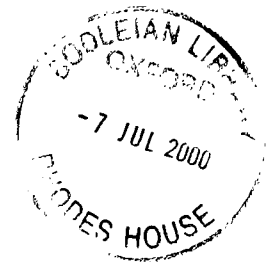


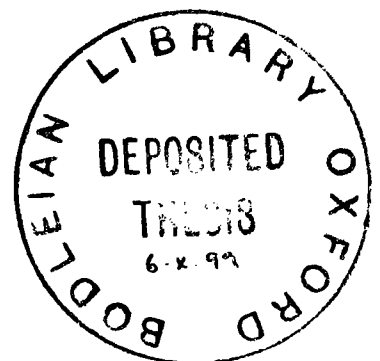
Hierarchy in twentieth-century Sefwi (Ghana)

Stefano Boni
Linacre College

A thesis presented to the Faculty of Anthropology and Geography
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy, University of Oxford



Hilary Term 1999



Abstract: "Hierarchy in twentieth-century Sefwi (Ghana)"

by Stefano Boni, Linacre College

Doctor of Philosophy, University of Oxford, Hilary Term 1999.

The dissertation aims to provide an understanding of the relation between political-economic power and the attribution of social value in twentieth-century Sefwi (Ghana). The existing literature on relations of dominance amongst the Akan has flaws: works examine single relations of dominance in isolation; studies focus mostly on discontinuity and change; peripheral areas are neglected. In the dissertation these issues are addressed. Hierarchy is used as an analytical tool which enables one to link diverse expressions of dominance; the persistence of certain hierarchical patterns throughout the twentieth century is analysed alongside transformations; and the focus is on Sefwi, a marginal region of the Akan world.

The dissertation is divided into five sections. The introduction presents the methodological and theoretical approach adopted in the work. Part one is concerned with change in hierarchical patterns: twentieth-century dynamics are analysed to determine the extent of change with reference to chiefly power, capitalist relations and gender issues. Part two shows that unequal relations inform three hierarchical domains -ancestry, gender and seniority. Part three addresses the issue of the coherence and unity of hierarchy by examining modes of organization of experience that cut across the three domains of inequality: reference is made to the use of kinship terms; concepts of ownership, caretakership and help; recourse to the supernatural; food and drink transactions. In the conclusion, Sefwi hierarchy is examined in a wider comparative and theoretical perspective with reference to the notions of 'encompassing of the contrary' (Dumont) and 'fetishization' (Marx).

Long Abstract: "Hierarchy in twentieth-century Sefwi (Ghana)"

by Stefano Boni, Linacre College

Doctor of Philosophy, University of Oxford, Hilary Term 1999.

The dissertation aims to provide an understanding of the relation between political-economic power and the attribution of social value in twentieth-century Sefwi (Ghana). The existing literature on relations of dominance amongst the Akan has flaws: works examine single relations of dominance in isolation; studies focus mostly on discontinuity and change; peripheral areas are neglected. In the dissertation these issues are addressed. Hierarchy is used as an analytical tool which enables one to link diverse expressions of dominance; the persistence of certain hierarchical patterns throughout the twentieth century is analysed alongside transformations; and the focus is on Sefwi, a marginal region of the Akan world.

The objective of this thesis is not limited to the presentation of ethnographic and historical material concerning inequality in Sefwi. The aim is rather to insert the fieldwork results into a broader understanding of inequality which may have relevance beyond the Sefwi area. The ethnographic material is therefore presented with constant reference to other works on neighbouring Akan areas to show the wider implications of the hierarchical patterns described as principles of organization of society and guides for action.

In the introduction the theory and methodology used in the dissertation are illustrated. Studies on inequalities in the Akan area are reviewed and their shortfalls described. The concept of hierarchy is then presented and its usefulness explained. Sefwi, the research area, is introduced in relation to the wider cultural and historical context of the Akan region and of nineteenth-century Asante in particular. Finally, information on fieldwork techniques and methodology is furnished.

In part one, the dynamics of inequality are explored over the twentieth century. Most writers have so far stressed the discontinuity produced by the introduction of colonial rule and the spread of monetization. Here political and economic change is shown to have occurred partly within the framework of existing hierarchical relations. This point is elaborated with reference to three issues. The alteration of chiefly status produced by the introduction of market-oriented production is considered in chapter one. The consequences of the advent of capitalism on land and labour agreements are examined in chapter two with reference to the

cocoa industry. Chapter three is concerned with the transformation of gender relations by focusing on the stability of marriage, paternal rights and the distribution of parental responsibilities. Finally the issue of transition to a capitalist system is examined through insights provided by two Marxist writers (chapter 4).

In part two relations of subordination are approached with reference to the economic, social and political roles they create, and to the value attributed locally to each role. In the literature relations of dominance have so far been considered separately, ignoring their common features. Here, various relations are shown to be structured around three domains: ancestry, gender and seniority. These are examined as social constructions which organize society according to shared and meaningful principles. Ancestry (chapter 5) organizes a number of hierarchical relations. In the first half of the twentieth century incoming groups were assimilated in the Sefwi political structure and attributed political positions according to their ancestors' deeds. Until the 1950s a policy of assimilation prevailed and the attribution of a "stranger" identity was a temporary phenomenon. During the second half of the twentieth century, when large numbers of agricultural immigrants began to pour into the Sefwi area, foreigners were no longer assimilated. Their subordination has since been organized in relation to land access and labour relations. Forms of dominance organized according to gender (chapter 6) are examined within a range of different relationships. Gender is discussed within matrilineages. The history of marriage is studied with particular reference to the duties attributed to husbands and wives. Women's access to cash is analyzed in the context of cocoa production, and land transfers are examined in relation to Sefwi ideas concerning the value of women's labour. Several relations organized around seniority are then considered (chapter 7). These include rights and duties of youngsters in households; the importance of seniority in land access and cocoa farming; relations of seniority within matrilineages; and apprenticeship. In chapter eight, the general characteristics of hierarchical domains are discussed with particular attention to their claim of being natural and to their prevalent context of use.

In part three dominance is examined with reference to hierarchical codes, defined as meaningful ways of interpreting and ordering experience through a system of shared signs and symbols which include gestures, language and social actions. Examples of cultural codes implying subordination are discussed with reference to all three domains: ancestry, gender

and seniority. Kinship (chapter 9) is shown to act as a code which enables people to extend subordinate roles outside the arena of kinship proper. The framing of numerous relations with reference to the positions of wives, children, brothers, uncles is used to attribute and refuse subordinate roles. A set of terms linked to the division of labour and to responsibilities is considered as a second hierarchical code (chapter 10). The organization of experience around the roles of "owners", "subjects", "caretakers", "helpers" assigns unequal positions in numerous labour arrangements and justifies uneven control of revenues. Reference to the supernatural is examined next (chapter 11). The use of fetish-drinking and oath-swearing is analyzed over the twentieth century with reference to the creation, justification and refusal of subordination. Transactions of food and alcoholic drinks are considered in chapter twelve. The meaning of these transfers is examined in hierarchical relations generally and, more specifically, in a cluster of rituals which share common transactional patterns. The examination of codes shows that Sefwi hierarchical experience is organized as a unitary and consistent system: codes create unequal roles used across a number of relation (chapter 13).

In the conclusion, hierarchy is discussed in comparative perspective to understand its widespread local acceptance. Connections between notions of encompassment and value differentiation in social groups are examined with reference to the work of Dumont. The attribution of group membership implies assimilation in an inferior position within the group. The group's head holds the superior status and is identified with the whole group. Patterns of accumulation and distribution of resources are examined with reference to the Marxist concept of fetishization and in relation to Sefwi notions of the person. The head of the group is thought to be the rightful beneficiary of members' labour and of the group's resources. The head guarantees the group's prosperity by redistributing material and immaterial benefits to members.

Contents

Introduction. 1

<i>Studies concerning inequality in the Akan area</i>	1
<i>Definition of hierarchy</i>	3
<i>The Akan civilization</i>	7
<i>The Asante empire</i>	11
<i>The Sefwi kingdom</i>	14
<i>Fieldwork and methodology</i>	19

Part I. Inequality and change. 22

Chapter 1. Innovations and continuities in the political order	23
<i>Chiefs' and commoners' incomes compared</i>	25
<i>Chiefly dominance contested</i>	30
Chapter 2. The advent of capitalism in the cocoa industry	39
<i>Land rights</i>	40
<i>Labour arrangements</i>	47
Chapter 3. Transformations in notions of parenthood and marriage.....	52
<i>Fluidity of marital roles</i>	55
<i>Gendered rights from parenthood</i>	58
<i>Gendered parental responsibilities</i>	61
Chapter 4. The extent of change	67

Part II. From hierarchical relations to domains. 71

Chapter 5. Ancestry	72
<i>Genealogies</i>	75
<i>Historical narratives</i>	80
<i>Identity of king and kingdom</i>	82
<i>The elluo festival</i>	83
<i>Ancestral origin in society</i>	86
<i>The emergence of permanent strangers</i>	91
<i>Chiefs & Strangers: landlords and tenants</i>	96
<i>Chiefs & Sefwi: revenues and laziness</i>	107
<i>Strangers as labourers</i>	112

Chapter 6. Gender	118
<i>Women in matrilineages</i>	120
<i>Women in marriages</i>	123
<i>Husbands, wives and joint enterprises</i>	126
<i>Gender appropriate works and women's independence</i>	133
<i>Women's constraints in independent cocoa production</i>	136
<i>Women's success and the alteration of sex-roles</i>	142
Chapter 7. Seniority	145
<i>Youngsters in matrilineages</i>	146
<i>Youngsters in households</i>	149
<i>Youngsters' independence</i>	157
<i>Seniority and cocoa ownership</i>	160
<i>Youngsters' labour in and out of cocoa</i>	169
<i>Seniority in apprenticeship</i>	174
Chapter 8. Hierarchical domains	179
 Part III. From domains, through codes to hierarchy. 183	
Chapter 9. Kinship as a hierarchical code	184
<i>Perpetuation of kinship ties</i>	184
<i>Establishment of new kinship ties</i>	193
Chapter 10. The language of ownership, caretakership and help	197
<i>Institutional roles: subjects and caretakers</i>	197
<i>Informal relations: kin and household members</i>	205
Chapter 11. Supernatural codes	211
<i>Spiritual drinks</i>	212
<i>Oath swearing</i>	218
Chapter 12. Transactional codes	225
<i>Food transactions</i>	225
<i>Drink transactions</i>	239
Chapter 13. Hierarchical codes and hierarchy	246

Conclusion: Hierarchy in comparative perspective.	250
<i>Hierarchy as the encompassing of the contrary</i>	250
<i>Hierarchy and fetishization</i>	252
<i>Hierarchy in Akan marriage</i>	256
 Glossary	 262
Appendix 1- Cases of pawnship in Sefwi court records	267
Appendix 2- Data on cocoa production in Sefwi.....	268
Bibliography.....	269
Archives.....	295
Recordings.....	298

List of figures and tables

Figure 1. General Schematic Genealogy of the Sefwi Wiawso <i>oman</i>	79
Figure 2. General Schematic Genealogy of the village of Suhienso	87
Figure 3. The allocation of Kofi Badu's land estate.....	165
Figure 4. A five years old farm.....	167
Figure 5. Food and drink transfers and hierarchical relations.....	242
Figure 6. Dumont's graphic illustration of "distinctive" and "hierarchical" oppositions...	251
Figure 7. Hierarchy in Akan marriage.....	258
Table 1. Labour contracts by ancestral origin	114
Table 2. Most recent transfers from kin to present owner.....	122
Table 3. First owner of plot by sex and survey area.....	137
Table 4. Average age at acquisition of farm by sex.....	139
Table 5. Acres owned by farmer by sex and age	140
Table 6. Average time inputs in different activities per sex and age.....	151
Table 7. Percentage of farmers in age group per size of land holding.....	168
Table 8. Income from agricultural products and percentage contribution to the total income per age of interviewee.....	171

Acknowledgments

The doctoral project benefitted in different ways and at different times from several inputs which shaped its outcome. My first six-month residence in Ghana in 1993 was aimed at gathering information for my BA thesis at the University of Siena. Pier Giorgio Solinas, Luciano Li Causi and Fabio Viti provided encouragement and support besides informing my interests. When I continued my studies in England, they maintained their interests in my research progress. The NGO *Ricerca e Cooperazione*, and particularly Gianna Da Re, assisted me during my research in 1993. The help and friendship were renewed in successive periods of fieldwork .

The Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology of the University of Oxford provided a unique and stimulating setting for the doctoral project. Wendy James, Bob Barnes and David Parkin discussed the project at various stages and provided insightful suggestions. Paul Dresch, my supervisor at ISCA, followed my research right from the start. His comments guided my project and inspired my analysis of the fieldwork results. Terence Ranger, up to the time he taught in Oxford, and Richard Rathbone at SOAS acted as valuable co-supervisors. I wish to thank them for their careful and critical readings of various drafts of this work. I acknowledge a debt with Pepe Roberts who granted me free access to her unique knowledge and sources on Sefwi. I also benefitted from the friendship and valuable suggestions of Karen Ludtke.

I wish to acknowledge the financial assistance of the Rhodes Trust which provided a scholarship for the three years of my residence in Oxford and a research grant in 1996. The Godfrey Lienhardt Memorial Trust sponsored my fieldwork in 1997. Linacre College and the Oxford University Graduate Studies Centre offered research grants as well both in 1996 and 1997.

This work was made possible by the friendship and assistance of Stephen, Oscar, Felix, Thomas, Francis and Godlove and by all those who guided me during my residence in Sefwi. Informants not only play a crucial role in the collection of information; they enable an outsider to find one's way, help in the elaboration of the data and suggest interpretations. Sadly and unjustly their work is seldom acknowledged fully and they do not appear as co-

authors when the writing appears. All I can do here, is express my gratitude. Finally, I am indebted with all the inhabitants of Anglo, Suhienso, Nsawora and Debiso who welcomed me, offered hospitality and whose generosity has been boundless and undifferentiated along the hierarchical structure from youngsters, women and strangers all the way up the ladder to the *omanhene* Nana Kwadwo Aduhene II.

Introduction

This work is a contribution to the understanding of the allocation of wealth and value in the Akan area of Ghana. The introduction presents the objectives of the dissertation and explains its methodological and theoretical assumptions: the use of the concept of hierarchy to examine relations of dominance across social contexts; an interdisciplinary approach which relates the ethnographic material gathered during fieldwork to existing historical, sociological and economic studies; the attention paid to patterns and continuities in the organization of inequality throughout the twentieth century; the focus on a peripheral area of the Akan region.

Studies concerning inequality in the Akan area

Inequalities in the Akan area deserve attention because of three shortcomings in existing work on stratification, dominance and power. First, the literature has focused on single relations of dominance. Different unequal relations - - namely those linked to ancestry, gender and age are usually analyzed in isolation. Studies lack a unifying perspective and seldom attempt to find shared assumptions across social levels. For example, there is a tendency to separate economic dominance from religious prestige and allocation of value. Moreover socioeconomic and anthropological studies have often failed to illustrate the moral legitimations of existing inequalities.

Second, even though some notable exceptions exist, status in the precolonial and postcolonial period is usually analysed separately. For historians concerned with wealth accumulation, rank and class in the nineteenth-century Akan area, colonial rule usually marks the end of their accounts.¹ On the other hand, historical and anthropological studies which concentrate on the impact of the market economy in the early colonial period, make little reference to precolonial Akan dynamics.² Sociological and economic works make large use of

¹ See Arhin (1983a, 1983b, 1988b, 1990); Dumett (1983, 1990); Gocking (1990); Gutkind (1989); Kaplow (1978); McCaskie (1980a, 1981, 1983, 1986, 1995); Perbi (1992); Perrot (1982); Terray (1975, 1980, 1995); Wilks (1979, 1987).

² Austin (1987), Allman (1996), Arhin (1976), Boaten (1974), Sutton (1983), Roberts (1987).

statistical data and focus mostly on contemporary labour relations.³ McCaskie (1986: 19) has stressed the scant historical perspective of Akan studies generally.

There clearly exists a curious intellectual "dead zone" in time that effectively separates historical reconstruction from contemporary analysis. On the whole historians of the precolonial period do not carry the implications of their analyses into the contemporary world; and social scientists tend to look at modern Africa with a limited historical understanding.

The potential continuities of precolonial hierarchical practices into the twentieth-century cocoa industry are rarely addressed.

Finally, studies are mostly focused on center-stage political dynamics. A large literature is now available on nineteenth-century Asante –especially on the state apparatus resident in Kumase⁴- and on coastal traders.⁵ Peripheral areas of the Akan world, however, receive scant attention.

Asante historiography until now has been about the state and its servants, their practices and ideologies. The *Nkuraasefoo* [villagers] the vast bulk of the population, are heard, when at all, in the wings or off-stage. Whether their precolonial history can be reconstructed is a moot point; that their twentieth-century history can be reconstructed, but as yet has not been, is evident (McCaskie 1986: 19).

In the last two decades these shortfalls were partly addressed. Historians have produced several works concerning the legitimization of inequality. Studies have tried to bridge the gap between the precolonial and postcolonial period. Peripheral areas of the Akan world are increasingly studied. This dissertation wants to contribute to the overcoming of these shortfalls by using a theoretical framework centred on the concept of hierarchy, by focusing on continuities over the twentieth century, and by concentrating on a peripheral area of the Akan region, Sefwi. The objective of this work is not limited to the presentation of

³ Anaman (1986); Arhin (1986a, 1988a); Boadu (1992); Okali (1974, 1982); Kimmerling (1971); Konings (1986); Okali, Owusuansah, Rourke (1974).

⁴ Arhin (1983a, 1983b, 1986b); McCaskie (1981, 1983, 1986, 1995); Wilks (1987, 1993).

⁵ Kaplow (1978); Arhin (1983b); Dumett (1983); Gocking (1990).

ethnographic and historical material concerning inequality in Sefwi. The aim is rather to insert the fieldwork results into a broader understanding of inequality which may have relevance beyond Sefwi. The ethnographic material is therefore presented with constant reference to other works on neighbouring Akan areas to show the wider implications of the hierarchical patterns described as principles of organization of society and guides for action.

Definition of hierarchy

Hierarchy presupposes inequality, which may be addressed through a variety of concepts. *Rank* has been used in the Akan literature with reference to particular unequal relations, e.g. ancestry (Arhin 1983b). The notion of *class* has a Marxist connotation. This often leads to predetermined analyses which, on the one side, fail to address the importance of moral justifications which uphold inequality and, on the other, fail to account for local specificities (Terray 1975; Vercrujisse 1979; Crisp 1984; Konings 1986; Vellenga 1986). Neither rank nor class, moreover, is apt to address gender inequality (Robertson and Berger 1986). *Stratification* is normally used in economic analyses paying little attention to wider social and ideological implications of inequality (Howard 1980). *Status* refers to the position of an individual or group within society rather than to the working of the social system as such (Mikell 1984; Boaten 1993a). Notions of *dominance* and *oppression* imply coercion, while unequal relations are often considered locally as "natural" and are viewed as legitimate by both oppressors and oppressed.

Louis Dumont (1966) introduced the notion of hierarchy in anthropology with reference to the caste system in India. Hierarchy is defined "as the principle by which the elements of a whole are ranked in relation to the whole" (Dumont 1980: 66). This is connected to religious ranking: "in the majority of societies it is religion which provides the view of the whole, and ... ranking will thus be religious in nature". Dumont describes the hierarchy of the Hindu *varnas* through "successive dichotomies and inclusions" (p. 67) based on the opposition between pure and impure.

Some studies after the publication of Dumont's (1966) *Homo Hierarchicus* followed his use of the term. Others used hierarchy in rather different ways. Brady's (1978) Oxford D. Phil. thesis *Hierarchy and Authority among the Hausa*, for instance contains no reference to

the work of Dumont. Brown (1988: 5, 314-315) uses hierarchy cross-culturally to define "hereditarily stratified societies" and rejects Dumont's definition. Roniger's (1990: 24-29, 192-194) notion of hierarchy in southern and central America differs from Dumont's because in Latin America "hierarchy has been encompassed by equality and not the other way round" (p. 194). Other recent studies make use of the concept with no reference to Dumont. Rather than on the relationship between elements and whole, the focus is on social or ideological stratification (Telban 1996, Marlow 1997).

Works which have followed Dumont's definition more faithfully include two edited volumes which apply the notion of hierarchy outside India. The 1984 volume edited by Galey *Différences, Valeurs, Hiérarchie: Textes offertes à Louis Dumont* examines various aspects of Dumont's work and part three discusses "the particular relations which accompany the notion of hierarchy" (Galey 1984b: xxviii). The second volume, *Contexts and Levels: Anthropological Essays on Hierarchy*, edited by Barnes and de Coppet attempts "to explore the comparative potential of Dumont's ideas of hierarchy in social contexts different from the classical Indian sphere" (Barnes and de Coppet 1985: 2).

My use of the notion shares some of Dumont's concerns. First, it focuses on a structural analysis of society: "a system of relations, in short, not a system of elements" (Dumont 1980: 40). Second, it is concerned with principles of social organization, with the ideology intended "as systems of ideas and values in social action" (Barnes 1985: 8). In two respects, however, we must differ with Dumont's usage. First, Dumont identifies for India a sole "fundamental opposition" which "underlies hierarchy" (p. 43), i.e. pure/impure. By contrast, I examine three different domains: ancestry, gender, seniority. Moreover, I examine hierarchy within these domains as structured around contraries admitting gradations rather than exhaustive opposites (Barnes 1985). Second, the Akan world requires a more comprehensive definition of hierarchy integrating economics, politics and religion. The reason is simple: "in India there has never been spiritual power ...; status and power are differentiated, just as the general consideration of hierarchy seemed to require" (p. 72), and politics is hierarchically inferior to religion (pp. 75-79). Dumont identifies hierarchy in the Brahmanic ideology expressed in the theory of *varnas*. In the Akan world the religious sphere is not easily distinguishable from the economic or political: non-christian religious cults are deeply rooted in the chiefly order.

Kings and elders are themselves central religious figures: political power rests on a ritual legitimacy involving the supernatural.

Let us consider, for instance, a nuclear household. Members are differentiated by value. Headship is normally vested in the eldest male member; his wives, children and other kin are subordinates. The household head incorporates inferior members. He benefits from members' labour and manages the bulk of the household's resources. He represents members in judicial settings, is a key ritual figure in ceremonies involving members and manages the formal social and political relations of his household with others. The household head is also in charge of protecting inferior members spiritually by seeking the ancestors' intervention through libations.

The definition of hierarchy and of related concepts provided below is an analytical tool aimed at understanding the Akan world. I define hierarchy as the classification of a body of people in unequal ranks with respect to religious, social, economic and political status. An egalitarian concept of the individual is lacking. Instead a process of differentiation occurs. People are ranked into groups; religious competence, social value, political authority and economic wealth are allocated to these groups according to shared criteria. Dumont's (1980: 9) remarks on "traditional" and "holistic" societies share this perspective:

the stress is placed on the society as a whole, as a collective Man; the ideal derives from the organization of society in respect to its ends (and not with respect to individual happiness) it is above all a matter of order, and justice consists in ensuring that the proportions between social functions are adapted to the whole.

Related concepts used in the course of the dissertation include hierarchical *relations* by which I mean interactions between groups implying unequal religious, political, economic and social values. Hierarchical relations are ordered according to *domains* (ancestry, gender and seniority). Hierarchical *codes* are meaningful ways of interpreting and ordering experience through a system of shared signs and symbols which include gestures, language and social actions (kinship terminology, notions of ownership, recourse to the supernatural, food and drink transactions).

The dissertation begins with a critique of the fragmented study of inequality based on Western concepts and focused on change. Through the use of the notion of hierarchy, I aim to restore a unitary and persistent concept of inequality which accords with local understanding. In part one, I examine alterations undergone by inequality. An historical perspective covering the whole of the twentieth century is used to evaluate the continuity of hierarchical patterns. Even though major transformations occurred, I hold that certain patterns of allocation of unequal status remained unaltered. I examine such patterns by introducing the concept of hierarchy and by organizing the work thematically in parts two and three. Here the focus is on the persistence of hierarchical domains and codes through the twentieth century. In part two, I describe individual hierarchical relations and order them into three domains - -ancestry, gender and seniority. These domains are local ways of ordering experience and a first step to overcome the Western fragmentation of inequality. Sefwi, however, do not perceive these domains as separate and do not have local terms to distinguish them. In part three domains are shown to be interlinked and the unity of hierarchy is discussed. Single hierarchical relations, for instance the relationship between husband and wife, are part of a domain, e.g. gender, which comprises several relations. By examining codes, I show that domains, for instance gender, are perceived as part of hierarchy, a coherent and unitary complex of differentiated allocation of religious, social, economic and political status. The focus of the dissertation is therefore on common patterns of interrelation between the hierarchically superior and inferior in multiple relations.

Hierarchy in the Akan area invests notions of personhood. Those in superior positions are thought to hold superior personal qualities. *Tumi* is usually translated "power"; those who hold it, have the ability to intervene successfully in reality. *Sunsum* is the "essence" of beings; those who have strong *sunsum*, are able to use its supernatural force. The personal attributes of the hierarchical superiors justify their preeminence in society. Those who have such qualities need to take care of those who lack them, and do so by heading social groups. Locally the relationship thus established is expressed as *hwe so* which means to "look on" somebody who holds a lesser status.

In this regard, two recurrent hierarchical patterns need to be mentioned. First, the notion of encompassment or incorporation. I argue that persons and groups of inferior status are always

inserted into social/political units headed by superiors. Membership of these units implies being encompassed as part of the unit: the unit's head acts both as a member of the unit and as the whole unit. The notion of belonging or being incorporated implies that one is a subordinate part of a unit identified with the head. Second, the relationship between units' members and the head is one organized around a defined pattern of transfers of material and immaterial goods. The encompassing and the encompassed have different religious, economic and political transactional roles within the unit. A group's production, prestige, authority is controlled by the unit's head who uses it to "look on" members.

Two further points should be made before going further. First, to hold that the relations examined here are hierarchical and to discuss them from such a viewpoint implies taking a particular perspective. These relationships have other sides which will not be discussed in this work. Other approaches lead to different points of view, some emphasizing degrees of equality. By focusing on hierarchy, I acknowledge that I am privileging a certain reading of these relationships and that others may be equally relevant. Second, there are exceptions to the hierarchical relations examined as criteria are occasionally reversed; examples will be considered as we proceed.

The Akan civilization

The population which currently occupies most of south-eastern Ivory Coast and of southern Ghana, of which the Sefwi kingdom, my research area, is part, shares some common cultural, linguistic and political features. The part of the forest belt of West Africa displaying this cultural homogeneity is known as the Akan region.

Historians date the emergence of an Akan civilization to the fifteenth century. An economic system based on hunting and gathering was gradually replaced by one characterized by agriculture and trade. In the sixteenth and seventeenth century, new agricultural crops and techniques spread in the forest area enabling the production of substantial and regular surplus (Wilks 1993: 52-66). Moreover, in the same period commercial activities were stimulated by the insertion of the forest belt into two circuits of long-distance trade. One route was to the north, bringing the products of the Akan area, mostly gold and kola nuts, into the trans-Saharan trade. The other route, established in the fifteenth century, was to the European

settlements on the coast of the gulf of Guinea. Akan populations exported gold and ivory at first, and in the seventeenth and early nineteenth century mostly slaves. They imported brass, copper, clothes and slaves as well in an initial period (Law 1978, 1995; Wilks 1993: 16-28; Terray 1995). The transformation of agriculture and the spread of trading activities produced new opportunities for the accumulation of people -in the form of subordinate kin and slaves- and goods, such as clothes, firearms and gold -which was used as a mean of exchange. Accumulation, in turn, led to economic differentiation and state formation.⁶

Matriliney is a fundamental principle organizing Akan social life. The matrilineage is perceived as a group formed by deceased, living and future members. Akan believe that ideally there is a congruence between the past and present, between the deeds of the ancestors and the status of the living. Ancestors are represented by stools, symbolic artefacts charged with religious significance, which are managed by stool-holders, mostly chiefs, chosen from amongst the matrilineal members. Stool-holders must incorporate the knowledge, courage and strength of their ancestors. The installation of a new chief marks his transmutation from ordinary member of a matrilineage to representative of the ancestors on earth and intermediary between them and the community.

The chief, accompanied by a select few, goes into the stool-house, where he finds the blackened stools of his predecessors. Upon the one belonging to the most renowned of the dead chiefs, he is lowered and raised thrice. He has been brought into the closest possible contact with the ancestors and therefore enstooled. He is now more than just a head of state. He is, in a sense, an ancestor himself He has become sacred and is treated accordingly with the greatest respect (Sarpong 1971: 53-54; cf. Busia 1951: 8, 26-27; Kyerematen 1964; Gilbert 1987; Boaten 1993b).

The stool-holder incorporates the community's welfare and his behaviour is therefore strictly regulated .

⁶ This paragraph draws largely on McCaskie's (1983) and Wilks' (1993) insights. I believe however that the rise of a civilization in the forest area of what is today Ghana, with its characteristic kinship system, economic accumulation and state formation, predated the rise of the Asante state. This civilization should therefore have a name, such as Akan, which comprises the variegated forms it took over time (fifteenth to twentieth century) and space, rather than being called "proto-Asante" (McCaskie 1983).

He may not strike or be struck by anyone; he should not walk bare-footed; and as the drummer regularly reminds him on the talking drums, he should always tread 'gently gently; a chief walks gently, majestically', lest he stumble; his buttocks must never touch the ground. The occurrence of any of these incidents would, it is believed, cause some misfortune to befall the community, unless the expected calamity is averted by a sacrifice An Ashanti chief fills a sacred role as the 'one who sits upon the stool of the ancestors' (Busia 1954: 202; cf. Busia 1951: 26-27; Viti 1998: 230-233).

If a chief dies having honored his position, a stool is blackened for him in turn and he too becomes one of the ancestors (cf. Sarpong 1971: 35-55; Gilbert 1989; Boaten 1993b; Rathbone 1993). If, on the other hand, his behaviour is unsound, he abuses his position or is unable to maintain his ancestors' prestige, the chief may be deposed. Chiefs' exercise of power is thus limited by the continuous threat of deposition. Destoolment is usually sought by the chiefs' kin and by subordinate or superior chiefs. The malcontents present a set charges on which the stool-holder is judged by a council of chiefs. If found guilty, he is destooled. The chief's power rests on a wide network of support. To safeguard his office, he needs to exercise his authority carefully and to comply with the requests of his supporters (Robertson 1976).

Stools are therefore symbols of matrilineages, of their history and of the territorial and human resources – kingdoms, villages, social groupings – which fall under the stool's authority (cf. Kyerematen 1969: 1-2). Akan states have been and are ranked aggregates of stools and consequently of chiefs. Chiefs of inferior status exercise their political rights exclusively over a village. As the chief's rank increases so does the area under his control. Chiefs of high status normally control wide areas, administered locally by their sub-chiefs. The king is positioned at the top of the political structure and acts as the supreme power in the territory. Matriliney is therefore a crucial element of Akan political organization: it groups inhabitants in stools and establishes the rank of the latter within the state's framework.

Even though the political structure of Akan states is mostly organized around a matrilineal idiom, patrilineal links are important as well. Throughout the dissertation, I describe the link between father and son as a patrilineal one. Patrilineal connections are single links, which do not produce a patrilineal ideology and do not generate a formalized membership to the father's

group. Such links are to be distinguished from systematic principles of social organization termed lineality. In the Akan world, matriliney has often been described as the key principle of social organization, opposed to "submerged" patrilineal tendencies which necessarily clash with the former (Fortes 1963, 1970). It appears, however, that both matriliney and patrilineal links contribute to a complex social and political organization irreducible to a unilineal model (Boni 1998). Patrilineal links have political significance: chiefs allocate important offices to their offspring thus turning domestic subordination into political bonds.⁷ On a more local level, residence, labour arrangements and wealth transfers are influenced by both matriliney and patrilineal links. The father, alongside the mother and mother's brother occupies a central economic, ritual and social role. Souls (*asunsum*, sing. *sunsum*) are inherited patrilineally.

Many of those living in the Akan world do not belong to matrilineages controlling stools and political offices. Up to the early twentieth century, a large number of those excluded from the political domain were slaves. Some captives were captured during wars, others were offered by subordinate chiefs to superior ones as tribute. Elders could sell their dependants as slaves. Unpaid debts and court judgments could lead to bondage as well. Masters asked slaves to perform the dirtier and hardest work, but the latter could accumulate money and gain quite prominent positions in society.

Besides common social and political features, Akan populations share a system of supernatural beliefs centred around the ancestors and one Supreme Being, the Creator of all things. The former are thought to intervene in the everyday life of the living by both providing assistance and punishing misdeeds. The deceased are therefore respected, informed of earthly happenings and asked for protection. The second form of supernatural power is inhuman. According to the myth of creation, the Supreme Being used to be in closer contact with earthly matters but was annoyed by men's behaviour and ascended to the sky. It is, however, still accessible through intermediary deities which are spirits thought of as the Creator's children. These deities have a temporary abode (a tree, river or rock) and may be represented in images stored in temples. There are no human interpreters of the Supreme Being's wishes but there

⁷ Historians have described the attribution of political offices to sons in different areas of the Akan world. Among others see Wilks (1967), Terray (1987), McCaskie (1980a: 199-200), Perrot (1982: 193-215, 1987: 371-75), Arhin (1983b: 9) and Viti (1994: 67-69). For the role of sons in the kingdom of Sefwi Wiawso see Mensah-Brown (1967: 109), Luccini (1992: 90-91) and Boni (1995: 55-69, 108-126; 1997).

are for lesser spirits. Priests are thought to be chosen directly by their deity. Each area has specific spirits which vary in both power and kind. Regional variations are therefore present but the principal features of supernatural beliefs are common across the Akan world (Rattray 1927; Danquah 1944; Busia 1954; Gilbert 1989).

Chiefdoms have risen and fallen within the Akan region for centuries. Stool-holders conquered neighbouring areas, expanded their domains and were later defeated and subjugated (Daaku 1966; Kea 1982). Political relationships were therefore established between Akan groups. Migrations have connected Akan populations as well. Contacts between groups of the forest belt were common and are well documented in several oral traditions. Expansionist states and migrations produced linguistic similarities. Akan languages are part of a same group and often understanding is possible amongst people from different areas of the region (Boahen 1966).

The Asante empire

While what is known as the Akan is a civilization, a highly complex social organization, culture and way of life, Asante is one of the ethnic units forming the wider Akan world. In the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, the Asante undertook military campaigns, subjugated most of the Akan populations and spread their dominion to neighbouring non-Akan groups to the north and east of the Akan world. Asante, before the expansion, was a confederacy of chiefs, occupying areas of limited size, headed by the king of Kumase. After the conquests, what has often been called the Asante empire was a vast political entity, occupying most of today's Ghana and eastern Ivory Coast. Asante had a similar organizational pattern and prerogatives to other Akan states which had flourished before its rise. At the height of its power the Asante state controlled an extended communication system, supervised trading patterns, had a key role in the administration of justice, mobilized large armies, organized wealth distribution and exercised a key role in rituals guaranteeing stability and prosperity (Wilks 1975, 1993).

During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Asante successfully positioned itself as the centre of Akan civilization. Through the continuous refinement of Akan symbols, the Asante state acted as the ultimate arbiter of cultural norms and exercised an hegemonic role in the

interpretation of knowledge. Even though the empire preserved conspicuous regional variations, throughout the nineteenth century the Asante state acted as an ideal image of social order for a wide area including Sefwi. An outline of the organization of the Asante empire before its collapse in the 1880s and 1890s provides insights which prove useful in the study of hierarchy in twentieth-century Sefwi.

One crucial aspect of Asante state intervention was the allocation of social and political rank and affiliation. The Asante empire maintained the Akan political structure organized around stools and matrilineal membership. Asante stools were held by matrilineages headed by chiefs. Likewise, conquered Akan states preserved their internal organization based on stool affiliation. Once subjugated by the Asante, however, the stools of the conquered kings lost their primacy together with some of their powers and became subordinate stools under the Asante ruler. The king of Asante positioned himself as the ultimate sovereign of the kings whose states became part of the empire.

The superiority was not achieved by economic and military dominance alone, ideological legitimation was successfully sought. For example, the stool of the Asante kings is known as the Golden Stool. It is a wooden structure completely covered with gold. Asante hold that it descended from the sky on the eve of the creation of the empire. The myth of foundation of the Asante empire contains the explanation of its superiority: the stool of Asante kings, unlike any other, was made with gold, a symbolically charged element. Until the fall of Asante, no other chief could adorn his stool with gold; those who tried were severely punished. All stools were believed to possess supernatural powers. The Golden Stool, however, was thought of as the most powerful one and was said to contain the soul of the Asante people. The uniqueness of the Golden Stool positioned stools of conquered kings at a subordinate level ideologically as well as politically. The Golden Stool was the enabling instrument that validated and guaranteed the legal exercise of Asante sovereign right (McCaskie 1983).

The state intervened in the social order acting as an engine of differentiation between individuals and groups and governed kinship as a mean of controlling the rank of subordinates. The king established the status of matrilineages by judging which groups were to be allocated offices and privileges and by acting as arbiter in disputes between lineage branches (McCaskie 1985, 1995: 88-102). It also gave out wives and removed them if the

chief was to be punished, thus limiting his capacity to expand patrilineal links. Norms concerning the payment of adultery compensation stressed the hierarchical order of the state: compensation was paid according to the rank of the offended husband. Kinship, marriage and adultery compensation acted as statements of power and differentiation.

Asante expressed its cultural hegemony through rituals. A forty-two day calendar was central to the religious role of the state. Even though Asante lacked a linear chronology, cyclical time was strictly ordered: "the individual days of the *adaduanan* [forty-two day] cycle were charged with a range of symbolic meanings, functions, observances, and injunctions that were absolutely basic to the ordering of all aspects of life in Asante" (McCaskie 1980b: 184). McCaskie holds that the Asante king was "fundamental to the practical articulation of this system" as he was "a spiritual and demiurgic actor, whose participation in and observance of numerous rites were deemed to be of crucial importance to the successful ordering of life" (p. 189). This was most evident in the annual cleansing festival, the *odwira*. Through the *odwira*, the state orchestrated and provided a reading of the Asante cultural experience intended to underline its hegemony. The king cleansed himself and his ancestors as a way of purifying the whole Asante nation and kings from subordinate areas, the Sefwi ruler amongst them, were called to attend the annual *odwira* festival. Conquered kings, in turn, organized similar celebrations in their own dominions and demanded the participation of their subordinate chiefs.

The state intervened on the boundaries between nature and culture as well. Throughout the Akan world, certain spaces have been and are charged with symbolic significance. Kumase the seat of the Asante kings, was presented as the stronghold of culture as opposed to peripheral and rural settlements, considered in pejorative terms, and the forest areas, the domain of nature (Arhin 1983a: 474-475). Spaces within Kumase, were charged with special significance representing central and ideal sites of "Akaness". The separation of Kumase, the centre of power and culture, from the hostile environment of the forest and villages on the periphery was stressed. The main roads leading to Kumase were accorded special religious attention as they were seen as the ultimate points where human or supernatural invaders could be halted. The importance of ancestral worship amongst the Akan was best visible in the mausoleum where the remains of the deceased Asante kings were kept. This was a crucial

spatial marker in several religious rituals: Asante kings paid periodic and solemn visits to their ancestors' graves. Rank being largely hereditary, the cult of ancestors was a means to mark and restate roles within the political structure. Not surprisingly, other potent sites which were often visited by Asante kings and ritually cleansed were buildings where stools were stored and residences of royals. The palace in particular was charged with extreme supernatural as well as juridical and political significance. By stating and preserving the spatial symbolism linked to Kumase, the king of Asante expressed key Akan cultural features and positioned himself at the center of their representation (McCaskie 1995: 144-166).

The Sefwi kingdom

One of the regions which were part of both the Akan civilization and the Asante empire was Sefwi. What is now called the Sefwi area was, in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, a sparsely inhabited portion of the Akan world. Until the early nineteenth century, this area was not identified as an ethnic unit and contradictory information was provided concerning the territory lying directly west of the Asante.⁸ The rise of kingdoms in what is today called Sefwi, dates back to the seventeenth century and thus preceded Asante conquest. A Sefwi identity was produced by eliding a name, a language, a territory and the presence of centralized political units probably during the course of the eighteenth century. The first European to attribute a recognizable ethnic name to the present Sefwi area is, to my knowledge, Bowdich (1819). The name "Sauee" or "Sawee" was mentioned during his stay in Kumase in 1817 but he was unable to gather detailed information.⁹ From Bowdich's mission onwards, most studies restated the name, offered new particulars or simply

⁸ Bosman (1704: 73) uses the names "Encasse" and "Juffer" to describe the territories on the east of the Comoé River (cf. Daaku and van Dantzig 1966). A similar indeterminacy on the definition of groups occurred in cartography. See, for example, the following maps. D'Anville in 1729 does not include the name "Sefwi" in his map; see Kimble (1963), map 1; cf. Snelgrave (1754), map facing page 1; Postlethwayt (1766), "Africa plate Ist: Northwest part..."; and Robertson (1819), map facing page 1, "Nigrita and the Course of the Niger".

⁹ Bowdich (1819: 169), on the return journey from his mission to Kumase, mentions a road which passes through "Sauee" but adds that he "could not procure the routes". In 1821, Bowdich published *An Essay on the Geography of North-Western Africa*. In the map facing the title, both "Sawee" and "Moisan" the latter probably refers to the northern part of the kingdom of Sefwi Wiawso, where the village of Boinsan was and is positioned- are followed by question marks.

reproduced his account.¹⁰ Maps of the Gold Coast and of Guinea began to include the name as a consequence of the information provided by Bowdich.¹¹

The process of political centralization and the establishment of an ethnic name were achieved through a policy of military expansion and incorporation of neighbouring populations. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Sefwi became one of the most important areas of the west of the Asante empire both politically and militarily. Sefwi paid tributes, furnished men for military campaigns, supported trade and collaborated in the administration of the south-western part of the empire on behalf of the Asante kings (Daaku 1974, Boni 1997, Roberts n.d.a). Sefwi's inclusion in the Asante political domains lasted for one and a half centuries.

In the 1870s, with the gradual collapse of the empire, Sefwi Wiawso withdrew its allegiance from Asante and sought British protection. In 1887 a treaty was signed and in 1896 a colonial district commissioner began operating in Sefwi. The power bases of local chiefs were shaken in the twentieth century by the market economy and British rule. The exercise of legitimate violence was taken over by the colonial government. Peace was enforced, inhibiting the acquisition of slaves and wealth through war booty (Terray 1982: 263-264). The judicial system was reviewed. Chiefs could still hold court but appeal cases were judged by colonial officers, together with most relevant matters (Addo-Fening 1990). Chiefs' privileges over trade were banned. Most works hold that the diffusion of chiefly "culture" was halted by British dominion and chiefs were powerless witnesses of the destruction and confiscation of many key cultural reference points. The downfall of the Asante state exemplifies this. In 1896, the Bantama mausoleum was destroyed; the *odwira* festival suspended; the Asante king exiled. Urban development of Kumase under British administration, then devaluated the symbolic meanings attributed to places by the Asante state.

¹⁰ Hutton (1821: 335); Dupuis (1824: 242, XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX, LVI); Cruickshank (1853: 41); Ramseyer and Kunhe (1875: 143-144, 213).

¹¹ Hutton (1821) does not include the name "Sefwi" in his map (map facing page vi). Dupuis (1824, map facing page I) inserts in his map the names "Showy" and "Sumah" in an area corresponding to the present Sefwi area. "Sawee" and "Moinsan" are included in the "Map of the West Coast of Africa... compiled mostly from the map of John Arrowsmith" (1842). The cartography, however, does not provide detailed information on the Sefwi area, until the colonialists undertook expeditions aimed at fixing the frontier between British and French possessions in the 1880s.

In Sefwi, however, colonial administration did not produce the collapse of the precolonial political structure. The role of chiefs was transformed rather than cancelled. Chiefs were organized in State Councils (termed Traditional Councils from 1961) which were presented as continuations of precolonial states. These acted alongside national (colonial and independent) governments and local government bodies, termed Native Authorities at first, Local or Urban Councils from 1951 and District Assemblies from 1989 (Ollennu 1976). During the twentieth century, traditional rulers preserved considerable rights over land, collected revenues, established local laws and judged minor court cases. Even though these prerogatives were supervised and limited by the local and national government bodies, chiefs were leading social and economic actors in twentieth-century Sefwi .

Today, the Sefwi area covers the northern part of the Western Region of Ghana and comprises about 2,000 miles square. The land is hilly and crossed by several water courses, the two principal ones being the Tano and Bia. Sefwi language shows similarities both with Asante Twi and with Aowin-Bono, a language spoken further west (Daaku 1971: 32-34). The Sefwi area comprehends three kingdoms which share a common dialect. This dissertation focuses on the largest of these three states, the one of Wiawso.

The main feature of Sefwi in Akan history is and has been its marginality. Sefwi is far both from Kumase, the centre of Asante, and from the coast. None of the eight precolonial routes which linked Kumase to various parts of the empire, passed through Sefwi (Wilks 1975: 15). Communication with the coast was difficult and unsafe in the late nineteenth century. Existing routes were scarcely used and became impassable during the rainy season.¹² The marginality of Sefwi continued in the colonial period. In the first decades of the twentieth century, the possibility of navigation on the river Tano was examined and abandoned on various occasions; in 1925, a railway was projected but not built. Foot-paths were gradually improved but no motor road reached Wiawso until the 1920s and the northern part of Sefwi was opened up to motor traffic only in the 1960s. In the early colonial period, industrial development was hampered by lack of transport facilities. Geographical and

¹² PRO CO 96/128, Mr. Smith to Private Secretary, dd. 25 Oct. 1879.

infrastructural marginality were matched by low population density. Large tracts of forest remained uninhabited until the latter half of the twentieth century.

In the late nineteenth century the Sefwi area was involved in a network of trade. Gold, besides being used as a currency, was dug and traded on the coast before then, but Sefwi was not one of the areas producing consistently for the world market (cf. Daaku 1971: 42). Slaves were bought and sold. In 1893, a colonial emissary to Sefwi described the exports from the Sefwi area:

Presently the trade is confined to those products which can be carried best on heads and consists for the most part in gold dust, skins, rubber, ivory, country cloths, mats and leather goods.¹³

Food production was sold but mostly aimed at subsistence until well into the twentieth century. Up to the late nineteenth century, Sefwi was involved in cash-oriented production and but only marginally so.

Even though Sefwi is still considered one of the most peripheral areas of southern Ghana, its marginality has gradually diminished. From the 1880s a gradual increase of production linked to the world market occurred. In the 1880s and 1890s chiefs allowed the extraction of rubber from their territories in exchange for part of the product (cf. Dumett 1971; Arhin 1972, 1980).¹⁴ The "gold rush" occurred in the early years of the twentieth century; after that, concessions were granted at periodic intervals.¹⁵ The gold mines at Bibiani and the bauxite mines at Awaso have attracted labour and infrastructural development. With the increase in the demand for rubber and the search for gold-veins, traders, brokers and concession-seekers visited the Sefwi area. Timber cutting was attempted from the 1910s but only established

¹³ GNA Accra ADM 11/1/1130, Mr. Vroom District Commissioner of Wassaw to H.C.S., Elmina, 6-9-1893.

¹⁴ See PRO CO 96/320; GNA Accra ADM 11/1/1130; GNA Accra ADM 48/4/2, Kujo Wuo vs. Kobina Aduhene, 7-3-1905.

¹⁵ See Dumett (1998), Rhodes House: MSS. Afr. s. 2037, British Records Association "Leases relating to mining companies in the Gold Coast: 1900-1902" and GNA Accra ADM 11/1/1130 for the gold rush at the turn of the century. See GNA Accra ADM 48/1/3: pp. 264-278 for the closure of gold mines in the 1910s. For the operations on gold mines in the late 1920s and 1930s see Rhodes House: MSS Afr. s. 1044, Wilkinson, E.D. "Diary letters home, 1931-35, as a wife of administrative officer, Gold Coast"; GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/154 & 155; GNA Accra ADM 48/1/4; GNA Kumasi ARG 1/5/2/31; GNA Accra ADM 47/1/23.

itself in the 1940s when concessions were acquired by outsiders (often Europeans) throughout the Sefwi area (cf. Agbosu 1983).¹⁶

Cocoa production, which expanded in the Gold Coast in the late nineteenth century, began in Sefwi in the first decade of the twentieth century. It witnessed a rapid start and then production figures stabilized from the middle of the 1920s up to the 1950s (Roberts n.d.b).¹⁷ Production increased when the price exceeded 10 shillings per load: such price was achieved in the early 1910s and late 1920s as the motor road approached and then reached Wiawso and Bibiani. In 1929, the price ranged from 12 to 15 shillings and this produced a bumper harvest. The following year the price dropped to 3 to 6 shillings; production figures remained low in the early 1930s. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, the increase of cocoa production stimulated by higher prices and the establishment of the Cocoa Marketing Board was hampered by major price fluctuations and the spread of swollen shoot disease.¹⁸ Cocoa production, however, established itself as the principal economic crop and the main source of livelihood for most Sefwi. In the 1960s and 1970s producer prices were relatively low but the industry was strengthened (production figures captured the increase only partially as large amounts of cocoa were smuggled to the Ivory Coast). In the 1980s and 1990s, smuggling was minimized, production figures boomed and Sefwi established itself as one of the leading cocoa-producing areas in Ghana (see appendix 2). The spread of the cocoa industry attracted consistent flows of farmers into Sefwi. The first waves of agricultural immigration began in the late 1940s but the movement of farmers gained momentum only in the 1970s and has since been increasing steadily (Hill 1963a: 236-237).

The Sefwi area witnessed a dramatic demographic explosion due both to natural increase and immigration in the course of the twentieth century. Population increased from 12,780 in 1911, to 26,008 in 1921, 42,060 in 1931, 65,208 in 1948, 115,870 in 1960, 153,060 in 1970 to 266,007 in 1984.¹⁹ From the late colonial period, the transport network improved

¹⁶ GNA Accra ADM 48/1/8; GNA Kumasi ARG 1/5/3/21; GNA Accra ADM 47/1/10; GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/6; GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/7; GNA Accra ADM 5/3/81.

¹⁷ Cf. GNA Accra ADM 48/1/3, L.W.S. Long to C.W.P., Amoya 19-7-1911; GNA Accra ADM 48/1/3: pp. 264-278.

¹⁸ GNA Accra ADM 47/1/23; GNA Sekondi WRA 6/1A/599; GNA Sekondi WRA 6/2A/24.

¹⁹ For population data on Sefwi see: Appendices and Returns of the Census for the year 1911, Part II, pp. 36-

slowly but considerably: in the 1940s a railway line was finally constructed and today most villages are connected by roads.

The marginality of the research area is important in a comparative Akan perspective. Peripheral regions, such as Sefwi, form the greater part of the Akan area both geographically and population-wise, but have been less studied. Most works are concerned with Kumase or with regions closer to the coast. Not all the dynamics so carefully described for these areas are valid in Sefwi. In this dissertation, however, the patterns described in the Sefwi area are constantly compared with dynamics occurred in other parts of the wider Akan region, and often similarities are noted. The Akan world, however, was not an homogeneous area in the nineteenth century and it maintained its internal differences in the twentieth century. French and British colonial governments implemented rather different kinds of rule. The dynamics occurred at Kumase are in many respects not comparable to those of other parts of the Akan world. The southern Akan states and even more so the coastal states displayed a relevant degree of cultural autonomy and particular historical dynamics. The attempts to compare Sefwi with other parts of the Akan area should therefore be viewed as a search for some wider regional patterns within a variety of peculiar local contexts.

Fieldwork and methodology

Before starting my doctoral work I had spent from January to August 1993 in Ghana researching a BA thesis (Boni 1995) and from June to September 1995 in preparation for the doctoral project. The latter required a further twelve months fieldwork in 1996 and 1997. I was based in the district capital, Wiawso. From there I regularly visited three villages Nsawora, Anglo and Debiso. The length of residence in each village varied from a couple of days to two weeks at a time.

The complexity of the topic required a range of research techniques. Firstly, fieldwork produced a historical farm census of three agricultural areas in the neighbourhoods of

37; Appendices Containing Comparative Returns and General Statistics of the 1931 Census, p. 31; Census of the Population, 1948, Report and Tables, p. 195; Population Census of Ghana, 1960, Vol. II, pp. 128-143 (the Sefwi-Wiawso and Sefwi-Anhwiaso-Bekwai-Bibiani Local Councils were considered as forming Sefwi); Population Census of Ghana, 1970, Vol. II, pp. 71-93 (the Juabeso-Bia, Wiawso and Sefwi-Bibiani-Bekwai Local Councils were considered as forming Sefwi); Population Census of Ghana, 1984, Vol. VI, pp. 43-44 (the Juabeso-Bia, Wiawso and Sefwi-Bibiani Local Councils were considered as forming Sefwi).

Nsawora, Anglo and Debiso. Tracts of up to one square mile were defined in each case. Plots within the selected zone were visited with a farmer who indicated boundaries and ownership of the land. A sketch map of the area and its farms was drawn. A questionnaire was then compiled with the farm owners in regard to their plots. The questions covered issues of land transfer, labour use and the acquisition of land rights. Agricultural labourers working in the area were also interviewed on the conditions of their labour contract. The quantitative and qualitative data collected provided essential insights into agricultural labour relations, the gendered value of farm work, patterns of land access and transfer, and the distribution of revenue gained from cocoa.

Secondly, video recordings were made of three different ceremonies (marriage, apprenticeship and land transfer) which contributed to the understanding of expressions of hierarchy within rituals. Thirdly, audio-recordings of settlements of marital disputes at the Social Welfare Office of Wiawso were used to examine gender relations in marriages. The recordings of both the ceremonies and the settlements were listened to and commented upon by a native speaker. Parts of the recordings were transcribed into the local language and translated.

Fourthly, a great deal of additional archival material was collected in Wiawso, including Traditional Council Meetings, contracts of land access and agricultural labour, summaries of settlements recorded at the Social Welfare Office and videos of the king's funeral and of the annual Sefwi festival. Finally, extensive research was carried out at the national archives of Accra, and the regional ones of Kumase and Sekondi. The analysis of archival sources and in particular of court records provides insights on hierarchy in the early colonial period. Besides these primary sources, existing historical, sociological and ethnographical studies on the Akan have been reviewed. "Classical" ethnographies, such as the work of Rattray, Danquah and Fortes, provide important contextual and historical insights.

Throughout the dissertation, quotations from people's speeches and rituals are referred to in footnotes by name of the speaker, his position, the date and place of recording and the original language used. All archival material quoted was originally in English. The reader may be uncomfortable with some of the English used in local archives but the quotations offer

precious insights on Sefwi concepts and prove valuable for the argument presented here.

Local terms are written mostly in Twi, for the Sefwi equivalent see the glossary.

Part I.

Inequality and change

In part one, I address the issue of the magnitude of the change that has affected inequality in the Akan area over the present century. The analysis of transformations involving patterns of inequality is a necessary starting point of this work. If one finds that hierarchy was drastically transformed over the twentieth century, it would be impossible to outline its general features. If, on the other hand, one finds some continuity in patterns of subordination, a unitary analysis of twentieth-century hierarchy is possible. Here, I review some of the principal aspects where change in relations of inequality was identified and compare the transformations with existing Sefwi historical documentation. Part one is formed by four chapters: the first is concerned with the impact of twentieth-century transformations on chiefly power; the second is centred on the magnitude of change produced by capitalist relationships; the third examines innovations in gender relations and notions of parenthood. The last chapter evaluates the extent of change with reference to recent Marxist writing.

Chapter 1.

Innovations and continuities in the political order

Chiefly power in the nineteenth-century Akan states is seen as resting on economic, social, and cultural control. Office-holders monopolized wealth, commanded the economy and governed trading patterns, in gold and slaves particularly.²⁰ Gold production was closely controlled as well.²¹ Office-holders limited private accumulation by levying tributes - especially death duties.²² Chiefs received large revenues from the administration of justice.²³ Most writers hold that individuals could accumulate wealth but the state had the final control of it through a system of taxation and monopolies.²⁴ McCaskie (1980b, 1983, 1989b, 1995) has pointed out that the Asante state elaborated and used a cultural order to reinforce its legitimacy as well.

The majority academic view holds that status differences were clearly marked before colonial rule and gradually collapsed in the course of the twentieth century due to colonial rule and the advent of the market economy. The thesis of chiefs' declining authority has been stated since the beginning of the century. Rattray (1929: 408-409) identifies three "causes which are operating to diminish the power and authority of the greater Chiefs", namely: "the decline of old religious beliefs" due to the spread of Christianity; chiefs' incapacity to enforce their rights; the gradual collapse of the chain of authority. Terray (1982: 272) believes that the political economy of the Gyaman state ended with colonialism. Chiefly revenues -namely slaves, taxes, judicial fees and war booty- were halted by colonial rule. After that, only a few entrepreneurial chiefs managed to concentrate wealth. McCaskie (1986: 13; cf. 1983) holds that the end of the state's control over the economy led to the rise of the individual:

²⁰ The principal proponent of this thesis is Wilks (1975: 436-437; 1993: 128-135; cf. Arhin 1981, 1986b; McCaskie 1995: 49-58). See also Austin's (1996a) critique.

²¹ See Terray (1975: 122-123; cf. Arhin 1981: 19; Wilks 1975: 434-436) and Dumett's (1979, 1990, 1998) critiques.

²² See Wilks (1967: 214-218, 1993: 147-150); Arhin (1974a, 1981, 1986b); Terray (1982: 258-260).

²³ See Terray (1975: 115-116; 1982: 260-262); Grier (1992: 307-308).

