradition and modernity. The contemporary importance of kinship cannot be understood

as a 'hangover' from a more 'traditional' era in the sense that understandings of the importance

of family relations are configured in response to interests and tensions arising out of the fact of resettlement.

Yet Strathern's (2005) insight that kinship and tradition should not be analytically equated is partially complicated by the ways in which planners, architects and people living in resettlement townships make precisely this equation. When Akans talk of home-towns and of the matrilineal ties that connect them to these places, they often explicitly present these relations as 'traditional', by contrast to the more 'modern' forms of relationship imagined to develop elsewhere. By the same token resettlers frequently speak of Apeguso as a place of 'modernity' and oppose this to the 'tradition' of their own home-towns. Whilst the presentation of kin relations as traditional may be used to legitimise claims to belong, it may also be used to denigrate them. In this way, Ewe settlers speak of the ways in which kin relations are used to exclude them from town affairs, presenting these as backwards, and anachronistic. In other words, choices about the kinds of relationship people participate in, are inextricably bound up with understandings of tradition and modernity.

A similar equation of kinship and tradition underscores much of the planning discourse, albeit to often very different effect. During the process of resettlement, kinship as a form of tradition, was seen to entail both positive and negative possibilities. Whilst often seen as a negative break on the development of more diffuse forms of relationship, and as compromising the emergence of individual, autonomous citizens, it was also at times construed as the basis for social integration. In this sense, the opposition between tradition and modernity is itself an important intellectual resource, that is drawn into the imagination of different relational possibilities.

Though planners use of this opposition may indeed conceal local understandings of

kinship, the opposition also, at times, provides the very terms in which these understandings of kinship are made evident. Borrowing from Strathern's (1981) model developed in Kinship at the Core, we might say that this opposition also constitutes an image of boundary which can then be evoked in different contexts and in the service of different ideas and agendas. An apparently simplistic opposition between 'tradition' and 'modernity' is used to make apparent interests ideas and agenda that cannot themselves be understood in these terms.

Acknowledgements