²⁴ See especially Arhin (1974a, 1983b; 1986c; 1990).

in nineteenth-century Asante the state set perhaps the strictest limits in precolonial sub-Saharan Africa on the boundaries of consumption and hedonism. With the liquidation of the state not only was the individual now free to accumulate, to invest and to dispose of wealth, but the constraints on hedonistic consumption had gone.

Arhin (1995: 107; cf. 1976) builds on McCaskie's insights.

The State perceived wealth as a means of strengthening the community as a whole, rather than enriching the individual and thus upsetting the socio-political order. The colonial regime reversed this. Its total impact was to promote individualism of which the basis was individual wealth.

In the same volume, Manuh (1995: 193) is even more drastic.

The more generalized invasion of wealth into the Asante economy with the development of cocoa production, new avenues for the acquisition of wealth accompanying colonial rule, and the absence of the Asantehene [Asante king] and his court led to the dissolution of former rank and class gradations in Asante.

Chieftainship in the Akan world was certainly shaken at its roots by both colonialism and the market economy. From the late nineteenth century, new avenues of wealth accumulation were opened to a broader stratum of the population. The spread of money played a central role in these dynamics. I believe, however, that the case for a total collapse of hierarchical relations is overstated. Those who hold that a shift occurred in the twentieth century from an exclusion of commoners from substantial wealth to the possibility of unrestrained accumulation fail to account for certain continuities.

On the one hand, it has recently been shown that the Asante state's precolonial control over the economy was not as pervasive as was suggested by previous studies (Austin 1996).²⁵ Wealth was diffuse and autonomously managed. Monetization, therefore, widened existing avenues of wealth accumulation rather than initiating them. On the other hand, the connection

²⁵ Fortes (1948: 7-8) holds that precolonial Asante was "diversified", the concept of profit known, individual enterprise accepted. "Western ideas of individual enterprise, pecuniary competition ... had a fertile native tradition to appeal to" (p. 8).

between wealth and political offices persisted with colonial rule. Arhin (1981: 27) holds that precolonial Asante was characterized by a "communalistic view of property": the political office-holders represented, through their control of wealth, the "all embracing-unity" of the state (p. 31). I believe this is true in twentieth-century Sefwi as well, even though practices do not always match ideals. To understand the change undergone in the capacity of wealth accumulation by chiefs and commoners over the last century, I examine two issues: chiefs' avenues of wealth accumulation and contests against chiefly power.

Chiefs' and commoners' incomes compared

It is widely accepted that British colonial politics did not try to annihilate chiefs but, especially after the early decades of the twentieth century, with the Native Administration Ordinance of 1927, gradually reassigned them certain powers and privileges, especially in the judiciary (Addo-Fening 1990; Gocking 1993). The defence of chiefs was part of an attempt to preserve a political order which was essential for the perpetuation of British power.

The allocation of land revenues is crucial in this regard and explains the continuous prestige maintained by chiefly offices in the twentieth century. The introduction of the market economy and the increased monetization did not act only as destructive forces, dissolving the bases of chieftaincy. Rather, as the Gold Coast economy was altered, office-holders were offered the opportunity to adapt to the new context. Chiefs were recognized by the colonial government as the legitimate owners of land rights in a period in which their major source of revenue became income from land. The colonial government contributed to halting the process of land commodification and supported a legislation which stressed chiefs' "traditional" rights to the soil (Grier 1987). Market-oriented production, rather than threatening chieftaincy, gave it new vigour in a period in which its other prerogatives were being undermined.

Chiefs' role as legitimate landlords has guaranteed them considerable revenues throughout the twentieth century by drawing to them a share of the wealth produced. Rents paid by mining companies, the alienation of timber concessions, monetary transactions involving the transfer of farming rights to immigrants and different forms of taxation have supplied large incomes (cf. Austin 1988). Commoners used market-oriented production to accumulate wealth and compete with chiefs. Their incomes, however, usually proved inferior: while

commoners had to work, or mobilize labour, chiefs simply rented their land rights to produce an income.

Sefwi office-holders kept a close control over the new economic dynamics of the twentieth century. At first, most of them did not get directly involved in production. When they did, however, they had privileged access to both land and labour. These advantages allowed some of them to play leading roles as producers in market-oriented industries. Groff (1980: 395) holds that in Assikasso, part of the Akan portion of the Ivory Coast, the early decades of the twentieth century saw the dissolution of the precolonial social order: "the older bases of their [office-holders] authority began to melt away, new ones arose in the form of large plantations, armies of laborers, and high levels of cash income". Garceau's (1982: 105) study on differentiation of cocoa farmers in the eastern part of the Akan world confirms that chiefs, their kin and dignitaries often owned large farms.

If one examines more closely the group of 'large planters', it seems that among these twenty planters half of them occupy offices (chiefs of clans, captains of divisions, linguists) in the hierarchy of power and the other half is formed by successors of deceased dignitaries or of people closely related to them by kin relations.

Austin (1988: 93; cf. 74) believes that the chiefs' adaptation to the cocoa industry in south Asante was "relatively successful".

Though the widespread availability and opportunities to farm and trade cocoa beans had doubtless reduced the chiefs' share of local wealth, the chiefs themselves generally benefited in absolute terms. From the development of capitalist relationships as such, the economic and political positions of the chiefs were probably strengthened more than they were weakened.

Austin (1996: 29) therefore comes to the conclusion that "the 'rise of the commoners' did not mean the demise of the chiefs".

Chiefs of the colonial period were not impoverished and powerless figures. Kwame Tano I who reigned in the first period of colonial rule, from 1900 to 1932 is one of the most revered kings, *amanhene* (sing. *omanhene*) of Sefwi Wiawso: a creator of numerous subordinate relationships, an exceptional procreator and a generous distributor. His extraordinary status as

"traditional" chief was achieved thanks to the new opportunities for wealth accumulation produced by the spread of market-oriented production in Sefwi.

Presently, the distribution of wealth is no longer as strictly controlled as it was in precolonial times. Money, however, is still largely concentrated in stools on behalf of the community. Chiefs are still held responsible for the development of their territory. This is demanded by the population and is the justification which is often produced to explain their right to collect land revenues. Chiefs speak on behalf of the population in durbars demanding new facilities from visiting state officials. Traditional rulers are thanked when new governmental projects are initiated, and blamed when no improvement is forthcoming. The biographical notes composed to remember the late *omanhene* Kwadwo Aduhene II (died 1996), stress his achievements on behalf of the Sefwi community.

[Aduhene II] on his enstoolment pursued vigorously with development issues of the area. He counselled the major Timber Companies then operating in the Sefwi Wiawso area to open up many roads within their areas of operation to link up some of the towns His singular effort in [agriculture] has led to the leading role the Sefwi area is playing in the production of cocoa and coffee in Ghana today. This fact and his personal intervention ... led to the re-location of the Western Regional Cocoa Marketing Board's Headquarters ... to Sefwi Wiawso He was instrumental in getting a Secondary School and the Teachers' Training College at Sefwi Wiawso, both of which have been of major assistance in the education of Sefwis. In his reign, the first Sefwi Wiawso State Scholarship Award for Secondary Education for Sefwi-citizens, which many Sefwis both male and female, have benefitted from, was established.

The list of his achievements continues. The supply of electricity to the town of Wiawso was funded by the Traditional Council. Aduhene II lobbied successfully to have the District Administration Offices in Wiawso and for the upgrading of the District Police Headquarters; finally, his efforts towards the construction of a "modern palace" are recalled.²⁶ Rather than displacing presumed forms of communal wealth, embodied in chiefs, the increased monetization has merely acted alongside them, and partially reinforced them.

²⁶ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Traditional Council, "Burial Programme for the late Okogyebuor Kwadwo Aduhene II".

With regard to symbols, chiefs maintained their privileges. While the Asante culture of power at Kumase was demolished by the advent of colonialism, Sefwi never faced such humiliation. Palaces, stools and rituals preserved their social and political significance. The colonial administration limited itself to acting as supervisor. The *elluo* festival of Sefwi Wiawso was regularly performed during colonial rule. The *omanhene* Kwame Tano I built a magnificent wooden palace in the early decades of the twentieth century.²⁷ In short, chiefs have been able to maintain their social value. Mikell (1989: 47-48) identified similar dynamics in another peripheral area of the Akan world:

[the collapse of the Asante state in the late nineteenth century] led to greater economic penetration, but not to the denial of traditional values by rural people. Rather, colonial control tended to reinforce the increased syncretism between traditional Akan values and institutions and newer capitalist processes and relationships.

Arhin (1976, 1995) holds that political office-holders lost their power and no longer command respect and authority. But then why do wealthy and revered men compete for stools? Lawyers, businessmen, politicians and academics, in brief the modern elite of Ghana, contend for offices in the traditional political structure. The current *omanhene* of Sefwi Wiawso left a university teaching post in Sweden to struggle in the succession dispute of a peripheral Akan state.

Not only did chiefs maintain their position as exceptional accumulators of wealth, but attempts were made to curtail the riches of people whose ancestry did not entitle them to prosperity. Immigrant farmers' attempts to enrich themselves were prevented by chiefly demands and impositions. Restrictions on the accumulation and use of wealth and power were enforced on Sefwi of non-central ancestral origin as well through accusations of witchcraft and otherwise (Debrunner 1959: 71-72). An anecdote exemplifies this last point. In the recent past supporters of the Sefwi Wiawso *omanhene*, organized the poisoning of a rich Sefwi man whose display of wealth was said to be insulting the king (cf. Etienne 1966: 376-377). Even though the commoner had no title, he had built a large house in the center of

²⁷ Some hold that the new palace, completed in 1997, does not compare with the older one. It is smaller in size and can not rival the previous one in beauty.

Wiawso, was in the habit of exhibiting expensive cars and had won a prestigious farming award. The murder was planned but the preparations for the assassination became known to the king who stopped his dependants. The case was later settled and the rich man was asked to take a prominent office within the kingdom, which he accepted.

Another case may be mentioned in which attempts were made to make wealth and status coincide. Up to the 1970s, the Debiso stool was considered as one of secondary rank, a mere caretaker of the king of Wiawso. The chief of Debiso, however, over the past two decades has attempted to raise his status and claimed the position of *omanhene* for himself, successfully contesting the collection of revenues by the king of Wiawso. The chief of Debiso claims that numerous attempts on his life have been made since he began to enhance his status by means considered intolerable by the *omanhene* of Wiawso.

If transformations of status and rank are viewed with exclusive reference to the Asante state, colonial rule was certainly a big blow. But a Kumase-centred view leaves out the dynamics that occurred in the wider Akan world. Rather than a dissolution of values and rank, the twentieth-century transformations of chiefly status are best described as ongoing negotiations on economic and social dominance. Chiefs' authority has been threatened, forms of independent economic accumulation have been established but these have not ended wealth concentration in stools nor the social prestige of stool-holders.

The current competition between enriched commoners and chiefly power may be summarized by an anecdote. Kwadwo Aduhene II, the late *omanhene* of Sefwi Wiawso, and Kofi Mensah, the owner of a construction firm and arguably the richest man in Sefwi, were both catholics.²⁸ Their church organizes donations called "Kofi and Ama collection" (cf. van der Geest 1997: 540), Kofi being the male name for anyone born on a Friday and Ama the female one for those born on a Saturday. Contributions are received according to the name-day of the donor, the name corresponding to the day of the week on which the giver was born. Amounts donated by church-members born on each of the various days of the week are then publicized. When either Kwadwo Aduhene, born on a Monday, or Kofi Mensah, born on a Friday, were present, donations for their day would greatly exceed those of donors born

²⁸ A pseudonym is used for the entrepreneur.

on other days. When the two were simultaneously present, a struggle often occurred between them to make their name-day prevail. Witnesses state that the competition was intense and the outcome uncertain. Kofis usually prevailed but Kwadwos were always close runners-up. The riches of some Sefwi commoners may just exceed that of the *omanhene* but generally most avenues of commoners' wealth accumulation are controlled and curtailed.

Chiefly dominance contested

Chiefly dominance was contested in twentieth-century Sefwi. Protesters refused to comply with inferior roles, rejected appeals to obedience and questioned the system of wealth distribution. Those in inferior positions organized themselves to acquire rights, contested specific decisions, demanded more decision-making power and better living conditions. The techniques used to achieve these ends varied greatly. Violence was used, appeals were forwarded to the national government, the attention of mass-media was sought and more discrete forms of lobbying were attempted. Two instances of opposition to traditional rulers are examined here to evaluate their impact on chiefly power: the activities of youth associations and the struggle over the control of land revenues.

Youth associations have historically been connected to the deposition of chiefs and subversion of the established order. In the late nineteenth century the young men, *nkwankwaa*, led political uprisings against chiefs.²⁹ In the first half of the twentieth century chiefs were often deposed by the youth.³⁰ In Sefwi young men's opposition to chiefs intensified during two periods: in the 1950s and early 1960s; and in 1979.

In the first period under review, the activism of the Sefwi young men coincided with the rise of the Convention People's Party (C.P.P.). In 1952, the newly established Sefwi Wiawso Local Council had a strong C.P.P. majority. Appointed members of the "traditional" political structure in the Council often had their proposals rejected. After just a few sittings,

²⁹ The role of young men in nineteenth-century Asante politics is discussed by Wilks (1975: 534-548, 710), Aidoo (1977), Arhin (1983b: 3-4) and Austin (1996: 22-24).

³⁰ See Danquah (1928: 119); Kimble (1963: 469-473); Simensen (1974); Addo-Fening (1990); Grier (1987: 36-39); Mikell (1989: 89-91); Rathbone (1996) for protests in the early twentieth century. See Mikell (1989: 151-165) and Simensen (1974) for young men's protests in the 1950s and Nugent (1995: 72-78, 154-156, 205-207) for the 1980s.

they threatened to withdraw from the assembly because "suggestions and motions advanced by the traditional members were often overlooked". The threat was not carried through and attempts towards reconciliation followed but the Council was viewed in that period as a subversive institution. The "Sefwi Youth Association" asked the assembly to diminish by half the salary paid by the Council to the *omanhene*. Chiefs felt threatened by the rise of the C.P.P. and the young men. They responded by informing the population that "anybody who would abuse any Chief would be shot".³¹

The local C.P.P. branch played a major role in threatening the "traditional" political structure in the 1950s and early 1960s. Young men were often acting alongside dissident chiefs to question the king's authority. In 1951, the C.P.P. and the "youths of the State" petitioned the police to start an enquiry into the illegal appropriation of funds by the ruler.³² In this period the C.P.P. and malcontent chiefs led successive attempts to oust the king. In the District Commissioner's report of 1952 the young men are identified with the C.P.P. and accused of violent anti-chief behaviour.

The malcontents consist mainly of the youngmen, usually in the name of the Convention People's Party, and one or two chiefs with grievances against the Omanhene. The behaviour of the youngmen has been far from correct, and general hooliganism is the order of the day, mainly in abusing the Omanhene and his followers or actually assaulting the Omanhene's supporters A gang of young toughs went round to most chiefs demanding their signatures [for depository charges against the omanhene]. They were threatened with beating and destoolment if they did not sign...³³

The young men -identified with the C.P.P.- and the king's supporters -connected to the Ghana Congress Party- clashed for months. Many were wounded and at least one died.³⁴ In 1953, with the election of a new *omanhene*, who had been a non-traditional member of the

³¹ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/18, "Minutes of the Sefwi Wiawso Local Ccuncil Meeting held from Monday 18th August to Thursday 28th August 1952".

³² GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/14, "Advance of £300 out of £500", 5th February, 1952.

³³ GNA Accra ADM 47/1/23, "Quarterly Report- Sefwi District, Report for the Quarter Ending 30th September 1952".

³⁴ GNA Accra ADM 47/1/23, see quarterly reports, Sefwi District 1951-1953.

Local Council, the tension between the C.P.P. and chiefs diminished temporarily.³⁵ In 1956, however, conflict resumed when the king stated openly his aversion to the C.P.P..³⁶ The young men allied with insubordinate chiefs to oust the *omanhene*. The latter was challenged on several instances and finally the government withdrew his recognition in 1965.³⁷ What seemed to be the C.P.P.'s foremost success in Sefwi had a short life, however. In February 1966, while the new council of chiefs formed by pro-C.P.P. members was seeking local legitimacy and selecting a new *omanhene*, a *coup* overthrew the C.P.P. government. The deposed king was in exile in Accra and hastily congratulated the new rulers of Ghana. Restoration followed: young men were publicly harassed, dissident chiefs were deposed while those ousted by the C.P.P. were re-instated. Young men's attempts to control chiefly authority suffered a severe blow.

The rise and fall of young men's power is exemplified by the trajectory of a Youth Association formed in Sefwi during those years. In 1964, some students and teachers of the newly opened Sefwi Anhwem Secondary school formed a "Scholars' Association". At the beginning, the association was aimed at mobilizing communal labour for development projects and, despite the name, included people of different ages but normally not connected with chiefly power. Even though the association did not openly oppose chiefs, conflicts with traditional rulers arose:

The primary thing that brought us in [the association] was cheat. For instance, there was a time [c. 1963] that we knew that an allocation, a certain sum of money, had been given by Gliksten West Africa Company to the State, the *omanhene*, for us to build a Social Centre. But we found it had been halted somewhere. We tried to bring this issue out. These were the primary differences between us and the chiefs

We tried to let the chiefs get the idea that we were not with the intention to destool them but to set some of these things right. I remember very well that once the *omanhene* wanted to travel overseas, to England. He had already gone once [in 1961] with the wife and the secretary but he wanted to go again with a group of them. We went ... to

³⁵ GNA Accra ADM 47/1/23, "Quarterly Report- Sefwi District, Report for the Quarter Ending 31st March 1954".

³⁶ GNA Sekondi WRA 6/1A/401; GNA Accra ADM 47/1/23, "Report on the Sefwi District for the Quarter ending 30th September 1956".

³⁷ GNA Sekondi WRA 6/1A/162; GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/71.

tell him that it would be unwise to take that group at the expenses of the State. They could use it [the money] to offer scholarships to students. He had gone once to study agriculture but we had not seen the impact. So some of these things gave the idea that the youth was in to oppose the chief but it was actually the right of the people to demand.³⁸

The association had some backing and influence in the 1960s under C.P.P. rule. After the coup, it gradually died out. Attempts were made to revive it in the early 1970s but had scant success.

A new "Youth Association" was established in June 1979, just days before the Rawlings' June fourth *coup*.

The purpose was to organize the youth of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Area, to forge unity with the chiefs and people of the area so as to achieve progress. The relationship with the chiefs was cordial at the beginning and it was the effort of the chiefs that helped to bring about the association. But just two months after the formation, the relationship deteriorated The association was not formed for the deposition of chiefs or against chieftaincy *per se* but somewhere along the line, after it had been formed, the youth realized that before the advancement of this traditional area could go on smoothly we had to iron out some differences between the chiefs on one hand ..., and the rest of the people.³⁹

The association's influence grew with the strengthening of the 1979 *coup*.⁴⁰ In those years, it seemed as if young men could successfully challenge chiefly power. The association was once again mostly formed by teachers and students. Some of the king's kin participated up to

³⁸ Mr. K. Ahinkorah, member of the "Scholars' Association" in the early 1960s, Wiawso, 19-11-1997, English. The request for money to build a community centre was forwarded in 1963; Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Eight Session of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held on Monday the 11th March 1963. The *omanhene* Kwadwo Aduhene II travelled to England in 1961; Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Forth Session of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held on Thursday the 7th December 1961. Lineage members and palace-dwellers often travelled with the king. When Mr. Ahinkorah speaks of a "group" travelling with the king, he is probably referring to them.

³⁹ Mr. G.K. Kobiri, Organizing Secretary of the "Sefwi Wiawso Youth Association" in 1979, 11-11-1997, English.

⁴⁰ The events of 1979 created quite a stir in Wiawso as elsewhere. The late 1970s are remembered as years of widespread corruption, of arbitrary abuse by those in dominant positions, of great enrichment of few and of hunger for the rest. After the *coup* young men and soldiers sought vengeance. Those who were identified as the cause of the 1970s' hardship were beaten, their goods confiscated and a few went just short of facing the firing squad at Wiawso (cf. Shillington 1992; Nugent 1995).

a certain point but withdrew their support when the conflict with the traditional rulers became apparent; others were found secretly passing information to the king and were expelled.

The association came into conflict with the chiefly establishment over a large amount which was paid by the Ghanaian government to the *omanhene* as compensation for the expropriation of land used to establish the 'Bia National Game Reserve'. The Youth Association and some chiefs accused the king of having embezzled the amount. They demanded that the sum be refunded and used for the area's development. The association appealed to Rawlings' revolutionary government to force the *omanhene* to return the money. In September 1979, however, Rawlings handed over the leadership of the country to the elected moderate civilian government and revolutionary politics were halted before addressing the dispute in Sefwi. This had important repercussions on the ongoing struggle in Sefwi Wiawso. In January 1980, the *omanhene* addressed the Traditional Council:

The Students' Union Legon [an association of university students at Legon, in Accra] and the Sefwi Wiawso Youth Association ... wrote to the dissolved Armed Forces Revolutionary Council to deal with me [the *omanhene*] in a revolutionary way before handing over the power to the civilian government. This action 'to deal with in a revolutionary way' to the Students and to the Sefwi Wiawso Youth Association meant that I [the *omanhene*] should either be imprisoned for a very long term or for life or made to face the firing squad.

The king in that meeting asked for the Sefwi Wiawso Youth Association to be banned. The Council ruled that the executive members of the association should not attend the *omanhene*'s funeral and passed a motion to "ask all chiefs and their subjects to withdraw their support for the association with immediate effect".⁴¹ The newly elected civilian government and chiefs combined to put the association under pressure by legal and illegal means: some members working for the government were transferred to distant parts of Ghana, others were threatened, one fled abroad.⁴²

⁴¹ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Minutes of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held at D/C Hall on Friday 4th January 1980.

⁴² Mr. G.K. Kobri, Organizing Secretary of the "Sefwi Wiawso Youth Association" in 1979, 11-11-1997, English. The king, however, was eventually brought to court and asked to account for the money.

The association had an intense life, but a short one. By the time of Rawlings' second coup and the proclamation of the revolution in December 1981, the charismatic members of the association were dispersed. Other, more informal youth movements, however, survived and took advantage of what seemed, in the early 1980s, a pro-youth government. In 1983, for example, the "Youth" of the village of Anyanabrim petitioned the government to oust the chief as he was authoritarian and opposed development.⁴³

Youth associations of the early 1960s and of 1979 contested chiefs' role as accumulators of wealth on behalf of people and challenged their unrestricted exercise of power. Commoners formed pressure groups aimed at controlling the use of chiefly resources. The *omanhene* was called upon to account for his income and expenditure. The associations wanted revenues to be used for the general benefit of the area: they campaigned for development intended as the spread of individually controlled wealth and against chiefly privileges. The aim was to free society from "political" accumulation and to enable commoners to start profitable enterprises themselves.

The associations faced certain obstacles in their challenge against chiefs. They were formed by the literate elite and attempts to involve villagers were unsuccessful both in the 1960s and in 1979. When the associations rallied openly against chiefs they found little support. Most members were men; few women participated and those who did were seldom assigned influential offices. The movements challenged just certain actions by certain chiefs. Their scope was as limited as the consensus they managed to draw. They had an impact, but only over brief periods under what were presented as revolutionary governments.

Colonial and postcolonial governments posed a second major challenge to the chiefly establishment by questioning their role as landlords. Governments stepped in to limit chiefly demands on immigrant tenants and control land revenue collection. In the first decades of the twentieth century, land revenue was usually collected by the king who was then supposed to give subordinate chiefs their share. From the 1920s the colonial government attempted to set chiefly finances in order through the establishment of Stool Treasuries.⁴⁴ These were only

⁴³ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/127, "The Youth to The District Secretary", 24th October, 1983.

⁴⁴ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/154 and 155; GNA Accra ADM 48/1/20.

partially successful. The 1934-1935 annual report for Sefwi suggests that chiefs managed to retain a considerable part of the revenues without recording them officially.

The surprising fall in concession rents is accounted for by the fact that in most instances the Omanhene's and Elders' share of these moneys is paid before they are brought to account.⁴⁵

In the 1940s, timber firms gave unrecorded advances to chiefs instead of paying royalties into the Native Authority Treasuries.⁴⁶ Colonial attempts to seriously control revenues were, however, limited. Chiefs maintained a fair amount of freedom in the collection and management of land revenues. According to Grier (1987), from the 1930s the colonial government supported a chiefly-centred land tenure system because traditional rulers were viewed as the guarantors of a system which prevented the creation of a potentially dangerous class of indigenous landless peasants.

As national governments increased their interference, chiefs resisted as their role as landlords was being questioned and their incomes threatened.⁴⁷ Disputes inevitably followed: the contest was partly over the control of revenues and partly over the legitimate ownership of Sefwi land. Two governments in particular adopted an anti-chiefs policy: the C.P.P. (1957-1966) and the first years of P.N.D.C. rule (1979, 1981- c. 1986).

A first serious limitation to chiefs' independent role as landlords was the establishment in 1952 of the Sefwi Wiawso Local Council which replaced the Native Authority in the collection of land revenue. This Local Council was C.P.P.-dominated and conflicts with the traditional members soon became apparent. Ninsin (1989: 167) describes the C.P.P.'s intentions:

⁴⁵ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/155, "Annual Report for the Sefwi Aowin District for the year 1934-1935".

⁴⁶ GNA Accra ADM 47/1/10, "Sefwi District Handing Over Notes of Mr. I.E. Cochran Ag. D.C. to Mr. H.J.P. Crawford, District Commr., 20th January 1949"; GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/7; GNA Accra ADM 47/1/23, "Sefwi District, Western Province, Quarterly Report: 31st December 1948, Quarterly Report on Bibiani Sub-District for Quarter ending 31st March 1949".

⁴⁷ The establishment of forest reserve was yet another way of menacing chiefs' role as landlords. Most forest reserves in Sefwi were established before land pressure became a crucial issue. Chiefs initially showed little opposition to the establishment of reserves probably because they did not have a clear idea of their consequences.

The CPP's land and anti-chief policies may be divided into two. The first was aimed simply at weakening the economic base of the politically most powerful chiefs while the second sought to assert the state's supreme dominion over all the lands of the nation-state.

Even though the Local Council tried to control all land revenue, it appears that chiefs managed to retain certain incomes through informal payments.⁴⁸ In 1955, the king and the chiefs were accused of entering into agreements with timber contractors without informing the Local Council.⁴⁹ In 1964, the *omanhene* was reprimanded for the unlawful collection of "special rates" which were the sole competence of the Local Council.⁵⁰ From the 1950s, the most considerable source of chiefly revenue has probably been the allocation of land rights to immigrant tenants. This revenue was mostly controlled by chiefs independently even though the Local Council made attempts to include it in its prerogatives.⁵¹

Perhaps the most serious contest over the *omanhene*'s role as landlord was the approval of the "Rents Stabilization Act (Act 109)" by the C.P.P. government in 1962.

Act 109 ... had the greatest impact on the relationship between peasant settler farmers and their landlords. This law was designed to redress the situation of extortionate rents being charged by landlords; and so it regulated such rents by fixing ground rent at five shillings per acre ... landlords remained resentful of the law until it was repealed in 1967 by NLCD 34 (Ninsin 1989: 168-169; cf. Benneh 1975: 58-59; Aidoo 1996: 9).

The law established a new criterion for the payment of land tribute from immigrant tenants to chiefs. The government decreed that the tripartite division enforced up to then was illegal and that it should be replaced by a small yearly devolution. While tenants welcomed the law, chiefs felt that their rights as landlords were being challenged. The issue was discussed at the

⁴⁸ GNA Accra ADM 47/1/10, "Handing Over Notes of Mr. D. Earle, Government Agent Sefwi District to Mr. H.B. Asmah, Government Agent, 19th June 1953".

⁴⁹ GNA Sekondi WRA 6/1A/401, "Sefwi District Quarterly Reports".

⁵⁰ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/53, "Minutes of the Proceedings of the Wiawso Local Council at the Annual Meeting held at the Council Chamber, Wiawso, on 20th Oct. 1964".

⁵¹ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/18, "Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the Sefwi Wiawso Local Council...", 4th July 1952.

Western Regional House of Chiefs and the *omanhene* reported to his Traditional Council the ambiguous words of the government official, presumably the regional Minister.

The chairman [the *omanhene*] informed the Council that the Minister openly told the house [of chiefs, Western Region] that all stool lands are still in the hands of chiefs but owing to misappropriation of funds from these lands ... thus the government has taken the control to avoid unlawful execution.⁵²

The Council accepted the government's decision but its resentment against the C.P.P. grew and the 1966 *coup* was celebrated with jubilation by most of the Sefwi chiefly establishment. After the repeal of Act 109, there was more agreement between chiefs and Local Councils on systems of taxation and revenue division.⁵³ The notion of the *omanhene* as ultimate landlord was reinstated even though the exercise of his rights remained under government supervision. The second period of conflict between chiefs and national government over land issues occurred in 1986, was centred specifically on the relationships between chiefs and immigrant tenants and will be discussed in chapter four.

⁵² Archives of the Traditional Council, Sefwi Wiawso, Sixth Session of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held on Monday the 3rd September 1962.

⁵³ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/60, "Petition from Robert Ata...", 21st March 1967; "Petition of strangers...", 29th March 1967.

Chapter 2.

The advent of capitalism in the cocoa industry

The introduction of some aspects of a capitalist economy in the Southern area of Ghana was a major change which has drawn the attention of historians, anthropologists, sociologists and economists. In the present chapter I review this vast literature and examine the effects of the spread of capitalist relations on patterns of subordination. Existing relations of dominance, I argue, did not vanish with the introduction of the market economy. While the means of subordination have changed -land, money and their relationship becoming crucial in strategies of domination- unequal assumptions persist.

The works of Polly Hill must be mentioned first to mark their chronological precedence and because they had a widespread influence on studies concerning cocoa production in Ghana and elsewhere (Austin 1997). In 1963, she published *The Migrant Cocoa-Farmers of Southern Ghana*. The main argument of this work, which can be found with little change in subsequent publications (Hill 1963b, 1970), was that a large number of Ghanaian migrant cocoa farmers ran their enterprises according to a successful capitalist logic. An assimilated market consciousness regulated their acquisition of land rights, labour employment and use of profits.

From the early 1970s, Adomako-Sarfoh (1971), Addo (1974), Okali (1975) and Arhin (1986a, 1988a) have examined the importance of migration in the spread of a capitalist-oriented cocoa industry. As both landlords and workers travelled to turn new forest areas into cocoa farms, the relationships they established in offering and acquiring land and labour were centred on monetary exchanges rather than social obligations. The migration process linked to cocoa production was seen as a partial liberation from family and community constraints and as more specifically market-oriented.

While palm, oil, kola and rubber paved the way, the cocoa industry is viewed as marking the decisive shift to capitalist agriculture. Boaten (1973: 43) states that cocoa production inherited the "capitalist outlook" of rubber commerce while having a more profound impact. The shift towards capitalism was the focus of much of the Marxist literature. Vercrujse (1979) views the spread of cocoa as marking the passage from a "tributary" to a "capitalist"

mode of production. The author, however, holds that the process is still far from completion: "as there is little or nothing of a wage-earning class in peasant farming ... the direct producers have not yet been separated from the means of production" (p. 104). Groff (1980) believes that a capitalist system emerged in the Anyi area of the Ivory Coast in the 1920s. As a consequence of the advent of the cocoa industry, the Anyi were stably linked to the world-market economy, the control of the means of production -and in particular land- was held by a minority, and capitalist labour relations were established. Eric Wolf (1982: 340-343), in his monumental work on the formation of a world-market economy, refers to the Ghanaian cocoa industry to exemplify the spread of export agriculture in the forest belt of West Africa. Wolf draws largely on the work of Hill (1963a) to prove that the cocoa industry implied capital accumulation and commodification of land and labour.⁵⁴

This literature highlights tendencies towards an increase of both market-oriented attitudes and capitalist labour arrangements which certainly had great relevance in twentieth-century dynamics. I hold, however, that these transformations acquire a more pertinent meaning if viewed as a continuation of existing Akan relations of subordination. While many agricultural relationships have a monetary side to them, indeed a capitalist one, to focus on this aspect alone is misleading. Economic transactions are inserted in a complex of symbols, social roles, and systems of value attribution. In what follows, I discuss the degree of commodification of land rights and labour. These are two crucial aspects to determine the extent of capitalist penetration within the cocoa industry, for Marxists identify land and labour as the key means and forces of production in Southern Ghana.

Land rights

The monetization of land access has drawn attention since the late nineteenth century. The first descriptions of the Akan land tenure system were provided by writers with legal backgrounds. John Mensah Sarbah (1897) a well-known lawyer wrote the first systematic study on Akan "customary law" with reference to the Fanti. The author admitted that land could be sold and listed the conditions which made land sales "valid". He specified, however,

⁵⁴ Hart (1982: 59-63) holds a different view. He believes that capitalist relations did not fully develop and that "cocoa farming in West Africa is still an industry contained within the matrix of indigenous family life".

that "land is about the last thing which became the subject of an out and out sale". Land, Sarbah explained, was granted for temporary use rather than alienated; however "the sale of land has been of more frequent occurrence in the coast towns" (p. 74). Rattray (1923: 213-241; 1929: 340-366), a colonial official with legal training, outlined the "customary" laws concerning land, described with some regret the initial stages of monetization of land rights and defended chiefs' ultimate control of land. Danquah (1928: 197-211), who received legal training in England as well, stated customary laws relating to ownership. Land was a peculiar form of property "part of the general religious scheme" as it was received by the ancestors. Early twentieth-century dynamics, however, altered notions of land use; Danquah (1928: 212-219) denounced increasing land sales and listed the correct procedures for purchase.

These early studies are positioned on the borderline between a description of a normative legal system and an ethnography of social change. Their ambiguous status allowed for opposing interpretations of their findings. Two main bodies of literature derived from these pioneer works: legal studies on the one hand, historical and socioeconomic ones on the other. I review each of these two bodies of literature in regard to the acquisition of land rights by immigrants.

Most legal studies hold that little change has occurred in the land tenure system as land issues have always been addressed according to "customary law". Ollennu's (1962) *Principles of Customary Land Law in Ghana* states that "the only law governing land tenure in Ghana, with particular reference to transfer of title, is the customary law" (p. 119). The latter, he explains, attributes the "paramount title" to stools, while individuals may acquire only a "usufructuary title" (p. 4).⁵⁵ Kyerematen (1971: 23, cf. 36) believes that the chief is the "custodian of all lands within his territory". According to the author, the economic developments of the twentieth century "have not altered the general principle of land-holding" (p. 36). Chiefs may "give away lands to 'stranger-farmers'" but land alienation occurred in the precolonial period as well. Chiefs, anyway, maintain the "complete" or "ultimate" ownership (pp. 24, 39-40, 97-123). Kasanga (1988) states that land in Ghana is still held according to customary law: "the position of every 'allodial' title holder of land in Ghana is

⁵⁵ Bentsi-Enchill (1964: 80-83) takes a different stance and holds that "allodial ownership" can and could be vested in individuals.

that of a titular holder, holding the land in trust for the whole community" (pp. 30-31). Strangers have access to land through chiefs. However, "The absolute alienation of farmland through purchase was not encountered at any of the survey centres [Wa district, Obuasi, Techiman]" (37, cf. 62-66). The customary land tenure system ensures some degree of equality: "Communal landholding ... guarantees the absolute security of the most helpless local. Though not to the same extent as locals, the security of strangers (migrants), in respect to land is also potentially guaranteed" (p. 52). Aidoo (1996: 5, 10), concerned with the whole of Ghana, claims that absolute property rights are not alienable, while use rights are widely distributed to both locals and immigrants. The land tenure system is described as "flexible and accommodating to all" (p. 10).

Works of customary law hold that little change occurred in the land tenure system over the twentieth century. The current commodification of land finds a justification in customary procedures; the "ultimate ownership" remains vested in stools; the traditional land tenure guarantees a certain degree of equality and some security of title; customary law is often presented as adaptive and efficient. This legal literature is largely concerned with the normative: the focus is on the way the legal system should work rather than on its implementation. When writers make an attempt to exemplify their theories, legal cases are brought as evidence. Land issues in the Akan area, however, are often resolved out of court, and judicial records often fail to document the complex social, political and symbolic implications inherent in land cases. Works of customary law clash with the view of tenant farmers and with the understanding of social scientists.

The first social scientists were cautious about land ownership. Fortes (1948) distinguishes lineage property from individual ownership. Immigrants have neither, they only hold "perpetual usufruct of the land" (p. 17) and are asked to pay a yearly rent. Hill (1963a: 138-180) holds that the sale of land in Akyem Abuakwa was not a consequence of cocoa production but rather "a traditional practice" (p. 141). She, however, admits that land sales greatly increased with the advent of cocoa. In subsequent decades works concerned with the Akan land tenure system stressed the link between spread of permanent cash-crops and alienation of land rights more clearly. Up to the expansion of the cocoa industry, runs this argument, individual farmers held only short-term usufructuary rights over their plots rather

than anything resembling ownership. Land as a marketable commodity is a twentieth-century phenomenon explainable with reference to the spread of cash agriculture.

Benneh (1970; 1988) examines the effects of the introduction of cash-crops on the land tenure system of Southern Ghana. The "traditional" tenure, based on usufructuary rights, was replaced by a strengthening of individual's rights leading to ownership of land and to its commodification. Lanternari (1977: 254-258; 1988: 116-131) examines the ethical consequences of land commodification. He stresses that cash agriculture produced a new social role: the "individual farm owner who tends to reinvest in new plots for ambition and desire to increase his prestige and wealth The traditional value system, based on the solidarity of clan members, is being replaced by individualistic attitudes." (Lanternari 1977: 258). Vercrujse (1979: 104) is more prudent and states that: "although land is now to some extent a source of income and has acquired certain characteristics of a commodity, it is still far from being freely exchangeable". Konings (1986: 65) holds that the advent of cocoa in Ahafo "virtually turned communal land into private property". Addo-Fening (1987) describes the process of commercialization of land in Akyem Abuakwa in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. He regrets that the "communalism" was gradually lost and market-dominated attitudes prevailed, land becoming a convertible commodity. Arhin (1988a: 12-13) states the change of attitude towards land.

Among the various Akan sub-groups, land sales may have been rare before the nineteenth century for a variety of economic and religious reasons. But since ... the last decade of the nineteenth century, land sales have become a firmly established aspect of cocoa production in areas other than the producer's own birth-place.

The author's survey in the Central and Western Regions shows that land "was available for outright purchase ... land had become a commodity; whoever acquired or purchased land could sell it". Austin (1987: 267-269) describes the "commercialization of land use" in the form of land sales to strangers in South Asante during the first decades of the twentieth century. He sees the widespread indebtedness which characterized the cocoa industry, particularly in the 1920s and 1930s, as "a major advance of capitalism" as it stimulated "the transfer of farms through the market" (p. 271). Agbosu (1990: 106, 108) believes the colonial

government sponsored a transformation from "communal systems of tenure founded on group ownership of the land and its resources" to a capitalist system characterized by "individually acquired interest in land".⁵⁶ Firmin-Sellers (1996: 59-91) describes the successful "reinvention of tradition" aimed at adapting chiefly prerogatives to the appreciation of land value in Akyem. She holds that chiefs sold the land "outright" but the king successfully controlled alienations by reformulating "customary law" and imposing a "traditional" land tenure system adapted to market-oriented production.

This literature uses field research techniques (interviews, surveys, participation, local archival records) rather than concentrating on court cases alone. The focus is on experienced dynamics rather than laws and the results are obviously different. Major transformations have occurred in land transactions: customary law seems to dissolve under the impact of the cocoa industry; the term "ownership" is usually used to refer to farmers' rights rather than to chiefly prerogatives; the current land tenure system does not guarantee equality; the commodification of land leads instead to the stratification of farmers. As land became a scarce and marketable resource, those who were able to control large portions could mobilize the labour of landless farmers.

These irreconcilable academic positions have some echo in daily practices in Sefwi. Tenant farmers express a view which can be identified with those works which have proclaimed the commodification of land. Immigrants claim that they have acquired land ownership through purchase. To them, the monetary payments made to chiefs imply outright alienation. Tenants support a view of a society in which land is commodified as any other good, social status being attributed by the capacity to accumulate capital. Sefwi chiefs do not agree and tend to re-state the principles contained in works of "customary" law. They declare that land can not and has not been sold. They present themselves as ultimate landlords, owners of all Sefwi lands. Written contracts confirm the chiefs' version. In the "memorandum of agreement", the official contract of transfer of land rights which both tenants and chiefs sign, the former are "granted ... for the purpose of cultivation ... peaceful and uninterrupted use and occupation of ...

⁵⁶ Grier (1987) holds a contrary view. She believes that the colonial government in the early twentieth century opposed the commodification of land rights.

land".⁵⁷ Legally, there is no transfer of ownership but of farming rights alone (cf. Robertson 1982: 458-459; Benneh 1988: 233-236). Land has become a commodity in Sefwi as elsewhere in Ghana, but a peculiar one. Chiefs and Sefwi have successfully opposed the demolition of a system of allocation of land rights according to birth.

One risks being caught between two opposing versions: a legalistic conservative one and an historical progressive one. Sefwi land tenure is both a combination of these two tendencies and yet neither of the two. Even though in Sefwi the terms of land alienation differ from those of other parts of southern Ghana (cf. Hill 1963a: 42), Sefwi dynamics may be illustrative of tensions common throughout the Akan area. Land tenure patterns are simply ambiguous: ground-rights are at the centre of an unresolved political contest. Most of the literature is concerned with whether land was sold or not. I believe this perspective is misleading. The terms of the issue should rather be: which rights are transferred with the monetary transactions and which are not? Does the chief maintain his role as landlord? If so, how does he enforce it? Moreover, the conflict between chiefs and tenants should be inserted in the particular local and national political context to understand tenants' and chiefs' success in imposing what each party considers its "legal" rights.

Land transactions exemplify the struggle for the preservation of tenants' subordination. Transferrals of land rights are not just legal contracts but ritual events involving the transfer of a bottle of alcoholic drink (*nsa*) from tenants to landlords: giving *nsa* is a typical expression of inferior status and implies the recognition of the superior position of who receives the drink (chapter 12). Land is crucial for both its economic and symbolic value: it is an essential source of chiefly revenue and land-giving maintains a hierarchical connotation. Chiefs' recognition of immigrant farmers' ownership would imply forgoing both exercises of power. As a result, principles of market economics are only partially applied to land.

Privileged ancestry and land ownership are seen as tightly linked: the ancestral deeds in occupying the territory confer land rights on current office-holders (see chapter 5). The initial payment of money is interpreted as a form of purchase by foreigners. Chiefs, however, consider this monetary transaction to be only a devolution which is part of wider obligations.

⁵⁷ See Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Commissioner for Oaths, "Memorandum of Agreement", clauses one and five.

The first sum does not conclude the monetary transfers from tenants to chiefs: rent is collected yearly, donations are demanded, devolutions are expected on ritual occasions, extraordinary sums are asked. Foreigners need to comply with these demands if they value the peaceful exercise of their farming rights. Moreover, tenants' inferior ancestry results in partial, temporary and insecure land rights: they are not allowed to turn themselves into landlords by sub-letting the land; they do not have any right to sell timber or dig for minerals; once the farming rights are transferred to the immigrant farmer, the tenant needs to start working on the land, for otherwise the entitlement is withdrawn; land disputes are to be judged by Sefwi chiefs; if the tenant sells his farming rights, he needs to inform the traditional ruler, have his permission and hand over to him part of the income. Through these practices, the potential capital accumulation of immigrant tenants is curtailed.

A hierarchical perspective used below in parts two and three shows the wider social significance of land transfers and the persistence of unequal relations over the twentieth century. Hierarchical codes often stress immigrants' inferior role: the status of "owners" of the land is reserved to Sefwi chiefs, tenants only own their farm (see chapter 10); when receiving land, immigrants are said to receive food and need to provide drinks (*nsa*), tenants are thus positioned at the inferior end of symbolic transactions (see chapter 12); when they refuse to comply with the obligations of their inferior position, reference is made to supernatural forces to prevent their insubordination (see chapter 11).

Chiefs have kept direct control over a large portion of lands in Sefwi and an indirect one on the whole territory. Their large incomes, derived from land control, are not systematically turned into investment capital. Chiefs' role within the community explains this economically unsound use of profits. Money received by chiefs is not, and to a certain extent may not be principally invested in capitalist enterprises. Office-holders embody public wealth and therefore need to spend on symbolic goods such as the chiefly treasure, cars, buildings and cloths. They also need to defend what they perceive as their rights; this produces costly litigation. Another large share of revenues is allocated to subjects both directly and indirectly through the sponsorship of scholarships and development projects (see chapter 5). Chiefs' superior hierarchical status requires them to devolve and consume a large part of their income rather than invest it in capitalist enterprises.

The change which occurred in land rights over the twentieth century can not be reduced to a shift from communal land tenure to private ownership supportive of a capitalist system. This position, first of all, fails to explain why land is increasingly fragmented instead of being concentrated by large capitalist farmers. Secondly, and most important, it limits the understanding of the wider meanings of land tenure.

Labour arrangements

Another crucial issue for those supporting the idea of the introduction of capitalist relationships in the cocoa industry is the establishment of wage labour. The commodification of labour for agricultural production was previously unknown: slaves, pawns, children and wives were involved in food-crop production. With the spread of cash-crops, labour was imported in the forest belt from neighbouring areas and was sold and bought.

Beckett (1944, 1945) describes hired labour arrangements in the cocoa industry of Akokoaso, a village of the Central Province, and Korasang a farm of almost one hundred acres in Akyem Abuakwa, in the 1930s. Hill (1963a: 187-190, 213-214) believes that the use of hired labour was common from the very beginning of the twentieth century and outlines employment agreements. She holds, however, that the "capitalist" aspect of migrant cocoa farmers rested on their attitude rather than on forms of labour engagement.

Many works which followed Beckett's and Hill's pioneer studies confirm the shift of labour contracts in cocoa production towards capitalist relations. In the 1970s, the principal features of labour agreements on cocoa farms are described in detail. Boaten (1973) examines the use of northern "stipendiary labour" in the expansion of cocoa production around the city of Kumase. Addo (1974) reviews patterns of labour employment. Okali (1974, 1975) illustrates the integration of family and hired labour in a Ahafo village. Robertson (1982) and Sutton (1983) provide in-depth analyses of various forms of wage labour with special reference to the immigration of northern workers. These studies do not, however, term the relationship as a capitalist one.

With the rise of Marxist theory, in the late 1970s and 1980s, agricultural labour relationships in Southern Ghana are described as capitalist and labour mobilization is associated with class analysis. Vercrujse (1979) uses a Marxist framework to describe the

"formation of peasant classes", which he identifies with "farm labourers" and "farm owners"; but he holds that the process was only "in its early beginnings". Groff (1980), on the other hand, believes that capitalist labour relationships were established in the Anyi area of the Ivory Coast in the 1930s. Among other effects of the new industry, he stresses new patterns of stratification.

A new "planter class" was taking shape. At the same time the Juablin's increasing dependence on migrant labor was calling into being an incipient class of laborers. These two groups, the Juablin planters and their migrant laborers, related to the means of production in very different ways. In this sense they constituted what Marx calls 'classes in themselves', that is groupings of individuals bearing a common relationship to the ownership of the means of production (Groff 1980: 391).

Garceau (1982) shares the Marxist concern with economic inequalities. He describes the process of land accumulation by indigenous farmers, mostly chiefs and their relatives, and the emergence of wage and sharecropping contracts involving immigrants. Konings (1986: 43) believes that the introduction of "capitalist farming" did not result in the "proletarianization of the domestic community" in Ahafo, as hired labour consisted mostly of immigrants from the North. The presence of immigrant labourers and the variety of work contracts "led to a peculiar process of class formation". Lanternari (1988: 117-131) holds that the advent of "European capitalism" produced the emergence of a "rural proletariat" employed by a class of "entrepreneurs-planters". Arhin (1988a: 13-15) describes the rise of hired labour in the migrant farming areas and identifies a class of "capitalist" migrant farmers able to "own land, the basic means of cocoa production" and to buy "the labour of others". The most systematic work on the establishment of capitalist labour arrangements in the Akan area was carried by Austin (1987, 1988). He defines capitalist relations of production as "forms in which labour and land were acquired through the market" (Austin 1987: 259; cf. 1988: 63). Austin describes the expansion of cocoa production in South Asante, the growing "market orientation" of the population and the rapid increase of wage labour in the 1920s and 1930s.

While forms of capitalist labour relations, as defined by Austin, were certainly produced by the spread of the cocoa industry, these were inserted in existing relations of subordination. Some expected hired labour to gradually replace existing forms of labour. This was not the

case. Two observations point to a complex interaction between capitalist labour contracts and wider social arrangements.

Firstly, capitalist labour relations did not replace domestic forms of labour mobilization: hired labourers worked alongside household heads, wives, children, junior kin, pawns, and slaves (Austin 1988). Austin (1987: 262; cf. 1988) notes for South Asante that: "Cocoa-farming in Amansie [Southern Asante] was from the start 'capitalist' ... but even by the end of its major growth, it was still only partly capitalist". Grier (1981, 1987, 1992) argues convincingly that the colonial state successfully opposed the commodification of labour relations. The wage labor force was "only partially proletarianized" (Grier 1987: 43) as a result of colonial "efforts to strengthen noncapitalist social relations" and "to revive and reshape many aspects of the old precapitalist order" (Grier 1992: 315, 325). Chauveau and Dozon (1985: 75) reach similar conclusions. They hold that the use of wage labour has often led academics to describe the relationship as capitalist.

The term seems to us an improper one because it does not account for the organic link between land and labour, where the worker accepts employment in the African plantations in the hope of becoming a planter himself The small commercial production does not oppose Capital and Labour but lives on the interaction between the latter and the land producing a multiplication of plantations.

Chauveau and Dozon explain that there are no fixed relations between a class of planters and one of labourers. There is rather a fluid market, producing labour arrangements which vary with circumstance.

Nor did the rise of wage labour affect sharecropping contracts (Robertson 1982; Boadu 1988). Once cocoa is planted and has grown to maturity, farmers can either harvest it themselves or employ labourers to take care of the farm maintenance and the plucking. Labourers employed for such purposes are termed *abusa* caretakers, and the cocoa proceeds are divided into three parts: one going to the labourer and two to the farm owner. The *abusa*, tripartite division of incomes in grown cocoa farms is common nowadays just as it was at the beginning of the industry. New forms of agreements emerged as well, such as the *abunu* sharetenancy which spread in Sefwi in the 1980s. The *abunu* caretaker is assigned a portion

of secondary forest which he has to develop into a cocoa farm. When the cocoa reaches maturity, the land is shared equally between landlord and sharecropper.

Less formalized and non-monetized contracts are common as well. For example some women who do not own land or who own land but who can not find a man to perform the clearing of the forest, sometimes resort to the following contract. They ask a cocoa farmer, normally a matrilineal relative, to assign them part of his new farm. The man clears the forest and plants cocoa while the woman plants food-crops alongside. She weeds the farm and collects the food-crops for two years. When the cocoa approaches maturity the system of intercropping is interrupted and the cocoa returns to the man. According to this agreement, the owner may demand part of the food-crops besides benefitting from free labour on his young cocoa farm. This arrangement exempts women from the clearing of new farms, while men benefit from free labour on their farms for the first two years. Even though this arrangement is predominantly used by women, men with problems of land access may engage in it as well. Even less formalized agreements occur, people with little land, mostly women, work for some hours and receive food-crops or a meal in exchange. The cocoa industry benefitted from the interrelation of wage labour and work mobilized through other means.

Secondly, wage labour is seen by Sefwi as part of more general hierarchical relations between landlord and worker. Konings (1986: 85) holds that family labour relations "have come to resemble more closely employer-employee relationships". I believe the opposite is true: capitalist labour contracts are, in many ways, conceived by the parties as one of the numerous labour arrangements resting on wider and largely non-monetized forms of subordination. The wage-work exchange is part of the allocation of unequal roles with further social, economic and symbolic implications. Austin (1987: 268) notes that in the 1920s some servants, who were formally freed by the British government, still worked for their masters. They were considered free farm workers by the law, but "may well have understood their position in terms of status rather than contract". I would argue that throughout the twentieth century contracts have implied status attribution alongside monetary transactions. Etienne (1971), for example, has shown that labourers are conceptually assimilated to slaves amongst the Baule; this leads youngsters to prefer non-monetized work for elder kin to wage labour.

Labour has been bought and sold but often these contracts are conceived by the parties as implying wider social obligations, irreducible to simple market transactions.

In parts two and three I examine some of the hierarchical implications of being an agricultural labourer. I show that labourers are considered and termed "younger kin"; they are asked to perform household duties reserved to children besides working in agriculture (see chapter 9). Workers are assigned subordinate roles such as those of "helpers" or "caretakers" (see chapter 10). Drink and food transactions ratify the subordinate role of labourers: they receive subsistence from their landlords and have to provide alcohol (*nsa*) when entering labour contracts (see chapter 12). Being a labourer implies wider obligations than providing work, while the employer has to grant services besides money. Workers are not only wage labourers, they are rather paid dependants. The employer, on the other hand, is called upon to provide accommodation, food, and medical assistance.

The market logic of investment in land and labour to obtain increased profits is not altogether lacking in Sefwi, but is rather inserted in a social framework which shapes its meaning. Ideas and practices of land allocation and labour division have created and maintained hierarchy without concentrating capital (cf. Chauveau and Dozon 1985). In most of the literature farmers' differential capacity to control land and labour leads to class analyses. Capitalists are identified either with chiefs and family heads (Vercrujse 1979; Groff 1980; Garceau 1982), with rich immigrant farmers (Okali, Owusuansah, Rourke 1974; Arhin 1986a: 12-13, 1988a; Agbosu 1990) or both (Konings 1986: 80-81; Austin 1988: 78; Ninsin 1989). The classes which are identified as "capitalists", however, fall short of this definition. Social and political constraints, concerning both the acquisition and the expenditure of resources, account for the lack of a strict division between holders of capital and hired labourers (cf. Austin 1987: 275-279). Monetary transactions, however, create links of subordination even when the money is redistributed to kin and dependants rather than being used to acquire land or labour. Accumulators of wealth accept their roles as redistributors, fragmenting capital while extending links of dependency. This process of distribution increases the value of the donor and justifies his dominant position. In turn, the increased value justifies the concentration of key production factors, such as land, and results in the capacity to mobilize unpaid labour.

Chapter 3.

Transformations in notions of parenthood and marriage

Literature on gender in the Akan world has, with some exception, argued that the status of women has constantly declined. Twentieth-century dynamics are seen as enhancing the position of men, suppressing women's independence and threatening their power.⁵⁸ The colonial government and the spread of market-oriented industries share the blame for the loss of women's independence. Authors' understandable concern with women's current inferior position is often arbitrarily opposed to an ideal past (seldom stated) in which forms of gendered subordination were either unknown or more contained. Often little historical evidence is provided to prove that egalitarian gender relations existed in the past. Rather, the degradation of women's status is taken as axiomatic.

Opong, Okali and Houghton (1975: 71) believe that "modern developments have weakened the status and power of women vis-à-vis men" in rural and urban Ghana. Numerous factors had a negative impact on female autonomy and rank: colonialism and cocoa production, however, feature preeminently. The work is detailed and convincing when it examines current dynamics but an historical perspective is lacking. The authors' claim that women made "retrograde steps" rests on an assumed, unproven past.

Mona Etienne (1983: 305-306) holds an even stronger view of the Baule past. She states that "historical" Baule marriage was characterized by "the absence of relations of domination-subordination between husband and wife Early observers are unanimous in noting the high position of Baule women". Women managed important rituals and achieved "political and economic power". The incorporation of Baule society in the "world capitalist economy", in the form of cash-crop production, is seen as the major engine of change. Effects on female activities, i.e. weaving, were "particularly devastating". What used to be an "equitable exchange of labour" between spouses "has become a form of unequal exchange" (p. 311-312). While abundant ethnographic detail is provided to illustrate current dynamics, there is

⁵⁸ It is, however, also believed that Akan women, thanks to matriliney, still enjoy greater autonomy than their patrilineal counterparts elsewhere in Africa (see chapter 6).

again no use of archival material, no citation of historical sources and the identity of the "early observers" of precolonial Baule remains unstated.

Other studies on Akan marriage have stressed change as well. Abu (1983: 167-168) believes that the "old order of economic relations" was upset by the market economy. Tashjian (1995: 168-169; 350-353) holds a similar view: cash agriculture favoured men more than women. The latter also faced increasing difficulties in obtaining divorce. Her evidence consists of memories of contemporary women and twentieth-century court records. Clark (1994: 337-338) affirms that the retreat of lineage ties and the increase of conjugal marital relationships favoured men: "women find it harder to take advantage of rights to lineage-controlled farmland and housing ... inheritance from women to men has become much more frequent". Manuh (1995) believes that the advent of the cocoa industry produced a redefinition of social relations and "attempts were made by chiefs, elders, and husbands to assert greater control over the labour and sexuality of women". Akyeampong (1996a: xx) reviews the literature on the various aspects in which "conditions of women have deteriorated in the late colonial period and during Ghana's independence". He mentions access to higher education, trading conditions, hostile governments and increasing fragility of marriage.

Perhaps the most systematic defenders of the thesis of the degrading status of women are Mikell (1984, 1986, 1995, 1997a: 11-16) and Allman (1997). The "original" matrilineal society is viewed as ensuring extended rights to women. With the gradual insertion of patrilineal elements over the centuries, women's power was constrained. The reconstruction of the "original" matrilineal society previous to degradation, however, rests on little documentary evidence. A consequence is that the period in which women's power was lost is uncertain. For example, Mikell (1984, 1986) finds a doubtful connection between the well-documented increase of patrilineal transfers of offices in late eighteenth-century Asante and women's difficulties in land access in the twentieth century. The pattern of decreasing female access to land is however not lineal: women's land attainment, the author admits, is not weakened in a steady fashion. In the period between 1900 and 1920, women were generally excluded from cocoa farming. They gained more wealth in subsequent decades while their capacity to obtain land declined again from the 1960s. Allman (1997) believes that the introduction of stratification in Asante lineages, with the rise of Akan states around the

seventeenth century, led to a more central role of the father and a decrease of the woman's control of children. She holds, however, that an "inalienable connection between fathers and children" (p. 309) was legally enforced only from the 1920s as a result of cocoa farming, the ideological influence of missions, and the spread of school attendance.⁵⁹

Akyeampong (1996a: xix; cf. 16-18) holds a different view: the early colonial period "provided women with the first opportunity to define their autonomy outside their relationship with men", and the beginning of the worsening of female status dates to the late colonial period. Mikell (1995: 225) identifies another negative trend in the even more recent past: "Between 1978 and 1985, the collapse of the national economy was accompanied by severe dislocations in family economic relationships, which had the strongest negative impact on women and children".

The theory of degradation rests on shaky grounds. The precolonial past is presented as an era in which power was held by women, but scant evidence is produced to support this belief. Little use is made of precolonial sources and when these are quoted they seldom offer convincing evidence of higher female status.⁶⁰ Moreover, authors rarely define the time in which the weakening of women's authority occurred; when they do, contradictions emerge. In what follows, I examine three crucial gendered issues which according to different authors have undergone transformations: the stability of marital unions, rights connected to fatherhood, and the gendered division of parental responsibilities. I believe that change has been overstated in all three instances. Sefwi archival material from the beginning of the century and current ethnographic evidence seem to match in many respects. The principle of gender inequality and certain crucial features of men's and women's roles, rights and duties seem to have carried through the dramatic transformations of the twentieth century.

⁵⁹ Allman (1991) in a previous work took a somewhat different stance. She held that: "the passive role of women in these 19th century power configurations is striking" (p. 177) and "what remains most striking about Asante's colonial-era cases is their continuity with the pre-colonial period, both in proceedings and judgments" (p. 180).

⁶⁰ Some authors hold that women enhanced their position in the course of the twentieth century. Hill (1975: 123) believes that where land is alienated "women's rights are tending to increase" and Roberts (1987: 67) states that the condition of wives' labour on their husbands' farms "are gradually being transformed by a struggle not yet won but increasingly effective". Other works stress continuity. Grier (1992) identifies gender as one of the principles of pre-colonial appropriation of surplus labour. Vellenga (1986: 64) believes that the negative effects of the world economy affected both sexes.

Fluidity of marital roles

Works have described in detail the different types of marriage, the wedding ceremonies and the rights to which these entail in the Akan area (cf. Rattray 1927: 76-102; Danquah 1928: 145; Amoo 1946; Fortes 1950; Kyei 1992: 26-39) and Sefwi (Tellier 1902: 150; Mensah-Brown 1968). The marriage ritual consists in the monetary payment from the groom to the bride's elder relatives (usually the father, mother or mother's brother) of a certain amount known as *aseda*, together with the transfer of an alcoholic drink, termed *tiri nsa*. Through marriage, the husband's matrilineage, which is always different from the wife's but may be that of her father, is involved in the maintenance of the woman and acquires a set of rights over her (see chapter 6).

Most works hold that marriage has undergone drastic alterations. Fluid unions, granting women more limited rights, are said to be on the increase. Vellenga (1983: 152) holds that while the lack of definition of marital status penalized men in the pre-independence period, the increasing "confusion" over forms of marriage now "works to the detriment of women". Manuh (1995) states that from the mid-1960s major transformations have occurred in marriage patterns. She opposes marriage transactions of the 1980s, characterized by expensive bridewealth, to those of the early twentieth century involving smaller payments. While in earlier unions most husbands chose to perform the full rituals, the 1980s were characterized by a growing number of "fluid relations". As a consequence of the higher bridewealth, "many young men and women were not ready to marry" (Manuh 1995: 196). Women refused matrimony to safeguard economic and social independence. A similar thesis is stated by Mikell (1997b: 102, cf. 109, 113). She, however, holds that the increase in non-formalized unions is caused by men's unwillingness to acknowledge the new legal responsibilities of wedlock and fatherhood:

Mpena awade marriage [common-law union], although not usually desired since it gave women few protections and did not give men the right to sue for damages if adultery occurred, is becoming extremely common in practice.

In what follows, I argue that women's refusal to enter full marriages can hardly be considered a novel trend of the 1980s, and that fluid unions guarantee women some freedom. The monetary transaction from husband to the wife's elder relatives implies the acquisition of a set of legal, sexual and parental rights by the money-giver, besides the inclusion of the woman as a subordinate member of his household. The choice to enter informal unions and the refusal to accept monetary payment denotes an unwillingness to allocate these rights in full to the prospective husband. Sefwi evidence suggests that fluid unions were common at the beginning of the century. In some cases, monetary transactions were refused to limit the husband's control over his spouse. As no formal "marriage" took place, only domestic duties and responsibilities were transferred. The one holding authority over the woman before the union maintained a much greater control over her.

Sefwi court records from the early years of the century contain instances of such marriage strategies. In 1905, a woman "gave" her younger sister to a man (the defendant), but she carefully refused the amount offered her by the prospective husband as bridewealth, locally *tiri nsa* which literally means "head drink". "I did not take any head money from defendant. My young sister was just to live with him", she explained to the court. The man later tried to limit the partner's freedom by not allowing her to work as a hired labourer, prohibiting her visits to the elder sister and finally through violence. In brief, he unlawfully assumed the role of husband. The man was brought to court by the elder sister of his presumed wife who demanded compensation for her sibling's maltreatment. The "concubine" provokingly asked her partner "I would like to know what expenses defendant has incurred on my account". Since the man had made no payment and performed no ritual, he had to acknowledge his reduced rights.⁶¹

In another case, a slave was married to her master (the defendant). She had an adulterous affair with the plaintiff, who after paying satisfaction to her husband and master, asked to marry the woman. The defendant agreed to let the woman marry the plaintiff, "but I would not take any head money, and if a time came when I was going to my town, I would take the woman with me. She is my servant. Kwamin [the plaintiff] wanted me to accept 9/- gin [*tiri*

⁶¹ GNA Accra ADM 48/4/2, Akosua Kuma vs. Kofi, case no. 46, 26-4-1905. The colonial court awarded £5 damages.

nsa] but I refused to take anything". The slave lived with her new partner for six years and gave birth to two children. Then, a small quarrel occurred between the plaintiff and the defendant. The latter went back to the plaintiff's father and "swore the oath on him that he [the plaintiff's father] had begged the woman for his son and he should now bring her back to me". Since no head money had been paid by the plaintiff, he had no rights over her, while the woman was one of the defendant's slaves. The case was settled amicably and the defendant renounced his residential right over his slave. The woman was asked her intentions: "woman elects to stay with the husband at present, but if the defendant, whom she calls her father, goes away she will go with him".⁶²

Marriage payments were part of strategies to acquire and transfer rights over women; and within this system women pursue rights of their own, recognized by Sefwi custom. Different marriage agreements allowed parties to negotiate their relations. The smaller the amount paid, the more fragile and limited the claims the husband could forward. A man who had claimed divorce fees and compensation for the wife's seduction, was told by the woman's uncle that: "He brought a flask of gin to thank us. Kwamin Tano [the king of Wiawso] has made an order that if you get a woman for a flask of gin and she afterwards wishes to leave you, her people pay 1/- [shilling]".⁶³ No divorce fees, could be claimed. An Ashanti woman explained her refusal to accept bridewealth (*aseda*) to Rattray in these terms:

I prefer sometimes not to take it [*aseda*], for then I can get my daughter back without any trouble or expense should the husband not treat her properly (Rattray 1929: 24; cf. Allman 1994: 37).

Fluid and informal unions occurred in different periods of Akan history, rather than being a late twentieth-century response to novel marital demands. Sefwi archival material from the early twentieth-century documents refusals to formalize unions. Roberts (1987) argues that the 1920s and 1930s were a period of widespread "illicit unions" in Sefwi. Allman (1991, 1996) documents similar trends in Asante in approximately the same period. Fortes's (1950:

⁶² GNA Accra ADM 48/4/2, Asemynia vs. Amoaten, case no. 174, [not dated, 1905 or 1906].

⁶³ GNA Accra ADM 48/4/2, Kofi Yao Amua vs. Kobina Poi, case no. 209, 11-7-1906.

278) Ashanti Social Survey of 1945 records an increase in "shortlived illicit unions". Vellenga (1974: 88) holds that marriages grew "less stable" around the middle of the century. Bleek's (1972, 1975) fieldwork in Kwahu during the early 1970s reveals the widespread presence of "free marriages", unions involving only partial monetary transaction.

Gendered rights from parenthood

Akan gendered parental rights are seen by many as having been transformed over the twentieth century. Women's "traditional" authority over their children is thought to have suffered a gradual setback. Allman (1997) and Mikell (1995, 1997b) hold that the matrilineage gradually retreated and paternity gained a more prominent position. In this section, I examine Allman's and Mikell's studies in this respect and confront them with Sefwi archival evidence. Parental roles have certainly changed and the importance of fathers may well have increased in respect to both the mother and the mother's brother. I believe, however, that the degree of change has been overstated and that the historical and ethnographic evidence to support the shift is not convincing.

Allman (1997: 301-303) reconstructs the role of precolonial fathers from Rattray (1923: 77-85; 1929). Her study focuses on who "owned" youngsters. Allman states that in the nineteenth century the "ownership of children in Asante was supposed to rest firmly with their *abusua* [matrilineage]" (p. 302). The right to give out pawns expressed ownership and was reserved to the mother's brother. By the early twentieth century, the "father's rights in his children ... had become inalienable" (p. 305). The introduction of cash-crops, conjugal work on cocoa farms, the missionaries' stress on the centrality of the father and the payment of school fees produced an increased recognition of paternal rights.

Firstly, Allman's stress on transformation is not always convincing. Her reconstruction of the past rests on Rattray (1929) and on Asante court records, both of which are firmly grounded within this century. Once again, the precolonial past is presumed rather than proven. Secondly, the declaration that a shift occurred in the "ownership" of children overstates her case. In the nineteenth century, as nowadays, rights and obligations over youngsters were inserted in complex and partly undefined hierarchical relations, irreducible to the notion of "ownership". Thirdly, Allman's (1997: 310-311) principal evidence of change is

that fathers in the twentieth century acquired rights and duties over their children which were, in the precolonial period, the prerogative of the mother's brother: i.e. the payment of debts, the collection of marriage payments, the right to pawn children and to benefit from their work. In the nineteenth century, these were supposedly transferred from the lineage to the father only if the latter received his children as pawns.

Sefwi evidence suggests that this set of rights was held by fathers as well as maternal uncles in the early years of the twentieth century just as it is now. Some Sefwi fathers controlled their daughters' marriages at the very beginning of colonial rule. In 1902, Kwesi Badu "gives his daughter in marriage" to the defendant and receives £10, while the mother is given £4.10.0. The daughter, however, is too young and the prospective husband suggested that "she could help him [the father] to do work and get money" before being handed over in marriage.⁶⁴ Fathers were responsible for the children's behaviour and were called upon to pay their debts. In 1903, two of Kobina Egua's sons seduced the wife of Edu Kwaku. The latter sued their father even though the sons who had committed the offence were "grown up".⁶⁵ Moreover, in Sefwi, contrary to what is suggested by Rattray (1929) and Allman (1997), children were pawned by their fathers just as much as by their maternal uncles in the very first years of the twentieth century (see appendix 1). This brief selection of cases suggests that fathers had rights and duties over youngsters alongside those of mothers, elder brothers and sisters and, of course, mother's brothers. The identity of the holder of rights and duties over the youngster depended on the particular residential, social and economic situation.

Mikell (1995, 1997b: 113-117) shares Allman's concern with the increase of paternal rights. Once again, she considers women's loss of power a current trend and opposes this to the "traditional matrilineal family" where women played "important economic and social roles" (pp. 99-100). Mikell's reconstruction of past marriage is based mostly on Rattray (1923) and Fortes (1949, 1963, 1970). According to the author, women's political and social roles were weakened by the introduction of colonialism and the market economy. She lists

⁶⁴ GNA Accra ADM 48/4/1, Kwesi Badu vs. Kujo Jibbi, 3-4-1902; cf. Kwaku vs. Anere, 16-12-1903.

⁶⁵ GNA Accra ADM 48/4/1, Edu Kwaku vs. Kobina Egua, 24-1-1903.

"new attitudes" which strengthened "patriarchal control" in the 1970s (p. 103-105, 113). Mikell then turns to women's appeals to family courts in the 1980s. Supposedly one of the consequences of these courts was to increase paternal custody after divorce: while "under traditional circumstance Akan men rarely make claims for custody of their children since they belong to the mother's lineage", in family courts they do so and manage "to deprive women of their children" (p. 114).

In fact, father's custody was common in Asante, as well as in Sefwi, in the early twentieth century. Rattray (1929: 10, cf. 9) states that: "If children are very young when a divorce takes place, they may follow the mother, but if they are older they may remain with the father". Danquah (1928: 187) says that the Akan law is "clear" on children's custody: "a child belongs to his father". Delafosse (1930: 267) holds that amongst the Anyi the father has the right to have the children reside with him after divorce. Sefwi informants clarify these statements. Only the baby who is being nursed follows the mother on divorce. When he/she is weaned, the mother brings the child to the father. The latter may ask the mother to continue her custody, but it is the father's right to decide the child's residence. Provision of food, cloths and scholastic and medical expenses are paternal duties whether children live with the father or with the mother (cf. Allman 1997: 309). Sefwi informants state that this is the ideal behaviour and the most common practice today, as it was decades ago.

Sefwi archival material suggests that children's fathers and lineage elders contested custody in the first decades of the twentieth century. A brief list of cases -all heard in 1915- involving children's custody after divorce sheds some light on paternal rights. First, a father demanded the custody of his two children. The mother refused to hand them over because the father had not been paying for their expenses after divorce. The court judged that the father "is entitled to his two children according to native law but the woman is entitled to expenses after her divorce for supporting the children".⁶⁶ Second, a father started legal proceedings to obtain custody. In this case, the ruling assigned one of the children to the father and one to the mother.⁶⁷ Third, a father of three children who were taken away by their mother's brother

⁶⁶ GNA Accra ADM 48/4/3, Yawo Danso vs. Ya Sarlie, 19-8-1915.

⁶⁷ GNA Accra ADM 48/4/3, Kweku Dunkwa vs. Abena Afolia, 25-8-1915.

after divorce, sought custody. The District Commissioner's court recognized the paternal right to custody but ruled that compensation be paid to the maternal uncle.⁶⁸

Gendered parental responsibilities

Paternal duties towards the maintenance of children are yet another issue which is said to have undergone major change in the twentieth century. Fathers are supposed increasingly to have failed to comply with their responsibility as providers of basic expenses: food, clothing, medical and scholastic bills, etc. Allman (1997: 312-313) states that in the colonial period paternal rights were recognized even if the father failed to perform his responsibilities. By the 1940s, wives found themselves bearing a larger share of their children's expenses.

As father's rights grew increasingly inalienable in colonial Asante, they were detached from any reciprocal obligations to his children. A father owned his children whether he provided them with subsistence or not. This transformation occurred at a time when the economic cost of rearing children, particularly as a result of school fees, was rising dramatically ... much of the burden of these profound transformations in the domestic economy of child-rearing fell quite squarely on the shoulders of Asante mothers.

Clark (1994: 341-342) sees the economic crisis of the 1980s as affecting paternal responsibilities.

Tensions over short-term advantage and obligations are rising because the division of contributions to subsistence, conceived of as complementary in the classical model, has become unbalanced under contemporary economic pressure. The wife contributed staple vegetable foodstuffs from her farm, while the husband contributed the sauce ingredients: meat, fish, and salt. As vegetable food prices have risen precipitously, consumption of fish and meat has dropped sharply. The emblematic fish and salt have been translated into giving a food allowance called 'chop money' to the wife. Her subsistence farming has been translated into financial responsibility for a high portion of family living expenses.

Mikell (1997b: 116) believes that in the 1980s "new paternal responsibilities" were defined.

⁶⁸ GNA Accra ADM 48/4/3, Kwaku Jampong vs. Kwami Mansu, 27-4-1915 and Kwaku Jampong vs. Yaw Achin, 12-5-1915.

In the face of pervasive female unemployment and impoverishment, Akan mothers have been forced to seek relief by asking the courts to place new demands on the fathers of their children. Therefore, the family courts have considerable female support as they reinforce new standards for male maintenance, custody and paternity.

Fathers apparently accepted their role as providers: "Unless a man was denying paternity, he readily admitted to responsibilities for feeding and clothing his children, although his ability to do so might vary" (p. 107). Mikell (1997b: 113) goes as far as suggesting, in sharp contrast to Allman's conclusion from the 1940s, that fathers in the 1980s denied paternity to prevent expenses being demanded from them. Mikell, however, believes that men's acceptance of responsibilities seldom corresponded to adequate transfer of money (Mikell 1997b: 112).

The above statements may be viewed as part of a single trend: the burden of child-rearing has been increasingly left to women since the early twentieth century. When the economic crisis struck Ghana in the late 1970s and early 1980s, husbands' responsibilities were legally enforced. Women have turned to courts to demand the husbands' assistance unsuccessfully in the colonial period and again in recent decades.

In fact, I would suggest that ideal roles and responsibilities have not changed drastically although short term alterations have occurred. The ideal responsibilities described by Danquah (1928) and Rattray (1929) at the beginning of the century, are still valid. The household head maintains the role of ideal provider of members' needs. In Sefwi, elders of the matrilineage (mother's brothers, mother) cater principally for junior kin who reside in their households. When youngsters reside with their father, as usually happens, he has the responsibility of catering for them. Contrary to Clark's (1993) statement, I believe that food provision is and was considered the household head's duty, and therefore, usually, a man's affair rather than a joint and complementary responsibility of spouses. While it is true that women perform most of the work on food-crops, the farms are not considered theirs. If the father is incapable of granting subsistence and services, he incurs a debt and social stigma (see chapter 12). Mikell (1997b: 112) states that the public acknowledgement of the man's incomplete covering of his wife's and children's expenses is a challenge to his "notions of manhood". The gender opposite of this statement would be untenable. While the mother may admit being unable to bear the financial burden of motherhood, fathers may not.

The extent to which men manage to conform to such ideals in practice is a related but different issue. The model of men as complete providers has not been met historically. Throughout the twentieth century women have unsuccessfully asked men to perform their duties fully. While fathers are called upon to take care of their offspring, they are seldom able, whether in the past and nowadays, to do so in a way which is considered satisfactory by wives and children. Mothers contribute to their children's maintenance in two ways: they step in to pay for part of the household's financial expenses when the father is unable or unwilling (and may or may not claim reimbursement); more fundamentally, they work in joint enterprises controlled by their husbands.

To acknowledge that men use part of the budget on their dependants' expenses is crucial to understanding household hierarchy. The fact that men provide as fathers and husbands is an essential part of women's and youngsters' subordination: it justifies the unequal attribution of value and the control over dependants' labour. Men are, therefore, willing, at least officially, to comply with their paternal duties. Their increased value in society and their rights over women rest on gender unequal interdependence (diverse allocation of work rights and financial duties) rather than on indifference (separation of budgets) or complementariness (equal financial responsibility). Men's finances need to be nominally family budgets to enforce subordination. In practice, they are required to be at least partially so. Men who utterly fail to satisfy their ideal role, lose their prerogatives over women through divorce, over children through the loss of paternal custody and moreover incur debts.

What were perceived as paternal duties have not been fundamentally modified and village and court settlements have tried to enforce them throughout the twentieth century, with a varied degree of success. The following are instances from different periods of the twentieth century (1905, 1978, 1997) showing similar characteristics. Women's claims show that the identification of the father/husband as provider for household members has not changed drastically. In all three cases divorced women ask their former husbands for the payment of the children's medical expenses. In all cases husbands are guilty of negligence, or, in Akan terms, they have contracted a debt as they did not furnish what they were supposed to provide.

In 1905, a man travelled and left his wife and children behind unattended. The wife, in the following quote, asked the husband to fulfil his responsibilities towards her and the children during his absence.

I got sick [and] incurred expenses I went to see him [the husband]. I said I have born 3 children to you. Two [and] myself are sick. He said he could not give me money, but told me to get a doctor [and] he would pay the expenses. I told Kwaku Enim [the husband] that if he could not look after me he had better divorce me.

The wife's admonishment failed to have an impact and the husband neglected to pay the medical expenses. The woman divorced him and then asked for the reimbursement of the money spent on herself and the children while married.

I was ill for 4 months. I had to buy from the market as I had no farm. I had to buy my meal and all food stuffs. Later my child was sick. I incurred expenses over him. All my expenses come to £6.1.6.⁶⁹

Over seventy years later a woman sent a petition to a government official asking him to intervene in her case.

We have produced four children when the marriage broke, through no fault of mine. He divorced me when the last born was two months old. During the divorcement he was asked to take all the children with him and care for them. Since he would have no body to look after the children when he was away for work, he pleaded that I should keep the children, and he would give me money to meet the children's chop [food] money and the necessary requirements, including cloths, and hospital bills in case of Sickness.

Three months later one of the children felt sick and I sent him to hospital ... and paid C[edis] 3.00 for clinic fees, I was asked to buy some medicine which cost me C. 8.00. I informed him about it but he took no heed to that. One week later he sent me C. 10.00 to be used for hospital bills and chop money for the children when he gave me the amount I asked him to add at least C. 5.00 to it but he would not add anymore. I refused to collect it and since that time he has not given me any money again for the children.

⁶⁹ GNA Accra ADM 48/4/2, Afua Afro vs. Kujo Pong, case no. 43, 24-5-1905. The case was dismissed and the District Commissioner recommended it be taken to a native court.

The following are the expenses involved on the up keep of the children, for the six months C. 238.00.⁷⁰

A case taken in 1997 to the Social Welfare Office of Wiawso, a government department in charge of promoting "social, economic, and emotional stability in families" (cf. Jones-Quartey 1974) documents similar dynamics and claims.⁷¹ A divorced woman presented her complains concerning the father's lack of care for their four children.

[Woman]: What worries me is that this man and me divorced four years ago, during this four years he only paid for their [the children's] school fees. Finish! If they have to eat I have to get tired, I have to work before they can eat. If one is sick and I send him to the doctor, I will tell him and he will fight me. Whatever I say, he will fight me because of this. About two years ago, I sent two children to him and two remained with me. The small ones remained in the village with me, and two I sent to him at Bekwai. He travelled and left them behind. So the children suffered. I had to sell *kenkey* [a food made of maize] and went there to give them money. If their cloths were dirty, they did not have soap to clean them unless I went and bought soap and gave them. It was like this for two months [before he returned].

It was agreed that as the father was not looking after the children properly, they would go and live with the mother and she would send the ex-husband receipts of their expenses for him to pay the bills. But even this arrangement failed: the father was accused of not providing an adequate medical treatment to the sons.

[Woman]: Since two years, if some child is sick and I send him to the doctor, I take the receipt and give it to him. He takes the receipts and puts them in his pocket and doesn't say anything. So, last Christmas the second child fell sick and was admitted to hospital. I sent him one receipt, he didn't say anything and put it there. A week before Christmas he sent me some money. He brought me 40,000 Cedis to buy the children's cloths. I told him I will not use them to buy the cloths because we had not settled the doctor's bill Since then, two children again fell sick together. I have cared for the little one. I sent the elder to him at Bekwai but he only enema the child. He didn't take him to

⁷⁰ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/122, "Madam Akosua Owuo to Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare", 22nd June 1978.

⁷¹ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Department of Social Welfare, "Functions of the Department of Social Welfare at the district level", p. 2.

hospital and returned the child to me. I was also lying sick, but he sent the child anyway. After about two weeks, he came to the house. I told him: "Ei! Is what you have done good? Your child is sick, we send him to you and you enema him! You couldn't even buy Paracetamol and give it to him. I was lying sick and you sent the child back". That is what I said. He asked me why I was asking him that. His chest grew [he became furious] and the two of us had fire inside us and we fought. Then this child fell sick again. I went to tell him and he didn't mind me.⁷²

The three settlements of post-marital disputes show great similarities and indicate that the formal role of the father as provider for his children has preserved its main characteristics as an ideal reference. Throughout the twentieth century, fathers have been asked to pay for their offspring's expenses. In all three cases they acknowledge their paternal responsibilities even though they fail to comply with these. In the first instance, the husband asks for time; in the second and third, the debate concerns the size of the debt rather than its legitimacy.

The urge to find domains where women have lost power in the course of the last century has produced an overstatement of the degree of change. Family structure has been seen as undergoing profound transformations but little documentation is produced to support this case. Sefwi evidence suggests otherwise. The continuity which characterizes aspects of family life is due to the substantial preservation of hierarchical practices. Throughout the twentieth century, the nuclear family has acted as a *locus* of hierarchical relations. Fathers and husbands exercised their role of household heads, while wives and children were required to occupy subordinate positions. As roles were not dramatically altered, household dynamics show some degree of continuity.

⁷² Audio recording, Social Welfare Office, Abena Nyankomango vs. Kwasi Agyako, Wiawso, 30-10-1997, Twi. The Social Welfare Officer ruled that the father was to pay 192,000 Cedis for the debt he had incurred over the past two years and provide 10,000 Cedis monthly from then onwards.

Chapter 4.

The extent of change

Numerous academics argue that colonialism, the advent of a market economy and the increased monetization of society deeply altered the Akan world as a whole and led to the collapse of the precolonial order. McCaskie (1986: 6; cf. 1983) holds that the fall of the Asante state in the 1880s was accompanied by the "disintegration of the moral and cognitive universe of the eighteenth and nineteenth century Asante ... [and] the dissolution of the moral order from the top downwards". Arhin (1995: 106; cf. 1974a: 80-82) argues that the advent of colonialism and of the market economy destroyed existing patterns of rank allocation: "the colonial situation produced a melting pot of social value". In a recent article van der Geest (1997: 550) states:

In the olden days everything of importance passed through the elders. That has changed drastically. Most of what the elders have to offer has lost relevance for the young. The thing that counts most, money, can be obtained without them. In that sense, money has acted as a lever, turning the traditional hierarchy on its head.

Three aspects said to have undergone major transformation in the course of the twentieth century were examined. In all three, I have tried to balance transformations alongside continuity. Firstly, chiefs' role was deeply altered. Their status, however, did not collapse. They still hold the legitimate right to accumulate wealth, and exercise it successfully. Secondly, capitalist elements were introduced in cash agriculture. Patterns of allocation of land rights and forms of mobilization of labour of the early twentieth century did not dissolve completely with the rise of the cocoa industry. Moreover, money was inserted within the framework of existing non-monetary relations of subordination. Thirdly, increased monetization has certainly altered marriage relations and notions of parenthood. There is evidence, however, that fluid unions, father's right to custody and paternal responsibility were all present from the beginning of the century.

The overstatement of change, or rather the neglect of continuity, rests on certain characteristics of the Akan literature. First, many works suffer from an urban, and especially

Kumase-centred, bias. Studies have focused where the alterations have been most drastic. If attention is shifted to rural and peripheral areas of the Akan world (which, incidentally, is where most of the Akan population lived and lives), transformations appear less radical. Second, writers' search for discontinuity disposed them to overstate their case. What the past was, rather than being examined carefully through existing evidence, is often assumed as being the contrary of the current situation. Third, the stress on innovation is due to the analysis of specific aspects of relations of dominance overlooking the preservation of general patterns of inequality.

Here I briefly show how two of the most dramatic changes of the twentieth century -an increased monetization and a growing individualism- managed to coexist with established bonds of subordination rather than generate their collapse. Monetization had effects on all three aspects studied: chiefs' land rights became sources of revenue; land and labour were channelled through the market; men's domestic responsibilities became a monetary issue. The increase of monetary transactions produced the redefinition of certain notions to adapt discourses and practices establishing inequality to the new context. For example, Sefwi men maintained the status of food providers but the way in which subsistence is furnished has greatly changed. Food consisted of hunted game in the early twentieth century while today men provide food to children and wives through the payment of money. The notions of *nsa* (drink) and *aseda* (thanks-giving) were also reformulated to maintain inequality after the introduction of the market economy. The ritual and symbolic payment of *nsa* which marks social subordination was gradually linked to the payment of large sums of money as *aseda* (see chapter 12).

Traditional institutions have not so much been dislocated as profoundly transformed through the introduction of currency. Traditions which used to be maintained by thanks-offering (*aseda*) and gift-giving -for example, family solidarity, territorial claims, chieftainship, funeral celebrations, inheritance, marriage customs, religious practices, friendship, drinking palm wine, apprenticeship- are now linked with the flux of money (van der Geest 1997: 539).

A more serious threat to the hierarchical order was posed by the gradual collapse of forms of social control over individuals (slavery, pawnship) and by the advent of the idea that the

acquisition of individual wealth is legitimate irrespective of status. This was not altogether absent in precolonial Akan (Austin 1996), but an egalitarian ideology was strengthened by the introduction of colonial rule (Arhin 1974a, 1990, 1995). An individual's success is established by his participation in the economic arena rather than by birth. While the twentieth century marked the beginning of this new trend, its success is still partial and its future uncertain. In Sefwi individual accumulation has benefitted those in dominant positions who were ready to use the "egalitarian" market ethic to their advantage. The history of the twentieth century, rather than being studied as the gradual but inevitable displacement of existing relations of subordination by monetization and "individualism", should be viewed, on the one side, as an effort by those in dominant positions to adjust to expanding market influences; and on the other hand, as attempts by certain subordinates to eliminate not inequality as a whole, but particular unequal relations.

Recent writing of two Marxist academics -Maurice Godelier and Donald Donham- helps to focus on the extent of change in twentieth-century Sefwi. Godelier (1991) has recently examined Marx's work on the "evolution" of societies (p. 7) and focused in particular on the transition to capitalism (p. 22).

To Marx the transition to capitalism is achieved when the ancient forces of production, inherited from the past, are replaced by new forms produced precisely *by the development of new relations of production* [emphasis by the author].

Godelier (1991: 25-26) derives from Marx a combination of four elements characterizing the capitalist mode of production.

- 1° It is a form, historically the most developed, of *market* production,
- 2° which rests on *private* property of the means of production and money.
- 3° These means of production and money act as *capital*, i.e. they are used to produce a *surplus value* beyond the initial investment in the production process, surplus value which corresponds to different forms of capitalist *profit*.
- 4° This valorization of capital is achieved through the activation and exploitation of *hired* labourers, free persons but impoverished of the means of production and of subsistence, thus forced to sell their labour force to those possessing them [emphases by the author].

Has a transition to capitalism occurred in Sefwi according to Godelier's definition? One has to answer in the affirmative. New relations of production have certainly arisen. The four elements are all present, in some form, in the cocoa industry: the market orientation of cocoa production is obvious; land has been defined as privately owned by many; the farmers' attitude is often described as "capitalist"; hired labour is well established.

Donham's (1990) approach to history borrows the notion of "epochal analysis" from Raymond Williams. He distinguishes epochal from historical analysis and clarifies the specificity of the former.

Implied in this phrase is the notion that societies can be placed into certain broad types and that history can be divided, at least roughly, into contrasting epochs. According to Marxist theory, the distinctive feature that demarcates social types and historical epoch is the nature of productive inequalities. Power differences grounded in material life define epochal structures (p. 131).

The author specifies that productive inequalities are "the basic structure of power that determines differential control over the division of the fruits of society's labour" (p. 62).

Has Sefwi entered a new epoch, according to Donham's definition? I believe it has not. While new elements have been introduced, the allocation of power organizing the labour process has changed only slightly. Throughout the twentieth century, the basic principles of inequality, discussed below were valid. Two conclusions may be drawn. First, the change towards capitalism is an ongoing process. Its outcome should not be assumed to be successful at this stage. Second, the focus on Donham's "epochal structures" or on "hierarchy" enables one to grasp continuities in patterns of domination even in a period in which, according to Godelier's definition, the transition to capitalism is well on its way. Grier (1992: 307) states that "gender, age and descent formed the bases upon which surplus labor was appropriated" in the "precapitalist" Akan world. In part two I examine these three hierarchical domains in twentieth-century Sefwi.

Part II.

From hierarchical relations to domains

In part two, single relations of dominance are shown to be organized hierarchically. Three domains may be distinguished: ancestry, gender and seniority. Within each domain the same principle is apparent in the allocation of wealth, political office, social value and religious competence. The three domains, however, are not clearly distinguished in local terminology. Moreover, they overlap with each other in practice and ancestry and seniority to some extent conceptually. Nor, however, is the division solely that of an outside analyst. As we shall see, concepts and practices cluster in distinctive ways. Each of the following chapters is concerned with one domain of hierarchy: chapter five is centred on ancestry, chapter six on gender and chapter seven on seniority. In chapter eight, some conclusions are drawn on general features of hierarchical domains.

Chapter 5.

Ancestry

A number of twentieth-century hierarchical relations have shared ancestry as a common criterion of power and value attribution. Existing bodies of literature on the Akan have studied concepts related to ancestral origin but have failed to acknowledge fully its implications for the system of dominance or to point out clearly the importance of ancestors' perceived deeds as a principle of social organization. Studies concerned with ancestry are awkwardly divided into three scarcely connected bodies of literature: anthropological works greatly conditioned by Fortes's theories; historical studies centred on the analysis of precolonial status; and socioeconomic literature on ethnic differentiation in cocoa production. I briefly outline some shortcomings of these studies before addressing the relationship between ancestry and hierarchy in the Sefwi area.

McCaskie (1981: 479-482) has pointed out some of the omissions of anthropological works on the Akan with respect to the analysis of power. Some additional observations concerning ancestral origin may be added. Fortes (1953) and Busia (1954) -and a great deal of anthropological work which followed- present lineages as identical with each other, and society itself as a juxtaposed set of undifferentiated segments. The following citation from Busia (1951: 26) exemplifies the lack of interest among structural-functionalist anthropologists in differentiation: all lineages are seen as sharing common features.

The Ashanti believe that the well-being of society depends upon the maintenance of good relations with the ancestors on whom the living depend for help and protection. Each lineage keeps in touch with its own ancestors through ritual sacrifices. Each lineage has its blackened stool which is the shrine of its ancestors. During ritual ceremonies the elder places sacrifices on the stool, and pours libations on it, and prays for the welfare of his lineage, which is represented at these ceremonies.

Akan ideas concerning ancestors are here presented in a formalistic and egalitarian manner, where, in fact, not all ancestors are equally venerated and diverse status of the living is legitimized by the rank and deeds of their particular ancestors. The urge to find general rules

governing the social structure, applicable to all lineages, led to a lack of attention to differences in the ancestry of individuals and groups.

Historians have paid more attention to relations of dominance. More detailed analyses have been produced on nineteenth-century economic differentiation among merchant communities on the coast (Kaplow 1978, Arhin 1983b, Dumett 1983) and of precolonial Asante than rural contemporary Ghana. Wilks (1975: 699-724) and Terray (1975, 1982) applied class-analysis to nineteenth-century Asante and Gyaman respectively. Arhin examined the differentiation between residents in the town of Kumase and rural villagers as well as the rank of "status groups" in precolonial Asante, as defined by the attribution of political and military offices (Arhin 1983b, 1990). McCaskie (1981, 1983, 1995) focused on the Asante culture of power and the role of the state in its administration.

The precolonial exercise of power was often linked to issues of marriage and descent. McCaskie (1980a: 199-201, 205-206) and Wilks (1967, 1975: 327-373) pointed out the importance of marital strategies in the management of power. Arhin (1983a: 475) stated that:

social stratification in Asante occurred within a system of distribution of power and authority among lineages and patricentric groupings, so that the social rank of a group or an individual was a function of political status role.

Practical differences of wealth and power were attached to formal positions, chiefly stools being the obvious case, rather than deriving from personal rivalry or random movement. In another work Arhin (1983b: 6) held that "the bases of ranking were the antiquity of stools, distinction in war of former stool holders, and relationship of stools to the head stool of the state". Historical studies have thus hinted at the importance of ancestry but its implications as a widespread principle of social differentiation have not been fully examined. Two main reasons may be mentioned. Firstly, historians' interest has been focused where the richest evidence is found. Geographically most studies have examined the coast and Asante -Kumase in particular; research privileged the political elite rather than commoners; and the importance of ancestry in households and villages across peripheral Akan states has been consequently left unexplored. Secondly, historical studies have seldom considered twentieth-century

dynamics. As a result, the study of ancestral origin in the Gold Coast and independent Ghana has been left to other disciplines.

This last remark leads us to the socioeconomic literature, concerned with ethnic differentiation especially on cocoa farms (Addo 1974; Vercrujisse 1979; Garceau 1982; Okali 1982; Arhin 1986a, 1988a; Benneh 1988). These latter works have little historical depth, and show only modest concern for Akan ideas on differentiation, while concentrating on the description of labour arrangements through an extensive use of statistical data. Colonial historians have addressed some of the methodological shortcomings of the socioeconomic literature, but generally only in regard to the early stages of cocoa production (Sutton 1983; Austin 1987).

In the present chapter I explore the importance of ancestry in the kingdom of Sefwi Wiawso by drawing from all three bodies of literature, from local archival material and my own research. The study of ancestral origin enables one to focus on continuities. Firstly, I consider the persistence of precolonial forms of dominance in twentieth-century principles of social organization. Secondly, the relationship between ethnic dominance and attribution of political authority within ethnic groups is addressed. I argue that status in the Akan world has been linked to individuals' and groups' perceived and asserted ancestry. Power and value are attributed according to one's patrilineal and matrilineal ancestors. To Sefwi and the Akan in general, one of the key ordering principles of society is an historical and genealogical one: continuity with the past justifies present hierarchical positions.

By characterizing Sefwi identity as a question of ancestry I do not mean that biological pedigrees produce Sefwiness and rank. I rather suggest that processes of negotiation and construction of identity and status have used ancestral origin, and its ambiguities, as a central criterion. A focus on ancestral origin is not merely an exercise of genealogical reconstruction: it involves the strategic forging of ancestry (cf. Arhin 1986c: 163; Berry 1998: 55-60). Each group reconstructs its ancestry -both in terms of who were the ancestors and what they did- only to the extent thought possible by others. Ancestral origin and therefore identity and status are negotiated within a framework of accepted historical knowledge. An attempt to advance a claim which is manifestly groundless will not be well received by anyone while a claim which

involves a partial and partisan reconstruction of shared historical beliefs is considered acceptable.

The importance of ancestral origin in Akan politics can be seen in the specific example of the *oman*, the kingdom, of Sefwi Wiawso. Beliefs concerning the past, the perceived history of how the Sefwi *oman* came to be, serve to structure present political and social hierarchy. The emergence of a Sefwi identity probably followed the political strengthening of a group, called the Asankera, which became the royal matrilineage of the Sefwi Wiawso kingdom. The Asankera migrated from the Wassa area to Sefwi in the seventeenth century. They settled in the area of the present town of Wiawso and led a gradual military expansion towards the north-west and west. In the second half of the eighteenth and in the early nineteenth century, the Asankera, with the support of the Asante, expanded their territorial possessions by incorporating neighbouring villages. The attribution of an ethnic name to this area and its population coincided temporally with the establishment of a Sefwi kingdom (Daaku 1971, 1974; Boni 1997; Roberts n.d. a).

The creation of a centralized political entity was not only a political and military issue. The Asankera had to expand links of subordination whilst maintaining a unitary framework. This required the careful differentiation and interweaving of the ancestry of kin groups within a "national" ideology. The population of the kingdom was and is inserted within the political structure according to kinship affiliation. Most inhabitants belong to a matrilineage, holding a stool and headed by a chief. The matrilineage's participation in the kingdom is mediated by the chief and expressed through stool affiliation. Four uses of ancestral origin facilitated the creation of a unitary political entity while attributing diverse rank to groups and offices. These were genealogies, historical narratives, identity of king and kingdom, and an annual celebration known as *elluo*. I examine them in turn.

Genealogies

Descent and affinity have served as tools for the diversification of status and for the creation of a genealogically interconnected political structure. Matrilineal descent is plainly a criterion of differentiation and status allocation (cf. Grier 1992: 307-308). Within matrilineages,

descent is invoked both to state common group membership and to distinguish lines of different rank within the lineage.

Let us take an exemplary case of matrilineal descent: that of the Asankera. The Asankera are the lineage that holds the position of *omanhene*, or king in Sefwi Wiawso. Asankera, in Sefwi, is used as an idiom of membership in the royal matrilineage. It implies the attribution of or claim to the most privileged matrilineal ancestry in Sefwi Wiawso. The Asankera, and the king in particular, claim to be the direct matrilineal descendants of the first occupants of the land and of the leaders of the military expansion.

Those who share the king's ancestral origin matrilineally are a dominant group. An Asankera chief explains the origin of his name as follows:

If you want to beat some of their children, they send you to the chief's palace so that they discipline you They will send you to arbitration so that you will be charged a huge amount. So ... they said: 'These people, don't touch them'. That's the meaning of Asankera. They were royals, so they couldn't beat them.⁷³

In 1908, a colonial administrator provided a rough summary of the history of Sefwi and of the status of the Asankera in comparison with other groups. The Asankera are identified as the "Twi [Akan] speaking invaders" who "reduced to subjection ... earlier inhabitants All the members of this [Asankera] family seem to enjoy special privileges, to be entitled to special fees, and in fact to be in a position of a ruling caste".⁷⁴

Matrilineal descent partly acts as a unifying principle of attribution of rank, and partly as a criterion of diversification. Privileges are not uniform for all lineage members. Matrilineages are divided into branches sharing a common membership while holding diverse ancestry and status. Asankera are no exception. The rank of the Asankera branches acts as a key criterion of attribution of political offices, and in particular of that of *omanhene*. The history of the Asankera offers insights into the use of descent as part of the negotiation of status. Asankera

⁷³ Nana Mintah, Boakohene, August 1993, Boako, Sefwi. This explanation corresponds with the Akan idea that the blood of royals may not be spilt (cf. McCaskie 1995: 365).

⁷⁴ GNA Accra ADM 11/1/1130, "W.C.F. Robertson to His Excellency The Governor", Accra 28-11-1908.

descent has been attributed, segmented, neglected, negated and restored for strategic purposes.

Matrilineal descent constitutes a double source of differentiation. Firstly, fictitious kinship bonds may be identified. Lineage membership may be derived through the incorporation of groups. These lines are said to belong to the same lineage but their matrilineal link to the "pure" branches is considered artificial. Oral traditions and judicial records contain accusations concerning the "real" matrilineal origin of certain Asankera branches. Disputes have occurred between the two branches claiming the king's stool, Behiramwere and Asafo. Within the Asafo branch, sub-branches are distinguished. The "pure" Asafo royals claim the exclusiveness of their rights *vis a vis* branches which they claim to have been incorporated.⁷⁵

Secondly, a further source of differentiation lies in segmentation and genealogical distance of lineage branches. Asankera groups may share a common ancestry, but their matrilineal connection may be seen as temporally and genealogically remote. Village stools were therefore created for numerous Asankera branches to mark the groups' separateness. Stool succession is largely limited to one's own branch.

Genealogical history is debated and interpreted with a view to present affairs. Vivid debate surrounds the issue of whether, despite the genealogical distance and the fictitious ties, all Asankera have the right to compete for the *omanhene's* stool or whether only certain branches are entitled to succession (Boni 1995, 1997). The ambiguity of the rights granted to the Asankera by lineage membership has revived debates over ancestral origin. Different groups have claimed the same king as an ancestor of their particular Asankera branch, thereby attempting to position their segment in a central genealogical position, in order to strengthen future succession claims. Branches which have recently held the king's stool were accused of being members through fictitious matrilineal links. While the debate continues, the established practice is that certain, privileged lines have access to the *omanhene's* stool, while marginal ones succeed only to their village stools.

Matrilineal descent forges unity within the kingdom and acts as a tool of differentiation. Affinity and patrilineal links have served as the other tool used by Asankera kings to

⁷⁵ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Minutes of the Judicial Committee of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council, pp. 167-245, 23rd April 1974.

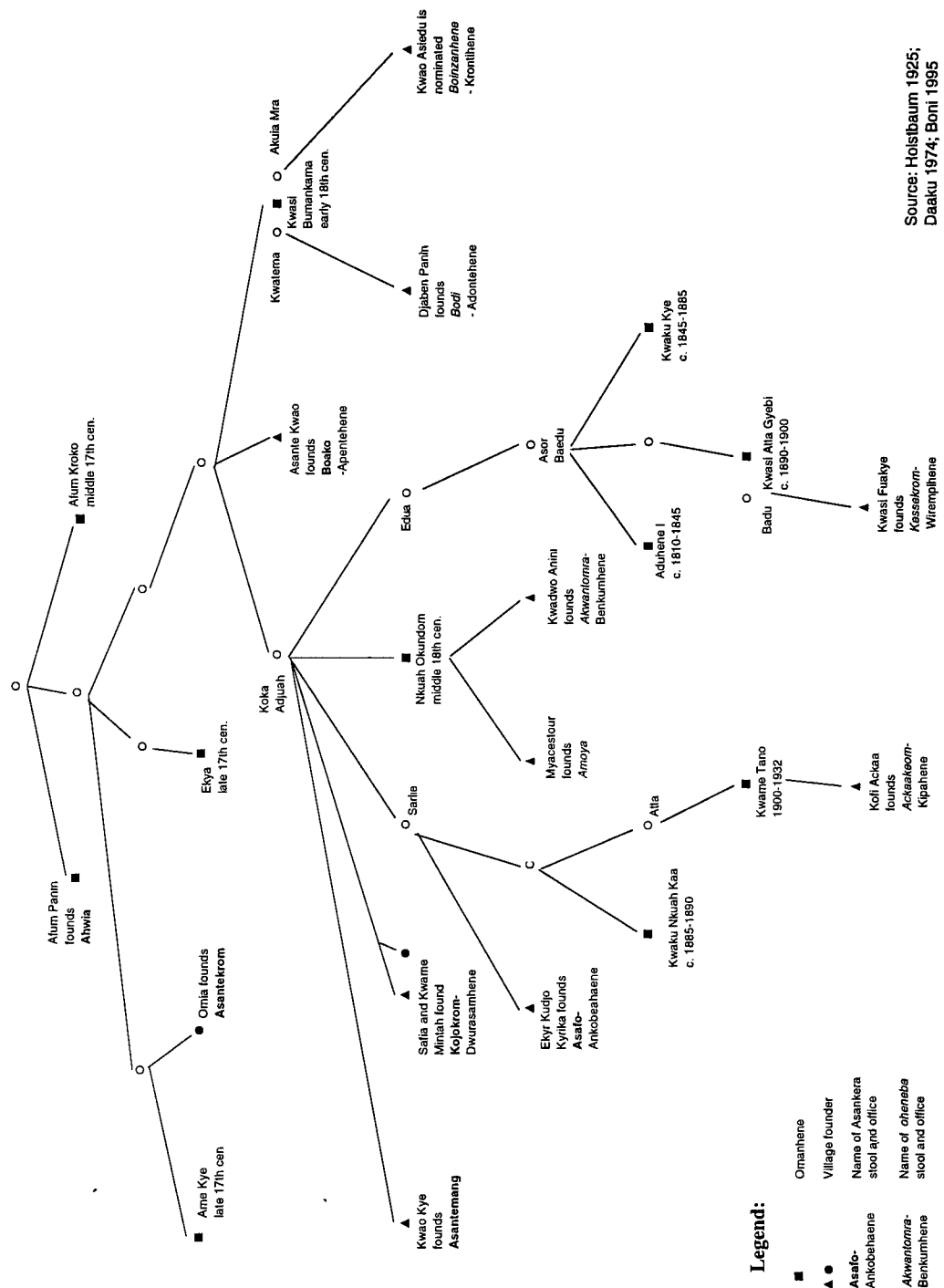
diversify status and create a genealogically interconnected political structure. Even though Asankera present themselves as the "original" Sefwi, settlements existed in the area before the Asankera invasion (Boni 1997). Vast areas were occupied, cleared and populated by immigrants arriving from neighbouring Akan areas to the east and south of Sefwi in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Asankera did not seek to exclude new settlers and old-time residents from the kingdom's political structure. On the contrary, the strength of the Asankera has rested, to a certain extent, on their capacity to link their ancestry to that of autochthonous people living in the conquered areas as well as to that immigrants and, in the process, justify the latter's subordination. These groups were incorporated through matrimonial bonds and attribution of offices.

A marriage was frequently arranged between the king and a woman in a crucial genealogical position within the immigrant or autochthonous group. The son of the couple, an *oheneba* -literally a son of a chief- was then nominated as head of the immigrant or autochthonous matrilineage. The *oheneba* covered the role of chief on behalf of his matrilineage, and was at the same time the son of the king. A bond of subordination was thus sanctioned genealogically: the Asankera matrilineage -represented by the *omanhene*- acted as the hierarchically superior father, the matrilineage of the immigrants or autochthonous people -represented by the *oheneba*- as the *omanhene*'s subordinate son (cf. Palumbo 1991, 1992, 1994a, 1994b; Pavanello 1995a, 1996).

In the early twentieth century, the ancestral origin of the population inhabiting the kingdom of Wiawso was heterogeneous, but formed a unitary framework in so far as groups were perceived as genealogically interlinked through descent and affinity. Resident groups were inserted in the political structure and differentiated by matrilineal segmentation and patrilineal links. Many of the stools -and therefore the groups- forming the kingdom were identified either as Asankera or as *oheneba*, stools which were sons of the king.

The genealogy in figure 1 should be read as a mapping of Sefwi ideas of relationships between ancestors rather than as historically founded genealogical links between individuals. This representation is a helpful map in identifying stools' and groups' roles within the kingdom's interwoven structure. Not all Sefwi would subscribe to the position I have assigned them within the genealogy; indeed some of the genealogical links are the cause of

Figure 1. General Schematic Genealogy of the Sefwi Wiawso *Oman*



Source: Holstbaum 1925;
Daaku 1974; Boni 1995

disputes. Most of the relationships represented however seem widely accepted as a shared framework of assigning roles and authority to stools.

Historical narratives

While perceived genealogical links are crucial in the allocation of hierarchical roles within the kingdom, they require practical confirmation. Stools of noble ancestry have to prove themselves capable leaders and warriors: historical narratives recall the valour of the ancestors, giving historical sanction to the stool's rank (cf. Arhin 1986c). Oral traditions express the speaker's desire to point out his ancestry in a particular context of alliances or disputes over land or rank. The narratives presented below show the perceived or claimed continuity between ancestors and the living.

Sefwi oral traditions often turn upon issues of ancestry and contribute to the identification of the kingdom as an internally differentiated but unitary entity. Narrators insert their group's history within that of the kingdom. Narrations provide a historical justification for the state's existence while attributing rank and offices. These patterns are exemplified by both the king's narrative and the oral traditions of some of his subordinate chiefs. Conceptions of Asankera history have been crucial in creating a unitary political framework. The whole *oman*, or state, identifies with the Asankera's origins. In stories of the foundation of the Sefwi Wiawso state, the king's predecessors are identified as the kingdom's founders. Their glorious past is presented as the history of the Asankera as well as that of the entire state.

It all started from the North We came to settle at some place called Takyiman in Brong-Ahafo. We separated ourselves from other people in search of land. From there our elders, our ancestors, began a long journey to a place called [Wassa] Bremang and Efiena. We settled there for some time but my ancestors were not satisfied with the land they got there. So some again moved to a place called Essamain where they settled for a long time. And then they decided again to move forward to fight the Aowin. All these places were for the Aowin, and so my ancestors fought with them and drove them far away We were chasing them. Then we sent a message to seek peace and so a peace agreement was reached on the present borders. We stopped chasing them.⁷⁶

⁷⁶ Nana Kwadwo Aduhene II, Omanhene, April 1993, Wiawso, English.

Subordinate chiefs' narratives link their particular group and village history to that of the ruler. Their membership in the Sefwi Wiawso kingdom is thus historically sanctioned and their office within the state is justified. Some of the sons of the *amanhene* proved the nobility of their ancestry by living up to the fame of their predecessors. They showed courage and strength and were awarded relevant political and military roles. One of the *ahenemma*, the king's sons, who distinguished himself in war and was accordingly assigned a relevant political office was the chief of the village of Bodi. An immigrant group arrived in Wiawso in the early eighteenth century and the queen mother of the group married the ruling king. The group settled briefly in the neighbourhood of Wiawso and was then asked to expand the Sefwi Wiawso state's territorial possessions militarily at the expenses of Sefwi's enemies, the Aowin. The *omanhene*'s son, Djaben Panyn, was nominated chief of the group sent to war. The descendant of Djaben Panyn justifies his present territorial possessions with reference to his ancestors' deeds.

We were growing and becoming large numbers. We could not get a place to do the farming ... so we had to move to this place and get a big area to make our farms The *omanhene* asked us to fight the Aowin if we wanted a bigger place to stay. So we fought and we defeated great land [conquered a vast area] All this land, we conquered so it became ours.⁷⁷

Similarly, the chief of the village of Ahebenso claims that his present office within the state is historically grounded. His ancestor held a similar position during a nineteenth-century war. The stool holder's current office was passed on by his ancestors.

The chief from this town [Ahebenso], carries magic weapons during war-time. So, he is the powerful chief who accompanies the *omanhene* in war time During Nana Aduhene's time we [the Sefwi] were at war with the Nzema so during that time he [the chief of Ahebenso] took the magic weapons and accompanied the *omanhene* to Nzema.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Nana Kwadwo Bi, Bodihene, August 1993, Bodi, English.

⁷⁸ Nana Kofi Sobre, Ex-Ahebendahene, July 1995, Ahebenso, Sefwi.

The chief of Kofikrom, head of the king's executioners, narrates the history of how Adjei, his ancestor, acquired the position. The events narrated relate to Aduhene's reign, in the early nineteenth century.

The *omanhene* planted yam and they used that yam in war time. The *omanhene* had a son who was a witch. When they planted the yam and it germinated, the son spoiled the yam. They consulted an oracle and were told that it was the son who was causing all these troubles. The *omanhene* wanted the son to be killed. At that time there were some executioners When the *omanhene* ordered the son to be killed, those executioners, knowing that he was the *omanhene*' son, could not go forward and kill him. Nana Adjei was bold enough to take a knife and kill him.⁷⁹

Reference to history justifies unity and political rank within the Sefwi Wiawso kingdom. Ancestral origin is crucial in this respect. Groups which can not trace a parental connection with the *omanhene*, can still insert their history within the political framework of the kingdom by claiming that their ancestors contributed to the creation and prosperity of the *oman*.

Identity of king and kingdom

The importance of ancestry in presenting the kingdom as a unitary and hierarchical entity is clearly visible in the identification of the king and the kingdom. As the stool and the stool holder embody a matrilineage and its history, the kings' stools and the king's person embody the whole kingdom. The *omanhene*'s body is the incorporation of the welfare of the entire state and expresses its unity (cf. Arhin 1986c; Gilbert 1987; McCaskie 1995: 259-263; Viti 1998: 322-328). His health corresponds to the prosperity of the *oman*. The king's body needs to be free of disease and malformations. He is protected from uncleanness by his linguist who mediates the king's interaction with commoners. Moreover prohibitions ensure that the palace is uncontaminated: menstruating women and linguists performing widowhood rites are both considered unclean and may not enter the king's residence (Yankah 1995: 95-102).

The exercise of power by a wealthy Asankera ruler is viewed as guaranteeing the state's stability and prosperity. By contrast, the momentary interruption of Asankera rule represented by a king's death- is hazardous for the entire kingdom. When the ruler is

⁷⁹ Nana Bediako II, Kofikromhene, May 1993, Kofikrom, Twi.

approaching death, a purification ritual, termed *momome*, is held in the streets of Wiawso.⁸⁰ The same ritual is performed on occasions -such as epidemics and wars or when women die during childbirth- which threaten the welfare of the population (cf. Daaku 1974: 3; Perrot 1982: 31-32; Ebin 1989).

The king of Asante has been compared to a "large tree offering shade" (McCaskie 1995: 283-284; cf. Gilbert 1989: 75-76). An appellation of the Asante ruler is *katamanso*, literally he who is "covering the whole nation" (McCaskie 1995: 288). These images exemplify the protection and shelter which the king offers to his subjects. The death of the ruler is presented as the fall of the tree. The subjects no longer enjoy the protection of the king's shelter. They are left unprotected under the rays of the sun. The death of the Asante king produces a suspension of the social order. In the precolonial period, widespread violence and mass-killings were common during the funeral rites (McCaskie 1989a).

The idea that the *oman*, headed by a particular group -the Asankera represented by the *omanhene*-, incorporates all others has some implications for how wealth is distributed and displayed. The exhibition of hierarchical symbols corresponds to political status. The number of wives, the splendor of the treasury, the size of the palace are negotiated within the perceived hierarchical framework. Akan states -and Sefwi is no exception- accumulate wealth in those offices which have a wide range of dependants or nominal descendants (cf. Arhin 1976, 1981, 1983b, 1990; Terray 1982). The state and its head are to accumulate and display wealth on behalf of all inhabitants.

The elluo festival

Ancestral origin's importance as a criterion of chiefs' unity and hierarchy is expressed ritually in the *elluo*, the annual Sefwi yam festival. The celebration comprises an offering for the *omanhene*'s ancestors and marks the beginning of a new agricultural year. I will not go into details of the long and symbolically charged ritual (cf. Holtsbaum 1925: 13a-14a; Daaku 1971: 43; 1974: 12-13, 20, 38-39; Akomiah 1992).⁸¹ I shall concentrate on the role ancestry

⁸⁰ Video recorded and commented on by Mr. Mintah: "Funeral Rites of Nana Kwadwo Aduhene II, Omanhene of Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Area 28th January -24th February 1997, part I".

⁸¹ Cf. Video recorded and commented on by Mr. Mintah: "40th Anniversary Celebration of Nana Kwadwo Aduhene II Enstoolment, 29th November -5th December 1993".

plays in the justification of both the state's unity and the status differentiation of political offices (cf. Danquah 1928: 125-142; Middleton 1979: 255-256; Arhin 1983c; Wilks 1993: 112-118; McCaskie 1995: 144-242).

The yam festival links the king's ancestry to that of other stools in his kingdom: the celebration is perceived as both an offering to the Asankera ancestors and an essential source of life for the whole state. An important stool holder explained that "according to custom it is the stools, the gods, who are helping us to till the land. You see, they provide rains ... so if you are not able to satisfy them you can not work on this [land]".⁸² Asankera and Sefwi ancestral origin is carefully combined in the *elluo*. The ritual takes place in the king's palace. The stools which are addressed in the festival are those of the deceased rulers. Asankera stools are thought of both as the resting places of deceased rulers' souls and as materializations of the whole nation's spirit (cf. Sarpong 1971: 26-27). Holtsbaum (1925: 13a), a district commissioner residing in Sefwi in the 1920s, interestingly describes the kings' stools as "tribal ancestors". While the *elluo*, in a sense, is the celebration of only some ancestors -the Asankera's-, chiefs from all over the kingdom play a part. Each stool's role is said to be essential for the festival's correct performance.

The celebration lasts three days. At each stage of the *elluo* the king's ancestors encompass and represent those of the entire state. Thursday is a day of mourning "to remember the fallen heroes who fought for the land the chiefs and people converge at the Omanhene's palace to join in as he mourns his predecessors" (Akomiah 1992: 32-33; cf. 52). On this day of mourning the state is in turmoil as the year is ending and ancestors are asked to grant renewed assistance for the coming season (cf. Sarpong 1971: 56-74). The king and some of his chiefs visit the Asankera ancestral graves. A libation is offered to ask the gods and the deceased rulers for support, protection and prosperity. Friday is the day which marks the end of mourning and the beginning of general merry-making: ancestral deeds are narrated and chiefs parade in the streets. The *omanhene* performs rituals of purification and then "goes to bestow the blessing of the gods and ancestors on the people" (Akomiah 1992: 55). The stools of deceased rulers are then ritually fed the blood of a sacrificed sheep and the first yam of the

⁸² Nana Owusu Akyeampin II, Kessekromhene, July 1997, Wiawso, English.

year (cf. Oyedipe 1966). Holtsbaum (1925: 13a-14a; cf. Daaku 1974: 7, 28) vividly describes this part of the ceremony:

The blood [of the sheep] is sprinkled on the stools which have been made for the various Amanhin and their names are called. They are then thanked by the Omanhene for the harvest which they have given to their people and for all the blessings of the past year. They are asked to continue their favour and to increase the tribe, to give long life to the Omanhene, to give many children to the women, and to prevent trouble from coming to the people.

On Saturday, the third day of the festival, "the Omanhene sits in state to receive the homage and gifts from his subjects. They swear the oath of allegiance to him, resolutions are made for the ensuing year and the curtain is drawn on the celebration" (Akomiah 1992: 38). Deceased *amanhene* grant prosperity and protection for a new year. This revival of the state's fertility coincides with the re-establishment of the hierarchical political order through the renewal of the chiefs' oaths towards the ruler.

Apart from furthering a sense of incorporation and unity, the festival marks differentiation according to ancestry. The roles which subordinate chiefs are called upon to perform in the celebration, like the political offices they are assigned, acquire their legitimacy only in relation to the central figure of the *omanhene* who distributes ritual authority. Stools' position in the festival are established historically, with reference to ancestral deeds.

We bathe the *omanhene* during the Yam Festival In the olden days there were wars and the *omanhene* was fighting some people The enemies were around so the people were afraid to go and fetch the water. So the chief of this village [Sikaneanssem] told the *omanhene* that he would not allow him to sleep without bathing. So the *omanhene* told the people to give him [the chief of Sikaneanssem] a gun and some bullets so that he could go to the riverside and fetch the water. The man courageously went The enemies ran away so he could get the water. So that is why during the function he fetches the water for bathing.⁸³

The *elluo* establishes rank in yet another way. The celebration of the ritual in Sefwi villages follows a temporal hierarchy. Stools perform their festival in an established order.

⁸³ Abusua panin of the *adehyee* of Sikaneanssem, March 1993, Sikaneanssem, Sefwi.

The first *elluo*, the one held for the Asankera stools, occurs in Wiawso. Later other stools, according to their hierarchical position, are allowed to celebrate their own festivals. As the king assigns a position within the celebration to subordinate chiefs, the various village chiefs, in their turn, call their own dependants to attend, forming a hierarchy of inclusion with the *omanhene* at its peak.

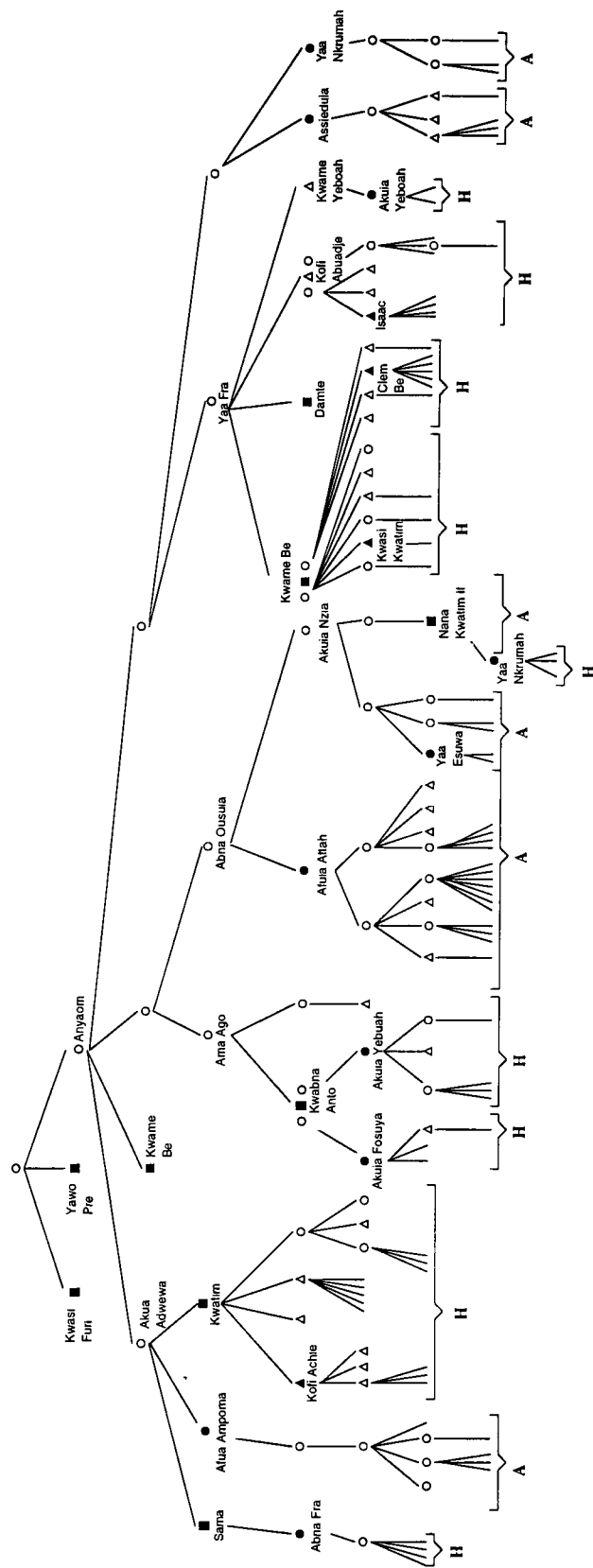
Ancestral origin in society

Sefwi political and social structures show considerable uniformity in their criteria of assimilation and differentiation: at different levels of organization the same methods are used. In villages throughout Sefwi genealogies, narratives, identity between chiefs and subjects and the village replica of the *elluo* festival contribute towards forging a unitary identity while differentiating groups by rank. In parallel to the kingdom's strategical incorporation of immigrants, the assimilation of alien elements is practiced in villages and households. Individuals and groups which are outsiders at the time of arrival are received and attributed subordinate status, justified by the inferior value of their ancestry.

A policy of inclusion and differentiation based on descent and affinity is still adopted by village office holders. Chiefly status is shared by the stool holder's lineage members. The word *adehyee* is commonly used to refer to the matrilineal kin of the chief, who are termed the "royals" of a certain stool (cf. Arhin 1983b: 9, 1983c). *Adehyee* not only hold a central position within the kin structure of the village, but privileges as well. They are among the main beneficiaries of revenues cashed by chiefs. *Adehyee* are said to do little work and to live on chiefly sponsorship. They enjoy a certain degree of judicial immunity, as court cases are heard by chiefs. *Adehyee* were not sent to school when education was spreading in Sefwi, for, as a teacher recalled, "they did not want the cane to be used on them".

Village chiefs organize local political relationships that replicate the *oman*'s structure and values. Chiefs construct social units through their policy of assimilating immigrants and attributing subordinate offices within village politics. Chiefs often marry women of incoming groups. These unions produced *ahenemma* -sons of chiefs- who at times reside in their father's village. Matrilineal and patrilineal descent are combined to include and differentiate elements in the village kin network (Palumbo 1992; Pavanello 1996; Boni 1998).

Figure 2. General Schematic Genealogy of the village of Suhtenso



Legend:

○	Adult woman	Compound	H	Atrernima's compound
△	Adult man	Compound	A	Adehyee's compound
■	Chief or abusua pann			
▲	Household founder			
○ △ ○	Polygamous marriage			
	Children			

Source: Boni 1998, fig. 4

Figure 2 shows that most residents in the village of Suhienso -numbering just under three hundred in 1993- are positioned within a unitary kinship framework organized around the fission of the *adehyee* and the multiplication of the male and female *ahenemma*. The pattern of residence at the village level resembles closely that of village foundation within the kingdom (figure 1). The royal matrilineage split into branches occupying the palace and a number of other households. The children of village chiefs and of *adehyee mmusua* (sing. *abusua*) *panyn*, heads of the royal matrilineage, have at times founded *ahenemma* households, that is compounds built by sons of *adehyee* office holders.

In Akan societies individuals are attributed status through group membership, and so far as one can see, always have been. All had to have positions within groups, as groups did within wider socio-political frameworks. A person without socially validated ancestry was therefore excluded from society as such. Heads of social and political units -from the king down to household heads- extended the number of dependants through the incorporation of alien elements and slaves in particular. While office holders certainly increased their status through this policy, for those with unknown ancestral origins -and therefore with no recognized group membership- being incorporated was the only valid option (McCaskie 1995: 88-90). Rattray (Rattray 1929: 42; cf. Etienne 1971: 239-242) compared the status of slaves and free Asante.

The chief danger in which his [the slave's] particular status placed him appears to me to lie in the fact that the slave was generally a solitary creature more or less at the mercy of a single individual. Every one around him was in a sense 'the slave' of some one, but such persons had always behind them a whole group of relatives, whose numbers and wealth and power were ever at their disposal.

The benefits of possessing slaves, meanwhile, were not limited to the performance of work. Unfree labourers were viewed as outsiders only in an initial period. Gradually, slaves were made part of their owner's kinship realm and increased the size of his/her's matrilineage (Delafosse 1900: 208-209; Klein 1980; Dumett and Johnson 1988; Maier 1990; Perbi 1992).⁸⁴

⁸⁴ See numerous cases in Pepe Roberts Papers, Sefwi Native Tribunal Court Archives heard in the first half of the twentieth century (cf. Roberts 1985).

The position of slaves within society throws light on the attribution of status to those with the least prestigious ancestral origin and on the pervasiveness of Sefwi's policy of assimilation. Slaves' status varied according to their origin: Akan slaves' position was higher than that of Northerners. One of the reasons was that Akan slaves, unlike Northerners, could be redeemed. The Asante army at times raided neighbouring Akan areas or the possessions of insubordinate Asante chiefs. In the course of these expeditions large numbers of slaves were captured. Some of these were sent west of Asante -to Sefwi and beyond- to be sold there. Often Akan chiefs asked Sefwi to buy the slaves raided in their area so that they could later be redeemed (cf. Rattray 1929: 37-38). If the redemption fee was not paid, the slaves were assimilated in the course of time (cf. Arhin 1983b: 11-13). Northerners, by contrast, had no chance of being redeemed and were often assigned the hardest work (Dumett 1990; McCaskie 1995: 89).

Colonial records containing claims for the return of slaves offer some insights into Sefwi identity in the early twentieth century. In 1902, an issue arose concerning more than one hundred Dwaben slaves who had been brought to Sefwi in 1875.⁸⁵ The colonial government ordered that the slaves be returned to their home towns. The *omanhene* responded that:

the Sefwis are a very mixed race consisting of Juarbins, Mampongs, Akems, Assins, Denkeras, N'koranzas, Wassas, etc: etc: [sic] and that he fears if the Juarbins are allowed to take their own people away regardless of their own desire to stay in Sefwi, other people will then adopt a similar course, and the whole of his people will thus disappear.⁸⁶

According to the Sefwi District Commissioner the slaves whose return was being claimed had been assimilated in society.⁸⁷ When the slaves themselves were asked whether they preferred

⁸⁵ GNA Accra ADM 48/1/2, November 1902 to February 1904. The slaves were the result of Dwaben's secession and the consequent occupation by the army of the Asantehene Mensa Bonsu. In the records the war is dated in 1872, while Wilks (1975: 513-516) dates the invasion in 1875.

⁸⁶ GNA Accra ADM 48/1/2, Claridge to Honorable Colonial Secretary, Accra, Asafu 18-9-1903. The colonial policy aimed at freeing slaves was strongly opposed, especially if no compensation was offered to the owner. The major sources of opposition were chiefs and household heads who were more likely to possess slaves. Chiefs viewed the freeing of slaves as undermining their authority. If the assimilation of subordinates was an upgrading of rank, dependants' departures represented a loss of status.

⁸⁷ GNA Accra ADM 48/1/2, Breckenridge to King Kwamin Tano, Wioso, Asafu 29-12-1902; Breckenridge to Chief Commissioner, Ashanti, Asafu 23-3-1903.

to return to Dwaben or remain in Sefwi, "comparatively few" left as "they have lived in Sefwhi all their lives and they have, moreover, been very well treated by the Sefwhis" (cf. Daaku 1974: 15, 61).⁸⁸ The Dwaben case was not unique. In the early twentieth century, the return of slaves from Sefwi was requested by chiefs of a number of neighbouring areas. People from Mampon, Nkawie, Nkoranza, Nsuta and Wassa had been bought as slaves in the last decades of the nineteenth century. In most cases where the slaves and their descendants were asked if they preferred to stay in Sefwi or return to their home towns, they chose to stay.⁸⁹

The incorporation of slaves into households and of slave descendants in society was protected by a well-known Akan norm which prohibited the public questioning of others' ancestral origin (Rattray 1916: 177; cf. McCaskie 1995: 95-101). Questioning the past is a serious business, as past and present are supposed to be coherent. Sefwi themselves state that other people's histories should not be recalled unless someone is thought to be forwarding claims to which he has no historical right. If an attempt is made by a slave descendent to become a stool holder, for instance, his origins will be recalled; if a stool advances illegitimate claims over a certain portion of land, the history of the settlement will be narrated. Ancestry is notoriously negotiable, but only to a certain extent.

Up to the early twentieth century the *oman* of Wiawso practiced a policy of assimilation and incorporation. Immigrants, inhabitants of conquered villages and descendants of slaves acquired a Sefwi identity, and -with the exception of slave descendants- were offered land and political offices within the kingdom. The process of incorporation was relatively rapid. While the value of political roles differed greatly, all members of matrilineages which were part of the Sefwi political structure were identified as Sefwi. Permanent strangers, whose incorporation was refused, seemed to be unknown. The term "stranger", *ahoho* in Sefwi, was probably used to describe momentary passers-by and short-term residents such as traders,

⁸⁸ GNA Accra ADM 48/1/2, Claridge to Yao Japon, King of Jarbin, Asafu 3-2-1904.

⁸⁹ GNA Kumasi ARG 1/2/5/13; GNA Accra ADM 11/1/1130, Forwarding a letter from 2nd class Constable Kofi Aidoo requesting that his wife may be redeemed from slavery, 12th October 1891; GNA Kumasi ARG 1/2/12/1; GNA Kumasi ARG 1/2/3/4; GNA Accra ADM 48/1/3, pp. 362-397; GNA Kumasi ARG 1/2/2/10.

guests, rubber-collectors and travellers. The notion of "stranger" was transformed, however, by the commercialization of land.

The emergence of permanent strangers

Ancestral origin has been effective as a hierarchical domain throughout the twentieth century, although the means of its application have varied greatly. In the remaining part of this chapter, I examine how this notion has structured relationships in the current century as an "ethnic" criterion. The importance of ethnicity as a principle of differentiation emerged as the policy of incorporation of immigrants was interrupted. The emergence of the notion of permanent "strangers" who were not incorporated in the Sefwi social and political structure dates back to the early twentieth century. After that, immigrants were no longer allocated land and political offices. They were identified as strangers and as different from Sefwi. The economic dynamics of twentieth-century Sefwi had important consequences for this fundamental transformation in the patterns of receiving immigrants.

In Sefwi, land is said to belong to the king and is administered through local chiefs. The monopoly of "traditional" rulers over the allocation of farm land is the recognition of the *omanhene's* and the local chief's ancestral rights over the territory. The king's rights derive from his claim of being the first occupant of Sefwi land. Up to the early twentieth century, subordinate chiefs were normally posted by the king to uninhabited portions of Sefwi and started farming there. Chiefs' control of land rights had, up to the late nineteenth century, more of a political and symbolic value than a directly economic importance (cf. Terray 1982: 258-260; Arhin 1983a). Individuals who did not belong to the matrilineage holding the village stool, had to be granted access to land by the chiefs. Nineteenth-century rituals connected to the transfer of agricultural land rights, should be approached with reference to the identification between chief, stool and land.

In nineteenth-century Sefwi ownership of farm land was not an issue. Chiefs placed few restrictions on agricultural land use. The area was so sparsely populated that new settlements seldom disturbed neighbouring villages' access to land. The population in Sefwi never reached a figure close to that identified as a "critical density" (Wilks 1993: 54).⁹⁰ Farm land

⁹⁰ In 1911, the population density was of seven persons per square mile. In 1921, the figure of ten persons per

represented a small percentage of the total territory; the rest was covered by virgin forest. In the early twentieth century no monetary payment was involved in the transfer of agricultural land use to immigrant matrilineages and strangers in Sefwi and neighbouring areas (cf. Tellier 1902: 154; Austin 1988: 66-67).⁹¹

In 1904, the District Commissioner of the Sefwi area established demonstration food-crop farms in an effort to introduce cash agriculture. One reaction to the colonial official's efforts to demonstrate the "correct" method of food-crop farming was the remark of a chief who expressed his approval of the fact that Preventive Policemen, who were those ordered to establish such farms, were finally growing food-crops for themselves so that the local population would be exempted from providing them with daily food. The lack of a cash-oriented attitude amongst locals was attributed by the District Commissioner to the laziness of Sefwi and to their system of land tenure.

The great trouble is the ownership of the land. Here in Sefwi the land all belongs to the stool and the right of use is free to all. Any person -be he the uttermost stranger- may take his cutlass and axe, go to the bush and make a clearing for a farm. He pays absolutely nothing for the right to do this. His farm, when made, may be taxed to the extent of one bunch of plantain a year, but it is most unlikely. There is no outlay- no return is expected. His women plant and tend the farm and there grow just sufficient for his and their needs.⁹²

Power was exercised over people rather than over land. Before the turn of the century, chiefly revenues were provided by the subjects' activities on the land. Political authorities had the right to demand a part of the goods extracted from the territory: a share of gold, fish, and

square mile had not yet been reached (Gold Coast Government 1921). In 1931, sixteen persons per square mile were calculated (Engmann 1986: 86).

⁹¹ Works of Akan "customary law" have sought in the rituals of land transfer prototypes of land alienation by contract in an attempt to legitimate the present land-holding system. See for example Bentsi-Enchill's (1964: 45) statement: "Those who assert that land could not be alienated in former times have yet to account satisfactorily for the existence of indigenous and immemorial procedures for the alienation of land by sale or otherwise" (cf. Ollennu 1962: 64-65; Kimble 1963: 19-20; Hill 1963a: 109, 138; Kyerematen 1971: 37, 97). This approach ignores the fact that the notion of "alienation" and "sale" of land for farming purposes, simply had little meaning in many parts of the precolonial Akan world (cf. Viti 1988). What came to be called "alienation" was conceptualized in a very different way. Interestingly enough, earlier works (Danquah 1928: 212-217; Sarbah 1904: 61-64) question in more depth Western notions of ownership, tenure and sale which were taken for granted by later students of Akan law.

⁹² GNA Accra ADM 48/1/2, Breckenridge to Commissioner Western Province, Asafu, 8-8-1904.

wild game was collected from the area under the chief's control. More substantial incomes were obtained by labour control, levies collected on ritual occasions, war booty, death-duties, trade and especially court fees (Daaku 1974; Arhin 1974a, 1976: 453-456, 1981, 1983a, 1990; Terray 1982: 258-262; Wilks 1993: 147-150). This latter source of revenue seems to have been of some importance in Sefwi well into the twentieth century.⁹³ Within this context, it was in the chiefs' interest to incorporate immigrants and extend their jurisdiction over aliens as subjects.

With the spread of market-oriented production in Sefwi, sources of chiefly revenue changed and the means of subordination altered accordingly. The increase in the demand for rubber and the search for gold-veins, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century brought traders, brokers and concession-seekers in the Sefwi area. Around the middle of the twentieth century, timber industries increased their operations in Sefwi and large numbers of cocoa farmers poured into the area. Incoming entrepreneurs sought to acquire land rights from political office holders (cf. Ilegbune 1976).

By the 1940s the nature of chiefly revenues had changed radically. By far the greatest part of the official revenue -and even more so if informal payments are considered- derived from the cession of land rights and from royalties.⁹⁴ The expansion of production linked to the world market deeply altered the foundations of political power. Access to the emerging source of power -money, in other words- could be achieved through the management of land rather than through the expansion of the number of subjects. Market-oriented production while opening avenues for individual accumulation independent of the political structure, did not cause the dissolution of existing hierarchies based on ancestry. Rather, export industries transformed the means of hierarchical subordination and produced a redefinition of the meaning of being Sefwi.

⁹³ GNA Accra ADM 11/1/33; GNA Accra ADM 11/1/394, W.H. Gray to The Honourable, The Colonial Secretary, Accra 26th April 1912. Death duties were collected in Sefwi in the early twentieth century; see GNA Accra ADM 11/1/1697, p. 34.

⁹⁴ GNA Accra ADM 47/1/23; GNA Sekondi WRA 6/1A/401; Archives of the Traditional Council, Sefwi Wiawso, Minutes of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held at D/C Hall on Friday 13th June 1980 at Sefwi Wiawso.

After the introduction of the market economy, British administrators repeatedly accused Sefwi of being lazy (cf. Dumett 1998: 144-148). In 1904, the failure of attempts to introduce cash-crops was attributed by the District Commissioner to "the insuperable laziness of Sefwi men".⁹⁵ In 1914 the situation had changed little. A colonial administrator reports: "The Natives can not be called enthusiastic Agriculturalists- they cultivate just sufficient land and plant just sufficient crops of plantain, yams, coco-yams, groundnuts, tiger nuts, beans, etc for their own consumption but do no more".⁹⁶ Even in 1950 a colonial officer complained that : "it is the most difficult thing in the world to get a Sefwi man to do hard manual work".⁹⁷ These were not only colonial racial prejudices, Sefwi "laziness" connects with the question of who worked Sefwi land.

As land rights acquired value, in the first decades of the twentieth century, the attitude of Sefwi towards strangers changed drastically. The number of foreigners increased rapidly and a form of subordination was sought which involved immigrants less intimately with Sefwi values and self-definition. The policy of assimilating foreigners declined as the chiefly establishment was no longer willing to offer land in exchange for political allegiance. Subordination was no longer achieved through incorporation but rather by distinguishing and re-defining ancestry on ethnic lines. Immigrants thus became permanent strangers.⁹⁸ From the 1940s, land rights began to be allocated according to ethnic membership, probably the most important contemporary use of the idea of ancestral origin.

The present chief of Debiso offers a detailed description of the relationship between the allocation of land rights and ancestry. He distinguishes three social groups. First are the royals, the members of the royal lineage. They may farm and alienate their land rights to

⁹⁵ GNA Accra ADM 48/1/2, Breckenridge to Commissioner Western Province, Asafu, 8-8-1904.

⁹⁶ GNA Accra ADM 48/1/3, p. 264.

⁹⁷ GNA Accra ADM 47/1/23, "Quarterly reports 1948-1955", Sefwi District, Report for the Quarter Ending 30th June 1950.

⁹⁸ Fortes (1971, 1975: 236) believes strangers were never fully assimilated in Akan societies. According to Arhin (1980: 52-57) a conceptualization of the notion of strangers in Sefwi and elsewhere took place in the late nineteenth century with the spread of the rubber industry. It must be noted, however, that the rubber industry was an itinerant enterprise while twentieth-century market production, and cocoa in particular, required a permanent settlement in the area. Rubber tappers and traders were probably viewed as strangers but they were not permanent residents in Sefwi while cocoa farmers were.

strangers without paying any amount to the chief "because when I am away they can come and inherit. Whatever I do and whatever they do, we do it together". Second are those he terms "inhabitants". These settled at Debiso and were assimilated before the rise of the cocoa industry. Their identity and history is related to that of the royals but they have more limited privileges in respect of land.

The village was built by my ancestor and then, as time went on, people from the neighbourhood also came to join him. When they came, he took them as brothers and sisters and they were all feeding themselves on the land. Each and every one would cultivate a farm. The lands were not sold to them. They became inhabitants and all inhabitants have the right to weed without buying the land.

"Inhabitants" do not pay for the land they have cleared and acquired. However, they are taxed if they lease land to strangers.

All the lands belong to the royal family of Debiso [An inhabitant who] tries to weed can do so. If you weed about a hundred farms, we will not take a tribute from you. But if you know you can not weed and you want to keep the land in front of your farm to somebody for the continuation of the farm [i.e. claim land adjacent to the plots cleared with the intention of selling or renting it to strangers], whatever amount you take from that stranger, one third will come to the stool.

Finally, the chief of Debiso identifies "our strangers who came to join us by occupying the same village".⁹⁹ These are twentieth-century agricultural immigrants who are recognized as having no inherent rights. If they seek land rights, they have to pay.

The chief of Debiso's social classification is widely accepted in Sefwi and promoted by most Sefwi citizens. From the early 1940s tens of thousands of immigrants came pouring into the Sefwi area in search of land and work and were attributed the permanent and irreversible position of strangers. Research examining similar dynamics in the neighbouring Ivory Coast, outlined the connection between ethnicity and land rights.

the 'ethnic conscience', the claim to autochthony was very often used to serve partisan interests, namely the interests of the owners (sometimes absentees) for which

⁹⁹ Nana Aforo Kwaw II, Debisohene, July 1997, Debiso, English.

'customary' rights, decreed after the fact, justified their strategies of land appropriation (Chauveau and Dozon 1985: 67).

What Chauveau and Dozon suggest for the Ivory Coast, and what evidence from Sefwi and other parts of the Akan world confirms (Akwabi-Ameyaw 1974: 192; Konings 1986; Viti 1998: 279-280), is that the establishment and enforcement of ethnic distinctions was instrumental in patterns of dominance characterized by the allocation of land rights. Sefwi negotiated land rights amongst themselves according to ancestral origin; strangers were excluded and taxed for their land use. Hierarchy established by ancestry was not displaced but rather adjusted itself successfully -in its ethnic variant- to the process of monetization of society. The lineage claims, around which assimilation had taken place in the nineteenth century, were supplemented by a collective claim in the name of all Sefwi. Access to land rights therefore shaped roles in the agricultural process. In the following sections I examine the relevance of ancestry to certain relations established in cocoa production, quite generally in the Akan region, and relate these to the detail of Sefwi ethnography and history.

Chiefs & Strangers: landlords and tenants

In this section the roles of chiefs and strangers in respect to transactions of land rights are examined. Since the policy of incorporation was interrupted, the relationship between chiefs and immigrants has been regulated by monetary transactions, from the latter to the former, and inverse transfers of usufructuary rights on land. Sefwi chiefs, in their capacity as landlords, grant agricultural rights to immigrants, who act as tenants. While land rights are the bone of contention, ancestral origin acts as a criterion for defining and ordering claims to land between chiefs and immigrants and within each of these two groups.

Although chiefs form a unitary group of landlords *vis a vis* strangers, they are differentiated among themselves by status, rights and interests. Ancestry is brought to the fore in chiefly disputes over revenue division as the accepted principle is that the greater the stool's status, the larger the share of revenues to which it is entitled.¹⁰⁰ Subordinate chiefs who can

¹⁰⁰ On the peculiar Sefwi criterion of revenue division according to chiefs' rank see Archives of the Traditional Council, Sefwi Wiawso, Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held at the Ahenefie on 5-6-1972.

claim a glorious past either because they settled early in the Sefwi Wiawso kingdom or because they participated in wars of conquest, usually hold prominent positions within the state, control large tracts of land and receive consistent revenues. Amongst Sefwi, therefore, oral traditions and ancestral history are bitterly contested.

Different roles as payers of taxes or collectors of revenues have consequences on participation in the productive process. Chiefs and royals are the primary beneficiaries of land revenues; they are involved in cocoa production by mobilizing subjects' work and by employing hired labourers on their cocoa farms. Sefwi commoners are exempted from the payment of taxes but do not benefit from land revenue directly; they are mostly independent farmers. The whole burden of chiefly taxes on cocoa production falls on strangers who act either as landless labourers or tenant farmers.

Immigrants form a heterogeneous group. Incoming farmers are distinguished according to their ancestral origin. Asante are amongst the immigrants whose customs and language more closely resemble Sefwi; in 1956 they were "not considered as strangers" but nowadays are treated as other Akan groups (Hill and McGlade 1957: 12). Akan and other southern Ghanaians, are familiar with the methods of cultivation of forest land and speak languages which resemble Sefwi. Northerners are unfamiliar with the forest environment and with the agricultural tools of the forest belt; and, moreover, speak languages which differ greatly from Sefwi. Immigrants' origin connects to their role in cocoa production. Akan speakers mostly entered cocoa production by acquiring land from Sefwi landlords while Northerners work predominantly as landless labourers, especially at the beginning of their residence in Sefwi. The condition of northern labourers will be described at a later stage, below I focus on Akan tenants who acquired land rights and began independent farming activities.

In 1921, a survey stated that strangers farming in the kingdom of Sefwi Wiawso were treated as natives farming out of their own village: they were asked to pay one third of the product if farming palm and a yearly fee, ranging from £7 to £10, for other cultivations.¹⁰¹ In the early 1940s some Sefwi mines were closed and agricultural immigration intensified. In the village of Jabeso "land was ... informally granted free to miners who had become 'citizens'

¹⁰¹ GNA Accra ADM 11/1/1241, "Commissioner Western Province to The Honourable, The Secretary of Native Affairs", Seconded 15th September 1921.

and were well known in the town" (Hill and McGlade 1957: 12). As population pressure made itself felt in Sefwi, the ancestral status required in order to have free access to forest land increased. By the late 1940s, Sefwi became less willing to incorporate immigrants and grant them unrestricted access to farming rights. In the 1950s most foreigners paid to acquire usufructuary agricultural rights and were referred to in documents as "tenant farmers" while Sefwi still had free access to the land.¹⁰²

Since the 1950s, two sorts of payment have been demanded from strangers seeking land in Sefwi: an amount charged for the initial acquisition of the farming rights and a yearly rent. The former payment -which documents term "customary consideration money", also known as *aseda*, was and still is collected by chiefs granting farming rights on forest land which, being unoccupied, belongs solely to the stool. In recent decades, however, individual Sefwi and matrilineages have occasionally granted land rights to immigrants (cf. Arhin 1986a: 16-17). Strangers may sell their rights as well -but they seldom do so. Farming rights may therefore be bought and sold. Once acquired, rights are perpetual if the land is put to use and the yearly rent paid. Chiefs distinguish the perpetual right to farm from ownership of the land itself, including the timber and mineral resources, which remains vested in the stool. Yearly rent is collected by chiefs in their capacity as ultimate owners of all lands. In the infancy of the cocoa industry a yearly monetary fee was collected which varied according to the cocoa's maturity.¹⁰³ This came to be replaced by sharecropping in the 1950s. A tripartite division, previously enforced only on palm products, was extended to cocoa: tenants were to forgo to the chief one third of the proceeds or of the cocoa farm when it reached maturity and were therefore termed "tripartite farmers" (cfr. Hill and McGlade 1957; Hill 1963a: 42; Robertson 1982: 469-472; Austin 1987: 202).

With the interruption of the policy of assimilation practiced in the early twentieth century and the introduction on taxes on cash-crop cultivation, ethnicity became a serious issue. The definition of who was Sefwi and who was not had important economic consequences. By

¹⁰² Some immigrants received land for free when marrying Sefwi women in the 1950s (Hill and McGlade 1957: 6; cf. Okali 1983a: 47). To a certain extent this still happens, but the land is regarded as the wife's land (cf. Benneh 1988: 233).

¹⁰³ See Hill and McGlade (1957: 17-21); Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Commissioner for Oaths; Pepe Roberts Papers, Sefwi Native Tribunal Court Archives, 21st June 1933.

identifying somebody as a "stranger" the chief had the right to enforce the taxation due from immigrants. In 1954 a farmer, who was identified as stranger and therefore asked to pay a one third share of cocoa, swore an oath concerning his Sefwi ancestry.

I make Oath and say as follows That to the best of my knowledge, information and belief both my mother and ... uncle are Sefwis and direct subjects of Sefwi Wiawso Paramount Stool and automatically I acclaim [sic] birth-right and privilege as a pure Sefwi born, in accordance with [the] existing custom of the Land

That having observed that ... Nana Yao Ntaadu [the chief of Boinzan] was considering me as a stranger, by demanding one-third share of the proceeds from the ... cocoa farms, I formally introduced myself by offering him a customary rum of £5 as my Overlord.

That during the present cocoa season the said Nana Yao Ntaadu visited my village ... and demanded a share of one third proceeds for the past three seasons at three loads of cocoa each season, and a further and continuous [sic] similar shares in the years to be[,] which I feel reluctant so to do since[,] to my knowledge[,] the demand appears a drastic innovation of custom never practiced in [the] history of Sefwi Wiawso State.¹⁰⁴

In 1956, "foreign" farmers numbered about 3,200; they were, for the greater part, Southern Ghanaians who had purchased farming rights using capital accumulated through cocoa production in other areas of the forest belt (Hill and McGlade 1957: 1; Hill 1963a: 178-185, 1970: 21-29; Adomako-Sarfoh 1971; Dunn and Robertson 1976: 50-52; Arhin 1986a: 2-4, 14-40). A cocoa survey, completed in 1956, distinguished farmers' attitudes according to their ancestry. Sefwi were described as low producing farmers in contrast to the more entrepreneurial immigrants.

the stranger-farmers are opening up the Sefwi area with a vigour quite foreign to native Sefwi farmers, whose farms are usually very small (an eighth of an acre is a typical sort of size we have heard) and whose outlook is very limited (Hill and McGlade 1957: 9; cf. 1963b).

¹⁰⁴ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/23, "Affidavit of Kojo Kwarteng...", 10th March 1954.

By the 1960s almost half of the residents in Sefwi were not Sefwi-born and this percentage was on the increase.¹⁰⁵

Written contracts between stools and tenants of the early 1950s and those of the 1990s show some similarities even though certain conditions of tenure enjoyed by immigrant tenants became harder from one decade to the next. The initial payment termed *aseda* increased drastically and the yearly collection of revenue after the cocoa farm's maturity underwent major transformations. A first major change in the collection of the yearly fee from immigrant farmers occurred in 1962, with the reform of tenants' taxation known as the "Rents Stabilization Act". The law, which introduced the payment of a small yearly amount per acre, rendering tripartite division of farms illegal, was strongly opposed by the chiefs and the king. After the 1966 *coup*, this law was withdrawn and the chiefly establishment imposed a new sharecropping agreement (Ninsin 1989: 168-171; Benneh 1975: 58-59). In 1967, traditional rulers settled for a one tenth share of the cocoa produced. This one tenth share is still being collected. In 1997 the government re-introduced an acreage system supported by the tenant farmers, but this law has not yet been applied.¹⁰⁶

Besides, the yearly collection of revenue, other norms were reviewed over the last three decades. First, while in the 1950s, after the division of the cocoa farm into three portions, the tenant farmer had the right to sell or sublet his share; in more recent contracts chiefly agreement is necessary for this transaction. Second, a time limit, usually five years, has been introduced within which the farm is to be planted; if the tenant is unable to perform his work in time, the land reverts to the stool. Third, tenants are to bring all land disputes before native courts run by chiefs. These modifications of land contracts show that chiefs have become increasingly careful to dictate conditions of land transfer and maintain control of their role as landlords.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ The 1960 and 1970 censuses which record the birthplace of residents suggests that 57% and 51% respectively was born in Sefwi Wiawso state, 21% and 16% within the Western Region, 16% and 20% in another region within Ghana and 6% and 4% outside Ghana (1960 Population Census of Ghana, vol. III, p. 136; 1970 Population Census of Ghana, vol. II, pp. 78, 84).

¹⁰⁶ In the 1996/97 cocoa season the usual one tenth tax was charged. Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Lands Commission Secretariat, "Annual Acreage Fee", 20th February 1997; cf. Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council, "Annual Acreage Fees", 2nd June 1997 (cf. Berti and Contini 1995: 92).

¹⁰⁷ The king of Sefwi Wiawso has a standardized "Memorandum of Agreement" which has been used since the 1970s. See Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Commissioner for Oaths, "Memorandum of Agreement".

By the 1970s most forest land had been either assigned to immigrants or occupied by Sefwi, and chiefly revenues from alienation of land rights decreased. New sources of income have therefore been sought in recent decades. Strangers, however, are still called on to provide the revenue. Innovative justifications are sought to demand additional payments from immigrant farmers. Often the first devolution made by the tenant farmer for his land rights proves insufficient. Chiefs frequently refuse to acknowledge the first payment and ask strangers to enter into new agreements requiring them to pay again for their farming rights. Various tricks are used to do this. First, immigrant farmers are led to reach agreements with false land owners. After a first payment, the tenant is informed that the land does not belong to the one who received the amount; later the rightful owner asks for a new contract. Second, chiefs send messengers to "measure" tenant farmers' land boundaries and invariably find that immigrants trespassed beyond the land granted them. Tenants are therefore asked to pay additional amounts for the part which, according to the chief, was illegally cultivated. Third, chiefs allot the same parcel of land to a number of tenant farmers. Immigrants dispute over the land amongst themselves, the chief acting as judge. Finally, tenant farmers who seek to secure their land rights, some years after purchase, face demands for money by the king and local chiefs, whom they want to sign written contracts, indentures and maps to confirm the tenants' rights (cf. Arhin 1986a: 24-33).¹⁰⁸

Not only are tenants unable to prevent major extortions linked to the process of land acquisition, smaller swindles have to be accepted. Food and cocoa pods at times disappear from immigrants' farms. Animals are stolen from traps set by strangers (tenants state that living in hamlets on farms has been a way of minimizing these small thefts). Immigrant farmers' descendants are penalized in regard to the inheritance of wealth. Chiefs claim part of the property left behind by strangers dying in Sefwi. In 1974, the following petition was sent to a government official for action.

Here are my problems: Both my Grand-father and Grand-mother hail from Ajumako-Biseasi, in [the] Central Region of Ghana, travelled all along the way to Chori-chori a

¹⁰⁸ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/60; GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/127, "Complaint against collection of money...", 12th February 1984; GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/113; Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Lands Commission Secretariat, "White Paper on the Report of the Committee...", February 1990.

village in Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Area about hundred years ago to work. They did not return to their home town again and died at the village and were buried there as well. Before their death, they left behind two children. There were Kofi Asunsu and Kofi Nkoah After his [Kofi Asunsu's] death the Chief of the Village called me and Kofi Nkoah, the late Asunsu's successor, and put before us that my late Grand-father was a stranger in Sefwi District and his property must be divided into three parts equally, and that one third must be given to the Chief and the other two thirds also be given to us Upon this, I humbly put my humble petition before you ... to determine whether it is legal that a person who was born in the district, and resided in the same district for over 85 years and also had a status as a linguist during his life time, and left behind 15 children in the same district could be termed as a stranger?¹⁰⁹

Immigrants are especially concerned about the management of justice. Government courts often prove distant, expensive and inefficient. Day to day justice is therefore administered by Sefwi chiefs. Immigrants feel that they are systematically cheated. While Sefwi enjoy a quasi-immunity if they maltreat foreigners, immigrants are often brought to court, and heavily fined, for the breach of Sefwi "custom". Strangers who appeal court decisions are directed to the *omanhene's* court where the problems are similar and expenses higher.

Chiefs resort to forms of legal taxation as well to increase their incomes (cf. Konings 1986: 66-68; Benneh 1988: 233-236). In 1952, stranger farmers were accused of not possessing written agreements. The Local Council demanded that tenants' "agreements, either written or verbal, should be brought up for examination".¹¹⁰ In 1954, the neighbouring Sefwi Bekwai farmers were asked to pay a yearly "land tribute" to the Wiawso stool.¹¹¹ In 1963, the Traditional Council established rates to be paid by immigrant fishermen.¹¹² In 1975, the Traditional Council once again addressed the issue of immigrant farmers.

¹⁰⁹ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/60, "A Petition", 7th January 1974. Native Courts were often called upon to hear such cases: see, for example, Pepe Roberts Papers, Sefwi Native Tribunal Court Archives, Kwesi Armah vs. Nana Kweku Asante, 25th June 1958 and 30th Jan. 1959.

¹¹⁰ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/18, "Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the Sefwi Wiawso Local Council...", 4th July 1952.

¹¹¹ GNA Accra ADM 47/1/23, "Quarterly Report- Sefwi District, Report for the Quarter Ending 30th September 1954".

¹¹² Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, In the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held on Friday the 11th October 1963 at the Ahenefie, Wiawso.

The Council decided that all tenant farmers in the area are to be identified at such [sic]. They should possess an identify [sic] card each from the Council at the cost of C[edis] 5.00 and that they should each pay the sum of C[edis] 50.00 for the endorsement of an agreement by the *omanhene*. These proceeds payable into the Traditional Council Fund as well as a yearly tribute of C[edis] 50.00 per 12 sq. poles of land allotted them to the Administrator of Stool Lands on behalf of the Sefwi Wiawso Stool.¹¹³

Sefwi landlords' systematic targeting of immigrant farmers as sources of land revenue and the increasing pressure on land has caused and still causes tension. Chiefs and tenants each complain that the other party violates the terms of the original agreements. Chiefs accuse tenants of acquiring large portions of land and illegally sub-letting them with great profits; of failing to pay agreed tributes; of extending their farms beyond the areas allotted to them; of not being in possession of legal documents sanctioning their land rights (cf. Benneh 1988: 234).¹¹⁴

Immigrants accuse the *omanhene* and the chiefs of harassment and extortion. Cases of assault have been reported since 1970 and became more frequent in recent decades. Tenants also complain of continuous monetary demands of Sefwi chiefs, which are not part of the original contract. Occasionally farmers are called to the chief's palace and faced with demands for various amounts. Small sums are collected from tenants for the construction of feeder roads, during the annual *elluo* festival, at chiefs' or *adehyee*'s funerals, and when chiefs incur expenses over land disputes. Over the last decades, larger amounts have been demanded by the king for the construction of a new palace. The collection began in 1966, while the palace was actually completed in 1997; throughout these thirty years, reference has been made to the palace to justify farmers' taxation and to account for the expenditure of government grants.¹¹⁵

Land tenure disputes, taxes and swindles create tension between Sefwi and immigrants. Agricultural immigrants are not usually assimilated within Sefwi communities. They mostly live in hamlets built on their farms or in non-Sefwi villages. Similar processes have occurred

¹¹³ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Minutes of the Meeting of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held at the Ahenefie on Monday the 25th August 1975.

¹¹⁴ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/60; GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/113.

¹¹⁵ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/60; GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/113; Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Lands Commission Secretariat, "White Paper on the Report of the Committee...", February 1990.

in other parts of the Akan world. Immigrants are isolated residentially, discriminated against in terms of land access, taxed, extorted and relegated to inferior positions (Addo 1974; Garceau 1982; Sutton 1983; Chauveau and Dozon 1985; Rathbone 1996: 516-517).

Relations between immigrants and autochthonous farmers have periodically produced violent "ethnic" clashes throughout Ghana. Austin (1987: 273-275) describes revolts of labourers in the early decades of the twentieth century in South Asante. Akwabi-Ameyaw (1974: 192) noted similar dynamics in Eastern Asante in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Sefwi was no exception. Sefwi always felt that revenue collection from foreign tenants was insufficient. In 1979, the pro-Sefwi District Council demanded new forms of taxation. It was proposed "to compile and maintain a record of all tenant farmers and the rents and tribute which should be paid by them" and it was decided that tenants should pay a registration fee to finance the exercise.¹¹⁶ The non-Sefwi District Chief Executive was cautious: "the subject evokes such emotions, which if not handled properly, can lead to serious breaches of the peace".¹¹⁷ There is evidence that government agents resisted the pressure from the Local Council, did not support the tax and tried to make its implementation a failure. They feared new taxation of immigrant farmers would lead to violence. In the early 1980s, revenues were meagre even though the Council sought improved forms of tax collection.

The matter remained dormant until it was brought up again in 1986 after a Sefwi was nominated as government agent. The new District Secretary and the Traditional Council undertook a massive operation of "registration [of] tenant farmers/ demarcation of tenant farms" throughout Sefwi. Surveyors were provided the following instructions: "you are to demarcate Only developed farms [sic]" while "all old farm plans" were to be confiscated.¹¹⁸ Immigrant farmers saw this exercise as the latest strategy to extort money. They feared that portions of their land on which cocoa had not yet been planted would be expropriated and re-

¹¹⁶ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/118, "Minutes of the Forth Ordinary Meeting of the Sefwi Bibiani District Council held at the Council Hall on Friday, the 19th October 1979"

¹¹⁷ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/118, "Address by the District Chief Executive Mr. M.K. Homiah on the Occasion of the forth Ordinary Meeting of the Sefwi Bibiani District Council held at the Council Hall on the 19th October 1979".

¹¹⁸ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/138, "Registration tenant farmers/ demarcation of tenant farms", 13th November 1986.

allotted to Sefwi. Up to then, most of chiefs' extortions of tenants' resources had been personal and informal. Tenants faced chiefly demands for money individually either in traditional court proceedings or when summoned to palaces. In 1986, the situation was rather different: an official legal measure was taken and the norm involved all tenant farmers. This brought unity amongst them.

Tenants firmly refused to comply with the registration ordinance. The king's oath was sworn to force tenants to submit or stop farming altogether (see chapter 11). Immigrants disregarded the oath and continued their farming activities. Violence ensued as Sefwi chiefs sent villagers to dispossess stranger farmers of what the former considered land illegally occupied. Some immigrants fled. A settler farmers' union was created to protect tenants and oppose the registration. In its current membership card those days are recalled.

The perfidy of the traditional rulers was at its zenith and in the open and made no secret of their intentions. In the wake of various acts of provocation by the traditional rulers and their agents which include[d] outright confiscation of fully developed farms, encroachment upon lawfully acquired farmlands[,] the exaction of the ten percent levy on all cocoa produced by tenant farmers, unnecessary invocation of the traditional Oath 'Takwa ne Asantewa' against settler farmers, and the extortion of large sums of money from tenant farmers.¹¹⁹

The government stepped in to mediate between the parties. In 1986, a law to facilitate land title registration was passed (Woodman 1988; Aidoo 1996). The Asare Committee was hastily formed and sent to investigate the matter. The results of the enquiry documented the violence committed on immigrant farmers. A fairer treatment of tenants was recommended in the conclusions.¹²⁰ In 1987, the government posted the Sefwi District Secretary elsewhere and passed the "Sefwi Wiawso Settler Farms Law" prohibiting proceedings by chiefs' courts on land issues.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Western Region Settler Farmers' Union, "Membership Card- Brief History of the...", n.d.

¹²⁰ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/138; Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Lands Commission Secretariat, "White Paper on the Report of the Committee...", February 1990.

¹²¹ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/138, "Sefwi Wiawso Settler Farms Law, 1987"

Sefwi youth and chiefs established an association called WEREMUD to safeguard their privileges on Sefwi land. Legitimation for Sefwi right to land rested on ancestral origin: birth and blood justified the role as landlords.

We wish to bring to the notice of the [Asare] Committee that the lands so brotherly and generously leased out to Tenant Farmers for the production of food, cocoa and other valuable crops, remain the inalienable birth rights of the Sefwi Ghanaians whose ancestors fought with their sweat and blood and that the present generation will never toy with the land so be-queathed to us.¹²²

Sefwi claimed that land was not sold to strangers but only leased. Kin and descendants of the tenant who signs the agreement may work on the land but the immigrant farmer may not sell or sub-lease it without chiefly consent.¹²³ Sefwi were claiming to be the sole legitimate land grantors. On the eve of the violence of 1986, a group of Sefwi expressed their feelings about immigrants acting as landowners.

About thirteen farmers all Sefwi's [sic] entered a certain piece of virgin forest land for the purpose of farming. As Sefwi's we are aware of our customary right [i.e. to clear virgin forest and acquire farming rights]. Surprisingly one Aknoko a tenant Ashanti farmer claims the whole area over six miles as belonging to him. At the moment he has thirty five sub-tenants (abunu farmers) not counting what he himself has developed. We feel that one man an out sider [sic] must not possess all this land ...¹²⁴

In 1987, during the sitting of the Asare Committee, WEREMUD posed the following question to the government that had just passed the "Sefwi Wiawso Settler Farms Law".

We ... wish to know whether the recent pronouncements ... were meant to legalize the illegal farming by some of the Tenant Farmers. That is to say, whether ... they should be allowed to sublet lands leased to them to other Tenant Farmers on 'Abunu' basis, thus turning themselves into Landlords.¹²⁵

¹²² GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/138, "Memo", 12th November 1986.

¹²³ See Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Commissioner for Oaths, "Memorandum of Agreement".

¹²⁴ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/134, "Asuentaa farm lands", 3rd October 1985. See also GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/138, "A Call for a Review...", 26th May 1987.

¹²⁵ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/138, "Campaign of falsehood", n.d. [May/June 1987].

Sefwi are struggling to maintain their role as landlords (cf. Gilbert 1997: 518). To them, the tenants' payment of money for land is part of the preservation of existing hierarchical relations and acceptable only within this framework.

Chiefs & Sefwi: revenues and laziness

The revenue collected from strangers was distributed unevenly amongst Sefwi according to their ancestry. All Sefwi land is said to belong to the king. Chiefs have subordinate rights deriving from their stool's ancestral deeds. Whatever accrues from the land, is divided between the *omanhene*, holder of the absolute right over the land, and the local stool, administering the particular territory which produced the revenue (cf. chapter 10).

The Omanhene is the Paramount lord of all lands in Sefwi and Divisional Chiefs or Sub-Chiefs including Adikro, etc., hold the lands by tenure through chivalry or spiritual obligations to the State. Proceeds in the kind of natural economic resources are shared into parts, the Omanhene or Paramount lord always retaining a portion whilst the remaining portion goes to the Caretaker or Stool concerned.¹²⁶

While revenues are and always have been received by chiefs, part of the sums collected are redistributed within their communities. Sefwi residents in villages are organized in a kinship network linking individuals and groups to the *adehyee*, the matrilineage holding the village stool. Elders from various households are allocated subordinate offices such as those of linguists and counsellors. Chiefs have to seek the consensus of members of their matrilineage and of stool elders before entering into agreements with incoming entrepreneurs: older members of the chief's lineage and other prominent figures must sign their names alongside the chief's on concession agreements for such contracts to acquire legal status. In exchange for their signature and consensus, the chief is made to share the amounts received. Land revenues are thus partly redistributed within the larger kinship network of Sefwi villages.

Of course the largest share of stool revenue is administered by the chief on behalf of the stool. However, chiefs are called upon to account for their use of stool land revenues. They

¹²⁶ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/30, "Customary Law of Succession...", 7th March 1956.

often take upon themselves major expensive projects that benefit the whole matrilineage, such as the construction or renovation of the palace or of a lineage house. Chiefs are required to provide prestige goods to enrich the stool's treasure, to take care of lineage members in difficulty and to cover medical and scholastic expenses of younger *adehyee* members. An Asante proverb runs: "When a chief has plenty of milk, then all people drink of him" (Rattray 1916: 115). When chiefs used revenues for personal benefit by taking advantage of the often undefined separation between the stool's and the chief's properties, they were often deposed (cf. Robertson 1976; Roberts 1983). In 1950, the district commissioner commented:

The chief of Boako abdicated in August, one of the main charges against him being the failure to improve the town with some hundreds of pounds received from timber concessions in his area. To squander appears to be the practice of most chief and I am surprised that more have not been destooled.¹²⁷

Ideally, chiefs should concentrate wealth for the community's general benefit. Part of the chiefs' fulfillment of this role, consists in the Traditional Council's involvement in development projects, which have included the building of a new palace for the *omanhene*, the sponsoring of roads and hospitals, the construction of schools and banks, and the granting of scholarships to Sefwi pupils.¹²⁸ These projects were often unsuccessful and chiefs have sought alternative ways of granting the needed improvements to their communities. Factories operating in Sefwi, identified as foreign, have been asked to participate in the development of the area. In 1962, Gliksten WA, the largest timber firm operating in the Sefwi area, was asked to extend its electricity supply to the town of Wiawso.¹²⁹ In 1963, the Traditional Council passed a resolution requiring a contribution to

¹²⁷ GNA Accra ADM 47/1/23, "Sefwi District, Report for the Quarter Ending 30th September 1950"; cf. "Sefwi District, Report for the Quarter Ending 30th September 1951". Destoolment charges for not developing the village or pocketing procedures may be found in abundance in the 1950s and 1960s, related to local C.P.P. activism, and also in the Minutes of the Judicial Committee of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council 1974-1976.

¹²⁸ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Minutes of the Meeting of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held at the Ahenefie on Friday 26th August 1966; Minutes of the Emergency Meeting of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held in the Ahenefie, Sefwi Wiawso on Friday 20th September 1974; Minutes of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held at D/C Hall on Friday 4th January 1980.

¹²⁹ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Seventh Session of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held on Monday the 15th April 1962.

the community's welfare from all major timber companies operating in Sefwi. Firms were asked to provide electricity supplies, to build houses for their employees, a town hall, schools, football fields, clinics and community centres.¹³⁰ In 1964, timber companies were asked to reach "gentlemen's agreements" to build bridges on motor roads.¹³¹ In 1976, Gliksten was called upon to maintain the motor roads in the district.¹³² In 1996 and 1997, commercial enterprises operating in Sefwi were amongst the major donors contributing to the completion of the king's palace at Sefwi Wiawso.¹³³

In the early twentieth century Sefwi villagers backed chiefs in their alienation of farming rights to immigrants. The compliance of Sefwi villagers suggests that chiefs used at least part of their money for communal purposes and that revenues were usually redistributed within a larger community. In 1916, Sefwi farmers were said to lack incentives for large scale cocoa production: "As in all produce in the country the incentive to cultivate extensively is lacking. As soon as a man has cultivated a few loads of cocoa or rubber he appears content".¹³⁴ In the 1950s there was still no opposition to the chiefs' policy of alienation of forest to tenant farmers.

Perhaps in the end the native farmers will come to regret [resent] the encouragement given to the immigrants by the chiefs. But so far there is little evidence of a conflict of interest between the chiefs and their people (Hill and McGlade 1957: 9-10).

Sefwi were granted free access to land while forest was available. No taxes were demanded from local farmers clearing forest in their village and the tripartite division of the cocoa with chiefs did not apply (cf. Benneh 1988: 231). Many Sefwi, until the 1950s, were

¹³⁰ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Eight Session of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held on Monday the 11th March 1963.

¹³¹ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Minutes of the Emergency Meeting of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held on Thursday the 13th August 1964 at the Ahenefie.

¹³² Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Minutes of the Meeting of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held at the Ahenefie on Monday the 25th August 1975.

¹³³ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Traditional Council, "Burial Programme for the late Okogyebuor Kwadwo Aduhene II".

¹³⁴ GNA Accra ADM 48/1/3: pp. 264-278.

content with gaining a livelihood through subsistence agriculture and hunting, using whatever monetary income derived from small-scale cocoa production and the redistribution of stool land revenues. Sefwi and immigrants who were asked to recall the early period of cocoa production agreed that "Sefwi, at first, were not interested in cocoa". Sefwi in general, and *adehyee* in particular, worked in their customary activities. They are remembered as capable hunters and as producers of alcoholic drinks, palm wine and its distilled derivative - *akpeteshie*. Immigrants recall the festive atmosphere of Sefwi villages. Dances were often organized during nights of full-moon as the community shared alcohol and meat.

In the first half of the twentieth century, land was available but the will to farm it was lacking: Sefwi production figures remained low. While tenant farmers worked large portions of land, Sefwi usually cultivated smaller parcels in the neighbourhood of their village (cf. Okali, Owusuansah and Rourke 1974: 174-179; Benneh 1988: 230-231). In 1956, Sefwi farmers were described as "very localised in their outlook" (Hill and McGlade 1957: 3) and not seriously dedicated to cocoa production.

So far as the indigenous people are concerned the standard of living of cocoa farmers in the area appears to be very low. It is not only that the average cocoa production is low, and that there are few large farmers, but also that the cocoa farmers much less commonly have other occupations than in other areas. But the area is fortunate in its reserves of timber and minerals -both gold and bauxite: the total paid in royalties to local authorities and chiefs by the timber and mining companies must be considerable (Hill and McGlade 1957: 1).

Hill and McGlade link the relaxed attitude of Sefwi cocoa farmers to the revenues from timber and mineral concessions. Sefwi had other sources of livelihood.

As land pressure began to make itself felt, roles gradually changed. Sefwi farmers who had been reluctant to take up commercial agriculture now realized that cocoa was not only an opportunity, but would soon become a necessity. The Sefwi population was increasing rapidly and land resources began to grow short. Young men rushed into cocoa production. Up to the early 1970s, Sefwi acquired any portion of virgin forest they were able to clear without payment. In the 1960s, however, chiefs' alienation of farming rights to immigrant tenants was at its zenith. Competition developed between young farmers and chiefs as the

former began to clear as much forest as possible before chiefs had a chance of selling it. Stool holders indiscriminate alienation of land to immigrants was questioned (cf. chapter 7). A councillor of the Wiawso Local Council urged the appointment of a committee to look

into rampant indiscriminate granting of Forest Lands ... by people who are financially exclusively benefited [sic] with heavy sums of customary consideration monies unduly exacted from the prospective farmers.¹³⁵

Chiefs found themselves in the uncomfortable position of being pressured to put an end to a major source of revenue. The minutes of the Traditional Council show chiefly exercises in political acrobatics: on the one hand, alienation of farming rights to immigrants was practiced up to the time land ran out, and indeed beyond; while, on the other hand, chiefs had to act as if they were safeguarding general Sefwi interests. In 1963, a strong pro-Sefwi stance was taken by the Council at one of its meetings.

It was ... agreed that chiefs should advise their subjects to carry on with farming from any portion of land belonging to any farmer who wants to monopolize with unnecessary delay.¹³⁶

The resolution was an explicit threat to "foreign" tenants. All the forest they had acquired but had been unable to farm could now be cleared by Sefwi. The increasing land pressure was thus blamed on immigrants' "monopolizing" strategies. While this official stance was maintained, the alienation of farming land in fact continued. In 1967, the chiefs' hypocrisy reached its climax; on the one hand, chiefs were massively selling farming rights to foreigners, on the other, they rendered illegal the transfer of land to immigrants.¹³⁷ In 1975, the Council paradoxically stated that the alienation of farming rights to strangers was intended to provide farms for the stool.

¹³⁵ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/53, "Wiawso Local Council Meeting", 12th April 1965.

¹³⁶ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, In the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held on Friday the 11th October 1963 at the Ahenefie, Wiawso.

¹³⁷ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Minutes of the Meeting of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held at the Ahenefie on Tuesday the 16th day of May 1967.

It is well known that our purpose of disposing part of our stool-land on tenancy basis was to obtain a part of the farms involved for our stool. Yet it has been defeated due to the lukewarm attitude of most of the tenant farmers.¹³⁸

While chiefly political rhetoric was on the side of landless Sefwi farmers, the alienation of farming rights to immigrants rendered land access a real problem for Sefwi youth. By the 1980s, some Sefwi were paying chiefs to acquire land rights in the remaining scattered portions of virgin forest.

When Sefwi's interest in commercial agriculture was strengthened, ancestry played a role in the timing of the groups' involvement in cocoa production. There was a relation between the time in which the individual decided to engage in cocoa farming and his ancestral rank: the lower the status of the Sefwi farmer, the earlier the establishment of his cocoa farms. Sefwi people with slave origins were more willing to attempt cocoa production from the start. *Adehyee* were the last to turn to cash-oriented agriculture. Chiefs established farms for themselves mostly through the employment of immigrant hired labour or unpaid communal labour.

The criterion of land rights' allocation illustrates the shift from an assimilatory political and social structure, in which farming rights were granted to all, to a more exclusive one, in which immigrants had to purchase the right to farm. Later status differentiation divided Sefwi themselves. As chiefs monopolized remaining forest lands, Sefwi commoners were forced to buy farming land which supposedly chiefs were managing on their behalf. Where at first any Sefwi from a known lineage could clear forest, later the rights became vested in those of royal descent.

Strangers as labourers

Among agricultural immigrants a distinction should be drawn between those who arrived in Sefwi with sufficient capital to acquire land -sometimes very large portions- and those who were forced to sell their labour. The former were mostly Akan and became tenant farmers, the

¹³⁸ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Minutes of the Meeting of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held at the Ahenefie on Monday the 23rd June 1975. The statement may be intended as a reference to the pre-1962 agreements establishing that one third of the farm was to revert to the stool.

latter were mostly Northerners and worked as labourers. As Sefwi themselves provided little agricultural work, there was high demand for labour. Immigrant labour in cocoa production took two prevalent forms: sharecropping and hired labour. Throughout the Akan world and for the entire twentieth century, sharecroppers and wage labourers have normally been Northerners (Hill 1963a: 187-190; Adomako-Sarfoh 1971: 136; Groff 1980: 399-403; Okali 1983a: 44-54; Mikell 1989: 128-134).

Abusa caretakers, who work on grown cocoa farms and harvest the pods are mostly Northerners from the infancy of the cocoa industry (Garceau 1982, Sutton 1983, Konings 1986: 86-95; Austin 1987: 273-275). The agreement does not require long-term settlement on the part of the labourer, as no permanent land rights are acquired, and is particularly appropriate for immigrants who arrive without sufficient money to acquire land (cf. Robertson 1982). In 1956, half of the *abusa* labourers employed on Sefwi farms were "foreigners". Of these, the largest number, were from the Northern Territories. Northerners represented only the 8% of the population but almost 30% of the *abusa* farmers working in Sefwi (Hill and McGlade 1957: 2, 4; cf. Addo 1974: 212; Robertson 1982: 463-465). As land pressure increased, Akan and Sefwi became more willing to enter into *abusa* contracts, leaving less favorable labour options and wage labour to Northerners. Today the prevalent sharetenancy agreement in Sefwi is the *abunu*: the caretaker plants cocoa on a plot of land produced by the landlord and receives half of the grown farm. Few Sefwi work as *abunu* caretakers, again most of the work is provided by immigrants (table 1; cf. Berti and Contini 1995: 86-87).

Northerners have formed the bulk of hired labour: they were associated with slaves and therefore viewed as "natural" workers (Etienne 1971).¹³⁹ Sefwi recall that Northern hired labour was largely used to establish cocoa farms in the 1950s and 1960s. Labourers worked in Sefwi seasonally or for some years and then returned to their home towns. They were usually paid a fixed amount to clear agreed portions of forest. In 1956, Hill and McGlade estimated that more than half of the clearings for new farms were completed by employed labourers (Hill and McGlade 1957: 7; cfr. Addo 1974; Arhin 1986a: 41-50). Northern labour

¹³⁹ See Pepe Roberts Papers, Sefwi Native Tribunal Court Archives, Native Court B, Sefwi Wiawso, 25th Feb. 1953.

still forms a large part of the hired work used in Sefwi. Land owners employ labourers occasionally on a daily basis and engage Northerners on yearly contracts. In the latter agreement landlords pay the travelling expenses of a Northerner who has been residing in the village for a number of years and, in exchange for his travelling fee, demand that he procures a certain number of annual labourers. Normally the age of the labourers is specified. The labourers are generally male but at times young women are involved. When the labourers arrive in Sefwi, an annual payment is agreed. The labourers then start working on behalf of their landlord who must provide for their daily expenses besides the payment at the end of the year.

Table 1. Labour contracts by ancestral origin¹⁴⁰

		Employers				
		Chiefs & Adehyee	Sefwi	Akan	North.	Tot.
Employees	North.	2 H.L.; 1AN; 2 AS	9AN; 1AS	1AN; 2AS		18= 2H.L., 11AN, 5AS
	Akan	11AN; 1AS	9AN; 3AS	2AN; 2AS		28 =22AN, 6AS
	Sefwi	1AN; 1AS	5AN; 12 AS	1AN; 1AS	1AN	22 = 8AN, 14AS
	Chiefs & Adehyee	4AS; 1AN				5= 1AN, 4AS
	Tot.	24	39	9	1	73

Source: Field survey.

AS= Abusa

AN= Abunu

H.L.= Hired Labourer

Abusa labourers of the 1950s could hope to gain sufficient capital to acquire land rights and start their own cocoa farms in a few years. As land became exhausted, the inflow of strangers did not cease but more and more immigrant farmers found themselves in the condition of landless labourers and their hopes of acquiring farming rights over a portion of

¹⁴⁰ Family labour and daily hired labourers are not considered. Annual labourers were counted only when they worked exclusively on farms within the survey area. Their proportional number is therefore greatly underestimated.

land diminished with the rapid increase of land prices. From the 1970s, immigrants who started off as labourers faced increasing problems in acquiring their own land.

A field survey carried out in 1996 and 1997 gives statistical support to the relationship between ancestral origin and long-term labour arrangements (table 1). Sefwi act mainly as employers; Akan immigrants do so to a lesser extent; while Northerners hardly employ any hired labour. On the contrary, *adehyee* seldom work as labourers and, when they do so, it is exclusively for lineage members. Sefwi citizens have recently felt the need to work as labourers: they usually enter into *abusa* contracts with elder kin. The bulk of agricultural labour, especially in *abunu* contracts, is produced by immigrants.

The influence of ancestral origin on the division of labour has relevance beyond agriculture: it structures labour organization in the few factories operating in Sefwi. While Sefwi refused to be employed as labourers, Northerners, from early in the twentieth century, arrived in large numbers in the quest for jobs as miners and timber labourers.¹⁴¹ In 1952, the main timber enterprise working in the Sefwi area, Gliksten WA, employed only 20% Sefwi workers; other Akan formed 15% of the labour force; Northerners 60%. In 1955, the percentage of Northern labourers had increased further, while that of Sefwi had decreased.¹⁴² An inspection report commented:

[Labour] supply bad around Sefwi- the Sefwi people don't seek work and in many cases are not suitable Majority of present workers are from the Northern Territories.¹⁴³

Labour for the Sefwi gold mines was brought from the Northern Territories as well: in 1927, only 13% of labourers were Sefwi while 47% came from the Northern Territories or from neighbouring French colonies.¹⁴⁴ Sefwi seldom worked as miners, especially in the harder

¹⁴¹ CO 98/16 "Gold Coast Departmental Reports: Mines Department, 1906 and 1907"; GNA Sekondi WRA 6/SF8A/104.

¹⁴² GNA Sekondi WRA 6/SF8A/78.

¹⁴³ GNA Sekondi WRA 6/SF8A/78, "Labour Department -Inspection Report", 5th December 1951.

¹⁴⁴ PRO CO 98/50, Report of the Mines Department 1927-28; cf. PRO CO 98/62, Report of the Mines Department 1932-33.

and more dangerous position of underground labourers.¹⁴⁵ Again, this does not seem to be a peculiarity of Sefwi. Throughout Ghanaian mines, Akan reserved more privileged work for themselves (Crisp 1988: 19-21, 35-55, 181-183; Robotham 1989: 59-82; Dumett 1998).

Various forms of twentieth-century inequality, both among members of the Sefwi Wiawso kingdom and between them and strangers, have been organized according to ancestral origin, a shared principle of differentiated attribution of value, wealth and labour. Within Sefwi society, ancestral origin has organized important features of political and social life acting as a criterion of office attribution to stools and of definition of genealogical relationships between stools. Besides acting as a principle of rank differentiation, ancestry, has produced a common Sefwi identity. Incorporated groups and individuals are positioned within the unitary framework of Sefwi society through genealogical links between matrilineages, the perceived interweaving of ancestors' deeds in history, the identification of society with the body of the king and the re-enactment of the interconnected history of the kingdom in the *elluo* festival.

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed the shift from an inclusive structure, in which strangers were incorporated, to an exclusive one, in which immigrants were excluded from the identity and rights accorded to Sefwi. The shift operated a fundamental change in the enforcement of hierarchy; nevertheless, ancestral origin maintained its validity as the organizing principle. Up to the early twentieth century, subordination was predominantly achieved through marriage strategies and the allocation of political offices. With the introduction of cash agriculture, these methods did not entirely vanish but were combined with the allocation of roles in cocoa production. Ownership rights, revenue collection and labour arrangements are defined according to ancestry. Sefwi chiefs are seen as rightful landlords. Sefwi commoners are unwilling farmers who largely refuse wage labour and sharecropping contracts. Akan immigrants are predominantly tenant farmers. Northerners are thought of as the ideal hard-working labourers. Group members do not always conform to their ideal roles, but a connection between social categories and appropriate roles was nevertheless established.

¹⁴⁵ PRO CO 98/53, Report of the Mines Department 1928-29.

Works often describe status differences as dichotomies such as that between autochthonous and immigrants, or chiefs and people without office, or between *asikafoo*, the rich, and *nkwanwaa*, the commoners. Akan society is more complex. A focus on ancestral origin enables us to appreciate the great variety of degrees and kinds of hierarchical rank and to account for the peculiarity of the status of groups and individuals. Ancestors' deeds assign roles that are not reducible to class dichotomies and may not be ordered according to a single scale. They create positions which are relational rather than absolute. Individual and group status is defined by the particular relation established with subordinates and superiors. Ancestry offers tools -genealogies, narratives, bodily identification, festivals, ethnicity and indeed many others- which are used to forge hierarchical bonds. Those holding inferior positions may legitimately multiply their own relations of subordination using ancestral origin or by resorting to alternative hierarchical criteria such as gender and seniority.

Chapter 6.

Gender

There are two diverging and seldom connected scholarly approaches to the study of gender relations in the Akan area: anthropological studies on one hand, and socioeconomic and historical work on the other. The two bodies of literature cover different issues and present conflicting pictures of the attribution of value and wealth in Akan gender relations.

Most anthropological studies have focused on specific cultural institutions. Some works have described the importance of the *ohemma* (pl. *ahemma*), usually termed queen-mother in English. Hers is the female counterpart of male political offices. The duties and importance of the *ohemma* vary greatly according to each group's ancestry. *Ahemma* of less influential matrilineages co-ordinate women's activities in the village, they may be consulted in regard to local political decisions, and usually contribute to the matrilineage's succession choices alongside male elders. *Ahemma* of more important lineages may have their own stools, hear court cases - in particular those concerned with marriages - exercise influence on key political choices, and play crucial roles in determining succession to the most relevant political offices both as electors and as mothers, aunts and sisters (Rattray 1923: 81-85; Fortes 1950: 256-257; Perrot 1979; Arhin 1983c; Manuh 1988; Boaten 1992).

Anthropological work has also focused on the centrality of motherhood in the matrilineal Akan world. The importance of women as mothers in perpetuating and extending the matrilineage has been stressed. Fortes (1950: 256) states that in all matters related to the social life of matrilineages "there is a very high degree of equality between male and female members of the lineage". He views relationships between spouses as balanced and attributes this to matriliney: "The recognition of matrilineal descent is responsible for this high degree of equality between spouses in Ashanti marriage law and custom" (Fortes 1950: 280, cf. 260-263, 1971: 8-9). Rattray (1923: 77-78) shares a similar view: "The most obvious results of a social organization framed on such lines [i.e. matrilineal descent] is to raise immediately the status of women in the community". Mary Douglas (1969: 126) argues similarly that an inherent feature of the matrilineal tracing of descent is the importance of women as "connecting links". James (1978) suggests that gender relationships among the Akan, and in

other matrilineal African societies, are conditioned by the high value attributed to motherhood; to stress male dominance, she argues, may be a misleading exercise in patrifocal thinking.

Other issues which have attracted much attention are the separation of spouses' budgets and Akan women's economic independence. Wives control autonomous revenue sources - especially through trade- with which the husband may not interfere. Women therefore manage their own activities and accumulate resources independently of their spouses (Rattray 1929: 22-23; Hardiman 1974; Van der Geest 1976; Abu 1983; Asante-Darko and van der Geest 1983; Etienne 1983; Vercruysse 1983; Clark 1994: 330-371; Tashjian 1995: 140-151). Overall, anthropological studies stress the relative power of women in the matrilineal Akan world, especially in comparison with patrilineal societies. Their focus is often on the normative: anthropologists have shown that Akan political and parental institution should provide women sources of power. Historical and socioeconomic studies, on the other hand, have concentrated on gender relations in specific moments and contexts.

Historical studies have convincingly shown that colonial governments -both directly and through indirect rule- contributed to women's subordination (Grier 1992; Allman 1994). Historians have examined some instances in the 1920s and 1930s in which traditional political authorities forced women to enter into marriage through coercion (Roberts 1987; Allman 1996). Colonial and postcolonial courts are described as instrumental in encouraging male dominance by strengthening a patrilateral pattern of wealth transferral and increasing fathers' rights over children in the early colonial period (Mikell 1984; Allman 1991, 1997; Grier 1992: 323-328). More recently courts tried to extend women's rights. These attempts are viewed, however, as potentially threatening to women's independence: male judges seek to extend paternal responsibilities, thus menacing women's autonomy and their right to raise children (Mikell 1995, 1997b).

Most of the socioeconomic literature concerned with gender has focused on cocoa production to show that women's agricultural labour has not received satisfactory compensation. Many women work on cocoa farms as wives, sisters, daughters and nieces for male household heads and do not receive adequate returns for their labour. Independent women cocoa farmers, meanwhile, face several constraints not faced by their male counterparts. The introduction of cocoa produced an increase in women's work load while

granting them wealth and economic independence only in a brief period in the 1920s and 1930s. Men control most of the revenue from cash-oriented agriculture (Oppong, Okali, Houghton 1975; Vellenga 1977, 1986; Bukh 1979; Greenstreet 1981; Okali 1982, 1983a; Mikell 1986; Grier 1992: 314-323).

The different emphasis of these two approaches, one concerned with women's independent status and the other with their subordination, suggests that different gender discourses and practices have coexisted in the Akan world. Even though gender relations are not one sided acts of male power, I believe that gender has acted as an important principle of unequal allocation of labour and wealth, while offering accepted justifications for existing inequalities. This chapter describes the roles men and women play as members of matrilineages and nuclear households and then discusses women's management of independent enterprises, with particular reference to cocoa farming.

Women in matrilineages

Sefwi, and Akan more generally, are brought up as members of social groups, namely matrilineages and nuclear families. The crucial characteristic of women's participation in these groups is their role as subordinates. Men are usually viewed as the "natural" heads of social units at different levels of organization: in the nuclear and extended households as well as in matrilineages and villages. Heads are held responsible for the welfare of all group members. They administer the unit's income and decide how it will be spent. Women -and junior members of the group- are thought of as unable to provide for themselves fully. Somebody has to take care of them, pay their expenses and be liable for their debts.

While anthropologists have often viewed matriliney as enhancing the position of women, more recently the issue of the relationship between matriliney and women's power has been re-addressed in a rather different light. Vellenga (1986: 75) states that: "[matri] lineages and polygyny do not necessarily disperse resources and lead to more equity. Instead, differentiation takes place within families, often along gender lines". Allman (1991: 179) describes women as "jural minors": the lineage head or the father usually act on their behalf in court cases. Mikell (1989: 109-110) argues that: "During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the dynamics of the export-based colonial economy caused men to

predominate in production of export crops, leaving women to play ancillary economic roles". She explains that matrilineal descent did not alter this pattern: "while women were the vessels for transmitting access to resources and authority within the matri-group ..., they were not themselves the loci of power and authority". Clark (1994: 337) expresses a similar view: "Asante girls and women unfortunately seem to be increasingly marginalized in their lineages, in leadership, residence, and inheritance".

Male elders take decisions which concern the whole matrilineage, such as those with regard to succession and land disputes. Female elders may be present when these resolutions are made but hold more limited authority (cf. Yankah 1995: 69-70). A woman may be nominated as lineage head only if no appropriate male candidate is available. She often holds this position only temporarily and manages matrilineage affairs in close connection with a man, possibly her own son. When the man becomes familiar with lineage matters, the elder woman gradually transfers her authority to him, and the official headship reverts to a man even though the senior woman is still usually consulted in important matters and asked for advice.

A brief excursus on human pawnship clarifies one form of differentiated gender treatment within Akan matrilineages. Up to the first half of the twentieth century lineage heads pawned members. A person contracting a debt was usually asked to offer security as a guarantee that the money would be repaid. The creditor often demanded someone to work for him until the debt was repaid. Lineage heads selected the members to be pawned. Pawns were normally young and that there was a marked preference to pawn females over males (Rattray 1929: 48; Van Hear 1982; Austin 1993: 105-110; 1994). In 1917, the Sefwi District Commissioner commented:

The custom of giving [and] taking youths [and] women as pawns is not dead yet [and] a rigorous policy has now been taken to extirpate this nuisance- a policy very unpopular with the chiefs. There are signs that steady persistence will gradually break up this very old custom.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ GNA Accra ADM 48/1/3, p. 394. Data from Sefwi court records offers a more balanced number of sex and age of pawns and suggest that pawning was not the exclusive right of the matrilineage (see appendix 1; cf. Tellier 1902: 152-153, 160).

Matrilineages control considerable resources: the property of deceased members as well as lineage land and houses. Lineage membership is beneficial to women in so far as it can grant them monetary assistance in times of need and, occasionally, a starting capital to engage in trade or cash agriculture. Allocation and transfer of wealth tends, however, to privilege men. Lineage heads are more likely to assist -both by mobilizing manpower and by granting a capital to begin agricultural and trading enterprises- male rather than female members.

Data on land transfers within the survey area confirm that lineage membership provides women access to wealth alongside gifts from fathers and husbands (table 2). Overall, women receive more land from female than from male matrikin. Similarly, men acquire more land from male than from female members of their matrilineage. Females occupying genealogical positions identical to those of male counterparts, however, receive smaller portions of land from kin. A similar pattern has been recorded in other parts of the Akan world (Hill 1963a: 116-117, 1975; Okali 1983a; Vellenga 1977: 198-201, 1986: 73-75; Mikell 1984, 1989: 103-105, 123-126; Clark 1994: 334-336).

Table 2. Most recent land transfers from kin to present owner¹⁴⁷

			Land		Giver		
			Female matril. members	Male matril. members	Spouse	Father	Other
Land	No. of Plots		26	32	33	36	1
	Females No. of Acres		117	108	149	91	2
	Per. Acres		25%	23%	32%	20%	-
Receiver	No. of Plots		65	117	9	76	5
	Males No. of Acres		255	512	19	243	11
	Per. Acres		24%	50%	2%	23%	1%

Source: Field Survey, 1996 and 1997.

Male-biased strategies of land transfer involve both gifts and succession. Land is often passed on as a gift from man to man, through a female link. Typical examples are MF-DS (11 plots, 67 acres), MMB-ZDS (23 plots, 90 acres), MMZS-MZDS (11 plots, 60 acres), besides the obvious MB-ZS transfers. Married women are thought to be catered for by their husbands;

¹⁴⁷ Only land transferred from kin, as inheritance and gifts in life, is considered in this table. Plots which were purchased, which were owned as a consequence of finished *abunu* contracts, which were acquired through the clearing of the forest, and which were property of the matrilineage were excluded from calculations.

this justifies the matrilineages' choice to direct the bulk of resources towards male members. Likewise, plots are seldom given to elderly women as general opinion holds that they do not have the strength to start new farms. Land is instead given directly to their sons to cater for their mothers. Sexually unequal distribution of resources, and particularly of land, is reproduced over generations as succession itself follows gender lines, men succeeding to men and women to women.

Women in marriages

Besides being a part of her matrilineage, a woman belongs to other social groups. In Sefwi, she is often raised in her father's household (Boni 1998). The dominance exercised on females during the first part of their life has more to do with seniority than with gender. Children, regardless of their sex, are brought up with similar duties and responsibilities in their early years. A clearly gendered hierarchical bond emerges in marriages. The main features of marriage correspond to those previously described for female membership in matrilineages. Women are, once again, in a subordinate position in a male-dominated social unit.

Marriage marks the transfer of responsibility to care for a woman and the shift of benefits from her labour from the father or uncle to the husband. The role of the husband implies the assumption of precise rights and responsibilities as regards his wife. These are summarized by Fortes (1950: 280) as follows.

The payment of *tiri nsa* [a drink which sanctions marriages] gives the husband exclusive sexual rights over his wife and the legal paternity of all children born to her while the marriage lasts. It gives him, also, the right to essential domestic and economic services from her. He in turn is obliged to provide her and their children with food, clothing, and housing if she has none. He must give her sexual satisfaction and take care of her in illness, is responsible for debts she contracts, and last but not least, must obtain her consent if he wishes to take an additional wife.

The husband, being the household head, needs to pay for certain expenses incurred by wives and other household members, such as medical bills, school fees and domestic expenses (cf. Hardiman 1974; Roberts 1987: 60-61). He is expected to provide his wife with textiles every

year -usually bought during the Christmas vacations- and to pay for children's clothes. Construction and maintenance of the house and of the kitchen are the household head's duty (cf. Kyei 1992: 40). He is held responsible for the behaviour of household members and for their welfare. Moreover, the household head manages the judicial and social involvement of household members on their behalf.

The husband is, also, responsible for the payment of the wife's debts. During the marriage ritual, the father or uncle of the bride asks the bridegroom if he intends paying his wife's debts.

As you take away this woman with you, should she incur any debt it would be your liability; but if she comes by a treasure she takes it all to her lineage. Do you agree? (Kyei 1992: 31).¹⁴⁸

The husband is of course expected to respond in the affirmative. An example of a husband bearing responsibility for the wife's debt occurred in the village of Nsawora in 1997. A seamstress' shop was broken into at night and some fabrics stolen. The cloths had been brought by customers who had commissioned the seamstress to style their dresses. The cost of the material had to be refunded to the owners. Calculations on the total amount to be reimbursed were presented not to the seamstress but to her husband, the household head, who used his cocoa money to pay this debt. The husband had no right to reclaim the money from his wife.

Household headship implies not only responsibilities but rights as well. The husband holds authority over his wife, who is a subordinate member of his unit. As the husband bears the expenses incurred by his wife, he has the right to direct her actions. Kyei (1992: 42) states this principle clearly.

From the day that a wife's TIRI-NSA is given, the parents transfer their care and responsibility for her to the husband. He assumes full responsibility for her behaviour,

¹⁴⁸ Such a clause is reported in other ethnographies on Akan marriage with some variations. Danquah (1928: 154) states that the husband has rights over half of the treasure and is liable for half of the debts. Rattray (1929: 26) states that the husband "becomes liable for the wife's debts" Mensah-Brown (1968: 79) mentions the norm of accepting responsibility for wives' debts but states that husbands are "under no legal obligation to do so".

for her actions and in accordance with the condition under which she was given to him, namely ... he is legally and morally bound to pay any and all debts she may incur when she is with him as a wife. In consequence, he has full authority to disapprove of any action or undertaking from which he has reasonable grounds to anticipate trouble. For this reason, it is the wife's bounden duty to respect his authority unquestioningly.

The husband's rights are partly those which were previously held by the woman's father or uncle before marriage, and partly a new set of rights linked to sexuality. Husbands largely dictate women's public behaviour. Wives must be granted permission to travel and may be made to follow the husband when he migrates (cf. Tashjian 1995: 104-127). Members are expected to follow the directions of the household head, to show respect and submission. Wives are expected to change their church membership after marriage to conform to that of the husband, even though resistance may be expressed and practiced. Husbands have exclusive rights over their wives' sexuality while the opposite is not true.

The husband's most important prerogative is perhaps his right to control his wife's labour. Labour is allocated to spouses according to widely accepted views concerning the appropriateness of specific types of work to each sex. Wives must fulfill all household chores: cleaning the household; washing clothes; caring for children; collecting firewood and water for drinking and washing; all activities linked to food preparation both in the morning and in the evening, including food purchase, the collection of food-crops from the farm, the cooking of meals, as well as the cleaning of utensils and dishes. All these are duties and responsibilities of women and therefore of wives (cf. Hardiman 1974: 106-108; Bukh 1979: 56-57).

Apart from these duties, wives assist husbands in their cash-oriented enterprises. In the early twentieth century, women were involved in joint cash-oriented production with their husbands such as trading, rubber tapping and gold digging. These enterprises, however, can not stand comparison with the pervasiveness of the impact of cocoa which has become the most important revenue source for most Sefwi families. Women have been called to work on cocoa farms. The amount of time women should spend on their husbands' farms is negotiated within households. Excessively divergent ideas of wives' "appropriate" labour efforts on

husbands' farms may lead to divorce. Wives' duties are summarized as follows by Danquah (1928: 153):

Two, and perhaps only two, things are expected of a wife by her husband, viz., to bear and care for their children and to do all domestic and some of the farm work, and she must of course, maintain her fidelity unimpaired.

Mensah-Brown's (1968: 78-79, cf. Tellier 1902: 151-152; Amoo 1946: 235-237) description of spouses' responsibilities in Sefwi marriages, expresses a similar view.

Besides sexual rights, the husband is further entitled to essential and economic services from the wife. For the Sefwi, the principal source of material well-being is cocoa farming. Thus the wife is under a duty to assist her husband to cultivate as many cocoa farms as possible. The proceeds of the principal economic crops belong to the husband In return for her services, the wife has a right to maintenance by the husband. This includes shelter, food, clothing ... the necessities of health and life.

Even though particular issues may be subject to negotiation, the general features of the division of household responsibilities are known and accepted. The non-compliance by the husband or wife with their duties creates a social crisis. For instance, the husband's prolonged failure to supply food usually leads to divorce (cf. chapter 12). Similarly, the wife's unmotivated interruption of any of the above-mentioned duties, especially cooking, is sufficient grounds for the interruption of marriage. A Sefwi man provides the following summary of gender relations: "The woman can never command the man. You have to perform certain duties. When you do that, she can never say anything again".¹⁴⁹

Husbands, wives and joint enterprises

In this section gender roles are discussed in what I term the household's joint enterprises. These are activities run by the joint effort of household members. The returns derived from such enterprises are managed by household heads. The pattern of labour distribution to household members and accumulation of wealth by the household head, has been practiced throughout the twentieth century (cf. Roberts 1988).

¹⁴⁹ Collins Ntaadu, Anglo, 13-9-1996, English.

Since the beginning of the century, women have been working on joint household enterprises. Before the expansion of the market-oriented economy, women performed essential economic tasks. They played a major role in gold production, especially in the process of gold washing (Dumett 1979, 1998: 72-74; Arhin 1981: 17), and as porters and traders (Grier 1992). However, when they worked in these activities alongside their husbands, wives seldom had control over the returns of their labour. The head of the household was considered to be the rightful beneficiary of all goods produced by household members in joint enterprises. In this respect, the condition of women does not appear to have been radically different from that which they hold nowadays in Sefwi society (cf. chapter 3).

Court cases provide evidence on gendered labour relations and wealth allocation in early twentieth-century Sefwi. In 1915, an appeal case from a traditional tribunal concerning rights over a cocoa farm was brought to the District Commissioner. The plaintiff, the ex-wife of the defendant, claimed the return of the cocoa farm she had established. She explained her case as follows.

Deft. [defendant] is my husband or was my husband. I divorced him. After divorce the Deft. claimed a cocoa farm from me. A man in [the] omanhene's court at Bekwai gave judgment against me I made the farm myself. Deft. does not even know where the farm is.

The husband's answer exemplifies male conceptions of female labour.

When I returned from Bibiani I found my wife, the Pltf. [plaintiff] had made a cocoa farm. Some time after this my wife divorced me. I claimed the farm. I did not help to make the farm but I claimed the farm.¹⁵⁰

The wife claimed the right to the returns of her work. The husband, on the other hand, believed the outcome of his wife's labour to be entirely under his control. Traditional Courts seemed to support this latter view (cf. Roberts 1985: 382; 1987: 55). If the farm was completed before the dissolution of the marriage, it belonged to the household head and his

¹⁵⁰ GNA Accra ADM 48/4/3, Yaa Etuka vs. Kwaku Duku, 13th March 1915. The colonial court, inverted the king's ruling. The judgment was for the plaintiff "for the farm and its full possession".

role as husband was sufficient to justify his rights over the outcome of his wife's work. The household head's control of the profits from women's labour was an integral part of the marriage arrangement.

Hierarchy regulated the relationships between household members in general and spouses in particular. This principle is well spelled out in a ruling by the Asantehene's Court in 1953:

in the language of marriage a wife is not a free agent as she is one with the husband ...; let us define the relationship of a husband and wife: Obviously a wife is not, as regards her husband a free agent or separate person and therefore has not her own free will to act exclusive of her husband's, nor has own consent, and her own interest.¹⁵¹

While this principle, as stated by the Asantehene's court, remained intact throughout the twentieth century, there has been room for negotiation. The unity of husbands and wives within households was only one part of their roles in society. Women could, in some circumstances, act as private entrepreneurs independently of their husbands. Legal disputes reveal a process of negotiation over the definition of what part of the wife's labour was to be considered conjugal -and therefore directed towards the household- and what part was to be viewed as her own.

In the following case, heard by a colonial court in 1904, the plaintiff, who is the wife and "servant" of the defendant, complains that her husband had taken £22 belonging to her.

I used to wash gold at Adjumadium. I washed for Deft. [defendant] my own share amounted to £22. This is what I claim. I got no share in washing from quartz dug by Deft. but when I washed for other people I got the money from [the] sand. I got the profits from the refuse after washing for other people ... and also selling cocoa yam, yam and plantain. I had my own farm. I did my husband's work before doing my own. My master [husband] gave me permission to do these things. Some of the £22 is in gold dust and some in silver. Deft. has used it all.

The wife distinguishes the revenues from activities that she performed as a wife, when working alongside her husband, from those derived from work performed independently of

¹⁵¹ Nana Kwasi Bafuor per Kojo Kakari v. Adjoa Adai, heard in the Kumasi Division Native Court "C" held at Kumasi on Tuesday the 17th day of November, 1953; quoted from Tashjian (1995: 274).

her spouse. She agrees to forgo the former, but not the latter. The husband's response clarifies his view concerning his wife's labour. He overlooks his wife's distinction and claims the total control of the returns of her labour.

I never got any money from Pltf. [plaintiff]. I made a farm for her and she sold plantains and cocoyams. All this money she got belonged to me. She also used to wash gold and gave it to me.¹⁵²

These court cases show that from the very beginning of the twentieth century contests have occurred over the definition of what was to be considered women's separate income.

With the expansion of cash agriculture, the allocation of returns from joint household labour became a crucial issue. While wives' work on husbands' estates was not a novelty, cocoa-farming now involved the majority of women in stable wealth-producing enterprises. The distribution of labour and the accumulation of wealth in cocoa production was arranged according to a pattern applied in pre-cocoa farming which was adapted to cash agriculture. Since the spread of cocoa production, wives have been required to perform specific agricultural work on husbands' farms. Tasks in the production process are assigned different values and divided according to gender. Danquah's (1928: 154) description of agricultural duties and rights in the 1920s echoes the words of present-day Sefwi of both sexes.

The proceeds of the principal economic and food crops reaped from the farms belong to the husband, who may give presents to the wife to any high value, but the wife has prescriptive right to the green-crops, pepper plants, garden eggs, etc. The clearing of the farm land and the heavier farm-work are done by the husband, while the female partner follows with cultivating the soil with foodstuffs, etc. And it need be noted that it is always the wife's duty to go to the farm almost every day for the purpose of bringing foodstuff, firewood, etc., for their daily consumption In these days of economic farming the wife has to give due assistance to her partner in attending his cocoa and kola farms, or making new ones (cf. Amoo 1946: 231-232, Mensah-Brown 1968: 78-79; Hill 1975: 121; Lanternari 1977: 219-224).

¹⁵² GNA Accra ADM 48/4/1, Akosua Buatua vs. Kwaku Minta, 26th January 1904. The court decided to grant the woman half of the amount claimed.

Danquah's statement contains multiple gender norms which are worth analyzing separately. Agricultural products may be divided into three types with differentiated gender ownership. Firstly, cocoa, rice and maize are cash-crops. Some of the last two may be used for consumption but the bulk of the produce is sold; incomes are managed by the husband. A second type comprises what Danquah called "green-crops": he mentions pepper and garden eggs, but beans, tomatoes, onions and okro should be added to the list. Green-crops are usually sold in small quantities and provide a scant income controlled by wives. Thirdly, cassava, yam, cocoyam and plantain are generally termed food-crops. These have an intermediate status: they are an essential part of the daily diet and are not sold unless plentiful. When sold, they provide larger incomes than green-crops. The revenue from food-crops is owned by the household head but women may occasionally be allowed to sell these crops and keep the profits.

This division of rights over agricultural products is justified by reference to who performs the work on the crops (cf. Etienne 1971: 241-242; Okali 1983a: 100-102). Every year in March or April, new farms are cleared by husbands. Women are thought to be unable to perform the clearing of the forest to prepare new farms. They therefore have trouble setting up their own cocoa farms. Females need to be assisted by men in this crucial, initial stage. The farm is then burnt and is ready for planting before the rains. The yearly clearing of a new farm is an essential part of the agricultural cycle as the food-crops mature approximately one year after planting. If no new farm is made during an agricultural season, there will be no food-crops in the next. If the land is suitable, cocoa and food-crops are usually planted by both husband and wife on the entire area: these belong to the household head, regardless of who planted them (cf. Bukh 1979: 51). Wives generally plant and own green-crops.

After planting, the farm needs to be cleared of unwanted weeds. Women are believed to perform the weeding on new farms, where cocoa grows alongside food-crops and green-crops, with great skill. This is a tedious task which requires extreme care. The land needs to be cleared without damaging the cocoa saplings and the foodstuffs. Women, compared to men, are said to weed with greater care. Men are able to weed larger portions but they do so with less attention and so damage some plants when working on new farms. Wives' work on these farms is further justified with reference to the fact that the wife needs to be acquainted

with the quantity and type of crops present on the plot as she is in charge of selecting the mature food-crops and of transporting them from the farm to the household for cooking. Work on new farms is therefore viewed as more suitable for females both because it is thought to require less strength and because it fits with the general link drawn between women and food. By contrast, work on grown cocoa farms -and in particular the weeding under the mature plants and the harvest- is viewed as hard work which needs to be performed by men. The perceived division of labour is partially confirmed by analyses of time-budgets on cocoa farms: women work mostly on new farms while men privilege labour on mature cocoa farms (Beckett 1944: 82, 87; Okali 1975: 46-60, 1982; Hill 1975: 121-125).

There are no norms prohibiting women from performing men's agricultural tasks apart from etiquette and social pressure. During interviews for the farm census, I was told that sometimes women performed the clearing of portions of forest with little or no male assistance. Women spoke of their accomplishment with pride, but viewed it as exceptional and extremely tiring. Likewise, I have seen women harvesting cocoa. This operation requires no particular strength. The exclusion of women is explained on the grounds of their inability to handle a picker mounted on a long palm stalk (*asoso*) used to cut cocoa pods from the branches of tall trees.

Wives may freely collect food-crops for cooking and green-crops for selling. They should, however, inform the husband if they intend selling the food-crops (cf. Lanternari 1988: 87). Otherwise, as one informant stated, "it is like stealing". Permission to sell food-crops is generally granted to wives if money is necessary to buy some specific household good (meat, salt, oil, soap or kerosene). The husband, instead of providing money to cover these expenses which are his responsibility, uses the food-crops to this end (cf. chapter 12). Occasionally, wives ask to sell food-crops and use the money for themselves. Reference is usually made to minor expenses for clothing, hair-dressing and beauty products.

Rights over agricultural products are further complicated if the husband decides to divide a new farm in portions. The division of a new farm organizes the allocation of labour and wealth by assigning specific portions of the plot to the husband and his wife or wives. Different portions of the newly cleared land are subject to distinct rules. The division of the farm is the usual procedure if the husband is polygamous; the senior wife is generally allotted

a larger portion than the junior one. But monogamous husbands may decide to resort to this option as well. The husband performs the clearing of the entire land and then works only on his portion. Cocoa is planted on the whole area. The portions assigned to the wives revert to the husband when the cocoa plants reach maturity, after approximately three years, and the period of intercropping with green-crops and food-crops ceases. Wives work on their portions and occasionally on those of their husband. If the man is polygamous, the wives will take turns to work on his portion. Wives may freely collect food-crops for cooking and green-crops for selling from their plot. They need to seek the husband's approval to collect food-crops for cooking from his plot. However permission is usually granted if there is a food shortage on the wife's portion. This division of the farm has two purposes: it enables the husband to keep a close control over the food-crops grown on his portion; and it also stimulates labour competition between wives as each tries to prove herself more hard-working than the other (cf. Okali 1983b: 171-172).

It is interesting to note that the connection between certain crops and the gender to which they are allocated is occasionally overlooked. If any of the green-crops -the revenue of which should be controlled by wives- is planted on a large scale by husbands to be sold as cash-crops, these turn into men's crops. Even if reference is made to the type of crop, the gender division of the agricultural revenue appears to be regulated according to the amount of cash derived. Potential incomes from women's crops (pepper, garden eggs, beans, tomatoes, onions, and okra) are limited unless planted as cash-crops, i.e. in large quantities and with the intention of selling the product when prices rise.

Work on new farms is an integral part of cocoa farming. Women's labour is therefore essential to cocoa as well as food-crop farming but women are not usually accorded the status of cocoa farmers. Although joint labour predominates in the cocoa industry, the household head controls the activity and its profits. While wives' contribution is not fully acknowledged (cf. chapter 10), husbands' control over cocoa revenue is justified with reference to the gendered division of agricultural labour and to the fact that men are household heads and that they accumulate wealth on behalf of the entire household.

Besides the returns from green-crops, wives receive gifts from their husbands in appreciation of their contribution towards the establishment of cocoa farms. These gifts vary

in kind: they may include cloths, capital to begin an independent enterprise or the money from a minor cocoa harvest. Cocoa is harvested several times during one season and some harvests are larger than others. Wives may be allowed to retain the money from a minor harvest and use it as they wish. Some immigrants, on their arrival in Sefwi, acquire portions of land for their wives alongside those for themselves. Husbands explain that the wives worked on their cocoa farms in other parts of Ghana and acquiring land for them expresses gratitude. Husbands, both Sefwi and immigrant, may also give portions of cocoa farms to their wives as gifts if these were jointly developed. Gifts from husbands or property otherwise acquired, provide wives with independent revenue sources.

Gender appropriate works and women's independence

A great deal of work is performed by women as wives in joint household activities controlled by their husbands. There are, however, enterprises individually run by women. Whatever is individually acquired, is managed independently of the unit's head. This may be a trading activity which the woman started with her own money or with money given to her as a gift. Sefwi women sometimes raise goats, chickens and sheep. Many are successful seamstresses. Some work as hired labourers in agriculture or earn monthly salaries as teachers. Others own cocoa farms. These activities provide profits over which the woman has total control.

While wives have constantly sought to establish independent sources of revenue, they have not always been successful. The gender asymmetry in monetary accumulation is achieved through constraints which result from value attribution rather than prohibitions. Women are not altogether denied certain economic opportunities; they are rather considered unsuited to perform certain works while others are considered more appropriate.

Early twentieth-century labour division assigned the roles of hunters, gold miners, rubber tappers and long-distance traders to men, thus granting them control over products demanded on the world market such as gold, ivory, rubber and monkey-skins.¹⁵³ Women's work as

¹⁵³ See PRO CO 879/25; PRO CO 96/275, Despatch No. Confidential, 20 July 1896, Captain Davidson Houston to the Acting Governor, 30 June 1896. As far as I know, there was no considerable export of palm products from the Sefwi area in the late nineteenth century. This was probably due to the fact that the region was poorly connected to the coast. In other parts of the Akan area where the trade flourished, it was a man's activity (Hill 1963a: 163-164, 168). Lynn (1997: 52-53) holds that while production of oil was mainly a female activity in nineteenth-century West Africa, men, however, kept most of the proceeds of its commercialization. In south-eastern Nigeria women had control over palm kernels but not palm nuts in the

wives in such industries was viewed as a contribution to a joint enterprise and not formally rewarded. Women's independent access to cash was mostly limited to the marketing of foodstuffs, to work on a salary base as porters or to local trading activities (Arhin 1981: 18; Grier 1992).

Throughout the present century, cash-oriented production linked to the processing and selling of food were considered "appropriate" for women. In the early twentieth century, at least part of the profits derived from the marketing of food-crops were managed by women independently. In Sefwi, however, food-crops were scarcely commercialized until the British created markets which had the main purpose of providing cheap food for incoming traders.¹⁵⁴ In this period the colonial government adopted a policy aimed at keeping food prices at the barest minimum, minimizing expenditures incurred by incoming entrepreneurs and labourers. The selling of food-crops was not a rewarding activity. Colonial officers on several occasions had to force villagers to sell their foodstuffs at markets.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, revenues from food-crop farming benefited only residents of the few large villages where trading or mining activities prospered. In the rest of the district, food-crops were not commercialized until decades later. The cost of transportation exceeded the potential revenue derived from the selling of foodstuffs up to the time when a network of roads was constructed (cf. Hill and McGlade 1957: 7).

While the selling of food-crops was considered appropriate women's work, some types of hired labour were viewed unfavourably. At the beginning of the twentieth century, husbands at times would not allow their wives to work as hired labourers. In 1905, a woman who lived in the mining town of Bibiani was prevented from working as a mine labourer by her partner. He stated that if she wanted money she could cook and sell "kenkey", a popular food made

early colonial period (Martin 1988: 47-48). Roberts (1987: 51-52) believes women were independently involved both in gold-mining and rubber-tapping. There is little doubt, however, that the majority of profits from such enterprises were controlled by men.

¹⁵⁴ The construction of markets was one of the colonial enterprises to which priority was given just after the turn of the century. See GNA Accra ADM 48/1/1, Commissioner Western Frontier to H.C.S., Wiawso, Sefwi, 26-8-1900, Breckenridge to Commissioner Western Province, Asafu 6-8-1903; CO/96/379, Despatch No. 195 "Sefwhi district", 7 May 1901, From E.H. Hobart Capt. to The Ag. Inspector General G.C.C., Accra, The Cantonments, Accra, April 8, 1901; GNA Accra ADM 48/1/3, pp. 250-255.

¹⁵⁵ GNA Accra ADM 48/1/3, L.W.S. Long to Chief of Datano, Amoya 28-8-1911; GNA Accra ADM 47/5/4.

from corn.¹⁵⁶ In the early twentieth century, a woman divorced her husband who then collected all the cloths he had given her. She asked her sister for a loan to buy herself some cloths: "My sister said she was a woman [and] had no money. I must carry *amankany* [cocoyam, a food-crop] to get some money".¹⁵⁷

In the early decades of the twentieth century, a crucial redefinition of the division of labour occurred as a consequence of the gradual exhaustion of animals in the forest, the control of gold mining by European firms and the fall in the price of rubber. Men gradually lost their principal sources of revenue: mining became an irregular and unprofitable enterprise when carried out independently; hunting inevitably decreased with the disappearance of wild game; and rubber-tapping suddenly died out in the 1920s. Male cash-earning rights, however, were extended over cocoa production, the newly established income-generating activity. Thus men managed to adapt successfully to a major economic shift. They kept control over the crucial cash-producing activities at a time when some resources were losing importance while others came to the forefront.

As cocoa became the major source of cash for most Sefwi households, gendered ideas and values were adapted to the new crop. While farm labour was widely considered a woman's affair at the beginning of the century, it became an "appropriate" male activity after the introduction of cash agriculture. This was achieved without any acknowledged transformation of the value system. Established norms regulating the attribution of labour and wealth in the pre-cocoa economy were adapted to the cocoa production process. In pre-cocoa subsistence agriculture, husbands were in charge of clearing the forest, wives in charge of most other work. With the spread of cocoa farming, husbands and wives maintained their respective roles, while husbands performed most of the labour connected specifically to cocoa. Nowadays, clearing is still performed by men and weeding on new farms by women, as it used to be. The new agricultural tasks linked to cocoa, i.e. the plucking and the weeding of grown cocoa farms, are work considered appropriate for men. The overall result is that, to Sefwi, cocoa production is quite naturally a man's business. Women's access to cocoa is not

¹⁵⁶ GNA Accra ADM 48/4/2, Akosua Kuma vs. Kofi, case no. 46, 26-4-1905.

¹⁵⁷ GNA Accra ADM 11/1/1697, p. 47.

banned, it is marginalized. The adaptation of the agricultural division of labour to cash-crop agriculture locally justifies a differentiated access to the benefits from cocoa production.

Today, women's work as independent entrepreneurs on cocoa farms takes two forms. Some women manage to establish farms; others work as labourers. While a variety of contracts of hired labour and sharecropping are available to men, women's "appropriate" options as labourers are more limited. The perceived unsuitability of women to perform key agricultural activities excludes them from acquiring land as annual agricultural labourers. The few women I found engaged in annual labour contracts, were not paid a fixed amount at the end of their yearly service; they were rather provided with a sawing machine. Females are thought to be unable to clear the forest and are therefore unsuited to receive land with the *abunu* sharetenancy contract according to which the labourer receives a portion of secondary forest from the owner and needs to plant cocoa. Otherwise, women can not pluck the cocoa and are therefore also excluded from the *abusa* agreement according to which the labourer receives a grown cocoa farm and needs to maintain it and harvest the cocoa (cf. Vellenga 1986: 67-70). *Abunu* and *abusa* contracts may, very occasionally, be granted to women, provided they have male subordinates who are in charge of the labour. Women can not sell their hired labour within these privileged sharecropping contracts. Many are therefore employed as daily workers, the least favourable labour contract. Reference to their presumed physical weakness justifies a daily pay rate thirty per cent lower than that accorded adult male labourers.¹⁵⁸ The role of women as independent cocoa farmers deserves a separate section.

Women's constraints in independent cocoa production

With the increase of the cocoa price in the early 1910s and in the late 1920s, Sefwi became seriously involved in cash-agriculture (see appendix 2). Even though Sefwi's engagement in cocoa production was gradual, some men and women present themselves as "cocoa farmers" in the court records of the early decades of the twentieth century.¹⁵⁹ It was sufficient for a

¹⁵⁸ In the period between 1993 and 1996, the pays of daily hired labourers varied considerably according to locality and season. The discrepancy between male and female pay was nevertheless a constant: in 1993 in Suhienso male labourers were granted 500 cedis, females 350; in 1996 at Nsawora males were paid 2,000 cedis and women 1,500, in the same year in Anglo men received 1,500 while women only 1,000.

¹⁵⁹ GNA Accra ADM 48/4/1-3.

Sefwi to clear the forest for him to gain farming rights over the portion of land cleared. In the early period of cocoa farming, some women acquired land rights by either clearing portions of forest themselves or by asking for the assistance of their brothers, sons or nephews to fell the bigger trees while they cleared the undergrowth. However, most of women's work in this period of large scale clearance of virgin forest was performed on behalf of husbands, fathers and brothers. By the beginning of the 1970s, when most of the virgin forest which could be cleared had been cut down, the share of land acquired by women was limited. Table 3 shows the clear correlation between gender and control of the first agricultural rights over land. The average of the three survey areas shows that 80% of the surface had a male first owner compared to 10% with a female one.

Table 3. First owner of plot by sex and survey area¹⁶⁰

Survey Area	First Owner							
	Female		Male		Matrilineage		Unknown	
	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%	Acres	%
Anglo	112	9%	1,103	87%	32	2%	23	2%
Fiafano	55	10%	348	66%	102	19%	24	5%
Dedimendi	69	10%	533	80%	63	10%	-	-
Average	236	10%	1,984	80%	197	8%	47	2%

Source: Field Survey, 1996 and 1997.

Mikell (1984, 1986) shows that Brong women were more likely to acquire land in the period between the 1920s and 1940s. In the 1960s, women's access to land was diminishing and the trend has not been reversed since. Roberts (1987) believes that similar dynamics occurred in Sefwi Wiawso: women's economic independence increased in the 1920s and 1930s and was then curtailed. The data provided above for Sefwi must be viewed in the light of Mikell's and Roberts' studies. Most of the forest clearing in Sefwi occurred in the 1940s and subsequent decades, in a period in which women's access to land was more problematic.

¹⁶⁰ I define "first owner" of a plot of land as the one who cleared the virgin forest or acquired agricultural rights through purchase. If the land was and still is owned by a matrilineage corporately, it falls under the heading "matrilineage". If the land used to be vested in a matrilineage but, at the time of the survey, an individual had managed to acquire exclusive rights, he or she is considered the first owner.

Not only did women acquire smaller portions of land in the period of the definition of land titles, but the gender differentiation in land access was further reproduced by land transfers. Land was and is transferred between kin mainly through gifts during one's lifetime and through succession. This latter form of transfer generally follows lines of gender: men inherit from men and women from women. As previously shown in this chapter, gifts during the lifetime from matrikin tend greatly to favour men.

Women, besides acquiring land by clearing the forest or through gifts from kin, may receive land from their husbands. After the transfer, the land becomes the wife's property which she manages independently. Land transfers to wives provide insights on the differentiated value attributed to the labour of sexes in joint cocoa production. Wives' land acquisition as rewards for labour on their husbands' farms are of two kinds: compensation received by wives on divorce; and gifts provided by husbands to wives after years of marriage. On divorce, spouses usually claim compensation for their work performed in joint enterprises. As jointly worked farms are normally cultivated on the husbands' land, men are supposed to provide a suitable payment for the labour performed by their wives towards the establishment of these farms. Husbands usually comply with their wives' families requests for compensation which usually consist of plots of land, often portions of cocoa farms. While wives who work on their husbands' land receive small portions of the estate as compensation, husbands who jointly developed a cocoa farm on the wives' land, normally claim half the farm (cf. Mensah-Brown 1968: 84; Okali 1983a: 118-123; Vellenga 1986: 70-71; Mikell 1989: 118-119).

Land gifts during the husband's lifetime are the second way in which a wife's contribution to the establishment of cocoa farms is acknowledged. After years, usually decades, of marriage, owners of large cocoa farms may pass land on to their wives. These transfers are viewed as gifts which show the husband's appreciation of his wife's assistance in the joint household effort establishing cocoa farms. There is social pressure on men to make these gifts, but no obligation. These gifts are viewed as a form of anticipated inheritance. Men state that they do not want trouble to break out after their death between their wife and children on the one side and their matrilineage on the other, and therefore hand the land over during their lifetime. A ceremony is performed in which the matrilineage acknowledges the transfer.

Similar dynamics have been described throughout the Akan world (Adomako-Sarfoh 1971; Vellenga 1977: 204-205; Okali 1983a: 103-107; Tashjian 1995: 300-313).

The transfer procedures are decided by the donor. Husbands choose what parcels of land to release as well as the size and timing of the transfer. Wives may be assigned portions of cocoa farms or secondary forest which may or may not be suitable for cocoa planting: they often end up acquiring small portions of their husbands' least productive land. Men usually clear the land given to their wives but do not perform any further work on it. Following the transfer, the gendered division of agricultural labour changes only partially. Besides working on her newly acquired plot, the wife continues her work on the husband's farms.

As expressions of appreciation of services rendered and as forms of anticipated inheritance, gifts of land to wives usually occur after decades of married life. Data from Sefwi show that women generally acquire land at a more advanced age than men; plots received from husbands are obtained at a particular high age (table 4).

Table 4. Average age at acquisition of farm by sex

	Average year of acquisition of farm	Average age at the time of the interview	Average age at acquisition of farm
Male	1980	43	27
Female	1981	51	36
Wives' farms acq. from husbands only	1986	56	46

Source: Field Survey, Anglo and Fiafano 1996; Dedimendi 1997.

Wives often receive small portions of land at irregular intervals over successive decades. Promises of future gifts are used as a means to control a wife's behaviour. If the husband dies unexpectedly before officially allocating portions of his farms to his wife, the deceased's matrilineage usually tries to acquire all the deceased's property (cf. Roberts 1987: 54-56). Widows' rights over their deceased husbands' cocoa farms have, however, been increasingly recognized in Asante since the 1940s (Tashjian 1995: 314-343; Allman 1997: 315). Widows' claims to part of their husbands' farms were further strengthened by the Intestate Succession Law of 1985 (Awusabo-Asare 1990; Manuh 1997; cf. Woodman 1974).

Data from the field survey summarizes differentiated gender opportunities in land access. While most men own land, only about one in two adult women possesses her own farm.

Women who do own land control average land holdings approximately half the size of men's (table 5).

Table 5. Acres owned by farmer by sex and age

	Age groups				Average Acreage	Total no. of farmers
	10-24	25-39	40-59	Over 60		
Male	4,8 (22)	12,3 (80)	33,3 (42)	33,9 (27)	19,9	171
Female	3,8 (6)	10,2 (24)	10,4 (39)	12,9 (21)	10,5	90
Average	4,6	11,8	22,3	24,7	16,7	

Source: Field Survey, Anglo and Fiafano 1996; Dedimendi 1997. The number in brackets indicates the number of farmers in the age group. Landless farmers were excluded.

Data on female farm ownership from other parts of southern Ghana vary greatly. Beckett (1944: 61) provides data on a village known as Akokoaso surveyed in the 1930s: 39% of cocoa farmers were women but they held plots of less than three acres, in contrast to larger male-owned plots averaging over ten acres. In the late 1950s in Akyem Abuakwa and Akuapem, Hill (1963a: 11, 116-119, 1963b: 216) found that while immigrant female cocoa farmers were rare and held small plots, nearly half of the native Akyem farmers were females. Bouman (1975: 28) believes that women were completely excluded from cocoa production. Data on the patrilineal Ewe gathered in the 1970s suggests that just 10% of female farmers owned cocoa farms and that women controlled only 4% of the total cocoa acreage (Bukh 1979: 65). Okali (1983a: 57) states that in Ahafo, just north-east of Sefwi in the 1970s, one third of the women who were Ahafo "citizens" owned cocoa farms, while few of the immigrant women did so; however, in her survey of the settlement of Dominase she found that only 3 out of 17 holdings and 6% of the acreage were owned by females (Okali 1975: 18-19; cf. Oppong, Okali and Houghton 1975: 75). Mikell (1989: 103), who carried out a cocoa survey in Brong and Ahafo communities, found that the "adjusted median farm holding per woman was 7.43 acres -quite small in comparison to median farm holding per male of over 160 acres"; this last figure seems suspect. Anaman (1986) presents data similar to those gathered in Sefwi: women's cocoa holdings are approximately half the size of men's and the average age of female owners is higher.

Women who own land face several constraints unknown to men in farm development. Wives are unable to concentrate fully on their cocoa farms because time-consuming household chores are considered their duty and husbands try to divert their agricultural labour to joint farms. Women have to hire male labour to clear their plots. As they generally lack cash, finding money for these payments and for other agricultural investments often proves difficult. Finally, wives usually receive land at an advanced age; this makes cocoa farming less rewarding as the plants enter full production only after at least a decade from planting. Moreover, men are able to draw much greater labour support from kin (cf. Bukh 1979; Vellenga 1986: 75-77).

Women have more difficulty in gaining access to land than their male counterparts. When they do control land it is, at times, taken over by their husbands (cf. Okali 1983a: 53-54). Women holding land rights may be excluded from cocoa revenue derived from their land. Income allocation and farming arrangements on land owned by the wife before marriage vary from couple to couple. Usually the wife maintains control of revenue from mature cocoa farms established before marriage. However, if she seeks the husband's labour to run the farm, he may claim part of the profits. If the wife holds farming rights to a portion of uncultivated land, the husband may, with her consent, clear the forest, plant cocoa and become the owner of the farm. He harvests the cocoa and controls half or more of the revenue. Farmers justify this peculiar land tenure arrangement by stating that the cocoa income should be managed by the household head as he bears the monetary responsibility for household members.

A comparison between two farms in the area of Fiafano, close to the village of Nsawora, provides insights on the gender differentiated allocation of cocoa revenue. Rights over the first farm were acquired by a wealthy man in the late 1960s. He cleared 45 acres of primary forest mostly through the employment of hired labour. When the clearing was completed, he was employed as a government officer in the district capital and left the village. Two of his wives have since been living in Nsawora and provided most of the labour to establish a large cocoa farm. The husband, who when interviewed in 1997 controlled over one hundred acres, returns during the harvesting season to control operations and collect the revenue. The husband allocated portions of the farm to his wives: the senior one received a first plot in

1987, a second in 1993 and a third in 1995 for a total of 9 acres; the junior one received only one plot of 4 acres. The second farm was given in 1983 from a woman to her daughter Adwua who left it uncleared. Adwua married in 1989 and her husband cleared the land and planted cocoa. Since then, the labour on the farm has been performed jointly but the husband claims ownership of the cocoa, distinguishing it from the wife's control of land rights. The farm has begun bearing fruits and the cocoa revenue is equally divided between the spouses.

Women's success and the alteration of sex-roles

Women, especially as they grow older, usually receive an independent source of revenue from their husbands. This may include permission to sell food-crops, the allocation of land or of a cocoa farm, or a gift of money to begin a commercial activity. Women are recognized as legitimate entrepreneurs. They manage their cash-oriented enterprises such as a trading business or an independent agricultural activity alongside their labour requirements in the household. Some women succeed in escaping conditions of dependency and manage to accumulate wealth of their own. Moreover, as children grow, household chores are gradually passed over to them, leaving the elderly mother more time and freedom. Tashjian (1995: 26-27) has divided the Asante women's life cycle into three phases: the pre-menses stage, the childbearing period and the entrepreneurial years. It is, however, not just a question of growing economic autonomy, for seniority alters the gender value system. As women grow older, they acquire some attributes of those in hierarchically superior positions: they participate in arbitration panels, become legitimate household and matrilineage heads and multiply bonds of subordination within the household through fostering.

Husbands accept, and at times indeed encourage, women's independent activities as long as these do not threaten the established gender roles within the household. Female enterprises are tolerated as long as these do not menace the husband's role as the primary controller of the household's wealth. Wives' incomes are usually much smaller than those of their husbands. Women use their money to buy personal items, to provide for themselves and for other kin or household members when the household head is unwilling or unable to do so, and as a form of security against divorce and widowhood. Men view with favour women's limited control

of money for these purposes. Women's accumulation of considerable wealth is, however, not supported.

Sefwi men speak with fear of circumstances in which wives' wealth surpasses that of their husbands (cf. Clark 1994: 339). Husbands believe that wives' behaviour changes drastically in these situations. According to men, wives who feel that they are monetarily independent no longer view as essential the husband's role as provider of food, textiles and expenses. They are said to change their attitude and act in ways considered intolerable: wives may stop being submissive, argue with the husband on equal terms, disgrace the husband publicly, refuse to perform their household chores as required, and even take lovers. In short, they reject the socially prevalent allocation of value and labour, claim equality and practice it. Sex-roles are threatened and divorce follows in most cases.

Even though many wealthy women are widows or divorcees, some are married. They do not, however, usually enter into conventional marriages. Few marry men who are even approximately as wealthy as they are. Some rich women are married to polygamous husbands who do not usually reside with them. Some married a very wealthy man who provided them with capital to begin or expand their independent activities early in their lives. Others marry men who accept a subordinate role in the household. This latter arrangement is of particular interest as sex-roles in these households are reversed (cf. Tashjian 1995: 56, 192-193; Yankah 1995: 71). The head of the household is the woman. She controls the main revenue sources and allocates resources. The husband is normally an outsider of low status, often a Northerner or a younger man. He prefers being incorporated into a wealthy household as a subordinate husband to having to work as a labourer.

Gender relations have been discussed in this chapter as lying between two poles. On the one hand, women and men are part of wider social units, on the other they act as independent agents. Social groups are usually headed by men who act both as group heads and as entrepreneurs on their own account. The inclusion of women within social units most commonly implies subordination to the unit's head. Social units accumulate decision-making power and resources in the lineage or household head on behalf of all members. Members, on the other hand, are asked to follow the head's directives. The head manages the economic

activities of the unit. Matrilineages do not act as corporate working bodies; the head however controls access to land and wealth. Household heads direct the work of female members, towards joint enterprises and household chores. Revenue derived from joint household activities is accumulated by the household head who should use it to cater for members' needs. When working as members of social units, women have little control over the outcome of their labour.

Besides being part of these social groups, women manage their own separate activities over which both the matrilineage and the husband have little say. Such enterprises are set up with their own independent capital and women control the profits derived from these activities. The accumulation of wealth derived from women's business is, however, constrained by ideas concerning appropriate gender allocation of work and resources.

According to the majority academic view, Akan marriage is characterized by spouses' separate resources. I believe this argument is misleading as it stresses only part of the principles organizing sex-roles in households. Women certainly manage their own wealth independently, but they are also part of joint household ventures. The day-to-day running of the household is a joint activity with differentiated and interconnected responsibilities. The most important form of household enterprise are cash-oriented ventures, in Sefwi prevalently cocoa farms. These are said to belong to the husband but are joint property in a double sense. Firstly, they are the result of combined household labour. Secondly, the husband uses part of the activities' profits to cover household members' expenses. The household's unity lies in the ambiguity of the husband's cash enterprise. It is both his own and the household's. This point needs further investigation which is reserved to the conclusion of the thesis.

Chapter 7.

Seniority

Forms of subordination organized according to the principle of seniority have not produced a large literature on the Akan area. Nevertheless, age plays a central role in the hierarchical organization of society. Eldership organizes relationships between adults and adolescents; the age of younger siblings may be stressed by their elder brothers and sisters; elders may refer to seniority to protect their superior status from that of emerging adults. Rank in society and the capacity to accumulate dependants and wealth should conform with one's age-status. Seniority is often mentioned in demands that someone's behaviour comply with that allowed at his or her age.

In Sefwi seniority is thought to be the locus of ritual, social and political competence. Elders, *panynfoo* (sing. *opanyin*) are thought to hold customary knowledge. Their wisdom derives from the experience they have accumulated in the course of their lives. They are aware of the intricacies of the rules governing society and are therefore called upon to hear arbitration cases. The *panynfoo* are asked for advice privately and are listened to with particular attention at public meetings. They establish, maintain and interpret custom in villages.

The importance of seniority is also expressed in the form of reverence to ancestors, represented by stools. Living elderly people are associated with the ancestors in many ways. Society is organized according to an order of seniority which extends from the moment of birth through to the after-life. Elders are more advanced on the road to becoming ancestors and begin to share some of their attributes (cf. Kopytoff 1971). Seniors act as mediators between society and the ancestors as they have the ritual competence which enables them to appeal to the ancestors and interpret their wishes (see chapters 11 and 12). They are the ones who may legitimately intercede with the ancestors on behalf of youngsters. Their authority rests both on their knowledge of ancestral deeds and on their experience; the two are intermingled as elders often refer to ancestral history to justify their decisions. Elders use their control over "traditional" knowledge and their privileged relationship with the ancestors to

decree norms, direct behaviour, obtain obedience and monopolize resources (cf. Etienne 1983: 305).

Seniority must be seen in social rather than in biological terms. Elders are usually senior men and women but this is not always the case. Chiefs are considered elders regardless of their age. Ancestry here overlaps with seniority: chiefs, not only have a privileged ancestral origin, they also incorporate their ancestors' knowledge and wisdom. Stool holders are referred to as *nana*, an appellation used to refer to the MMB, MMZ, MF, FF, FM or MM and more widely to express respect towards the elderly (Oyedipe 1966: 2; Akwabi-Ameyaw 1982: 330; Arhin 1983b: 10-11). On the other hand, certain elderly people do not benefit from the privileges normally accorded to seniors: they are not called in arbitration panels, they are given scant respect and treated as "young men". Childless and unmarried seniors as well as strangers are at times infantilized and remain liminally short of the full status of elders. While members of the political structure are termed elders, non office-holders are considered young men: "*Nkwankwaa* simply means commoners. That is, in a political sense, 'youngmen', free citizens without office. Thus its largest component was 'ordinary' people" (Austin 1996: 24; cf. Roberts 1975: 251-252; Aidoo 1977: 25-27). Youngsters, *mmbrantee* (sing. *abrantee*) or *nkwankwaa* are thought to lack experience. They need advice and guidance in matters relating to custom and therefore should turn to elders.

Seniority is utilized as a means of subordination in a variety of hierarchical relations. This chapter analyses some of the most relevant: reference is made to the importance of age in matrilineages, in households and in the establishment of youngsters' independent incomes; the link between seniority and agricultural roles specifically in cocoa production is discussed; and contracts of apprenticeship are examined.

Youngsters in matrilineages

Members of the matrilineage are internally differentiated according to seniority. Eldership acts as an important principle of status allocation in two ways. Firstly, the rank of members varies according to the "age" of one's branch within the lineage -that is the seniority of the founding female ancestor *vis-à-vis* her real or classificatory sisters. Secondly, the member's relative seniority is considered within his/her segment. The inequality of power and authority is most

pronounced between generations: in relations involving nephew or niece and uncle (*wofase-wofa*) and children and mother (*ma-mami*), real or classificatory. Members of the same generation, termed siblings (*nua*), have a greater degree of equality (cf. Kopytoff 1971).

Matrilineages are headed by an *abusua panyin* (pl. *mmusua panyin*), literally the family elder. He acts alongside the chief and a panel of elderly members of the lineage. The *ohemma*, a female office-holder, is also part of this restricted group. Together they are identified as the elders, *panynfoo*. Relationships between elders and youngsters are arranged around a negotiable set of duties and rights. Elders are called upon to fulfil their responsibilities. They are supposed to support younger members in financial trouble and to offer them access to land. Ideally, the *panynfoo* take care of ritual expenses such as those involved in the annual *elluo* festival and pay junior kin's debts besides their medical and judicial expenses. Elders represent the matrilineage on formal occasions and manage social and judicial relationships on behalf of lineage members. *Mmusua panyin* or household heads are present during members' court hearings as well as at their marriages, divorces and funerals. Elders are thought to embody the wealth of their lineage. They have large and well furnished households. At public gatherings elders are usually seen dressed in expensive cloth and often benefit from motor transport. Even though these normative requirements are not always met in practice, ideally they are part of the elders' fulfillment of their role.

Obligations are matched by rights. Lineage authority follows a criterion of seniority. Elders have the decision-making power within matrilineages. The *panynfoo* preside over an assembly inclusive of all adult members. Women, youngsters and people of ambiguous ancestry, however, tend to have little weight in the decision-making process; resolutions taken by elders are seldom openly opposed (cf. Fortes 1950: 254-259; Pavanello 1995b). Elders are said to know custom and, therefore, to be entitled to make decisions. Moreover they demand respect and direct the behaviour of younger members.

The *panynfoo* administer lineage properties on behalf of members (cf. Fortes 1970: 162-165). Elders tend to use this privilege for their own ends. The *abusua panyin* is supposed to build houses to be used by matrilineage members, cater for their health and judicial relief. The funding on certain occasions comes from the elder's private money. He is, however, entitled to raise funds for these ends. The *abusua panyin* may demand donations from members or

alienate lineage property -often land- for a common goal. Elders are at times accused of using their power to increase their private wealth rather than for the the general benefit of lineage members.

Funeral donations are a public self-statement of status. The individual should donate according to his/her status. Elders' funeral donations are approximately double those paid by other adults. Those of adults vary according to seniority. In 1997, an elderly women complained to the husband because he had given her only 2,000 cedis to donate for the funeral of her FZS. The classificatory brother of the deceased who collected donations had refused her's because he thought it insufficient. She pointed out to the husband that her "younger sisters" and "daughters" had all donated 2,000; so her amount should exceed that.

One of the most important matrilineal decision-making domains is succession. A successor is selected after every death. Heirs control part of the deceased's estate and are called upon to fulfil the latter's duties towards dependants. Succession is open to different interpretations and therefore, to struggles. Genealogical rights are weighed alongside the candidates' character -they should refrain from excessive drinking and quarrels, show generosity towards other *abusua* members, be educated and wealthy (cf. Fortes 1970: 173-175; Lanternari 1977: 252-254, 1988: 91-92). It is normally agreed that all eligible members of a generation should be nominated as successors before candidates from the next may be selected. A disputed point is whether members of the same generation should succeed according to their own seniority or to that of their mother. The issue is whether all sons of the senior sister must have had the chance of succession or whether nephews from other sisters can be chosen if they were born before the junior sons of the senior sister. Seniority, however understood, does not entitle one to succeed automatically but acts as a strategic resource in negotiation.¹⁶¹

Eldership is crucial in selecting successors to the offices of chiefs, *ohemma* or *abusua panyn*, as well as to the estates of ordinary deceased lineage members. Elders in central genealogical and political positions tend to be nominated as successors of wealthy members, while youngsters are selected when the property to be transferred is scant. Senior members

¹⁶¹ Classical ethnographies provide lists or genealogies explaining the succession order (Rattray 1929 41-43; Busia 1951: 1-2; cf. Awusabo-Asare 1990: 8). Succession, however, rather than being a product of clear rules is full of points of contention and possible ambiguities.

often benefit from the privilege of succession more than once. Moreover, when other members are nominated as successors, the *abusua panyn* may demand a share of the deceased's estate from the successor stating that money is needed to cover lineage expenses. Individuals in key roles within the matrilineage, senior sons of senior mothers of senior branches, are often selected as potential chiefs from an early age. The matrilineage invests in their education and upbringing and, if their progress meets the group's expectations, they find themselves in a favourable position to contend for matrilineal offices.¹⁶²

Youngsters in households

Youngsters in households are a subordinate part of a social group headed by an elder. They hold rights and are called upon to fulfil specific duties. Adults have to provide food, accommodation and clothes and pay for children's and junior kin's health and scholastic expenses (cf. Delafosse 1930: 262-263). Youngsters provide work, obedience, respect and assistance in old age. Fortes (1963), Caldwell (1966, 1967) and van der Geest (1997) have studied the obligations of fathers and mother's brothers towards children, nephews and nieces and the forms of assistance elders receive from the latter. This section is specifically concerned with the allocation of household chores to youngsters.

I have previously mentioned that the responsibility for all household chores falls upon the household head's wife (chapter 6). This statement needs further elaboration as gender hierarchy may be turned into subordination organized according to seniority. The wife is held responsible for the performance of household chores but this does not necessarily imply that she performs all the work herself. Wives often manage to mobilize the labour of children to perform these duties. The allocation of work is thus transferred from a criterion of gender, whereby husbands attribute household chores to wives, to one of seniority, whereby wives reassign these tasks to children.

Elderly women are not expected to perform the more tedious household chores. Younger household members are supposed to perform such tasks on their behalf (Clark 1994: 336-337, 357-367). Parents decide the work children perform accordingly to their age and

¹⁶² A notable case is the late *omanhene* of Sefwi Wiawso Kwadwo Aduhene II. See Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Traditional Council, "Burial Programme for the Late Okogyebuor Kwadwo Aduhene II", pp. 3-4.

capacities. Youngsters provide the bulk of the labour force for all activities which require no sophisticated knowledge or physical strength (Wade-Brown 1979: 291). Children carry the water used for household activities from rivers or wells daily. The time spent in this activity varies according to the distance of the house from the water source and the season. Most of the wood needed for cooking is brought home from the forest or fallow lands by children. Normally the wood is selected on the way back from farms but sometimes a specific kind of wood is required and children are sent some distance away to gather it. This activity is usually carried out by a specific child once or twice weekly. Cooking is a very time consuming activity. It is unusual to prepare a full meal early in the morning; normally a snack is eaten, often bought from street sellers. At noon a meal is prepared. Farmers usually consume it on their farm. If the wife is present, she is in charge of cooking but men manage on their own in her absence. The preparation of the evening meal takes place in the late afternoon. It often requires more than an hour of work and two or three persons may be involved. Children contribute to the cooking as infants and by their early teens are able to take care of the whole process themselves (Bukh 1979: 56-57; Clark 1989: 337-341). Youngsters perform other tasks as well. From an early age they are asked to clean the house; and later, clothes, dishes and cooking utensils. They are with their parents during the latter's trading activities and replace them when absent. Boys set traps in the forest and at an older age embark on hunting expeditions (cf. Kobiri 1997: 10-17).

One major activity, hardly reducible to quantitative data, is the time spent by children in running errands, carrying messages and objects. All communication between villages and inside the village for non-important matters is ran by youngsters. The time spent by children in caring for their siblings is another task on which the gathering of quantitative data is difficult. Youngsters, mostly females, often take care of junior kin. This activity is however carried out alongside others.

Table 6. Average time inputs (hours) per person per day in different activities per sex and age

Age	Water	Wood	Farm	Cook	School	Craft	Clean	Trade	Hunt	Other	Total
6-10	M. (11)	0.7	0.1	1.3	0.5	1.9	0.1	0.3	-	0.1	3.4
	F. (13)	0.6	0.1	1.1	0.8	1.0	-	0.7	-	0.1	3.6
11-14	M. (7)	0.6	0.1	2.3	0.9	1.0	0.1	0.4	0.8	0.1	5.7
	F. (15)	0.9	0.3	1.2	1.4	2.4	-	0.9	-	0.2	5.2
15-20	M. (9)	0.7	0.2	2.7	0.8	0.4	-	0.3	0.5	0.4	5.6
	F. (10)	1.0	0.4	2.0	1.4	0.8	-	0.9	-	0.2	6.3
21-30	M. (5)	-	-	6.3	0.4	-	0.5	0.2	0.4	0.4	8.2
	F. (9)	0.8	0.2	2.6	1.4	-	-	0.8	-	0.5	6.6
31-40	M. (7)	-	-	4.7	0.3	-	0.5	-	0.5	0.4	6.6
	F. (14)	0.3	0.4	3.6	2.2	-	-	0.9	-	0.4	8.2
41-	M. (12)	-	-	4.3	0.6	-	0.3	-	0.5	2.0	7.7
	F. (9)	0.4	0.2	2.4	2.3	-	-	0.6	-	0.2	6.7

SOURCE: Field Survey Anglo and Suihenso 1993; Nsawora 1996. In brackets the number of interviewees. The total does not include school attendance.

At an early stage, tasks are not gender specific. Both boys and girls fetch water. Later they may both be asked to clean the compound or cooking utensils. Then children of both sexes begin to collaborate with the most basic cooking procedures.¹⁶³ Gradually, however, tasks become differentiated. Boys are encouraged to take an early interest in agriculture. Sons and nephews are brought to the farms during infancy in order for them to observe and learn agricultural techniques. Their help becomes relevant, however, only in their early teens: they are asked to scare birds off newly planted crops and are assigned some portions of the farm to weed. While boys more often go to farm with their father, girls are asked to perform household chores such as cooking, cleaning, and fetching water alongside their mother (table 6).

Youngsters' labour is performed alongside school attendance. The school-day normally lasts six hours but some children spend a lot of extra time going to and from the school. Most children attend school up to their early teens but by their late teens a great many have dropped out.

The performance of household tasks is thought to be part of a child's training. No payment is offered to the youngster for the performance of these chores: it is considered to be her or his duty, as it is the head's responsibility to maintain junior members of the household. Youngsters' labour is not officially recognized through remuneration but it is nevertheless essential for the running of households.

A lack of children poses problems. Women who do not have children early in their lives, those who have only a reduced number of children, and elderly women whose sons and daughters have left the household have to perform chores themselves unless they are able to incorporate other youngsters. The unacknowledged value of children's labour is most evident in households where they are scarce. These households attempt to incorporate youngsters through fostering arrangements. Wealthy middle-aged women with few children in their households often take in youngsters to carry out the functions their own children once performed. The youngsters reproduce many of the roles which would usually be played by wives, while the elder woman acts as a dominant figure.

¹⁶³ For a different view see Bukh (1979: 56-57). She believes household chores are mostly performed by daughters only.

Fostering is a complex social practice involving relationships between kin groups and children's education (Bame 1974; E. Goody 1982; Wade-Brown 1979). I examine the phenomenon as part of wider strategies of youngsters' labour mobilization in households. Sefwi say that foster children are treated as the household head's own offspring. The head takes care of all basic duties towards them. He is, however, unwilling to spend large amounts or to make long-term investments in children who are merely incorporated in the household. His responsibilities are limited to the payment of school fees and medical expenses besides the provision of food, clothing and accommodation. Foster children, in turn, are asked to work in the household: they are often assigned heavier workloads and more dismal tasks than the household head's own offspring.

Wealthy households have considerable labour requirements for day-to-day chores. The larger the house, the more intense is the social life, the more clothes are washed and the more food prepared. When the children of the house prove incapable of performing the required labour, the household head tries to incorporate other youngsters. Wealthy households often comprise large numbers of foster children, usually distant kin. Below I provide four examples of the use of youngsters' labour in households. These show a pattern of growing wealth and of increasingly successful strategies of youngsters' incorporation.

The first household consisted of a newly married couple. In 1996, the head, Aning, was a medium-size cocoa farmer while his wife, Rebecca, worked as a seamstress. Both were in their thirties. Their household comprised a six-year-old son of Aning from his previous marriage and a two-year-old daughter of the couple. The boy was sent on errands but did not perform other tasks. Aning did not work in the household himself other than making small contributions to the preparation of the evening meal. Household chores were partly performed by Rebecca who, however, spent a good deal of time in her shop. Assistance was therefore sought from Rebecca's younger sister in her early teens and from her four apprentices, who were in their twenties. The former fetched water, cooked and cared for the children. The latter, besides working occasionally on Aning's farm, often went for water, helped in the daily running of the household, and looked after the children. The apprentices were not given any compensation for their work besides Rebecca's teaching, while her younger sister was periodically offered food and small amounts of money. One day I asked Aning why he did

not seek a more permanent form of labour assistance for his wife. He replied that he had considered the matter but was not ready to have anybody living with them as it would prove too expensive.

In a different village a couple did seek assistance. Kwaku, thirty-five, the headmaster of the local school was married to Akosua, forty-six. Kwaku and Akosua failed to produce children. Akosua had several children from previous marriages but the sons lived with their fathers and the daughters with their husbands. In 1996, only one of Akosua's sons was left in the house as the previous year her youngest daughter had married and now lived in a near-by village. This relatively wealthy household has systematically incorporated kin. In 1987, Kwaku's father had a daughter, Akuia, but a few years later, he divorced Akuia's mother. Akuia, a half-sister of Kwaku, lived with her mother until she was four and was then brought back to Kwaku's father as Sefwi custom demands. Kwaku heard of this and, knowing of the father's financial difficulties, proposed to relieve him of the burden of Akuia's upbringing. The girl has since been living in Kwaku's house. She calls her half-brother and his wife, father and mother. In 1995, Kwaku's FBW asked Akosua to take care of her three-year-old daughter, Afua, for a while. Afua's mother explained that her children were numerous and felt she could not look after all of them properly. In 1996, Afua's mother sent a message stating that she had heard that Afua was happy with Kwaku and Akosua and had therefore decided to leave her there. In 1997, Afua began to provide a little assistance in fetching water alongside Kwaku's step-son and Akuia. The latter was extremely helpful in the house and was being taught to cook. By 1995, Kwaku had finished building his new house and offered a room to a youngster in his early twenties. The young man has since been living with Kwaku and offers him occasional farming assistance, performs household maintenance chores and helps Akosua in the preparation of the evening meal.

Aning's and Kwaku's households were in villages. Nketsia lived in the neighbourhoods of Wiawso, one of the few semi-urban settlements in Sefwi.¹⁶⁴ Nketsia is very wealthy: he owns a van and uses it for passenger transportation. His wife, Magda, is a successful

¹⁶⁴ The population of Wiawso in 1984 numbered 6,027 according to the census (Population Census of Ghana 1984, vol. V, p. 155). In 1997, it is more likely that the population of Wiawso and the neighbouring villages reached 20,000.

seamstress, besides baking and selling bread. Both are in their forties. The household is large and has incorporated numerous kin on both Nketsia's and Magda's side. In 1997, the household was divided into two interrelated but separate economic units: one headed by Nketsia and one by his mother, Anti Akuia. The latter used her trading income to cater for an unmarried daughter in her mid-twenties, a brother's daughter of eighteen, two of her ZDS in their mid-teens and her deceased husband's daughter, aged twelve. The boys and the brother's daughter went for water, helped in the preparation of meals and worked on Anti's farm. The step-daughter, besides going for water, did most of the cleaning of both household utensils and clothes.

Nketsia's economic unit was formed by two of his children, a daughter of nine and a son of six (who performed little work and whose elder brother of fifteen was sent to a large city to complete his education); his wife's brother (in his late twenties, he was in charge of the daily running of the house and of some of Nketsia's enterprises such as ice-cream selling and chicken rearing); a real and a classificatory wife's sister daughter (one of them worked as an apprentice in Magda's workshop, the other was in charge of selling bread twice weekly on Magda's behalf. They moreover cooked, went for water and performed all cleaning activities). Nketsia had his apprentice living with him as well. The youngster performed household chores when they did not return late from work.

Lastly, I consider the household of the chief of Debiso, Nana Aforo Kwaw II. A complete list of his dependants would be difficult to construct. The chief owns numerous private houses in Debiso, besides the palace; he lives in one of these which is the focus of this examination. During my period of residence in Debiso, July-August 1997, the chief's children present in Debiso were exempted from household chores while these were performed by a number of dependants. I limit myself to listing the more permanent ones. Three young Northern sharecroppers were stationed in the chief's house. Their farms were not in the neighbourhood of Debiso but Aforo Kwaw had called on them to perform unpaid labour on his new farms. On their return from agricultural work, they were asked to help in the preparation of the evening meal. The chief had also hired two Northern annual labourers in their early teens. Their main work was agricultural labour but they performed household chores as well. A son of a previous chief in his sixties supervised agricultural labour and

acted as Aforo Kwaw's assistant in confidential matters: he stored documents, entertained visitors and delivered messages. Two girls in their late teens were "maid servants", as the chief termed them. One was the daughter of a labourer working for Aforo Kwaw. She was hired on a yearly basis but her wage was paid to her father. The other was a very distant junior matrilineal relative of the chief. They worked all day in the house, fetched water, cooked and cleaned.

Fostering is widespread. Youngsters' labour may be redistributed for long periods and implies a common residence as in the last three households mentioned above. It may also be "lent out" temporarily: children of households in difficulties may ask wealthy elders to perform certain tasks in the hope of getting food or small amounts of money. In 1995, for example, the mother of sixteen-year-old female triplets committed suicide. One of the orphans asked an elder's wife if she could "come and sit with her". The woman accepted and the girl now lives with her sisters but works on her adopted father's farm and cooks for her new mother. In exchange she gets general assistance and daily food.

Even less formal agreements occur. An elder whose wife is temporarily absent may call a young woman to cook his evening meal. The woman takes care of the whole process: she goes to the farm to collect the foodstuffs, prepares the meal, serves it and cleans the utensils; in return she keeps part of the food for herself and for her children. Similarly, a young man may assist in an elder's household maintenance. He is offered food when the work is completed.

The description of the different strategies of youngsters' incorporation provides insights into the widespread use of their labour. Wealthier households in need of labour reach more or less implicit agreements with less wealthy kin or strangers who are willing to exchange labour for maintenance.

The importance of seniority as a principle of social organization within households becomes apparent also in relationships between co-resident wives of polygamists. Wives usually perform similar tasks but there are privileges granted to the senior wife, the one who was first married (cf. Gilbert 1988: 305-306). Senior wives are owed respect and obedience from the junior ones. The former are normally assigned larger portions of the newly cleared plot of land. The evening meal of polygamists consists of dishes received from each of their

wives. The senior usually starts cooking slightly in advance of the junior and the former has the right to serve the first dish to the husband. He eats part and then turns to the one prepared by the junior wife. Senior wives also have the right to compensation, *mpata*, if the husband decides to marry again.

Youngsters' independence

Seniority is achieved partly biologically and partly by being able to adhere to the social definition of eldership. Youngsters lack some fundamental indicators of seniority. In what follows I analyse two important privileges controlled by male elders: wealth and wives.

Heads of social units have to provide for group members. Parents need to provide their children with clothes, medical expenses, school fees and food. The father's responsibilities, however, gradually decrease before his children leave home or form their own domestic unit within the father's household. By their early teens, children are required to take care of some of their own expenses. They start paying for their clothes and school uniforms; some may buy watches and shoes; others are offered a room by their father but are asked to provide the door and windows. Youngsters are given food in the evening but sometimes not at midday. Children continue to work on their father's farm during this period but have to find sources of revenue to satisfy their daily needs. Some income may derive from selling small game captured with traps (youngsters do not hunt with guns as adults do). They may own a food farm and sell part of the produce. If meat or food-crops are given to the mother, the child may ask cash in return. Children do not always ask for money when bringing their food-crops to their mother's kitchen; and when they do, they do not always receive it.

The establishment of an independent budget is a slow process. Throughout their teens, and at times well beyond that, young men and women are incapable of accumulating sufficient resources to break the subordinate link with their parents. As long as they reside in their father's or mother's brother's house, they are fed and receive financial support, whilst they are required to follow fully the elders' directives and to work on their behalf. Postponing youngsters' access to sources of wealth is of key importance in preserving household subordination.

An independent budget does not grant eldership in itself. It is, however, a necessary starting point to climb another step up the social hierarchy of age: marriage. A young man needs a stable and consistent income to marry and produce children, thus creating his own subordinate relationships. In the early decades of the twentieth century fathers arranged their sons' marriages. They selected his wife and decided when the son had accumulated sufficient wealth to marry (Rattray 1929: 8-17; Groff 1980: 185-186; Austin 1996: 19). Youngsters' difficulties in acquiring wives have not vanished with the decrease of socially arranged forms of marriage. Elders still control this process even though in a less direct fashion. The accumulation of dependants in the form of wives and children is a gradual process which requires economic independence and social status:

it is very unusual for men to marry early after puberty ...; he should be able to meet the economic demands of the married status. Normally, a man does not marry until in advanced age ... when he has been able to cultivate his own cocoa farm, or he is engaged in some lucrative trade (Mensah-Brown 1968: 65).

Two cases of pregnancies offer indications of how young men's accumulation of dependants in the form of wives and children is limited socially. In 1996, a love affair between Kwaku, nineteen, and Adwua, seventeen, resulted in a pregnancy. The two decided to marry before the child's birth. Kwaku, however, had only very little land planted with maize and no cocoa. He often worked as an hired labourer but his income was insufficient to cater for his wife and daughter. During the pregnancy and immediately after delivery, the husband's expenses are particularly burdensome. The father is supposed to pay medical bills and transportation to the hospital, to buy the mother a cloth for her to carry the newborn child on her back, sandals and beauty products besides an increased amount for food. Kwaku was supposed to form and head an independent residential and economic unit but did not have the means to do so. His two elder brothers were still bachelors and lived with their parents. Kwaku and Adwua lived in a room within Kwaku's father household. Adwua's food was not provided by Kwaku but by his parents. Two months after the delivery, Adwua declined the food given her by Kwaku's mother, Abena. Sefwi believe that in the first three months after delivery a woman recovers from the stress of birth and must eat abundantly and regularly. Adwua suddenly refused to eat on the grounds that Abena was always late providing her

morning meal. Abena felt offended by Adwua's words and asked the daughter-in-law to leave the house. While an attempt was made to pacify Abena, Adwua's elder sister intervened and asked for divorce. Confusion followed as Abena and Adwua's sister exchanged blows.

Kwaku was powerless as he observed the dispute which menaced his marriage: his inability to provide food made him lose control over his relationship with Adwua. Kwaku's lack of cash resulted in his mother and not his wife being in charge of cooking. When trouble occurred Kwaku could not offer alternative solutions, such as a separate residence, which may have saved his marriage. The couple was affected by their elder kin's struggle: Kwaku's mother and Adwua's senior sister were the ones who began the crisis which ended the relationship. An elder, called in to settle the dispute, commented on Kwaku's inability to pay for his expenses. He explained that youngsters should refrain from entering into love affairs as they are incapable of dealing with the consequences.

A second example shows that young men may marry, but polygamy implies seniority. Kwadwo, twenty-eight, was married and a father of three children. A love affair with a young woman from a neighbouring village resulted in a further pregnancy. Kwadwo admitted paternity and stated his willingness to provide for the baby's upbringing. Kwadwo, however, was unable to pay for his lover's expenses during pregnancy. He was brought to the government office in charge of children's welfare and was made to pay for the expenses he had failed to provide up to that point (cf. chapter 12). He was asked to give the woman a daily allowance for the period of pregnancy and, after delivery, to pay for the child's medical expenses and clothes. Kwadwo also needed to compensate the mother for breaking off the relationship. Half of the total amount demanded of Kwadwo was paid by his father's successor, a man of forty-seven, who complained about his classificatory son's behaviour. The elder explained in English that Kwadwo was still a "small boy" and should not get women pregnant. He concluded by stating: "Even, I'm grown and have only one wife". Young men face serious difficulties in acquiring wives. These two examples show that young men's love affairs seldom end up as marriages because of financial constraints. If they prove incapable of catering for their children from birth, they also lose the latter's services. As a result, their capacity to accumulate dependants is seriously curtailed.

Seniority and cocoa ownership

In the early twentieth century household heads commanded of youngsters' labour. Young men who worked for cash seldom had control over their income. The pay was often given directly to the household head who could, if he wished, give part to the youngster.

All profits derived from the work of children go to the father A father should, however, not 'mix' all such profits with his own, but should put some of them aside to help to pay the marriage expenses of his son or any taxes or claims made against him (Rattray 1929: 9; cf. Daaku 1974: 13, 28, 71).

In a court case heard in Sefwi in 1914, the plaintiff claimed the wage of his son's labour.

I saw defendant and he asked me to give him my small boy as a servant. I did so. This was about two months ago. After a month or so I asked for the wage, 5 shillings I had agreed for. I agreed to wait until the end of another month. After this, I took the boy away. I could not get the money.¹⁶⁵

Another way of benefitting from children's labour was to pawn them. Elders could dispose of their junior subordinates. Up to the 1930s, *mmusua panyn*, as well as fathers, pawned youngsters as well as adult women (appendix 1, cf. Austin 1994).

Gradually a liberation of youngsters' labour occurred. Pawning slowly decreased and died out in the 1940s (Austin 1994: 137-145). Young men became legitimate, independent entrepreneurs who controlled the returns of their labour. Studies link the more widespread distribution of wealth to the impact of cocoa farming and have described cocoa as the "people's industry", a source of revenue accessible to all (Mikell 1989: 83-106; cf. Hill 1963a: 180-185, Arhin 1976). Similar dynamics occurred in Sefwi. At the beginning of the cocoa industry, land was freely available to Sefwi and the initial investment required to begin cocoa farming was not high. Some youngsters did and still do acquire wealth from cocoa. The hierarchical pattern of monetary concentration in elders, however, has not vanished with the expansion of cocoa production. Two main reasons may be given for elders' near monopoly over cocoa incomes. The first is concerned with the historical pattern of land access

¹⁶⁵ GNA Accra ADM 48/4/3, Kwaku Nkrumah vs. Samba Fulani, 16th December 1914. Judgement was awarded to the plaintiff.

and transfer. The second has to do with the biological characteristics of the cocoa plant and with the agricultural strategies used for its cultivation. These two reasons are examined in turn.

Youngsters' work on behalf of senior kin on cocoa farms is part of the wider pattern of subordination of youngsters. Young men and women are said to assist their elders in agricultural labour while the latter are required to provide for the former. Children, nephews and nieces collaborate in the agricultural activities of their fathers, mothers, uncles and aunts (cf. Okali 1974, 1975: 31-60). Elder relatives, in turn, take care of many aspects of the youngsters' maintenance: they provide food, accommodation, clothes, medical assistance besides social, religious and judicial services (cf. Etienne 1971: 237-239). Junior kin, however, expect land as well as a reward for their agricultural labour (cf. Fortes 1950: 271-272; Hill 1975: 126-127; Viti 1988; Palumbo 1994a). With the expansion of cocoa farming, land and especially cocoa farms became one of the most valuable estates passed on from elders to youngsters.

Throughout the twentieth century youngsters worked on cocoa farms on behalf of their senior kin; in return they were assigned land. However, land transfers have become increasingly scant both in size and number. The agricultural and demographic dynamics of the twentieth century are essential to understand the changing patterns of allotment of land to younger relatives.

The timing of the clearing of the forest varied considerably in Sefwi, according to the suitability of the land for cash-cropping and to the availability of motor transportation. The first clearings started in the first decade of the twentieth century but some primary forest was still being sold in the 1970s in the northern and more remote parts of Sefwi. The temporal occurrence of the pattern of land rights allocation I describe below varied according to the areas within Sefwi but revealed similar tendencies throughout. Cocoa farming began in the first years of the twentieth century and production figures rose until 1930 when the price dropped and the increase in production was halted. In the 1940s and 1950s, when prices rose again, elders and young men rushed to mobilize all available labour (both family and hired) to alienate tracts of land. Up to the 1960s, the process of acquisition of land rights was straightforward: whoever cleared the virgin forest acquired farming rights over the deforested

land. Every Sefwi had the right to clear the forest, acquire land rights and expand his or her cocoa production. The clearing of the forest was performed according to a technique which maximized the area to which rights were acquired and minimized the size of actual clearings. The farmer selected a vast area. Every year a couple of acres were deforested. The following year, he would leave some forest and start a new clearing some distance beyond the previous one. The result of such strategy were irregular clearings which left the main portion, in the middle, untouched while the outskirts were deforested. The farmer could confidently claim as his all the portion of virgin forest delimited by his clearings. Cocoa was planted soon after the clearing on some plots while others were cleared just to acquire farming rights (cf. Benneh 1973: 140-142). The allocation of agricultural rights to individual farmers was therefore established long before the whole primary forest was actually cut down.

Through this strategy of deforestation, those who were elders at the time of the forest clearings acquired rights over entire hills and hundreds of acres. Most of them have died. Those who are elders today were young men in the 1940s and 1950s. They participated in the deforestation but were less capable of mobilizing labour and acquired smaller holdings. However, they obtained estates when nominated as successors and were given land as gifts. As a result, today's elders control considerable amounts of land. During the time of clearings, up to the 1950s, those who helped their fathers, mothers or mother's brothers gain farming rights were compensated with large portions of land. The number of youngsters involved was limited, whilst elders owned considerable estates. Senior relatives could satisfy land requests advanced by juniors through gifts during the lifetime or devolution of property at death. Up to that point the fragmentation of land properties was contained.¹⁶⁶

Land transfers to younger kin became increasingly problematic in later decades. This was due to two combined processes: from the late colonial period the population figures boomed, while availability of agricultural land decreased. Sefwi forests which were virtually uninhabited in the early decades of the century became dotted with new immigrant settlements

¹⁶⁶ Groff (1980, 1989) believes that cocoa production was initially controlled by heads of extended households, *aulo kpagne*, who relied heavily on subordinate labour. Middle-aged domestic heads gradually took control of the industry. Adolescents at first worked for the *aulo kpagne*, and later for the "domestic heads". Groff's distinction between domestic heads and *aulo kpagne* is not easily transferable to Sefwi. Households in Sefwi have very different sizes; a clear distinction between extended and domestic units is not always helpful.

while existing Sefwi villages swelled. While population was on the increase, the area of potential farm-land decreased. Over a third of Sefwi land, one of the last reservoirs of primary forest in Ghana, was turned into forest reserves by the colonial and postcolonial governments between the 1920s and the 1960s. Measures were taken as well to preserve timber species from agricultural destruction: in the 1960s, vast tracts of land were reserved as "Protected Timber Lands" which could not be cultivated by farmers. Protected Timber Lands were created by the government alongside forest reserves to safeguard timber revenues paid by logging companies.¹⁶⁷ While forest protection laws were established, large portions of the remaining land was being alienated to immigrant Akan farmers (see chapter 5). In just a few decades, land, which had been so abundant, became scarce. Sefwi youths were the first victim of land pressure (cf. Benneh 1988: 232). The number of youngsters in villages multiplied while agricultural resources decreased. Elders were faced by a growing number of land requests which they were unable and unwilling to meet.

At first youngsters' land requests were channeled through their chiefs. In 1927, a Sefwi chief stated that he had given his consent to the establishment of a forest reserve unaware of the consequences:

we are now prevented from even ploughing on our own lands All my youngmen [sic] say they have subscriptions to you towards the land in order to get power to made [sic] their farms but now they have no where to brush [clear] and make their farms.¹⁶⁸

Problems of land access were unknown in most Sefwi villages until much later. The low price of cocoa in the 1930s did not stimulate production. During the 1940s and 1950s land was still readily available. By the 1960s, however, the scramble for land became a crucial political issue. Young men tried to clear the forest and acquire rights while chiefs were allocating large plots to immigrants. Young Sefwi questioned chiefs' indiscriminate alienation of farming rights to strangers (cf. Grier 1987: 39-49). Traditional rulers, they claimed, were supposed to

¹⁶⁷ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Forestry Department, Bodi Forest Reserve Working Plan; Sui River Santomang and Tano Ehuro Forest Reserves Working Plan; Muro, Tano Suhene and Suhuma Forest Reserves Working Plan.

¹⁶⁸ GNA Accra ADM 48/1/8, "Kofi Danso, Chief of Asawinso to Omanhene of Anhwiaso, March 30th 1927".

hold land in trust for the community instead of profiting from its sale. Chiefs responded by officially taking a pro-youth stance while in fact continuing land alienations. In 1963, the Traditional Council passed a resolution to safeguard Sefwi "youngmen". If land was no longer available in the neighbourhoods of their village, they could obtain it from any Sefwi chief by paying a reasonable fee.

The Council agreed upon a decision that an amount of £2.8 either in cash or drink shall be collected from any youngman who calls on a chief for a portion of land to farm in the absence of any such youngman's own chief [providing land for free], so that farming can be encouraged.¹⁶⁹

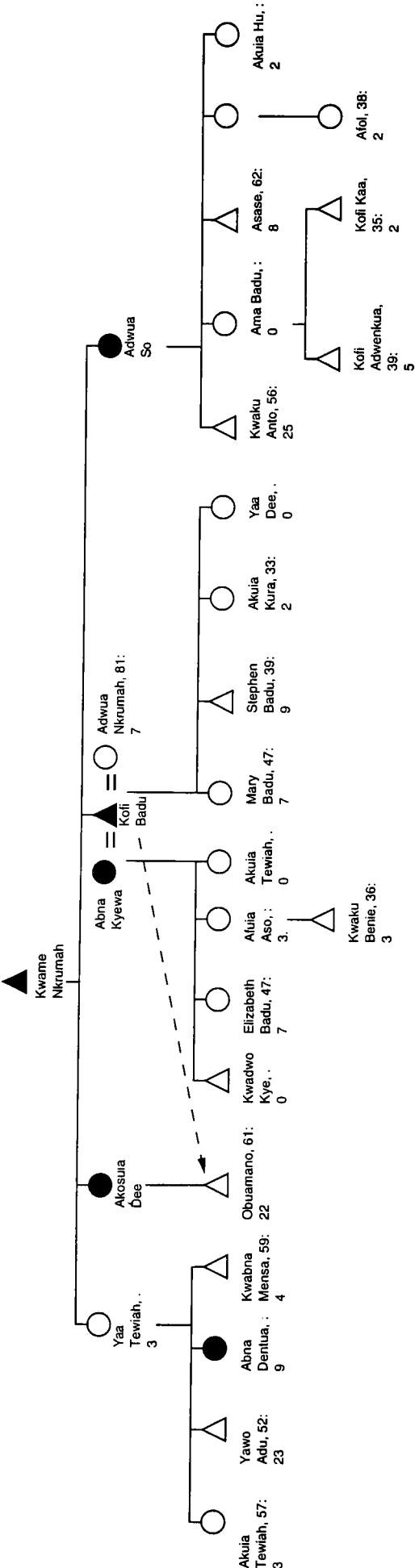
The Sefwi youth associations, both in the 1960s and in 1979, used the land question to draw support against the chiefly establishment (cf. chapter 1). Chiefs and elders faced increased pressure from Sefwi youth to stop land alienation and preserve the remaining holdings for future generations. However, few did so. Land alienation to strangers has continued to the present: once rights over the virgin forest were sold, Sefwi elders started alienating their secondary forest. As a young Sefwi put it, "they [chiefs and elders] did not think about those who were coming behind".¹⁷⁰

Today, elders still control large estates but face land demands by a greater number of children, nephews, nieces and younger siblings (cf. Hill 1975: 129-130). Senior relatives are prepared to forgo only part of their holdings, keeping the bulk for themselves. Plots are still handed over to junior kin through gifts and succession but transfers have become increasingly scarce and problematic. Members of the younger generation, compared to the youth of three or four decades ago, receive much smaller holdings and they tend to acquire them at a more advanced age. The fragmentation of land properties has reached a stage at which land acquired by youngsters is no longer sufficient to satisfy their expanding monetary requirements.

¹⁶⁹ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, In the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held on Friday the 11th October 1963 at the Ahenefie, Wiawso.

¹⁷⁰ Faced with increasing problems of land access, youngsters and strangers have encroached in forest reserves for agricultural ends (Arthur 1990; England 1993). See GNA Accra ADM 48/1/8, "Forestry Department Dunkwa to the District Commissioner, Wiawso, March 1st 1927"; cf. Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, NGO "Ricerca e Cooperazione", F. Ulzen-Appiah, Boateng Kyereh, E.L. Jampoh (n.d.) "Tano Ehuro Forest Reserve Management Project: A Reconnaissance Survey- Final Report".

Figure 3. The allocation of Kofi Badu's land estate



SOURCE: Field Survey.

Legend:

The name is followed by a comma, the age (when known), a colon and then the number of acres received from Kofi Badu.

--- Succession.

The pattern of land transfers from the estate accumulated by Kofi Badu, a deceased elder of the village of Anglo, exemplifies the increasing demands faced by elders and the consequent fragmentation of properties. Kofi Badu, born around 1905, was one of three sons of the chief of Anglo, Kwame Nkrumah (Boni 1998: 254). He succeeded his uncle Kwaku Amoa despite the fact that he was not the eldest of his nephews. Kofi Badu thus acquired the land his uncle had deforested. From the 1930s to the 1950s, he was active clearing large portions of forest in three different areas surrounding the village of Anglo. He used Northerners both as contract labourers and as annual workers. Later his two wives and two of his nephews, still at a tender age, helped him expand his cocoa farms. His total land holdings exceeded a hundred acres.

The redistribution of Kofi Badu's land properties began in the 1950s and ended with his death in the late 1970s. One of Kofi Badu's wives was assigned 7 acres. One of his sisters received a three-acre plot. His two sons were allotted a total of 9 acres; his six daughters 19 acres; a DS was given a three-acre plot. Three of his ZDs received between them a total of 14 acres; a ZDD was assigned 2 acres. His matrilineal nephews acquired the bulk of his land: the two nephews who were constantly working with him were offered 48 acres between them as gifts; another two were assigned 12 more acres; a fifth nephew, selected as successor, was allotted what was left of his property at death, two large cocoa farms making up a total of 22 acres. Two ZDS received 7 acres between them (figure 3).

Patterns of land accumulation amongst immigrant farmers are similar. A survey carried out in 1972-1973 found the average age of tenants in the Western Region to be forty-five: " 'young' men lack the means for entry into migrant cocoa farming" (Arhin 1986a: 4-5; cf. Adomako-Sarfoh 1971). Immigrants arrive in Sefwi with their children and younger kin. The former buy land while the latter work on behalf of the former. Immigrant farmers may then decide to redistribute part of their properties to the youngsters.

Demographic increase and land pressure is the first cause of youngsters' limited access to cocoa production. However, even those who manage to acquire large plots at an early age have scant cocoa incomes. This is due to the biological characteristics of cocoa farming and the farming strategies employed. The establishment of a cocoa farm is a slow process which takes several years and more often decades. Figure 4 illustrates an imaginary farm's history.

The clearing is performed from left to right. The deforestation and planting are repeated annually until the whole area is covered with cocoa trees. In the first year a plot of one or two acres is cleared and inter-cropped with cocoa and food-crops to shade the cocoa saplings. This area is considered the "new farm" in the first year. In the second year, the first year's farm is still inter-cropped while a new portion is deforested and becomes the "new farm" for that year. Three years after the planting, food-crops are no longer inter-cropped and the cocoa plants are left to grow alone. In the fifth year from the first clearing the farm looks as in figure 4.

Figure 4. A five years old farm

<i>Years 1-3</i> Grown cocoa	<i>Year 4</i> Previous year's farm	<i>Year 5</i> New farm	
cocoa only	cocoa & food	cocoa & food	uncleared portion of forest

The cocoa plant produces the bulk of its returns only several years after planting. It does not bear fruits in the first four years and peak outcomes are achieved after approximately twenty years. Production then slowly decreases. The length of the life of cocoa plants varies considerably according to the quality of the soil, the maintenance performed, the types of diseases affecting them and the amount of rain. Some trees still bear fruits fifty years after planting. As plants grow old, however, the maintenance labour increases while production shrinks. In the declining stage farmers often start planting new cocoa plants underneath the old ones. After two or three years the old trees are cut down to leave space for the new ones. Cocoa farming is a long term investment and a lifetime project. It requires hard labour and offers little benefit in the first decade. Profits tend to increase as new portions of the farm reach maturity. The bulk of the returns from farmers' efforts are postponed until somewhere between eight and forty years from the time of planting. Farmers therefore start cocoa farms poor and acquire cash as decades go by (cf. Robertson 1982: 459-461). Cocoa farming therefore strengthens the accumulation of wealth among elders.

The development strategies of cocoa farming are crucial in this respect. Men often start their cocoa farms in their late teens. They receive no help from younger kin while they themselves are usually asked to help their elder relatives. The labour investment is greatest for those in their thirties. As the workload decreases, returns are gradually received. Incomes from the first cocoa farm are often invested to put new plots into production. At this stage, farmers may employ hired labourers and gradually start using the work of children and younger kin. As farmers grow older they tend to multiply their income and cocoa farms.

Youngsters' cocoa production is rendered marginal by the historical and demographic dynamics of the Sefwi area, by the biological growth patterns of the cocoa plant and by the farming strategies used. The field survey indicates a strong concentration of land and cocoa revenue in the hands of male elders. Table 7 shows that while most young farmers' land holdings are under five acres, in older age groups the average holding increases. Farmers above forty control most of the estates of more than twenty acres.

Table 7 Percentage of farmers in age group per size of land holding

Land holdings	Age groups				Percentage of farmers
	10-24	25-39	40-59	Over 60	
Small: Less than 5	74% (21)	23% (24)	24% (19)	6% (3)	26% (67)
Medium 5 to 10	18% (5)	33% (34)	22% (18)	23% (11)	26% (68)
Large 10 to 20	4% (1)	32% (33)	27% (22)	29% (14)	27% (70)
Very Large Above 20	4% (1)	12% (13)	27% (22)	42% (20)	21% (56)
Average Acreage	4,6 (28)	11,8 (104)	22,3 (81)	24,7 (48)	16,7 (261)

Source: Field Survey, Anglo and Fiafano 1996; Dedimendi 1997. The number in brackets indicates the number of farmers in the age group. Landless farmers were excluded.

Table 5 (p. 140, chapter 6) illustrates the interrelationship between gender and age hierarchy in land access. While for the two younger age groups the ratio between male and female farmers (the numbers in brackets) ranges between 3 and 4 to 1, for the two elder age classes (those above 40) the ratio is almost 1 to 1. This shows that beyond a certain age most women

own at least a farm. Women, however, have smaller holdings. Eldership mitigates only partially the gender hierarchy which tends to exclude younger women from cocoa production.

Youngsters' labour in and out of cocoa

When entering their teens, adolescents have to bear the cost of some expenses which are no longer met by their household heads. Youngsters, however, lack land. When they do have the chance to farm, their cocoa revenue is limited. Youngsters therefore resort to less rewarding agricultural activities. Severable options are possible: they may work as hired labourers or as sharecroppers, turn to crops producing short-term benefits or seek the elders' assistance. Youngsters tend to use more than one alternative and in fact many use all.

A quick way of earning cash is to turn to one of the numerous forms of hired labour. Daily labourers are mostly Northerners and/or youngsters (cf. Robertson 1982: 461-465). Annual labourers are mostly in their teens. Sefwi state that they prefer young labourers. These are said to concentrate on farming and do not rebel against their masters. Contract labourers, who are assigned an agreed payment to perform an agricultural task, are also generally young. Another option to which youngsters may resort are sharecropping contracts. Elders provide land while young men, both Sefwi and immigrant, work on the farm. The cocoa produced is shared between labourer and landlord.

The roles established by seniority and ancestral origin overlap in hired labour agreements. Many young men and women, Sefwi as well as foreigners, seek employment as labourers or sharecroppers to cover immediate expenses (cf. Lanternari 1988: 121-122). It may, however, be useful to distinguish immigrants' and Sefwi's subordinate involvement in the labour market. Amongst Sefwi, the elders' monopoly over land enables them to control their junior kin's labour. Elders hold land and capital, exclude the youth from both and fail to cover the youngsters' needs. The latter lack the means for independent farming and necessarily have to turn to the former for employment. However, Sefwi men's lack of land may last throughout their youth but elder relatives eventually provide land and demand no payment. By contrast, the subordinate condition of Northerners risks being permanent. Immigrants, as a "natural" consequence of their ancestry, are landless. If they want to escape that condition, they need to put aside part of their scant incomes to buy land.

Amongst labourers, seniority is a decisive criterion in determining payment. Young male daily labourers below a certain age are paid as much as adult women, that is about thirty per cent less than adult men (cf. Arhin 1986a: 54). In sharecropping agreements, the younger the labourer the worse the conditions offered him: often young caretakers are allotted unproductive farms and asked to perform extra work for the landlord. Reference to the youngsters' physical weakness is used to explain the unfavourable terms of their agreements. Northern annual labourers are paid according to their age as well: the older and stronger the worker, the higher his wage. Labourers who have already lived in Sefwi receive higher payments than recent northern immigrants: they are said to be more productive as they already know the environment and the tools used for farming in the forest area. At times an agreement is struck between the landlord in Sefwi and an elder relative, normally the father, of the young immigrant. At the end of the year, the landlord does not pay the labourer but his parents (cf. Van Hear 1982: 499-506).

Youngsters' revenue may also derive from the cultivation of crops - such as corn, tomatoes and rice- which require intensive labour and produce income after a limited period of time. Large cocoa farmers state that they do not plant these crops because they require a heavy work load and the profit does not justify the input. Corn, tomatoes and especially rice are considered suitable for youngsters. These are strikingly different from cocoa. They provide cash after a period of just a few months after planting, while cocoa is a long-term investment. Rice, in particular, requires heavy work for the preparation of the land, planting, weeding and harvesting; by contrast, in cocoa farming the bulk of the labour investment is needed in the first years of the farm's life and the maintenance labour after that is lighter. Plots for the cultivation of rice, tomatoes and corn may be sought from kinsmen for temporary use or rented as the soil is occupied only for a few months; on the other hand, cocoa requires permanent control over land. Youngsters' commitment to the cultivation of these crops is a necessity: they are granted only short-term access to land and need immediate incomes from their labour.

The different agricultural strategies of age groups are exemplified by an household budget survey I carried out in Sefwi in 1993. The correlation between young age and rice or maize cultivation is striking. In the under 25 age-group, cocoa income features behind food-crops,

rice and maize. Profits from these latter crops decrease as age increases. While the cocoa income follows the opposite trend. Cocoa contributes more than half of the total income of farmers above 50 years of age (Boni 1993).

Table 8. Income from agricultural products (in thousand Cedis) and percentage contribution to the total income per age of interviewee

	Age Groups					
	Below 26	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-50	Above 50
Food-crops	24 (16%)	38 (13%)	18 (7%)	38 (11%)	30 (12%)	31 (10%)
Rice	18 (12%)	20 (7%)	3 (1%)	7 (2%)	2 (1%)	
Maize	18 (12%)	27 (10%)	25 (10%)	28 (8%)	18 (7%)	22 (7%)
Cocoa	17 (11%)	48 (17%)	43 (17%)	103 (30%)	97 (39%)	165 (53%)

SOURCE: Field Survey 1993.

A youngster's last option is to work for an elder. While access to the work mentioned above is almost exclusively limited to men, this last possibility is open to women as well. A young man or woman may direct his/her labour towards the mother's, uncle's or father's farms. The youngster may concentrate his/her assistance on a particular elder or collaborate with several. After a number of years of work, the senior kinsman is expected to compensate the junior with a plot of land (cfr. Pavanello 1995a: 41-42). The transfer has similar characteristics to the granting of land to wives: it is up to the elder to decide when, how much and which holding to forego. The land, which may or may not be suitable for cocoa, is often granted in small portions and over a period of several years. While mature cocoa farms may be allotted to wives, they are seldom passed on to children, nephews and nieces unless the owner no longer has the strength to work on them. Land rights handed over in such transactions are often uncertain. The elder simply informs the junior relative orally that a certain plot is assigned to him/her. There may be misunderstandings about boundaries, as the flowers which usually delimit holdings may not be planted right away. Elders at times claim part of the land's product after the "gift". Youngsters hold uncertain land rights until they

perform a ceremony of land allocation in which the rights are defined and the transfer acknowledged.

The ritual involves the offering of a bottle of alcoholic drink and a small amount of money from the junior relative who receives the land to the elder (cf. chapter 12). In October 1997, I witnessed a ceremony of formal land assignment. In 1994, the land had been informally transferred by the elder, who was over eighty, to his ZDD, in her early fifties. Three years later, the woman's husband urged his wife to perform the ceremony as he feared that the old man would die without a formal recognition of the gift. The following is a transcription of two parts of the ritual: the introductory statement by the ZDD's party and the words accompanying the pouring of libation pronounced by the old land-giver.

[Land receiver's linguist]: The purpose of our visit is that if a person gives you something, you thank him. What our grandfather has done, not everybody will do. We are very happy and so we came. We offer one bottle of Schnapps [gin] to grandfather. The property given her, has made her very happy and so she gives him 10,000 cedis.

[Audience]: Old man, good words have been spoken

[Land giver]: [While pouring drink] God Kwame, drink. Earth Yaa, drink. I gave land to my grand-daughter more than two years ago. Since then she has not given anything, and now she is giving the ancestors some drink. Whatever at all she does on the land, let it be prosperous. She says that she will plant palm. Everything she plants will be good except cocoa, because if you take it to the land, it spoils [this particular soil is sandy and unsuitable for cocoa plants]. And palm is also property. [While pouring drink] Uncle Ado, this is yours. Adwua Fuakyewa, this is yours. Kofi Angola, this is yours, you all take this drink and protect us as we sit in our house.

[Audience]: Thanks for your speech.¹⁷¹

Sefwi do not view such transfers as economic compensation for the labour previously provided by the youngster. The transactions are spoken of as gifts, *kyee*. Nevertheless, it is considered the elder's duty to offer his juniors the possibility to begin an independent life. Senior relatives fulfil their responsibility by sponsoring education, offering capital to begin trading enterprises, arranging contracts of apprenticeship or granting land to farm.

¹⁷¹ Ceremony of land transferal to Akosua Kye, Kwame Bua, 23-10-1997, Sefwi.

Land gifts do not imply the interruption of youngsters' labour obligations towards elders. They do, however, mark the end of the latter's duties towards sons and nephews as they become independent household heads. If the youngster benefits from the activity started with the elder's assistance, he/her is called upon to surrender part of the income. Farmers who receive land from their parents when young send them some of the cocoa profits yearly and assist them in expenses for clothes and health (cf. Van der Geest 1997).

The income-generating strategies of a young Sefwi man, James, born around 1977 help to illustrate how youngsters combine revenues from different activities in order to make a living. James' mother died when he was still young. His father did not want him to take up residence in his household in a neighbouring village. James visits his father every couple of months but receives no consistent support from him. He is living with his matrilineal kin and is reliant on them. In 1993, he was given a chance to enroll in Secondary School. Less than a year later, he was told that his uncle was no longer prepared to pay his fees. James returned to the village and started farming.

Since then he has been working on behalf of his MB, the *abusua panyin*, and his MM. He has also engaged in independent agricultural activities. In 1994, he was given a small cocoa farm on a sharecropping basis by his MZ. The cocoa, however, suffered from the disease known as "black pod" and James felt the harvests were not proportionate to his efforts. In the same year he was assigned an old and low-producing two-acres cocoa farm by his MB. In the course of the survey, James stated that the farm was his own. The MB, however, corrected this statement: the farm is on lineage land only temporarily assigned to James: he can pluck the cocoa, but has no permanent rights over the land itself. In 1995 and 1996, he planted rice on land granted to him temporarily by the MM. In 1996 and 1997, he grew tomatoes: in the first year, he used his MM's land and worked on it with a friend; in the following year, he planted on lineage land -granted by his MB- and farmed alone. In 1996, he cleared a new farm on behalf of his MM; she is now planting food and maize on that plot with the assistance of James and hired labour. In the same year, the MM granted him a portion of approximately two acres: he planted cocoa and maize on the whole plot. No ritual of land transfer was performed. Moreover, in past years James has worked in a *nnobua* group with other young men in their early twenties. *Nnobua* is a rotating self-help system involving co-operative

work. When the group works together, one member gets the benefit from the labour of all. Next time around, another member directs the labour and derives the benefits. Often James and other members of his *nnobua* group have used their turn to work as daily labourers. James also performs hired work on his own account.

Seniority in apprenticeship

Apprenticeship is a widespread institution in Sefwi and more generally in Southern Ghana (Peil 1970; E. Goody 1982: 198-205). Apprentices (*suafoo*; sing. *osuani*) work as tailors, seamstresses, electricians, masons, mechanics, carpenters, traders, bakers, drivers and blacksmiths. A young man or woman, normally in their late teens, who is keen on a particular occupation states this to their father, or to a substitute such as the mother's brother. The latter examines the owners of the enterprises in the child's field of interest and selects one. The craftmaster, termed *adwuma panyin* -literally work elder, fixes a date on which the young man or woman should approach him or her officially either in the shop or the house.

When the parents and the youngster reach the agreed place, the father of the apprentice-to-be informs the master that his child wishes to start working as an apprentice. The craftmaster then sets the requirements for the child's acceptance. The new trainee is asked to bring with him/her the equipment which will be needed to work. Seamstresses for example are asked to provide a sewing machine, scissors, a tape-measure, thread and cement-paper and chalk to practice on. They are also told about the uniforms they must wear at work and instructed on the behaviour required with respect to the master and the other apprentices. The bargaining over the amount to be paid to the craftmaster follows (in 1997, when I recorded some cases of apprenticeship, payments varied from £10 to £30). Part of the sum is usually paid during the initial ceremony and part in subsequent instalments. The money charged varies according to the type of profession, the status of the master and the terms of his relationship with the youngster's kin. The payment may be reduced but a token fee is always collected to acknowledge the arrival of the new apprentice. A bottle of gin is then provided and libations poured by the work master to seal the contract (cf. chapter 12).

After the master collects his sum, a smaller payment (around £2) is demanded by the most senior apprentice present at the time of the ceremony (seniority among apprentices is

established according to the beginning of the apprenticeship and not by birth). This amount is termed *amantem*, literally "he/she did not come early". The *amantem* should be shared with all other trainees at the work-site. The criterion chosen to divide this sum, however, is decided by the apprentice who collects the money: he/she may share it almost equally amongst all trainees or may keep the greater share for himself/herself; normally senior apprentices get a larger share than junior ones. The senior apprentice may also choose to use the money to buy something needed by the apprentices such as a game or some dishes. *Amantem* is collected in prisons as well: the convict who is put in a communal cell and has not been jailed before, is asked to pay by senior prisoners. If he has no money with him and none is provided from outside, the food brought to the newcomer is eaten by the convicts who have been in the cell for the longest time. The last comer also has the duty to take away the barrel with the excrement of all prisoners. At times wage-earners are asked to pay *amantem* when starting their work.

The apprentice may start work immediately after the ritual. In other cases, however, the father takes some time to provide the trainee with the tools needed to begin his craft. When a new apprentice starts work he will be assigned the most tedious and least rewarding tasks. The following are the recommendations given by a seamstress to her new trainee.

[Master to apprentice's mother and apprentice]: She must give respect to those she joins I have accepted to teach her the work but the children [the apprentices] will show her how to cut cement paper for her to know the way before [using cloth]. And if there is any difficulty at their side, then I will go and help. And so if she doesn't give them respect, they [the senior apprentices] will not mind her until I go to the shop. And so if somebody there, for instance, will tell her to go and buy *kenkey* [a food made of maize, normally eaten at lunch time], she should go because she is the last apprentice. Now everything will lie on you and so you don't have to let them speak to tell you [what to do]. And so if you do it, they will teach you seriously. And when you go, don't squeeze your face [show anger].

The subordinate role of the new apprentice both towards the master and the other trainees is expressed clearly in the master's words. Last-comers are asked to take care of the cleaning, to go on errands, carry loads and messages.

[Master to apprentice]: Now that you go there [to the shop] cleaning the dirt and sweeping are your jobs. Now these are the works you have to do but they won't leave it all for you alone. Everybody will participate. If there is dirt, don't let them tell you "Sweep!". You, yourself sweep so that they will know that you are a good child, and they will try to help you. So this is the little advice I have for you.¹⁷²

Masters, especially when they have numerous trainees, just act as supervisors. If they trust their senior apprentices, they will let the trainees conduct the whole work process. Craftmasters collect all payments from jobs performed in their shop even though apprentices may perform all of the labour. Most masters, however, share part of the revenue with their trainees. A daily amount for food is provided for all and a token fee may be granted to the senior ones.

Apprenticeship is a social relationship not limited to the work-site. Masters ask apprentices to perform chores not directly related to their craft such as cooking, weeding the master's farm and going for water both for the shop and for the master's home. Apprentices who do not live in the village where they work often take up residence in their master's house. There they are assigned the work of junior kinsmen.

The extension of the apprentices' labour beyond their work-site is similar to the work requirements demanded from students. Teachers often ask their pupils to work on their behalf -normally in agricultural tasks- either during school hours or on Saturdays. Teachers' labour demands are widely accepted. In 1978, a student's father forwarded a complaint to the District Education Officer stating that a primary school teacher used students' labour to cut and sell bamboo sticks. The petition was not aimed at preventing students' labour; rather, it expressed concern about the dangers involved in bamboo-cutting.¹⁷³ In 1997, a group of teachers took turns in benefiting from their Junior Secondary School pupils' labour. Every Saturday students, who were in their teens, worked for a different teacher. The teachers were called in by the chief. He remarked that it was preferable for the children to work for them during school hours, as on Saturdays they were needed on their parents' farms.

¹⁷² Apprenticeship ceremony Doris Ahinkorah & Magda, New Adiembra 26-10-1997, Sefwi.

¹⁷³ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/122, "Complaint against...", 6th December 1978.

Apprenticeship, however, differs from school education, as it leads to the establishment of an independent income. As time passes and new apprentices join the shop, the status of others gradually rises. After some months, the trainee is thought to be able to perform duties relevant to his profession. A couple of years from the beginning of the training, the apprentice may reach the status of "senior". At this stage, his/her knowledge of the work is well developed. The master has an interest in keeping the apprentice within the workshop as the trainee can perform more sophisticated jobs. In an attempt to delay senior apprentices' departure, the master, apart from asking them to work on his/her behalf, allots them small jobs which they can manage independently. In these instances, the senior acts as the master. The elder trainee is in charge of the work, receives the revenue, shares it with the juniors who assisted him/her and provides them with food.

Jonathan, born around 1974, informed his father that he wanted to become an electrician in his late teens. In 1995 the father gathered information on the various electricians operating in the surrounding neighbourhoods. By 1996 sufficient money had been gathered and Jonathan presented himself to his work master accompanied by his father. They were charged a fee of 70,000 cedis (approximately £25) and two bottles of gin. The *amantem* was 5,000 cedis. When Jonathan began there were twenty-two other trainees and three of them were considered "seniors". The latter received 500 cedis for food daily compared to the 200 of the younger apprentices. In his first months of training, Jonathan was required to reach the shop at 6.30 a.m., before all other apprentices to do the cleaning. He was sent by the elder apprentices and the work master to deliver messages and to run errands. After less than a year, two more trainees had joined and Jonathan performed work which required more technical skill.

After three or four years, apprentices may feel they have learnt the job and are not getting sufficient rewards from the labour performed. At this stage, they often attempt to start working on their own. Normally a "separation fee" *aponsika* is demanded by the master to sanction the departure. The senior apprentice thus becomes a master. If his/her work is successful he/she may soon start receiving trainees.

The transfer of certain skills from elders to youngsters is institutionalized in contracts of apprenticeship. This arrangement marks the shift of control over the youth's labour from the father or uncle to the work master. Responsibilities are also handed over. Seniority is the

criterion of attribution of roles, allocation of duties and division of revenue in the work-place. The master is asked to act as an elder kinsman and to contribute towards the youngster's well-being and expenses. The master needs to pass on his knowledge and provide food at lunch, and is held responsible for the apprentice's behaviour at the work-site and even outside, if the apprentice resides with the master. Besides the hierarchical relation between work master and apprentice, a parallel, unequal relation is established amongst trainees according to their seniority. Elders (craftmasters and senior apprentices) offer their knowledge and cater for junior apprentices. The latter, in turn, acquire the rights (food) and duties (work and respect) of subordinates.

This chapter has shown that seniority acts as a hierarchical domain in a number of relationships. Within matrilineages it establishes status and is a crucial criterion of successors' selection. Youth labour is an unpaid but essential element within households. Youngsters' difficulty in setting up independent incomes which would allow them to create their own subordinate bonds with wives and children was also examined. The importance of seniority was analysed in the principal income-generating industry of twentieth-century Sefwi: cocoa production. Cocoa is a potentially subversive crop as it offers youngsters a chance to accumulate revenue. Increasing land pressure and the biological characteristics of the cocoa plant, however, have contributed to the concentration of land and cocoa revenue in the hands of elders. Youngsters are therefore forced to turn to less rewarding forms of agricultural work such as hired labour, sharecropping, the cultivation of crops producing short-term revenue and assistance to elder kin. Finally, the importance of eldership in contracts of apprenticeship was considered. Eldership acts as a moral justification for such inequalities. Seniority is considered to be the locus of wisdom, strength and competence.

Chapter 8.

Hierarchical domains

Relations of subordination, which are analysed separately by the existing literature on the Akan, have been shown to share common principles of allocation of value, labour and wealth. In this chapter, the three hierarchical domains are compared to evaluate their similarities and differences. A crucial common feature of all three hierarchical domains is their claim to rest on a natural order. One's ancestry, sex and age is established at birth. Biological features are seen as key determinants in shaping the individuals' capacities.

Ancestral origin derives from membership in matrilineages and from patrilineal links. Living descendants of notable forbears are privileged beneficiaries of their ancestors' skills and powers. Ancestors are thought to transfer their qualities and privileges to descendants both by transmitting them in the process of procreation and by offering supernatural assistance to descendants. Moreover, ancestral deeds produce rights which are legitimately exercised by successors. Reference to descent legitimates the political status of matrilineages, justifies land ownership and explains the differentiation between autochthonous landlords and immigrant labourers in the cocoa industry.

Gender is also seen as a biological determinant of an individual's qualities. Men are thought of as naturally stronger and more able in certain tasks. Women are considered physically weak and therefore limited in their working abilities. Reference is often made to the bearing and caring of children. They are also considered periodically impure due to menstruation (Minkus 1980: 189; Kyei 1992: 44-45). Women's natural constitution has two consequence. First, women's minor role in cash-oriented enterprises and their exclusion from crucial agricultural tasks is explained with reference to biology. Second, women are thought to be naturally unsuitable to lead social units if an appropriate male candidate is available. Instead they are incorporated as subordinate members.

Age is an irreversible feature of existence. Elders are more able to take "correct" decisions, more competent in matters concerning custom, and legitimate suppliers of technical knowledge as they have had a longer life experience. Seniority, in itself, guarantees a higher status as it provides qualities which are thought to derive from age.

Two considerations on the naturalization of hierarchical relations need to be emphasized. First, the correspondence between biological features and the hierarchical order is not viewed as *inevitable* but as appropriate. For example, compliance to social roles is not a *necessity*: Northerners *may* employ Sefwi labourers, women *may* clear the forest, and youngsters *may* become rich. It is possible but it seldom happens and when it does, it is considerate inappropriate. The social hierarchy is flexible to a certain extent. When the deviation from the rule is occasional, it is accepted; when attempts are made to render it systematic, the dominant groups use legal, social and violent sanctions to preserve the integrity of what is presented as a natural order. Second, the naturalization of hierarchical domains does not prevent negotiations. Ancestral origin is forged, denied and often contested; genealogical links are constructed dynamically and contextually. Gender is less subject to negotiations but roles may be reversed: some wives may assume the husband's role within households. Seniority is often debated: diverging succession claims present different interpretations of eldership; young men and women may have access to the privileges of seniority while these may be denied to some biological elders. Dynamic and conflicting interpretations and applications of hierarchical domains are possible while preserving their "natural" legitimacy. The specific interpretation of ancestry, gender and seniority may be questioned and negotiated while the hierarchical domain itself is seldom criticized.

I suggest that reference to biology plays a major part in the perpetuation of principles of differentiation. Hierarchy receives legitimation from the natural order, which is thought to be little subject to change. Following Bourdieu's (1977: 168-171) terminology, hierarchical domains are inserted in what he terms the *doxa*, the universe of the undiscussed. The author reveals the importance of reference to nature in preserving an unequal social order.

Every established order tends to produce (to very different degrees and with very different means) the naturalization of its own arbitrariness. Of all the mechanisms tending to produce this effect, the most important and the best concealed is undoubtedly the dialectic of the objective chances and the agents' aspirations, out of which arises the *sense of limits*, commonly called the *sense of reality*, i.e. the correspondence between the objective classes and the internalized classes, social structures and mental structures, which is the basis of the most ineradicable adherence to the established order. Systems of classification which reproduce, in their own specific logic, the objective classes, i.e.

the divisions by sex, age, or position in the relations of production, make their specific contribution to the reproduction of the power relations of which they are the product, by securing the misrecognition ... of the arbitrariness on which they are based (Bourdieu 1977: 164, emphasis by the author).

Hierarchical domains support society as it is and make strong statements on how it should be, thus contributing to the removal of crucial issues of the exercise of power from the range of what is debatable. A complex apparatus of justification of inequality produces a widespread consensus and enables the perpetuation of inequality to occur with only occasional use of coercion. In Sefwi the very idea of a non-hierarchical society is largely lacking. Contextual refusals of hierarchy are rare and limited in scope.

While all three hierarchical domains show similarities in their reference to the natural order as a means to legitimate and perpetuate inequality, the social level in which they operate is different. Each hierarchical domain covers a wide range of relationships but the prevalent context where relations take place varies according to the domain. The level of incorporation of the subordinate within the social or political unit of the dominant determines the context in which the relationship is established, the arena in which negotiations take place, and the prevalent framework of interaction.

Ancestral origin, for instance, is mostly implemented in the public sphere. The hierarchical principle distinguishes the status of different social groups amongst Sefwi, and that of strangers from Sefwi. All men, regardless of their ancestry, have a status which enables them to participate actively in public gatherings. Sefwi with inferior ancestral origins are part of the kingdom and seek justice within this political and judicial framework. Strangers who belong to Sefwi dominated social units, such as annual labourers and some sharecroppers, live with their masters and are part of patterns of household subordination; however their inferiority is sanctioned by public agricultural contracts. Immigrant tenants form independent households and their level of socio-political incorporation is ambiguous. They stipulate agreements of farming right acquisition and therefore are part of the Sefwi kingdom (their disputes should be heard at this level as required by their contract, they should participate in rituals and funeral donations). However, they do not view themselves as part of the kingdom and therefore

refuse to accept settlements at this level. They rather seek remedy at a national level by forming unions and forwarding petitions to the government (see chapter 5).

Gender hierarchy is different. Even though women's participation in the public sphere is not precluded, it is minimized (cf. Woodford-Berger 1997). They do not usually have the status to enter agricultural contracts or to fight publicly for the improvement of their domestic labour conditions. Their participation in judicial and political issues is often mediated by men. Gender hierarchy is exercised in male-dominated households and matrilineages; women's protests are rarely organized and disputes are mostly resolved by local arbitration. Even though most marital disputes are heard at a village level, women can and do bring issues of inheritance or child maintenance to courts. Here, however, they seldom attempt to resolve hierarchical subordination, they rather tend to have their inferior position acknowledged and safeguarded. They do not aspire to equality but seek to receive the benefits which accompany their inferiority. Moreover, women's legal claims are often taken over by men as these become issues that involve their group as a whole (Mikell 1997b).

Seniority is positioned between the two. Eldership is largely exercised in households, matrilineages and work-shops. It has, however, a public side to it: youngsters enter in marriage agreements (even though often through their elders), advance succession claims publicly, negotiate agricultural contracts, and may be involved in political struggles (see chapter 1).

The identification of three hierarchical domains is a first step to overcome the fragmentation of inequality based on Western concepts. These domains, however, are not perceived as separate and local terminology does not have specific expressions to refer to them. They are rather inserted in a unitary complex. There is, therefore, no domain which dominates over others; domains should rather be viewed as interrelated and, to a certain degree, interchangeable parts of a cohesive system, as part three shows.

Part III.

From domains, through codes to hierarchy

In part two, I showed that different hierarchical relations are organized around common principles of attribution of wealth, labour and value. Three domains have been identified, namely: ancestry, gender and seniority. In part three, I discuss whether hierarchical relations may be viewed as forming a coherent system. To address this issue, I examine hierarchical codes as meaningful ways of interpreting and ordering experience through shared signs and symbols which include gestures, language and social behaviour. These codes cut across the three domains of inequality. From the numerous ways in which hierarchical experience is organized, I distinguish four codes which form the choreography of hierarchy: the recourse to kinship terminology (chapter 9), the use of a cluster of local terms revolving around the notion of ownership (chapter 10), the reference to supernatural sanctions (chapter 11), the meaning of food and drink transactions (chapter 12). Chapter thirteen draws some conclusions on hierarchy in the Sefwi area.

Chapter 9.

Kinship as a hierarchical code

Kinship has been viewed so far as an aggregate of relations between relatives. In this chapter it is considered instead as a hierarchical code perpetuating roles over generations and extending kin appellations to non-relatives. This use of kinship as an idiom involves a political struggle over the control of individuals' and groups' ideology of descent (Silverblatt 1988; McCaskie 1995: 75-82, 166-180). Kinship idioms are not merely rhetorical flourishes, they are rather means of enlarging the range of relations of dominance by perpetuating and forging new hierarchical bonds. Being termed a "son" or "wife", or having to call someone "father" or "husband" is not just a linguistic device. The terms reveal and organize relationships between individuals by allocating roles and expectations. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first examines the perpetuation of kinship roles through matrilineal succession. The second focuses on the use of kinship appellations in labour contracts and apprenticeship.

Perpetuation of kinship ties

Kinship ties imply diverse allocation of wealth and value to those involved. These unequal bonds may be maintained beyond the death of those originally involved in the relationship. Hierarchical roles may be transferred to the matrilineal successors of those who ideally established the kinship tie, and connections which would otherwise have ended with the death of the initial protagonists are thus perpetuated. We shall first discuss kin roles and appellations within the Sefwi Wiawso kingdom and then describe the extended use of kinship terms by chiefs and successors.

The recourse to kinship appellations in the *oman*, the kingdom of Sefwi Wiawso, revolves around the figure of the *omanhene*, the king. He represents the centre of authority and the ideal ancestry. According to tradition, the king's matrilineage, the Asankera, occupied uninhabited land and expanded its territorial possessions through military domination. The *omanhene* is both the head of the Asankera matrilineage and of the kingdom (see chapter 5).

The perpetuation of kin bonds is achieved by turning certain genealogical links between individuals into ties between stools, offices and lineage segments. The relationship between the king and a member -normally the head- of a subordinate matrilineage becomes a bond connecting two political positions. Ties established centuries ago are perpetuated by transferring the respective roles to matrilineal successors. If, for example, a certain chief was the brother, nephew or son of a certain king, the descendants of the former maintain an identical relationship with successive rulers. The genealogical links created between particular individuals are thus transformed into connections between stools. Kinship idioms are used to sanction the perpetuation of subordinate roles. Two kinship positions may be distinguished. On the one hand, lineage members are referred to as brothers or nephews, according to the degree of hierarchical stress one wants to insert into the relationship. On the other, the relations of filiation and affinity are necessarily unequal and involve different matrilineages.

The Asankera matrilineage to which the Sefwi king belongs is segmented into numerous localized branches. Most Asankera groups have their own chiefs and stools, and are identified with the village where they reside. It is claimed that the founders of these branches are the king's matrilineal relatives. Kinship terminology is used to assert the lineage bond, to diminish its distance and to mark the comparative hierarchical status of the two groups (Boni 1997). When Asankera chiefs are asked to describe their position in regard to the king, they often state that one of their predecessors was a brother or maternal nephew of a king. The historicity of these lineage ties is questionable but oral traditions specify the names of the protagonists and the perceived matrilineal bonds are perpetuated over time. What was once a relationship between individuals, becomes a structural link between lineage segments, stools and offices.

The chief of the village of Kogyina stresses his tie with the king when narrating the founding of his settlement.

Q: Who was the *omanhene* at that time [when you moved to Kogyina]?

A: Afum Kroko was the *omanhene*. His brother was called Afum Panyn, they were born from the same mother. Afum Panyn came here with a branch of the family and told his brother he was coming to farm here.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ Nana Asiedu II, Kogyinahene, August 1995, Kogyina, Twi.

Kogyina was probably founded sometime during the seventeenth century (Boni 1997: 31-38). Since then, the two Asankera branches have separated but the chiefs of Kogyina, descendants of Afum Panyin, describe themselves as "brothers" of the *omanhene*. Stools are referred to as "brothers" to express equal status. Political and military prominence of one's branch within the Asankera matrilineage may also be expressed in a genealogical idiom. Reference may be made to the seniority of the various groups. Segments vary according to ancestry and proximity to the stool of the *omanhene*. A court case of 1908 contains an interesting recourse to kinship terminology. A representative of the king states that the then *omanhene* was the "uncle" of the "Asankran family" to express his privileged position within the matrilineage.¹⁷⁵ The hierarchically superior position of "uncle" of a matrilineage declares the unquestionable seniority -and therefore authority- of the king over all members of his kin group.

Rank amongst lineage branches is dynamic. Oral traditions may be readjusted to meet current political necessities while maintaining a claim to historicity. Kinship claims are part of this process of negotiation of descent used to forge, maintain and upset current hierarchies. The rank of a segment derives from the seniority of the founder of the branch. The statement of the relative eldership of the founder of one's branch implies a claim to privilege for that segment. A more radical form of strategic use of kinship for political ends is to deny certain lineage links, thus excluding a group from the realm of the matrilineage and thus from making succession claims. Some branches are presented as "not true brothers". In the following passage the chief of Asafo, a branch close to the *omanhene*'s stool, discredits another Asankera segment's claims to the king's office.

[The branch from] Boako, really, we call them Asankera but paternally, not maternally. First they were close friends and so we termed them as brothers but really they can't succeed to the *omanhene*'s stool at Wiawso.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ GNA Accra ADM 11/1/1697, p. 30.

¹⁷⁶ Kwadwo Fuakye II, Destooled Asafohene, August 1995, Asafo, Twi.

The branch settled in the village of Boako is accused of being improperly linked -through a patrilineal link- to the Asankera matrilineage. They are called brothers, but are not "real" brothers. Interestingly enough, the same Asafo branch which censures Boako for not being "true" Asankera, is itself condemned both by Boako and by the *omanhene* for being an incorporated segment. Even though the Asankera represent a privileged *locus* when examining the use of kinship idioms in relationships between lineage branches, most Sefwi matrilineages show similar dynamics. Lineages are divided into localized segments which resort to kinship claims to contend for positions of dominance.

Alongside matrilineal terminology, patrilineal appellations are used to assign subordinate roles within the state. Some stools and offices are known to be "sons" of the *omanhene's* stool. The position of "son" is structurally different from that of "brother" and "nephew". The king's brothers and nephews could themselves contest his stool: they are thus thought to be treacherous and always plotting to subvert their inferior status. The role of "sons", however, implies irreversible inferiority: offspring belong to their mother's matrilineage and can not aspire to succeed to their father's office. "Sons" are therefore thought to be trustworthy and less prone to intrigue. Sefwi rulers, like political figures elsewhere in the Akan world, have placed their sons in key political and military offices (Fortes 1963: 62; Mensah-Brown 1967: 109; McCaskie 1980a; Perrot 1982: 193-215; Terray 1987; Luccini 1992: 90-91; Boni 1997). There was a mutual interest in preserving relationships between fathers and sons: the former sought to have supportive subordinates by their side; the latter were granted offices which were subordinate to the *omanhene* but could be prestigious. In the Akan world these filial ties, which would have otherwise been interrupted by the death of either the father or son, survive the mortality of the original parties.

Kinship terminology turns a declaration of natural filiation -i.e. the father-son relationship- into a structural position. The process of creating "son" stools involves the marriage of an *omanhene* with a woman, usually of an immigrant lineage. A son of the couple is nominated the political head of his matrilineage and given land and office by the father -i.e. the king. The son is termed *oheneba* (pl. *ahenemma*), literally son of the chief. With the passing of generations, the genealogically founded relationship, is transferred to the successors together with the offices, thereby becoming a structural bond. When the *omanhene* dies the filial link is

preserved: the son maintains his role and his appellation of *oheneba* regardless of the father's death. The new *omanhene*, the matrilineal successor of his biological father, is termed "father" in the deceased's place. Likewise, when a *oheneba* dies, his successor becomes a "son" of the king.

Father-son ties are constantly negotiated and readjusted to existing political contexts. Two processes in particular interact. On the one hand, stools which have been known to be *oheneba* for centuries may question their subordination and refuse to comply with their role as "sons" (Arhin 1983b: 7-8; Gilbert 1997: 511). On the other hand, a debate may occur over the seniority of the *ahenemma*. The narrative of the chief of Kessekrom illustrates this latter negotiation of status within the framework of the Sefwi Wiawso state. The chief asserts a prominent position amongst the king's offspring, claiming to be the senior son of the *omanhene*.

During the war the royals were sent to some places to safeguard the stool and the properties. So our grandmother Aso Bedu came here. The *omanhene* saw her and married Aso Bedu. The *omanhene* was Attah Kwasi [reigned c. 1890-1900]. During the marriage they had a child whom they named Kwasi Fuakye So my stool is the first son of the Paramount Stool His [the *omanhene*'s] grandfather married my grandmother. I am called the senior son of the *omanhene*, because I [my ancestor] was the first person to be born when my grandmother was virgin. My grandfather was the first son of Attah Kwasi.¹⁷⁷

All matrilineages which have seen one of their women marry an *omanhene*, with the consequent election of a son of the couple to the status of political head, may claim the position of *ahenemma*, sons of kings. There are approximately ten *ahenemma* stools in the kingdom of Wiawso. Sons and daughters of *ahenemma*, second generation descendants of an *omanhene*, are termed *ahenenana*, grandsons of the king.

The use of kinship terminology to enforce permanent kinship bonds is not a prerogative of the king alone. The perpetuation of relationships beyond the death of their original protagonists occurs at different levels of social organization: in inferior chiefs' possessions, villages, palaces and households. The kingdom's political structure lends itself to smaller

¹⁷⁷ Nana Owusu Akyeampin II, Kessekromhene, August 1993, Wiawso, English.

scale replications of its organizing principles. The attribution of kin roles within the kingdom is reproduced in a similar fashion by inferior office-holders within their possessions and villages. The king employs kinship devices to maintain political prominence within the state. Subordinate chiefs use similar techniques within their territorial dominions to perpetuate their control over inferior chiefs of neighbouring villages. The chief of Debiso illustrates his strategy of multiplying kinship bonds. Inferior chiefs' subordination is expressed in terms of offices which are "sons" and "nephews" to the Debiso chief who himself becomes the hierarchically dominant figure in a complex kin network extended over his possessions and perpetuated over generations. He mentions the names of neighbouring settlements and states the relationship linking the stool of the village to the chief of Debiso.

Eluokrom, Yawnkatia, Kwasi Nkuah, Kwame Nimanfro, they are all sons to me. Assuanta, Adjuafua are also my sons Kwametewiahkrom, Kwamensuakrom, Kwamebikrom, Essem and Osseikwadwokrom are direct nephews to the stool I am occupying Essem, for instance, was founded by Kwaku Kanka. He was the nephew of Aforo Kwaw [according to the oral tradition, the first chief of Debiso, ruled in the eighteenth century]. Aforo Kwaw never liked to stay with the nephew but [wanted] to separate the nephew from himself. So he ... asked the nephew to live next to him and so Kanka went to settle at Essem.¹⁷⁸

A similar use of kinship idioms occurs within villages. Each settlement usually has its own royal matrilineage headed by a chief. Members of the lineage are known as the *adehyee* of the village, they hold privileges and are considered to be the matrilineal descendants of the first settlers in that particular area. Sefwi villages are largely inhabited by sons, *ahenemma*, and grandsons, *ahenenana*, of local chiefs who reside in the settlement alongside the *adehyee* and are assigned local political offices (Boni 1998; cf. Palumbo 1991; 1992; 1994a; 1994b). Chiefs' descendants are termed "sons" and "grandsons" even though the father and grandfather with whom the original relationship was established have long died.

While some sons of chiefs occupy stools and hold prominent positions within the kingdom or village, others are not office-holders and their subordination is domestic. A use of kinship terms to perpetuate bonds of domestic subordination is commonly used in chiefs' households,

¹⁷⁸ Nana Aforo Kwaw II, Debisohene, August 1995, Debiso, English.

known as *ahemfie*, palaces. Chiefs are exceptional concentrators of dependants: they create and preserve a large number of hierarchical relations. Palace residents are often referred to as "wives" and "children", even though they are only distant classificatory kin. The latter are descendants of previous stool holders who maintained their position and appellation through the perpetuation of the bond of subordination. The terminology indicates their role in relation to the chief. The office-holder grants them what household heads normally provide: accommodation, food, medical and scholastic expenses. In return, chiefs receive the respect, faithfulness and services due to fathers. Office-holders' success in their strategies of accumulation of dependants through kinship devices may be appraised by the size of their palace. Ideally, there is a correlation between the chief's ancestry, the status of his political office, the number of dependants living with him and the size of his residence. His capacity to act as "father" and "husband" towards a large number of subordinates rests on a prestigious political position and simultaneously justifies this status (cf. McCaskie 1981).

Chiefs have to comply with their obligations towards subordinates. The perpetuation of bonds of dominance through the reproduction of kinship ties is both their right and duty. Political rule and accumulation of wealth is explained with reference to chiefs' roles as distributors (see chapter 5). When they are unable or unwilling to allocate resources, they are often deposed (cf. Robertson 1976). Below, I quote from two lists of charges against important Sefwi chiefs in the 1950s. In the first, the office-holder was accused of not having catered for his wife, presumably his own spouse, nor for "stool wives" and "stools sons". When kinship terms are preceded by the word "stool", reference is made to spouses and offspring of previous office-holders. The ruling chief has the duty to look after them.

You utterly failed to provide clothing for your wife you married from Bibiani ... which disgrace affected your position as Safohene [a political rank] and an occupant of a black-stool.

That you made no provision to comfort the Stool wife ... who had no cover cloths, mat and headkerchief and ... she therefore went to her relatives- This conduct of yours is contrary to Native Custom

That you were very selfish and have neglected to maintain the stool sons in their education, clothing and otherwise.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁹ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/10, "Charges of Deposition...", 21st July 1950.

The chiefs' inability to redistribute is considered an expression of greed, which shames his stool and the wider community.

For that you as Buakuhene did fail to maintain the royals [matrilineal kin] who were school children receiving financial support of the Buaku stool, contrary to native custom

For that you as Buakuhene, did fail to procure medicine for the treatment of your own mother.¹⁸⁰

The position of male elders resembles, in some ways, that of chiefs. The office-holder incorporates the affluence of a certain territory and of the subjects. He maximizes relations of subordination by perpetuating kin relations established by the chief's ancestors. Matrilineal successors play a similar role. Chiefs and successors alike need to preserve the concentration of wealth and authority achieved by their forebears and continue the process of distribution towards subordinates. The death of a chief or commoner is only a momentary threat to the hierarchical bonds established by the deceased. Succession ideally marks the re-enforcement of the deceased's role in relations with dependants.

For example, the hierarchical tie established at marriage is perpetuated beyond the death of spouses. Widows, ideally, shift their obligations from the deceased to his successor. The wife's subordination is thus reproduced over time and the marital rights acquired by a husband and his matrilineage are preserved. This practice is possible for both commoners and office-holders. Chiefs, however, have a further privilege. Not only are wives inherited by his successor, but if the chief's spouse dies while he is still alive, she needs to be replaced. These women, termed "stool wives", are married to the office rather than to a particular individual. The marriage agreement between the two groups is not interrupted on the spouses' death. Kyei notes that "a widow may be, and in some cases is, inherited by the deceased husband's successor, but a dead wife of an ordinary man is never replaced A Chief may request the head of a lineage of a deceased Stool-wife to replace her" (Kyei 1992: 16; cf. Danquah 1928:

¹⁸⁰ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/10, "Nana Kankah Mosi vs. Nana Kwasi Badu", 11th December 1957.

159-162, 182-184; Rattray 1929: 29; Fortes 1950: 279). Through the replacement of the deceased the bonds of affinity, and the subordination implied, are perpetuated. A court case of 1915 exemplifies the transfer of marital relationships. Japon the *omanhene* of Sefwi Bekwai, passed over three wives to his brother Akwabim. When the latter died, they were inherited by his successor Ackaah. The three women refused to "serve" Ackaah and started independent love affairs. Ackaah brought the three women to court asking for the reimbursement of the *tiri nsa*, the marriage payment charged on husbands. Two of the women's lovers were also required to pay a seduction fine.¹⁸¹

Transfer of marital responsibilities is less common in Sefwi nowadays. Widows often refuse the union with their husband's successors. The idea that kinship ties are passed over to the heir has not, however, wholly disappeared. Wives and children of the deceased are still supposed to act towards the successor as if he were their husband and father. The successor, on the other hand, is meant to provide for the wife and children as if they were his own, and to replace the deceased at public gatherings and at the children's funerals and marriages. The transfer of property to the matrilineal heir is explained with reference to his expenses and obligations towards the deceased's wife and children (cf. Gilbert 1988). Successors, however, minimize their caring for the widow and offspring and are not generally as responsible as husband and fathers were before death.

Sefwi hold that in precolonial times the matrilineal successor obtained all the deceased's estate. Widows and sons received a share of an intestate man's property in the colonial period. Ghana's Intestate Succession Law of 1985, passed to safeguard the interests of widows and children, is seen locally as a further development of an earlier deviation from the principle of matrilineal succession which complicated the relationship between successors and widows and deceased's children. The legislation states that approximately 2/3 of the estate of the deceased should be inherited by widows and children, only 1/3 going to the successor (Awusabo-Asare 1990). The law interrupts the matrilineal heirs' accumulation of property on which the redistribution to acquired kin rests. Successors claim that they are no longer able to act as husbands and fathers as they have been deprived of the means to do so. Despite the fact

¹⁸¹ See GNA Accra ADM 48/4/3, no. 70-74/15, pp. 453-457. In all instances the District Commissioner ruled in favour of the successor.

that the legislation has provided a legal instrument to widows' and children's claims over their deceased's husband/father's estate, the matrilineal heirs still attempt to control the deceased's wealth and to preserve his parental ties. Funeral expenses or the deceased's debts paid by the matrilineage are frequently mentioned to justify the matrilineage's prolonged control over the deceased's estate. The minutes -taken in English- of a case heard by the Social Welfare Officer at Wiawso in January 1997 exemplify a common dynamic. The successor took control of the deceased's properties declaring that he had run into a debt to pay for his predecessor's funeral. When the deceased's child demanded the transfer of the estate, the heir claimed he was using the money to cater for "his" children.

Complainant [deceased's daughter]: About 7 years [ago] father died leaving a house and some cocoa [and] secondary forest. The [matrilineal] family took over all my father's property. They later told us there's a debt after the funeral so they mortgaged the farm for 6 years. The 6 years have elapsed but they have refused to give our share and continue to take custody of it.

Defendant [deceased's successor]: When my junior brother died, I took them [the deceased's offspring] as my children and was using the property [on their behalf].¹⁸²

Laws on succession have changed over the last century enforcing a more patrilineal pattern of wealth transfer. It appears, however, that matrilineages have tried to perpetuate bonds of subordination with widows and children by controlling the property of deceased members and through kinship idioms.

Establishment of new kinship ties

Here the recourse to kinship terminology is considered in the establishment of relations where no marriage or filiation is involved. Roberts (1975: 252) provided an example of this:

In small villages they [teachers] were generally provided accommodation in the house of an elder. Their relationship to their landlord was similar in many respects to that of an unmarried son to his father and they usually addressed him as 'father'. His wives prepared the teacher's meals, also without payment. The 'father' acted on his behalf in

¹⁸² Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Department of Social Welfare, Angelina Donkor vs. Simon Bae, 9th Oct. 1995 to 12th Dec. 1995, ref. no. DSW/SW/W/242. The ruling allocated two thirds of the farm to the children.

relations with the community if these were not of professional nature. In return, the teacher owed the services of a son although he was not generally called upon to fulfil them.

The use of kinship terminology with non-kin is widespread. This section is concerned specifically with its use in two hierarchical relations: those between landlords and immigrant labourers and between craftmasters and apprentices. The hierarchically superiors attempt to turn working relations into wider domestic forms of dominance through kinship appellations.

Up to the first half of the twentieth century immigrants and Sefwi intermarried and their descendants were usually attributed a local identity, offices and land. From the second half of the century immigrants were termed strangers, excluded from political authority and made to pay for their agricultural rights (see chapter 5). While the assimilation of foreigners as members of the Sefwi Wiawso kingdom came to a standstill, their temporary incorporation within households continued. In this new situation, one in which the kinship networks of "strangers" and Sefwi were generally separated, the use of kinship idioms did not die out but was rather transformed. Sefwi landlords often use subordinating kin appellations to refer to incorporated immigrant labourers. Fictitious relations do not, however, lead to an assimilation of the hierarchically inferior as in previous times.

Annual agricultural labourers employed by Sefwi are often "taken as sons" by their employer. The language used is consistent with the relationship established. Addo (1974: 213-214) provides the details of the labourer's duties and rights:

Where the employee lives in the same house as the employer, the situation may be mutually beneficial and often leads to the development of a closer relationship between employer and employee. The employee may receive free accommodation, free or semi-free boarding facilities and possibly occasional gifts from his employer. The latter in turn might gain from extra domestic services which may be carried out from time to time for his household by the employee, such as fetching water and firewood, pounding 'fufu' [the evening meal], acting as a watchman of the household in the absence of the farmer or cultivating a food farm for the farmer's household (cf. Beckett 1945: 10-11; Arhin 1986a: 49-50; Konings 1986: 86-103; Vellenga 1986: 67-70).

In Addo's list of services the different roles appear clearly. The labourer's role resembles that of a son: he should not only perform agricultural work but respect and serve his employer as children do with their father. The employer acts as the father: his responsibilities extend beyond paying wages; he is also required to cater for the labourer, provide accommodation, food and medical expenses.

Labourers are not only considered "sons" because they perform children's duties, they are actually termed "sons" by their landlord and have to reply addressing him as "father". Funerary donations among the Akan are offered according to the kinship tie between the donor and the deceased. Labourers are often asked to pay for their landlord's funeral as much as sons (cf. Garceau 1982: 105). Labourers, however, are particular types of "sons". The filial link is temporary as it is not genealogically sanctioned. Owners are therefore less willing to make long term investments in labourers. While fathers are usually ready to sponsor their children's education and health, expecting returns in old age, landlords tend to minimize commitments towards labourers while maximizing their requests.

The situation of apprentices is similar. The new apprentice is inserted in a subordinate relationship both with the craftmaster and senior apprentices. I quote below from a ceremony of apprenticeship to show different uses of kinship idioms. The following recommendations, recorded in Wiawso in 1997, were uttered by the apprentice's mother during the ritual that marks the acceptance of a new trainee by the master, in this case a seamstress (see chapter 7). The apprentice's mother used kinship titles to render her daughter's future position more familiar and her subordination more gentle. First, she appealed to the craftmaster: she acknowledged the trainee's subordinate position by using the terms "younger sister" and "daughter", but demanded respect for her daughter.

[Apprentice's mother to work master]: Look after her as if she were your younger sister [Sefwi: *nua ketewa*] learning the work or even your own daughter [Sefwi: *ba*]. And so, if she does something that is not right, I beg you, respectfully call her. You also give her respect.

The language changed when demanding the assistance of the senior apprentice. She adopted an egalitarian kinship idiom -that of "sister"- to describe the relationship she expected to be established between her daughter, the new trainee, and the senior apprentice.

[Apprentice's mother's companion to senior apprentice]: Senior apprentice, receive the child with a smile on your face and teach her the work. You know that when somebody new comes, it is you the senior that will teach her the work before the master will add her knowledge. And so, we beg you, when she comes, look after her well. Now she comes, take her as your sister [Sefwi: *nua*].¹⁸³

Some trainees, especially if the craftmaster does not reside in the village of the apprentice's parents, live with the master. In such cases the similarity between apprentices and master's children is striking. Apprentices, besides working in the shop, are called upon to perform the chores demanded from children: assistance in farming, cooking, cleaning, etc.

Kinship language structures society and attributes value to individuals and groups both within the kingdom and at lower levels of social organization. Distant kinship ties are converted into relationships characteristic of the nuclear household: the husband's sister's son becomes an "husband" and the descendant of the father of one's matrilineal ancestor becomes a "father". Similarly kinship idioms are used to extend the subordination required from apprentices and labourers: they are not only required to hold an inferior working position but to assume the duties of younger kinsmen. Terminology establishes bonds and expectations creating hierarchical roles and preserving them over generations. Idioms assign positions which are known as they are common in day-to-day domestic life. The social value implied in roles is clear, and the behaviour required by the roles' acceptance evident. While the respective hierarchical positions implied in kinship terms are known, kinship appellations are continually used dynamically to alter and adjust one's role and value.

¹⁸³ Apprenticeship ceremony of Shirley Fuakyewa & Magda, Wiawso, 14-9-1997, Sefwi.

Chapter 10.

The language of ownership, caretakership and help

A cluster of Akan concepts organize labour division and assign positions, rights and responsibilities. The interrelated concepts enjoy a widespread currency and establish meaningful roles across hierarchical domains. These concepts have been analyzed individually by various authors within specific works which we shall examine as we proceed. I analyse their use together, as a code that orders multiple relations. The present chapter is divided into two sections: in the first, institutional roles are considered; the second is concerned with informal relations.

Institutional roles: subjects and caretakers

The notion of "owner" or "master" (*owura*) is used in several relationships. *Asase owura*, for instance is the landlord as opposed to labourers, tenants and subjects more generally. Sefwi identify landlords with chiefs and foremost amongst these, the *omanhene*, the ultimate owner of all Sefwi land, granted to both Sefwi and immigrant tenants. His ancestral origin justifies his claim to the title of *asase owura* of the entire Sefwi Wiawso kingdom. In 1997, one of the senior linguists welcomed the newly elected *omanhene* of Sefwi Wiawso, Nkoah Okodom II, who was entering his palace for the first time with the following words:

Majestically comes the land owner [Sefwi: *asee owura*]. He walks. Yes, there comes Nana Nkoah Okodom, majestically. Yes, the land owner, yes He has reached Wiawso today, by the grace of the ancestors. All is peaceful. Nothing bad has come. Nobody was hurt. God has made him come peacefully.¹⁸⁴

As the *omanhene* is the *asase owura* of all Sefwi land, the various farm owners are termed *afuo owura* holding rights alongside the king's. Annual labourers and sharecroppers may refer to their landlord (both Sefwi or immigrant) as *asase* or *afuo owura*.

¹⁸⁴ Ceremony of arrival of Nana Nkoah Okodom II, Ahenefie, Wiawso, 6-11-1997, Sefwi.

Owura implies possession of or authority over something or somebody. *Fie owura* is the household head or house owner. Apprentices work under an *adwuma owura*, literally work master. Market traders are called *owura*, masters of their specific goods. A woman selling oranges may be referred to as *ankaa owura*, owner/master of oranges. Wives at times call their husbands "*me owura*". The fact that the *owura*, the master is the one in charge of a certain activity or social relation unites the use of the term in different contexts. The *owura* is responsible for his material possessions or for his subordinates' well-being and behaviour.

Opposed to the term *owura* is the concept of *akoa* (pl. *nkoa*). *Nkoa* are subordinates, the term may be used for dependants in general, for slaves or for chiefs' subjects (cf. Dumett and Johnson 1988: 75-76; Dumett 1990: 8, 14-15). The status of the *owura* rests on his control over *nkoa* (cf. McCaskie 1980a). The relation between the two is well explained by Rattray (1929: 35): "An *akoa* ... in its original sense may be defined briefly as 'a person born into a natural condition of subjection in relation to some one else who is termed *owura* (master)'"'. Rattray (1929: 34-35; cf. McCaskie 1995: 289-290) describes the pervasiveness of hierarchy in the Akan world and the congruence between domestic, political and religious structures.

[*Akoa*] to the African mind meant originally nothing worse than that condition of voluntary and essential servitude in which every man and woman stood in relation to some other person or group. A man's nephew and niece are their uncle's *nkoa*, a man's wife is her uncle's *akoa*, a man's children are their uncle's *nkoa*, a subject of a small Chief is the latter's *akoa*, while the small chief is the *akoa* of the greater, and so on in an ever ascending scale, until, at a later date, we reach the era of the great *Amanhene* (petty Kings), who in turn became the *nkoa* of the central authority at Kumasi, the *Asante Hene* (King of Ashanti). He was the *akoa* of the '*samanfo* (spirits) and of *Nyame* (the Supreme God).

Ancestry, seniority and gender all structure Rattray's hierarchy. Political and parental subordination are expressed as relationships between *owura* and *akoa*. Rattray refers to the Asante *amanhene* as being *nkoa*, subjects, of the superior Asantehene. The same applies to the *omanhene* of Sefwi Wiawso: he was considered to be the son of the Asantehene and his

subordinate (Boni 1997). Sefwi chiefs, in turn, describe themselves and are described as the "small boys" or "slaves" of the king.¹⁸⁵

A different type of subordinates are the *hwesofoo* (sing. *hwesoni*), literally the ones who look on. The role is twofold: one may look after something for himself or on behalf of somebody. In the former meaning, the verb *hwe so*, to look on, is commonly used to allude to the responsibility of the hierarchical superior towards the inferior. One hears men state that they "look on" their wives and children and women complain that the husband is not "looking on" them as he is supposed to (cf. Kyei 1992: 40). An Ashanti proverb clarifies that "looking on" somebody is a way of exercising authority. Those who ask somebody to look after them, end up becoming his subordinates: "I am in want, so look after me [*fwe=hwe ma me*]", that is why some men became slaves [*akoa*]" (Rattray 1916: 123). In the second meaning, a subordinate "looks on" something on behalf of the hierarchically superior. The verb may also be translated into English as "taking care of" and the dependant as the "caretaker" on behalf of the owner. The notion of caretakership implies subordination. The position, however, can be very prestigious if one "looks after" something on behalf of an important political office. Here I discuss the relations of caretakership in this second meaning.

The idea of "looking on" cuts across hierarchical relations and social contexts. Sharecroppers are described as *hwesofoo*, those who take care of the farm on behalf of the farm owner. Likewise, subordinate chiefs are described as *hwesofoo*, caretakers, on behalf of the the landlord, normally the *omanhene* or an important chief (cf. McCaskie 1980a: 191). The following minutes, taken in English at a court case in 1906, provide insights on the establishment of a relationship between a land-owning chief and his caretaker chief.

I am a chief of the village of Nbuokuo. I dig for gold at Nbuooh. One chief called Kwadwo Djeng, he is chief of Ntubiase. He told me he liked me and told me he wanted me to look after some land he had. I went to this land to me take monies [sic]. Later we collected rubber and gave up mining. He told me to get people to collect rubber and he would divide the share with me.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ GNA Accra ADM 11/1/1697, p. 35, 36, 68.

¹⁸⁶ GNA Accra ADM 48/4/2, Kofi Mensah vs. Kwadwo Djapoma.

The following quotations are from a more recent petition. A group of immigrant farmers being harassed by a Sefwi chief appealed to the king. Tenant farmers asked for the ruler's support to regain some land which was taken away from them. The role of subordinate chiefs as caretakers to the *omanhene* is stressed.

Traditionally, there is only one Traditional Chief in the Sefwi/Wiawso Traditional Council. All the other chiefs come under Nana Aduhene [the *omanhene*]. That is to say all the other chiefs are, excuse me to say, 'care takers'. Nana Aduhene is the owner of the lands.

The two cases quoted above exemplify the unequal distribution of value and material advantages in caretaker-owner relationships. The *hwesoni* is thus to take care of the owner's property, in this case land. The *owura* controls the collection of revenues from the enterprise, being the rightful owner. He then allots a share to his caretakers. Throughout the twentieth century, revenues from market-oriented production have mostly been received by the *omanhene* or by chiefly councils over which he presided being the ultimate rightful landlord. He was then supposed to hand a share to his caretaker chiefs and to the Traditional Council, the chiefs' assembly. From the 1920s, colonial and national governments have contested chiefs' role as landlords and their collection of land revenue (see chapter 1). In the first half of the twentieth century, however, revenue collection was often unrecorded and received by the king directly.

A police inquiry over the revenue from a timber concession in 1950 exemplifies the dynamics of revenue collection and the ambiguities inherent in its distribution.

Mr. B.M. Kufuor of Bibiani Logging and Lumber Company in December, 1950 asked for [a timber] concession in the Sefwi Wiawso State which was given him by the three lessors ... with the consent of the Omanhene ... and some elders. A head rum [initial payment not part of the royalties] of £30 was paid by Mr. Kufuor [In January] the Omanhene ... interviewed Mr. Kufuor ... for an advance of £1000 against the concession Mr. Kufuor could not promise the Omanhene the £1000, however he assured him to send some messengers for £500 advance.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/14, "Theft of £300 out of £500...", 5th February 1952.

The £500 advance was paid to one of the three lessors, who with the king's knowledge and consent, publicly stated that he had collected only £200. Moreover the amount was presented as "head rum", an initial payment given as a gift to the king, and not as an advance on the royalties that needed to be shared with subordinate chiefs. Out of the £500 advance, only £10 were paid to the chiefs' assembly treasury. Some chiefs complained in a State Council Meeting about the misappropriation of the amount, threatening to begin destitution proceedings against the king. The youth pressed to know where the money had gone and a police investigation was ordered. Even though the king's attempt was unsuccessful, the enquiry shows that the ruler's control of land revenues was a source of power.

In the 1960s, the government established a Lands Secretariat in charge of collecting revenues on behalf of the central government which holds its share and sends part to the traditional authority. The king receives this latter share and divides it with his subordinate chiefs. The *omanhene*'s right to receive revenues from the government on behalf of all subordinate chiefs and his role of redistributor implies power. He is able to decide when and to which of his caretaker chiefs revenues are paid. Caretakers who have engaged in disputes with the king managed to obtain their shares only with extreme difficulty. In 1972, three chiefs who had been on unfriendly terms with the king petitioned the government to increase subordinate chiefs' control over stool-land revenues which were, at that time, received solely by the king or his secretary on behalf of all chiefs.¹⁸⁸ An important chief recently explained the *omanhene*'s role as ultimate landlord and connected it to his rights to allocate land revenues to subordinates.

All the land is for *omanhene*. How can the land belong to the chiefs? They are just caretaker chiefs They will bring it [the land revenue] to the *omanhene* and *omanhene* will divide it and give you your part It is shared according to grades: some [chiefs] take one third, some two thirds and some are given half.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/64, K. Aduhene to Chief Lands Officer, 9th March 1972.

¹⁸⁹ Nana Owusu Akyeampin II, Kessekromhene and Mr. Kumi ex-secretary to the *omanhene* in the 1960s and 1970s, Wiawso, August 1997, English.

The principle that revenues are received and divided by the owner but the caretaker is entitled to a share applies to the division of land revenue between chiefs -as seen above- as well as to sharecropping contracts in cocoa production -as discussed below. Both subordinate chiefs and cocoa sharecroppers are caretakers who perform labour which produces wealth. The wealth is however the property of the owner who then gives part to the caretaker. In the cocoa industry, the *abusa* caretaker has to look after a mature farm on behalf of the owner. The sharecropper is in charge of the whole process of cocoa production but the owner is entitled to collect the payment for the produce (cf. Robertson 1982; Boadu 1992). Banks pay the cocoa money to the landlord who then gives a one-third share to the *abusa* sharecropper. Weeks or months may pass from the time when the cocoa is sold to the time when the caretaker actually receives his share. The importance of the landlord's right to control and share the property produced by the caretaker's labour is even more significant in the sharetenancy system known as *abunu* (cf. Garceau 1982: 105). In the *abunu* agreement, land owners assign a portion of secondary forest to caretakers. The latter turn the plot into a cocoa farm. When the plants reach maturity, landlords divide the farm into two portions, supposedly of equal size, by planting flowers to mark boundaries; one portion is chosen by the farm owner, the other is left to his caretaker. Owners' right to divide and choose often produces openly unfair divisions (cf. Benneh 1988: 231-232). Caretakers often complain that they are actually allotted only one third of the surface of the developed farm. Besides keeping the larger portion of the farm for him/herself, the landlord tries to include in his share the more productive plants. Cocoa trees are often of unequal quality even when planted on the same parcel of land. Parts of the farm may be on less fertile soils (rocky, sandy or waterlogged). Some portions may be in full production, while others may include young and less productive plants. Landlords try to draw a demarcation line which includes all less fertile grounds, which are left to the *abunu* worker, while keeping the more productive parts for themselves. *Abunu* caretakers have recently been shifting irregularly the location where cocoa is planted within their plot, so that all areas of the farm include grown and young plants. The landlord also tries to include in his portion any hamlet built by the caretaker, thus gaining possession of the building. Caretakers therefore make sure that the hamlets they build on the farms are simple mud huts; constructions are not cemented until the farm has been divided.

The principle of sharing organize other agricultural labour besides the above mentioned contracts in the cocoa industry. Rice harvest, for example, requires an intensive use of labour within a limited time span. People outside the household, usually women and youngsters, are therefore called to assist on a sharecropping basis. Labourers may either chose to gather rice for four days, working three days for the owner and keeping the proceeds of the fourth for themselves, or they may choose to divide the produce daily. In the latter case, the harvest is brought to the owner's house and divided into three parts, one going to the labourer.

The division of revenue between owners and caretakers organizes labour relationships beyond agriculture. While sharecroppers receive from the owner a farm which produces wealth, the latter may provide money, *sika* instead. There are several local notions which relate to the Western concept of capital (Hill 1963: 214-17). Some are words composed out of the word *sika*; another, more frequently used, is *dwetiri*, which refers to an initial amount used to begin an enterprise. This latter notion indicates that money is conceived as a potential source of wealth which needs to be put to use.

The peripatetic selling of ice-cream follows organizational rules similar to those of agricultural contracts. Owners are in charge of acquiring and storing the ice-cream. The owner's role implies the investment of capital to buy both ice-cream in bulk and a freezer to store it. Owners have a number of sellers who come in the morning to collect the ice-cream, spend the day trying to sell it and return to the owners' houses by evening time. On their return, the daily income is handed over to the owner who shares it with the vendors. The total daily income and the number of ice-creams sold are counted. The owner subtracts his cost in buying the ice-creams from the vendor's income. The net profit is calculated and shared equally between owner and seller.

A further example may help to clarify roles in contracts regulated by a criterion of sharing. An elder owned some palm trees on the outskirts of the village of Anglo. The owner, seeing that there was a mature bunch of nuts on one of them but that the bunch was difficult to cut because it was stuck between two branches far above the ground, asked a youngster to collect the nuts. An agreement was reached on a division. Before the youngster went to cut the bunch the owner was informed. The nuts were cut, immediately shown to the owner and then stored in the owner's house while waiting for the next step of the process to be performed: the

separation of the nuts one by one. After three days the youngster asked the owner if he could separate the nuts in his father's house. The owner refused to grant permission as he felt the women, who would certainly help in the separation if performed there, would take a share of the nuts before these were returned to him for division with the youngster. The nuts were therefore separated by the youngster, his wife and mother in the owner's house and under his supervision. When the work was completed, the owner stepped in to control the division into two parts.

An acknowledged pattern organizes relationships which may be broadly defined as caretakership. The owner is in charge of providing the starting capital which represents a potential source of revenue: it may be land rights (for caretaker chiefs), a fully developed cocoa farm (in the *abusa* contract), secondary forest (in the *abunu*), a rice field, or even a single palm tree. Ownership is normally legitimized with reference either to what the ancestors have done to create the potential source of revenue (Etienne 1971: 240; Pavanello 1995a, 1996) or to the work of the owner him/herself. This work may have been the occupation of uninhabited land as in the case of the acquisition of political rights over a territory, the clearing of the forest to gain farming rights, the planting of a palm tree or rice.

When the potential source of revenue is handed over to the caretaker, the owner performs no work himself while he maintains the right to supervise. On the other hand, the caretaker has to furnish the labour needed to turn potential sources of revenue into actual wealth. He has to take care of the whole production process up to the achievement of the final product: money, fermented cocoa, palm nuts, or a mature cocoa farm in the case of *abunu* sharetenancy. Once wealth is produced, the owner controls the revenue and is in charge of its division.

The caretaker acquires rights over part of the produce but normally not on the source of revenue. The greater the input provided by the owner or his ancestors, the greater the size of the revenue potentially obtainable from the caretaker and the larger the share to which the owner is entitled. If the land given to the labourer consists of secondary forest, the caretaker has to plant cocoa and care for its development, he gains permanent rights to half of the farm, as sanctioned in the *abunu* contract. If the land given to the caretaker is a fully developed

cocoa farm, the caretaker acquires no permanent rights over the land and keeps only one third of the revenue, as established in the *abusa*.

Informal relations: kin and household members

The positions of *nkoa*, subjects, and *hwesofoo*, caretakers, are formally sanctioned. The sharecropping agreements described above are contracts in which terms are negotiated publicly. Other forms of subordination are less explicit. Within households, labour and revenue distribution follows principles similar to relations with caretakers even though there are no formally sanctioned agreements or fixed criteria of sharing. What remains unchanged is the idea of the owner handing out his property to somebody else, for the latter to work on it. Profits are controlled and divided by the owner.

Often revenue sources are transferred to close kin informally. The household head provides goods or capital to subordinates. The latter perform labour and produce wealth. The ownership of these incomes is ambiguous, however, as the criterion of revenue division is not rendered explicit. The ambiguity may work in favour of the hierarchically superior, who may forward claims on the produce of his subordinates' labour.

An example illustrates this. A lineage head of the village of Anglo gives a fishing net to his nephew. The nephew catches a large fish with the net, divides it into three and sends a share to his uncle. The uncle thinks that a one-third part is insufficient. He calls the nephew to his house and asks him who had bought the fishing net. The question implies that as the net was bought by the uncle, he deserves a larger share than the one he received. The nephew in reply, acknowledges that the net was given to him by his uncle and that the share handed over should have been larger. In justification of his own position, the nephew explains that his two wives were both pressing him for a part of the fish. Elder and nephew agree that the handing over of the source of revenue -the fishing net- entitles the elder, who had provided it, to a share. As no formal agreement was reached, the elder may legitimately complain and demand a larger portion of the produce.

Another example of ambiguous transfer of revenue sources, is household heads' provision of capital to wives and children to enable the latter to start trading activities. Some works have viewed women's control of trade as a source of economic independence (Bukh 1979: 42; Dei

1994: 136-137; Clark 1994). Even though this is true in many instances, it is not always the case. The one who provides the initial capital to begin the business, controls the revenues. If the wife or child start trading with their own capital, the household head may not claim part of the profits. He may, however, ask her to stop trading. Men justify their power to put an end to their wives' activity with reference to their responsibility to pay debts.

If the trade is not to your satisfaction you can stop her [your wife] from trading even if she is using her own money. Maybe you don't want her to trade. There can be various reasons. At times some women, when they get the money, they try to lord [it] over their husbands. They want to control their husbands. So some husbands say: "I don't want you to trade". You can tell her to stop because you have control over her and she will accept. She may be trading with her own money but in case she goes on transactions for her trading activity and she gets into trouble, you will be the person to take the responsibility of [for] the thing. If she gets a lorry accident, you will have to send her to hospital So if what she is doing is not in your interest, you can stop her.¹⁹⁰

Another expression of the same principle can be found in a court case of 1905. A man asked his wife, who had recently established a farm, to pay him 10 shillings "saying if anyone was at anytime hurt he would be responsible".¹⁹¹

If the household head hands over money to his wife or child for them to start trading on his behalf, the former has control over the activity and the profits. Women and children come into possession of the incomes but the household head is entitled to demand accounts and to decide how profits are going to be used. Husbands seldom request that their wives hand over the profits. They rather tend to ask wives to bear some of the expenses, the provision of which is considered the husbands' duty. After the husband has transferred part of his control over cash to his wife, she is called upon to contribute to the family budget.¹⁹² The household head makes sure that the profits produced through his "gift" are used to cover expenses which are his responsibility (cf. Bukh 1979: 64; Tashjian 1995: 185-192).

¹⁹⁰ Stephen Aidoo and Oscar Nsowa, October 1997, Anglo, English.

¹⁹¹ GNA Accra ADM 48/4/2, Afua Afro vs. Kujo Pong, 24-5-1905.

¹⁹² A very good example of this, are arrangements of revenue division from the marketing of fish on the Ghanaian coast (Hagan 1983; Vercruysse 1983).

Some husbands ask the wives to use the money and say: 'Trade with this money, this will be our chopmoney [money handed over from husbands to wives for food]. See to it that the profits, we use them for chopmoney'. Some say: 'If you make some profits your needs will come from it and you should not come to me anymore for cloths or other. But chopmoney and children's expenses, I will still take care'.¹⁹³

Rattray (1929: 9) stated a similar principle for transfers of trading capital to sons.

A father may also hand his son some capital with which to trade on his own account. All profits thus made will be put aside and given to him when the father dies or when the son marries.

Money given by the household head to wives and children for trading may be viewed in similar terms to a revenue source handed over to a caretaker. Procedures are similar to sharecropping contracts. Trading capital is handed over to the subordinate, profits are rightfully controlled by the one who provided the capital. Wives and children hold no permanent rights over the trading capital. On divorce, women have to hand the capital back to their husbands.¹⁹⁴ The difference between sharecropping agreements and these arrangements is that the terms of sharecropping contracts are formally sanctioned. By contrast, domestic transfer of wealth leaves more room for informal negotiation.

Each enterprise has an owner who manages and controls it. He/she may employ subjects and caretakers or may benefit from the work of what are termed "assistants". Those who "assist" or "help" (*boa*) are viewed as performing secondary and unworthy tasks while the performance of essential duties is the responsibility of the owner of the enterprise. Etienne (1983: 310) describes similar notions among the Baule of the neighbouring Ivory Coast.

The underlying principle that determined control of surplus ... was that the 'ownership' of a product was vested in the person who had taken initial and primary responsibility for production. The labour of the other, even if it was indispensable and quantitatively important, was a service rendered, for which he or she might receive a share of the

¹⁹³ Godlove Opoku, 24-7-1997, Debiso, English.

¹⁹⁴ In the early twentieth century "money to trade" often figures as one of the expenses claimed by husbands on divorce; see GNA Accra ADM 48/4/2, John Jorkson vs. Akosua Awotchie, 16-10-1905; Asonisi vs. Samani; case no. 168; cf. Tashjian (1995: 245-263).

surplus, more or less at the discretion of the primary producer, who otherwise disposed of it to his or her own ends.

Etienne (1983: 311-313) states that in precolonial Baule society there was a balanced gendered ownership in the household. Husbands owned yam plots, and were assisted by wives. Wives controlled weaving, and were helped by husbands. With the introduction of cash-crops, men established control over this crucial activity and the equality of gender relations was lost.

Even though some aspects of Etienne's reconstruction may be criticized, she rightly points out that cash-crop agriculture has been seen principally as a men's activity. Male household heads mobilize other sources of labour besides subjects and caretakers. The contribution of wives and children to their husband/father's farm is not sanctioned by public gatherings. Nevertheless their contribution to the development of the household head's agricultural estate is considerable. Agricultural tasks are divided according to gender and seniority. Men predominantly take care of cash-crops. The labour of women and children is attributed a lesser value as they are considered to be weak. Women do occasionally work in the process of cocoa production but are considered unable to perform certain tasks (chapter 6). Their alleged lack of strength, it is held, fits them for subsidiary tasks such as food-crop farming on new farms. The weeding under cocoa trees, especially just before the plants enter maturity - two or three years from planting, and the cocoa harvesting are seen as men's tasks. Women are said to "help" in the process but they are considered incapable of performing these tasks by themselves. They follow their husbands who plug the cocoa in order to gather the fallen pods. When the cocoa is fermented, women are usually in charge of transporting the beans to the village where they are dried and sold by men.

Women's labour on cocoa farms is not fully recognized as work (*adwuma*) neither by informants, who usually use the verb "*boa*", to help (cf. Vellenga 1977: 204-205; Tashjian 1995: 157, 158, 160, 163), nor by academics who tend to state that women "assist" rather than "work" (Danquah 1928: 54; Mensah-Brown 1968: 70, 78, 80, 84; Adomako-Sarfoh 1971: 135-137; Okali 1983a). "Help" is an extemporary, informal contribution. Therefore no contract is required and no need is felt to determine rates of payment. Kyei's (1992: 41) statements express ideas commonly heard in the Akan area.

On the farm a wife must assist her husband by doing any work that she feels her strength would permit. In particular she is expected to plant food crops, to clear weeds growing in a new farm, and to lend a hand in cocoa harvesting operations.

Through the lexical differentiation of roles in cocoa production women's labour is positioned in the background. Compensation for such "help" may legitimately rely on the owner's generosity (cf. chapter 6).

Apprentices' labour on behalf of their work master, *adwuma owura*, is attributed a similar status. The amounts given to trainees beyond the provision of food lie within the craftmaster's discretion. Instead of an agreed payment, returns to helpers -both women and children working on cocoa, and apprentices- take the form of a "dash", *kyee* (cf. Etienne 1971: 241; Arhin 1976: 460). To "dash" something is a spontaneous act of generosity which may not be demanded or imposed. In contrast to caretakers, the returns to those who "help" do not follow fixed procedures. Women and children may be "dashed" land. Apprentices may be offered small amounts of cash if the "help" they provided has pleased their master.

The division of labour rests on the definition of who is the owner of resources. Those who work on the owners' enterprises may be subjects, caretakers or assistants. They may hold some rights but the control over the revenue source remains with the owner. In institutionalized contracts owners control the amounts which result from the caretakers' activity and distribute a share to the workers. The owner uses his right to control revenue collection, to exercise authority over the subordinates and to acquire larger shares of revenue than those due to him according to the terms of the undertaking. In informal agreements the remuneration which goes to those who are termed assistants is not fixed. The owner keeps control over revenue sources informally transferred to kin and has the right to decide criteria of profit allocation. Similarly, the labour of assistants is not attributed the full status of "work" but judged to be unvalued "help"; as a consequence, the remuneration for such jobs rests on the owner's generosity. This cluster of concepts acts across hierarchical domains. The role of owner is held by superior hierarchical positions: normally Sefwi and not immigrants, elders instead of juniors, men rather than women. Institutionalized forms of subordination

include subjects and caretakers who are respectively, commoners, slaves, and lower chiefs, immigrant labourers, youngsters. Wives, children and junior kin are identified as assistants in informal labour agreements.

Chapter 11.

Supernatural codes

Hierarchical relations are often unstable. Attempts are made to break off subordination and subvert the established social hierarchy. Those in dominant positions often resort to supernatural sanctions to check these potential disruptions. The subordinate is made to affirm his faithfulness in front of other-worldly entities. If he fails to keep his promise, he will face dangerous consequences.

Chiefs and elders are thought to be in privileged contact with the supernatural (cf. Terray 1979). They hold the monopoly of access to the ancestors and are competent supplicants to and interpreters of the deities' wishes. Kyei (1992: 11; cf. Gilbert 1989: 62) provides insights into the connection between elders' exercise of authority and their identification with unearthly powers.

Some fifty years ago every Asante child knew and was conscious that *ôpanin ano yê ôbosom* (the mouth of an elderly person is a god) and so to disobey one's parents, especially one's father, was to incur the displeasure of his *kra ne n'abosom* (his soul and his gods). That was *mmusuo* (mystical disaster) and any marriage or undertaking that was without the blessing of parents was expected to have an unhappy ending.

Political office-holders keep close control over the relationship with supernatural powers. During the precolonial period, they had key roles in religious rituals and held the monopoly over the poison ordeal, a magical device used to prove somebody's innocence or to detect witches. Chiefs' recourse to the supernatural was seldom curtailed in the colonial period as the British tried to avoid intervention in this area of human activity. Today, chiefs still stress their privileged access to divine powers and supervise several rituals (cf. McLeod 1980: 57-71; Ebin 1989). Etienne (1966), for example, describes the spread in the Ivory Coast of a cult which was aimed at controlling and reconciling modernizing social elements with the traditional power structure besides preserving the subordination of youngsters and women.

Chiefly use of oaths and spirit-drinking is limited by moral constraints. Supernatural sanctions are to be used with care and for the general benefit of the population. If a chief

abuses his access to divine entities, his followers are likely to withdraw their support and the traditional ruler may be destooled. Supernatural sanctions are seldom used with kin or other chiefs unless these openly oppose the chief. Rather, spirit-drinking and oath swearing are mostly used against those who may not threaten the chief's office.

In this chapter, I use local archival material to examine the recourse to two such supernatural powers in the course of the twentieth century. Firstly, I examine the "drinking of spirits", *obosom nom*, and secondly what has been commonly known as the "swearing of oaths", *ntam kasa*. These are two distinct but related practices. Oath swearing is often combined with drinking of spirits and is aimed at preventing and controlling insubordination (Danquah 1928: 69-83).

Spiritual drinks

What are usually termed "fetishes" in the literature and *abosom* (sing. *obosom*) in most Akan languages are spirits identified with specific objects or places thought to be the *locus* of supernatural powers. They are, however, not manmade and their definition as fetishes is misleading (Rattray 1923: 145; Gilbert 1989: 86-87). *Abosom* are part of a complex and dynamic cosmology composed of a variety of sources of power. Spirits are attributed anthropomorphic characteristics: they are organized in a kinship structure, are capricious and have preferences for certain foods and objects. Spirits throughout the Akan world have shrines, receive sacrifices and are assisted by priests (*akomfo*, pl. *okomfo*) who mediate between them and humans (Clozel 1902b: 23-27; Rattray 1923, 1927; Busia 1954: 191-196; Maier 1980; Gilbert 1989).

In Sefwi, the main *obosom* is Sobore, a river which is venerated on Saturdays (cf. Holtsbaum 1921: 10a-11a; Daaku 1971: 43; 1974: 7). Sobore has an affinity for dogs and a dislike of palms. Dogs were sacrificed in its honour while all activities linked to palms were suspended on Saturdays: no palm soup could be cooked and brushes made of palm could not be used. Up to the 1960s, a fine was imposed on those infringing these rules.¹⁹⁵ Even though these prohibitions were abolished in the 1970s, rituals to propitiate the spirit are still

¹⁹⁵ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Minutes of the Meeting of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held at the Ahenefie on Tuesday the 27th August 1968.

held in some houses. Sobore is thought to assist Sefwi in their undertakings, to protect them and to guarantee the prosperity of their land. Even though the relationship between humans and Sobore is managed by priests, these are under the supervision of the king to whom they render certain services (cf. McCaskie 1995: 121-135). The priest of Sobore is contacted when the *omanhene* faces ill health and may be asked to intervene when the kingdom is in danger. While Sobore acts as a unifying Sefwi spirit, what Danquah (1928: 130) terms a "national fetish", most villages have parallel supernatural beings acting on a more limited scale (Daaku 1974). While Sobore was largely connected to the king, chiefs managed less powerful local gods.

Even though I term *abosom* "supernatural" and "unearthly" powers, they are thought to be very much linked to the natural world. Spirits mediate between the supreme God and humans by intervening in daily life in several ways. *Abosom* may be benign and protective but can also be dangerous as they punish the wrongdoer (Gilbert 1989). At times, *abosom* act independently, at other times, only when their services are deliberately sought. Those in hierarchically superior positions, however, have the power both to judge what is immoral and to call upon a spirit to inflict punishment. *Abosom* are often sought to prevent insubordination which is deemed a malign act. This is usually achieved through the taking or drinking (*nom*) of *abosom* or by swearing on the spirit. Here the recourse to *abosom* is examined in two different hierarchical domains: chiefs' repression of their dependants' autonomy and men's control over women's sexuality.

Abosom nom is a way to appeal to a spirit to witness the truth of an event or to sanction a course of action. The ceremony consists in the drinking of a certain substance containing the unearthly power. Fear of supernatural intervention obliges the one who drinks the spirit to tell the truth or to refrain from a possible line of action. Rattray (1923: 109-110) offers a vivid description of "fetish" drinking which is worth quoting in full.

[A chief administered a] fetish to a priest who had had a lawsuit with his nephew and had lost his case. By reason of the former's special position -as a priest- it was feared he might be tempted to retaliate on the nephew by soliciting the power of his gods against him. The *omanhene* and his elders had therefore decided that he should go through the ceremony of *abosom nom*, lit. 'drinking the gods'. A small bottle called

abosom toa (the gods' phial), containing the liquid to be drunk, was produced. The water is generally made potent by having been poured either over a god or gods or possibly over a stool or some other article having special properties as being the shrine of some spirit, human or divine; in the former case to invoke the power of the god, in the latter the assistance of the spirit of the dead. A little rum was added to the contents of the bottle. The mixture was then poured into a cup made by twisting cleverly together leaves of a tree called *adwin*. The priest who was to drink, now advanced [and] spoke as follows:

'As Fagyase (his god) is wedded to me, and if what he (i.e. the god) says is not what I shall tell, and if I make love or if I make hate the excuse for any falsehood, may the gods I am drinking slay me'

The ... chief then raised the cup of leaves three times to the priest's lips, until he had drained all the contents. A bell was rung over the man's head while he was drinking. The priest was then given a glass of rum. The chief who had administered the draught said: 'If you do not speak the truth may these gods slay you!'. The priest replied: 'I swear the great oath that I shall speak the truth'. He was quivering from head to foot during the whole of this ordeal, which now ended.

Office holders make widespread use of *abosom nom* to secure their subordinates' trustworthiness. Chiefs' linguists, for example, need to drink *abosom* and swear an oath on taking office, committing themselves to tell the truth and give honest advice (Yankah 1995: 92-94).

A court record provides insights into chiefs' uses of "fetishes" to create and shift relations of subordination. In 1908, Kofi Wusu, a subordinate chief of the Sefwi Wiawso *omanhene* tried to break off his allegiance. Conflict ensued between the king's followers and Wusu's dependants. The *omanhene* came off best and persecuted Wusu's followers. This retaliation was aimed at dissolving Wusu's ties with his dependants. The king used coercive violence: Wusu's followers were subject to various types of maltreatment and torture such as being publicly disgraced, left for days without food or physically harassed. Armed men were sent on a rampage in Wusu's village: they sacked houses, destroyed crops and beat up residents.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁶ GNA Accra ADM 11/1/1697, p. 19.

The king and his followers also resorted to *abosom nom* and other supernatural powers against Wusu's followers. Wusu described the measures taken by the *omanhene*.

When the young men [Wusu's followers] came they were all asked to take fetish against me. All my wives were told to call 'Kobiri' against me that they would no more mention my name. Whoever refused was severely flogged. None of the boys who had taken fetish against me could approach me. Messengers were sent to arrest the remainder of my people He then called a fetish on any one who followed Kofi Wusu.¹⁹⁷

The *omanhene*'s choice of *abosom* was carefully made. Most of the spirits before which Wusu's dependants were made to swear were known and feared: the powerful fetish 'Kobiri' was used on some occasions. In another instance the king resorted to an imported fetish.

[The *omanhene*] called them [Wusu's kin and] said: 'I am going to give you a Fetish to swear' He gave them a fetish at Amafi [a village close to Wiawso] called Famia, the priest of it is called Chefiro, from the Ivory Coast. The man who brought it, Kyerefo, said this fetish is not for women to swear. The om. [*omanhene*] said it was, on this occasion.¹⁹⁸

Diverse and innovative forms of supernatural threat were sought out. One of Wusu's nephews described one technique: "They made me kneel before the [*omanhene* and] he rubbed his sandals on my head [and] said I would have no luck henceforth".¹⁹⁹ People faithful to Kofi Wusu were taken prisoner by the *omanhene* and "were asked to take fetish. An old human head [skull] was brought. They washed the ruins with rum: put it [the fetish] in the head and asked to drink it [and] promise ... not to give evidence if Wusu took action [in court]". One of Wusu's followers who was made to drink from the skull, commented: "I said I had never heard of such a form of fetish".²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁷ GNA Accra ADM 11/1/1697, p. 22-23.

¹⁹⁸ GNA Accra ADM 11/1/1697, p. 25; cf. p. 59.

¹⁹⁹ GNA Accra ADM 11/1/1697, p. 63. Chiefly sandals are part of a symbolic complex which is the privilege of office-holders. Commoners' and lower office-holders' use of sandals is regulated. The foot on the head is a symbol of defeat or subordination (cf. Fortes 1967: 17).

²⁰⁰ GNA Accra ADM 11/1/1697, p. 56.

Spirits are also used by husbands to check their wives' loyalty both during marriage and on divorce. Husbands resort to *abosom* to constrain their wives' sexuality. Reasons for forcing women to take "fetish" are similar to those sought by chiefs. A husband's recourse to spirits is aimed at discovering and preventing his wife's sexual insubordination. A husband who suspects a wife's misconduct, confronts her and calls a spirit:

If from to-day you mention the name of, or speak with, or receive presents from, or have any intercourse with ..., may the national fetish kill you and may you be arraigned for violating the National Oath (Danquah 1928: 172).

Danquah points out that "the wife has no right to contend against anything in this sort of prohibition":

the first care of the wife is, naturally, to safeguard her honour and to strengthen the husband's belief in her fidelity. For this reason, there is always the right for the husband to call upon the wife at any time to 'take fetish' before the relatives as to her fidelity and past conduct. The wife is bound to confess as much as she knows on pain of being killed or adversely acted on by the National or other Tribal Fetish which had been invoked (Danquah 1928: 155; cf. Kyei 1992: 71-74).

The following quotes refer to a husband's recourse to *abosom nom* in Sefwi in 1905. Appia (the defendant) and Makor were married. Then, Makor felt her husband was not complying with his marital duties and sought divorce:

I was married to defendant. I bore him children. I used to look after the children myself [and] stood all this expenses without help from defendant. I wanted to leave defendant [and] refused to live with him.

Appia suspected that the woman was not divorcing because of his failure to fulfil his responsibilities but because Tieku (the plaintiff) was her lover. Appia felt that his wife's behaviour towards Tieku conformed to a husband-wife relationship: "I went to Bibianah for labour. When I returned I met plaintiff in my house. My wife was cooking for plaintiff [and] supply him with water to bath with". Appia therefore resorted to a spirit to force his wife to admit her adultery.

Defendant said he would bring a fetish, which if I allowed any man to have connection [sex] with me [and] did not acknowledge it, that I would die. This fetish was brought [and] I was asked if any man had connection with me. Defendant mentioned the name of one Tiekú [the plaintiff] [and] said if when I left him [the defendant] I went [and] slept with Tiekú that the Fetish Abajina would kill me. He mentioned the name of other fetishes which would kill me if I slept with Tiekú.²⁰¹

Rattray (1927: 86) mentions a similar use of *abosom nom* in marriage agreements. Betrothed girls are supposed to be virgins at marriage. Should the husband have some suspicion and the bride refuse to admit previous love affairs, the man can ask his wife-to-be to swear an "oath" that she should be killed by an "*obosom*" if she were lying. It is also thought that birth difficulties are often due to adultery. Women having labour problems confess their lovers' names to help in the delivery (Kyei 1992: 54-55).

Recourse to spirits has certainly diminished with the spread of Christianity. In 1914, however, it was popular in Sefwi:

There can be little doubt that among the pure Akan speaking people fetish practices of all kinds die very rapidly when exposed to the influences which the development of their country brings in its train amongst the Sefwi ... whose religious faculties are of a stronger type the inclination to abandon the old beliefs is less conspicuous.²⁰²

In 1919, the situation had not changed much: "The Omanhin of Sefwi is one of the last fetish kings. All Sefwi is therefore very fetish ridden".²⁰³ In 1922, a travelling priest stated that "the villages are entirely given up to Fetishism".²⁰⁴ In the 1940s, Sefwi men still used *abosom* to control women's sexuality (cf. Roberts 1985: 381-382).

²⁰¹ GNA Accra ADM 48/4/2, Tiekú vs. Appia, case no. 11, 27-1-1905. No judgment was given in this occasion the "case being purely a native question"; the plaintiff was advised to remit the case to a "native court".

²⁰² PRO CO 96/543, F. 13456 "Native Affairs", Gov. to Harcourt, enc., Report of Commissioner for Native Affairs, 24-3-1914. In 1893, the king of Sefwi Wiawso was unwilling to receive a Methodist missionary (Debrunner 1967: 181).

²⁰³ Methodist Mission Society Records, SOAS, MSS 5A Gold Coast 1835-1931; Box 770, General File 1918, Item 27, Horler to Goudie, 15-5-1919. Missionary data on the use of *abosom* is characterized by the necessity to denounce the "evil"; this often prevents a thorough understanding of the phenomenon.

²⁰⁴ Methodist Mission Society Records, SOAS, MSS 5A Gold Coast 1835-1931; Box 770, General File 1920-22, Item 87, Witter, DC's bungalow, Wiawso to Thompson, 1-12-1922.

Man accused of putting a woman under fetish Kobiri if she told her father that he had had sexual connection with her. He pleads for the case to be withdrawn from the tribunal as it is a customary matter and he will drink fetish to make amends.²⁰⁵

Religious practices were still very much linked to gender issues. Etienne (1966: 386-389) describes how two new cults which spread in the Ivory Coast in the 1950s had a negative impact on female independence. Nowadays the vast majority of the Sefwi population is Christian. The recourse to *abosom*, however, has not died out: even though one hears that Christians should not use spirits, the use of *abosom* is still common and feared.

Oath swearing

Ntam kasa, usually translated as oath swearing, is the uttering of prohibited words which refer to a past misfortune or disaster which occurred to an ancestor. Reference to past incidents is avoided because the forebears are offended by the recollection of disasters and because the remembrance of misfortunes may cause their reappearance.²⁰⁶ Different sequences of words -normally consisting of a toponym of where the incident occurred and the week day in which it took place- are forbidden to different stools and elders. Since ancestry varies, the importance and the geographical and social reach of *ntam kasa* differs. When Busia (1951: 69) states: "The swearing of an oath was the deliberate transgression of a taboo: that is, the commission of a religious offence involving the whole tribe" he is referring to the king's oath, usually termed "Great Oath". If the oath being sworn is the one of the king, his ancestors, who represent the kingdom, are offended and therefore misfortune threatens the whole state (cf. Daaku 1974: 5). Oaths of inferior office-holders have more limited consequences.

Once the forbidden words are mentioned, the wrongdoer is called immediately in front of a stool holder or elder and the reason for the prohibited pronouncement is asked. *Ntam kasa* is

²⁰⁵ Pepe Roberts Papers, Sefwi Native Tribunal Court Archives, 10th Sept. 1941.

²⁰⁶ For example the king of Wiawso instituted a new oath in 1966 concerning the sufferings he had undergone during Nkrumah's rule. See Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Minutes of the Meeting of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held at the Ahenefie on Monday 19th December 1966.

normally used to begin legal proceedings: the aggrieved party utters the forbidden words to demand the immediate attention of the one whose oath was sworn. The purpose of oath-swearing is explained to the office-holder and a court hearing follows (Rattray 1927: 205-215; Busia 1951: 75-78; Mensah-Brown 1970; Roberts 1985).

A parallel use of oath swearing is to mention that a certain course of action is equivalent to or as significant as *ntam kasa*. Oath swearing, in this sense, is used to establish laws. Important chiefs, and the king in particular, can constrain and direct behaviour by stating that certain acts insult their ancestors and are therefore potentially disastrous to the community. Mensah-Brown (1970: 132) describes precolonial Akan laws thus:

Most of them [the newly enacted laws] were prohibitive in character, prohibiting 'the commission of certain specified acts or the pursuit of a certain line of action', and sanctioned with the chief's national taboo- to the effect that a breach of the law would be deemed a transgression of the community's taboo and punished accordingly.

Oaths are still used by chiefs to prescribe certain action from their subjects such as communal work (Busia 1951: 75, 77-78) or the cleaning of their houses (Rattray 1927: 212). In 1968 the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council decided to deduct 15 new pence from every load of cocoa and coffee produced in Sefwi. As the tax was collected by licensed buying agents, it became crucial that all production be sold to them. The following law was therefore passed:

Any farmer who sells cocoa-coffee to any buying agent who is not a licensed buying agent contravenes the State Oath "Tikwa ne Asantewa" and he should therefore be dealt with accordingly.²⁰⁷

Anybody can use *ntam kasa* to seek a court hearing, but chiefs and elders make the most of oaths as laws. They can both swear that a certain action is unlawful and judge its violation, being the ones in charge of preserving good relations with the ancestors and therefore of assuring that prohibited utterances, or actions equivalent to them, are punished. In the precolonial period, whoever pronounced prohibited words could be killed. Later the penalty

²⁰⁷ Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Minutes of the Meeting of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council held at the Ahenefie on Tuesday the 27th August 1968.

was limited to a heavy fine. In 1927 the District commissioner stated that "the Omanhene's Oath ... is largely responsible for the quiet that reigns in Wioso".²⁰⁸ Oath-swearing, however, is still seen as extremely binding. Oaths are deeply feared as clearly expressed by an Asante proverb: "A chief's oath [*ntam*] is like the hole a yam [large tuber] is planted in, no one falls into it and gets out unhurt" (Rattray 1916: 116).

Amanhene use *ntam kasa* to ensure their subordinate chiefs' fidelity. In Sefwi new stool holders need to *kasa ntam* in front of the king to prove their faithfulness. Busia (1951: 8; cf. p. 54) describes a similar procedure for Asante chiefs. The stool elders, on presenting the newly nominated chief to his superior, swear the following oath:

I beg to swear by Thursday (the forbidden oath), this man we have brought to you, if he does anything wrong, and I do not advise him, if I do not serve him well so that he may too serve you well, then I have broken my oath.

Busia (1951: 48, 73) states that chiefs can also ask elders to swear oaths or drink fetishes to prove their innocence. Kings use oaths to ensure themselves that their subordinate chiefs perform courageously during war. Chiefs have to swear to be valorous on the battlefield.

I swear the great oath that I will fight for my king [*owura*] and my country rather than become any one's slave [*akoa*]. If I fire a bullet and it will not pass (in front), I myself and my own head will go forward. If I do not do these things I swear, I take the great oath (Rattray 1916: 116-117; cf. Sarpong 1971: 54).

At the death of a superior chief all subordinates are once again called to swear an oath in front of the corpse (cf. Boaten 1993b).²⁰⁹ The *amanhene* of Sefwi Wiawso used oaths on several occasions to preserve the existing hierarchical order. I examine two uses of *ntam kasa* in particular. The first concerns the liberation of Dwaben slaves, a major political issue between

²⁰⁸ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/154, "Report for the Sefwi District for the financial year 1926-27".

²⁰⁹ For an example of oath-swearing after a chief's election in the Sefwi Wiawso kingdom, see GNA Accra ADM 11/1/706. See the oath-swearing in occasion of the *omanhene* of Sefwi Wiawso Nana Kwadwo Aduhene II's funeral; Video recorded and commented on by Mr. Mintah: "Funeral Rites of Nana Kwadwo Aduhene II, Omanhene of Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Area 28th January -24th February 1997, parts I and II".

1902 and 1904. The second recourse to oath swearing was aimed at regulating strangers' land access in the second half of the nineteenth century.

In the early twentieth century, *abosom nom* and *ntam kasa* were used in attempts to prevent the liberation of a large number of Dwaben slaves and their descendants held in Sefwi. These people were captured by the Asante in 1875 and brought to Sefwi. The *omanhene* of Dwaben asked the Sefwi king to buy them and promised to redeem them in the course of time. To sanction the agreement a fetish oath was drunk which was considered to be "the most binding form of contract". In 1903, the colonial government asked the Sefwi Wiawso *omanhene* to free the slaves without payment. He refused on the grounds that his "fetish oath" with the Dwaben king would be broken as the latter was supposed to buy the slaves back. Non-compliance with the oath, the Sefwi *omanhene* explained, would lead to the death of both him and the Dwaben king.²¹⁰

When an agreement was finally reached on a partial payment for those slaves who wished to return to Dwaben, the king used *ntam kasa* to prevent them from leaving Sefwi. The king was severely admonished by the District Commissioner:

Several different people have complained to me that while collecting the Juarbin [Dwaben] captives, you, your chiefs or your people are trying to make them swear your oath that they will not go to Juarbin, or by other means trying to force them to stay here.²¹¹

When unable to use physical coercion, Sefwi turned to supernatural intervention to preserve their bonds of subordination. This was not an uncommon practice. *Obosom nom* was used to constrain the freedom of slaves on other occasions. Rattray (1929: 42) points out that runaway slaves, when caught, were made to drink "fetish" and swear that they would not escape again.

While Sefwi used oaths to prevent the slaves from leaving, those who sought their return resorted to *abosom* to force those who had chosen to remain in Sefwi to leave anyway. The District Commissioner describes Dwaben slaves in Sefwi as follows.

²¹⁰ GNA Accra ADM 48/1/2, Breckenridge to the Honorable The Colonial Secretary, Asafu, 21-1-1903.

²¹¹ GNA Accra ADM 48/1/2, Claridge to King of Wiosu, Asafu, 21-11-1903.

They have settled down here farming, trading, etc. and are quite content. Then someone comes along from the country from which their forefathers came and after a deal of persuasion in which fetish threats are used, the people decide to return to their original country. The people have no wish to return, they are generally threatened into it.²¹²

The contest of the *amanhene* of Dwaben and Sefwi over subjects was played out by using supernatural powers. In the agreement between the Sefwi and Dwaben kings, *obosom nom* was used to sanction a mutually binding contract. When *ntam kasa* and *abosom* were used with subordinates they had different implications. Resort to unearthly powers was instrumental in creating and maintaining subordinate bonds.

By the second half of the twentieth century, farming rights had replaced subjects as the main source of chiefs' wealth. When land pressure began to make itself felt and land value rapidly increased, Sefwi used their oaths to control immigrant farmers. Sefwi felt their tenants were frequently enlarging their farms beyond the plots allotted to them and failing to pay taxes (see chapter 5). Oaths were used to force strangers to comply with Sefwi's demands. In 1964, some immigrant farmers acquired a portion of primary forest from the Akaakromhene, a stool-holder under the Amoyawhene, an important chief. The tenants paid an initial amount and one bottle of alcoholic drink. Later the Amoyawhene demanded a new amount "to confirm the deal and give his blessing to our venture as the Land Lord". In 1970, the Amoyawhene was deposed and his successor "came to inform us that he was going to measure our farms and collect money from each of us according to the size of the farm". The chief was probably claiming that the tenants had worked the land beyond the boundaries granted them. The farmers pleaded with the newly nominated chief for him to be patient as the farms had not yet started bearing cocoa.

The Chief refused or objected to our explanation and has sworn the Sefwihene's Oath on all of us stopping us from developing our new farms. As strangers, we are afraid to flout this order by working in our farms in defiance of the oath because we may be

²¹² GNA Accra ADM 48/1/2, Breckenridge to King Kwamin Tano, Wioso, Asafu 29-12-1902.

beaten up by the Chief's subjects We feel that the Land-Lord could bring any claim against us through the Law Court but not intimidate and harrass [sic] us in this way.²¹³

Sefwi made considerable use of *ntam kasa* during the most delicate moment of their relationship with tenant farmers. In 1986, the chiefs and local government ruled that strangers' land possessions were to be "registered". Immigrant farmers refused to comply. In January 1987, the king swore an oath that strangers could not clear new farms.²¹⁴ In the following months, Sefwi began to chase immigrants from their farms violently, accusing them of having broken the oath. The farmers complained bitterly to the government.

We, the over 80,000 Tenant Farmers, humbly wish to inform you that, since the beginning of this farming season, the Omanhene has invoked the traditional Oath enjoining all the tenant Farmers from farming. Consequently, he has organized gangs involving Sefwi born militia personnel within all the traditional area combing through farms, arresting Tenant Farmers they find farming, beating them mercilessly, bringing them before him and finding [fining] them fantastically

In view of the above, we the Tenant Farmers solicit the Government ... to revoke all the traditional oaths to allow us to go on with our normal farming duties.²¹⁵

The contest between tenant farmers and Sefwi became an issue of oath swearing. The government backed the immigrants and passed a decree suspending the swearing of the Sefwi oath. A Sefwi pressure group immediately contested the "Government order ... saying that the Tenant farmers should ignore the Sacred Oath".²¹⁶ The *omanhene*, through his secretary, pleaded to reinstate his oath.

The Oath of a Traditional area is the symbol of the authority of the Chiefs in that particular area; its invocation in no small measure prevents the citizens from doing

²¹³ This case is reconstructed from a petition forwarded by a group of tenant farmers. See GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/60, "Cocoa Farmers Association to The Regional Chief Executive Officer", 5th February 1970. Few months later a similar case was reported; see GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/60, "Petition for your Leniency...", 16th July 1970.

²¹⁴ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/138, "Complaint against the P.N.D.C. District Secretary...", 19th January 1987.

²¹⁵ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/138, "Invocation of Traditional Oath...", 9th April 1987.

²¹⁶ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/138, "Campaign of falsehood...", n.d. [May/June 1987].

wrong. Suspension of the Oath involved has weakened the administration of the Sefwi Wiawso Area traditionally.²¹⁷

Appeal to supernatural intervention is potentially accessible to all. There are, however, social norms regulating the legitimate recourse to divine powers. Superior hierarchical positions end up making the most of recourse to spirits. Sefwi -and particularly chiefs- rather than strangers, men more than women, and elders rather than youngsters tend to appeal to unearthly spirits. Being able to compel people to drink spirits and having the right to swear binding oaths, have been two uses of the supernatural which have enabled those in superior hierarchical positions to create and preserve subordination. Recourse to the supernatural was sought alongside or in place of physical coercion to stop dependants from following courses of action those in hierarchically superior positions termed wrong and immoral or simply deemed undesirable. Chiefs used spirits and oath-swearing to assure the loyalty of subordinates. Men forced women to "drink fetish" to constrain their sexual freedom. Sefwi resorted to oath-swearing in periods when the material bases of chiefly power were menaced. As their sources of power were altered over the twentieth century, the recourse to oath-swearing changed accordingly. While at the beginning of the century *ntam kasa* was used to stop slaves from leaving Sefwi, by the end of the century it was aimed at enforcing what Sefwi considered legitimate land rights.

²¹⁷ GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/138, "Suspension of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Oath 'Tikwa ne Asantewa'...", 15th March 1988.

Chapter 12.

Transactional codes

Transactions of certain material and immaterial items often follow directions determined by the rank of those involved in the exchange. Transfers of goods divide society into two relational groups: providers and receivers. Food and drinks are at the centre of many of these transactional strategies in the Akan area as elsewhere. Young's (1971) work, concerned with the Goodenough Island (South-East Asia), contains in-depth descriptions on the use of food transactions as competitive resources in ceremonial events. Goody (1982) has reviewed the connections between food and power structures cross-culturally. Wiessner and Schiefenhövel (1996) have recently edited an interdisciplinary volume containing works of primatologists, anthropologists and archaeologists on the relationship between status and food. The role of food in forging identities and attributing rank has been examined in West Africa as well (Goody and Goody 1995, de Garine 1996). This chapter discusses the coherence between Sefwi hierarchical relations and transfers of food and drinks.

Food transactions

Guaranteeing food is the duty of men towards women; elders towards youngsters; Sefwi towards foreigners. Food provision is the core element of a set of transactions which are the responsibility of the hierarchically superior towards his subordinates (cf. Pavanello 1995a: 39-40). Besides food, people's medical expenses, accommodation and textiles are usually included in these transfers. Amongst these goods, however, food features as the most significant element both from a monetary and a symbolic point of view; and while accommodation, cloths and medical expenses may be excluded from transactions towards subordinates, food may not. For example, in the *abunu* sharetenancy and the *abusa* sharecropping contracts accommodation, textiles, and domestic expenses are seldom provided to the labourer, while he is normally granted food. Apprentices receive no goods except food from their work master.

Food provision comprises multiple transactions. In Sefwi "food" means agricultural products and meat or fish. The former such as cassava, yam, cocoyam, plantain, maize are

processed to form starchy dishes. A stew or sauce is added in which meat or fish is combined with tomatoes, okra, pepper, onions, garden eggs, peanuts, etc. The household consumes daily either hunted game, meat of reared animals, eggs or smoked fish brought from the coast and available in most villages. In Sefwi the word "*enam*" is used to refer to both meat and fish while the type of *enam*, is distinguished by using a prefix which indicates the particular animal. Protein-rich foods hold a central importance: a meal without them is considered incomplete and a sign of poverty; on the other hand, the consumption of costly items such as fish or meat as well as canned foods and bread indicates a wealthy status. While all household members receive protein-rich food at meals, the quantity and quality of the allocation indicates the hierarchical position within the household: the head receives large portions, followed by decreasing quantities allotted to the wife and children.

The Sefwi forest provided sufficient game to feed its population until cocoa farming spread in the region. Up to the 1950s, household heads provided meat by embarking on hunting expeditions. The availability of meat and fish has decreased steadily over the last fifty years. Today very few Sefwi are professional hunters even though many set traps on their farms and the game killed no longer satisfies the population's demand. The availability of snails, which used to be a key element of Sefwi diet and exports up to the 1930s, has also drastically decreased.²¹⁸

Today provision of food from husband to wife consists of the transfer of *adidisika*, literally "money to eat" (cf. Hardiman 1974: 111).²¹⁹ Danquah (1928: 154) describes the monetization of food provision in Akyem Abuakwa in the early decades of the twentieth century.

The husband has to provide meat and fish, and if he cannot hunt or fish himself he must give money to his wife to buy these from the market. The habit is also growing for husbands to buy not only meat but foodstuffs also for the household; this is usually the

²¹⁸ GNA Kumasi ARG 1/3/1/185, Kukuom 30th Jan 1903; GNA Accra ADM 48/1/1, Breckenridge to Commissioner Western Province, Asafu 14-10-1904; GNA Kumasi ARG 1/3/1/189, Kobina Kufuor to The Honourable, The Colonial Secretary 4th January 1921; GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/155, "Annual Report for the Sefwi Aowin District for the year 1934-1935".

²¹⁹ The word *didi* means to eat while *sika* indicates money. Another name for *adidisika* is *akônhama* (Kyei 1992: 40) or *akroma* (Clark 1994: 344). At times the English "chop money" is used as well.

case when there is not sufficient crop in the plantation or in case of famine (cf. Mensah-Brown 1968: 64, 79; Roberts 1987: 53-54).

In the Sefwi area the *adidisika* is still usually provided entirely by household heads. In other areas of the Akan world women are said to contribute to the payment of expenses (Mikell 1997b; Clark 1994: 330-344). Most authors, however, seem to agree that these are momentary breaches of custom (Tashjian 1995: 183-194) and wives stress that providing food remains the husbands' responsibility (Abu 1983: 163-168; Adomako Ampofo 1997).

The payment of *adidisika* is an essential element of domestic life. Monetary transactions for food expenses normally begin before marriage. When a love affair goes on for some time, the man or the woman may ask their partner if she or he is willing to take or give *adidisika* to cook. If an agreement is reached on the transfer of money, the relationship is strengthened. The provision of *adidisika* becomes obligatory with marriage: the husband must supply enough money for the wife to cook for the entire household.

Food transactions are key symbolic regulators of the relationship between spouses. It is the man's duty to supply food to his household members: wife, children and other subordinates. He does so by creating the conditions for agricultural production and by providing meat. Men are said to furnish agricultural foodstuffs through the yearly clearing of the farm where food-crops are planted. Women are thought to be unable to clear new plots of primary or secondary forest to begin new farms. Woodford-Berger (1981: 7) states that "the role of bread-winner and food provider is central to women's productive identities". This statement corresponds to what is observable and not to how the Akan intend food transactions. Even though women perform the greatest part of the labour on food farms, the man's initial clearing is essential and viewed as a kind of food provision (cf. chapter 6).

If the household produces its own food-crops, the *adidisika* will be used for smoked fish, oil, salt, spices, and tomatoes when these are not available from the farm. If the household owns no farm, the *adidisika* must cover the expenses for the food-crops as well (maize, rice, cassava, yam and plantain). Approximately half of Sefwi household's expenses are directed

towards the purchase of food; out of these, half is spent on smoked fish or meat.²²⁰ A Sefwi man explained the inevitability of the provision of *adidisika* thus:

Normally, as a man, when you wake up in the morning you give chop money [money for food] to the woman. There is a place on the table where you put it and later she will come and collect it. As a man this is your duty and your responsibility, every day.²²¹

Some household heads agree with their wives the payment of a monthly amount, others fix a daily sum. Still others negotiate it from day to day according to what is purchased. If a guest is invited, a supplementary sum may be provided. On the other hand, if some game is captured by the household head, he may ask the wife to return part of the *adidisika* as he hands over the meat to her. Through the payment of the *adidisika* the man is said to supply food for his wife and children.

Husbands may in no way ignore their responsibility as food providers. If a husband is unable or unwilling to pay the required amount, he is said to have got into debt, *obo eka*. Household heads' debts are of different kinds: they may consist of money to be paid to store-keepers from which the debtor's wife received items, promising that the husband will supply the amount shortly; debts may also consist of money to be refunded by the household head to somebody who paid for expenses incurred for the former's dependants (cf. Hagan 1983: 196-197). For instance, if the husband has no cash available, the wife may supply the *adidisika*. In such case, it is her right to keep a detailed account of the husband's debt, i.e. of all expenses paid by her on his behalf, and to present it to her husband as soon as he has cash available. If a household head travels, he should provide *adidisika* for all the days he is planning to be away. On his return, if the number of days he has been absent exceeds that for which *adidisika* was furnished, a supplementary sum should be provided to discharge his debt.

Husbands normally fail to provide *adidisika* when the relationship with the wife is strained either by an unresolved quarrel or by the man's directing of his monetary resources towards

²²⁰ See Boni (1993: 62-66), Beckett (1944: 46-55), Dutta-Roy and Mabey (1968: 40, 58).

²²¹ Godlove Opoku, Debiso, 24-7-1997, English.

his lover or younger wife. If the wife feels her husband is not performing his duty with regard to the provision of *adidisika*, she may ask the village elders to advise him to furnish food regularly. If the elders' advice has no effect, the woman may decide to take the case to the District Social Welfare Office. The officer's attempt to resolve disputes between spouses closely resembles the elders' settlements in villages. The woman is asked to present her case - normally demanding that the husband pay the *adidisika* or/and other expenses. She is questioned by the man. The man then presents his version of the facts -often disclaiming responsibility- and is then questioned by his wife. The officer questions both parties and usually comes to the conclusion that the wife's claims are legitimate. He then tries to reach an agreement between the parties on the size of the debt incurred by the husband. A daily amount of *adidisika* is established and it is multiplied by the number of days in which the husband failed to pay.²²²

The following conversation between a woman who had recently received a message from her husband announcing divorce, and the Social Welfare Officer at Wiawso, exemplifies the symbolic importance of food provision in relationships between spouses. The marriage had begun to deteriorate four years before this meeting was recorded. An initial settlement had taken place. The woman narrated how the husband had not complied with the terms agreed in the first settlement.

[Woman]: When I gave birth [four years ago], he did not look after me. So it was agreed that he would give me one cloth, and after my delivery another cloth, and a dress for the child to wear, and also my chop money which he says he would not give me. He should pay all this. And he didn't pay any Now he has left me

[Social Welfare Officer]: Now, after the first settlement, did he look after [*hwe*] you as his wife?

[Woman]: He didn't look after [*hwe*] me at all, but I thought he would stop [this attitude]. So, one year ago they said he cleared a farm and did not give me [a part]. And I thought this year he would clear a farm and give it to me. This year, again, he gave it to his wife, to his younger wife, he cleared a farm and gave it to her.²²³

²²² Mikell (1995, 1997b) studied similar settlements in Accra's "Family Courts" and in the Sunyani High Court. The attempt to settle cases at the Social Welfare Office is the step which precedes taking the matter to court.

In this instance the wife was abandoned by her husband: for two consecutive years he assigned the entire land he had cleared to his younger wife, ignoring the senior one. This is an explicit breach of his marital responsibility.

To a certain extent, the household head's social value rests on food provision. The fulfillment of his role as husband and father depends on his capacity to supply food. If he is unable or unwilling to meet these requirements, a social crisis occurs. This may be resolved either through the husband's payment of his debts, of the amounts he should have paid but failed to pay, or through divorce. If spouses quarrel and the woman feels she is in the right, she may leave for her father's or uncle's house. It is the man's duty to trace her. On the husband's arrival, if he is found responsible for his wife's departure, besides settling the issue which troubled the relationship, the husband is asked to refund the *adidisika* to whomever catered for the woman during her residence away from his house. If the wife lives with the uncle or father for one week and the daily *adidisika* is calculated at 1,000 cedis per day, the husband is asked to pay 7,000 cedis.

Even though the provision of food is a central marital institution and an inescapable responsibility, there is room for negotiations concerning when and how much *adidisika* is demanded and offered. While the payment of *adidisika* is an ineluctable duty, Sefwi's attitudes towards this payment are adapted to specific contexts. An example recorded in 1997 may give some idea of a practical application of the social norms concerning *adidisika*. Afua, a woman of the village of Anglo, married a man from the neighbouring village of Akoti and gave birth to two children. Afua's husband then married a second wife. In 1996, Afua returned to her mother's household for the delivery of her third child. After the child's birth, Afua and her household waited in vain for the husband to show up or for him to send the *adidisika*. Three months after delivery, Afua's household members went to Akoti and sought divorce. The husband admitted his negligence and promised to pay his debt shortly. The husband went to Anglo only three months after his meeting with Afua's kin. Afua's brother,

²²³ Audio recording, Social Welfare Office, Akosua Adee lodging a complaint, Wiawso, 7-8-1997, Twi. After this conversation the husband was summoned to report to the Social Welfare Office where the matter was to be discussed further.

the household head, then asked him to pay the *adidisika* and expenses for kerosene and soap for six months, a total of 100,000 cedis (£40). The husband promised to pay within two weeks. In November 1997, six months after this agreement, the husband had not yet paid anything. Afua's brother and other members of the household wanted to return to Akoti and sanction the divorce, but she prevented them from doing so. Afua felt that if she divorced, the father would provide scarce assistance for her children in the future (cf. Clark 1994: 342-343).

The calculation of the debt payable by the household head for neglecting food provision is a strategic indicator of the state of the relationship between spouses and their kin. Calculations of husbands' debts vary considerably. If the wife and her family feel that the husband is systematically neglecting her and needs a reprimand, they calculate all expenses meticulously, trying to inflate the husband's debt. The request for a large amount, however, is hazardous: the husband may feel that he is being treated harshly and seek divorce once the amount is paid. If, on the other hand, the wife and her family feel that the husband's negligence is temporary and they want to preserve the relationship, the amount claimed will be minimized.

Separation of spouses before divorce, such as in Afua's case, creates an uncomfortable situation for both the wife's kin and the husband: the expenses for the woman's feeding are covered by the wife's kin even though they are still the responsibility of the husband who neglects her. The women's kin need to provide her with *adidisika* while not being in full control of her labour (the husband could at any time come, pay his debt and take her back to his household) while the husband does not benefit from her services and accumulates a debt towards his wife's kin. The resolution of the issue regularizes this disharmony: either the woman divorces and reverts to being a subordinate member of her kin's household, or the husband begins to supply her with food once again.

The following case, from which I quote extensively, was heard at the Social Welfare Office at Wiawso in July 1997 and exemplifies the diverging calculations of the husband's debt. The relationship between husband and wife had reached a critical point. A first settlement was reached but the husband had failed to comply with its terms. On this second occasion, he still refused to acknowledge any debt at all. The wife's brother, by contrast,

claimed a large sum. The Social Welfare officer and the wife tried to find a workable compromise.

The wife complained that during her last delivery the husband had provided her with insufficient assistance. The husband claimed that he had given her money indirectly by letting her sell the food-crops from his farm. He was not liable to pay *adidisika* because, according to him, the wife had derived the *adidisika* from the sale of food-crops.

[Social Welfare Officer to woman]: So when your husband comes does he give you any money?

[Woman]: No.

[Social Welfare Officer to woman]: He comes and looks [at the child] just like that?

[Woman]: Yes. He comes because of the children. He comes and quickly goes. Last week he gave my child 200 [cedis]

[Man]: I uproot cassava and we sell it to get money. I do not collect the profits from what she sells, so that she can buy some fish instead of coming to me for money.

The Social Welfare officer ironically stated that he could not imagine the size of the farm for the woman to make so much profit by selling food-crops alone. The man added that he had given his wife 10,000 cedis to trade some years back. The profits from the trade should be combined with the food-crops' sale to provide the *adidisika*.

[Man]: That's what I do to them [my two wives]. When the time is ripe I give them money for them to trade and do not collect the profits. I always paid for the expenses in the period of delivery. [What she says] is not true. I come here and give them money, but not every time.

[Social Welfare Officer to man]: [You gave her] 200 [cedis] for morning, afternoon and evening [meals], for one and a half weeks!

[Man]: If she goes to the farm she gets food. She gets cassava, excuse me, and she will buy foodstuffs [with the money from the selling of cassava].

[Social Welfare Officer to man]: Doesn't she buy fish? Don't the children go to school?

The Social Welfare officer pointed out that the cost of fish and school-fees could not be met with the selling of food-crops. The husband was made to acknowledge that he had got into debt. The wife and her brother claimed two separate debts. One resulted from the feeding of

the wife before and after delivery, claimed by her brother and father, and another for soap and kerosene paid by the wife herself.

[Woman's brother]: We have not spoken of a debt to be paid to my father. I cannot bring this problem [unresolved] to the village. And he [the husband] does not pay it, he can not take it [the debt] and go. There is a big problem here. Her [woman's] father, his [man's] father-in-law, says he [the husband] is in debt

[Social welfare officer to woman's brother]: Which debt?

[Woman's brother]: It is the eating that she spoke about. My father gave her money for her to eat, chopmoney so that she eats. And at the time the child was born, he [the husband] did not take fish, he did not bring food to the house. He did not take anything to the house. Why didn't he bring food from the farm so that she could eat? Every day she ate in the street [from kiosks selling food] and my father paid part and I paid part. My father and I paid this debt

[Social Welfare Officer to man]: And you did not go to meet your father-in-law about the debt?

[Man to Social Welfare Officer]: They came and calculated this debt because I did not look after her. How many months? He [the father-in-law] said four months today. So every day she eats one thousand [cedis] Four months, this makes me pay 120 [thousand cedis]. But I say it is not true. I gave them money for them [my wives] to go and trade. They go to the farm and take food. When I get meat I bring them some. Some days I bring them money. How I look after them is there [for everyone] to see. It is impossible that I will pay that money. That's all the case.

The husband felt that the calculation of the amount made by his wife's father and brother was unfair and refused to pay. The Social Welfare officer made the two parties find an agreement on the amount payable to the woman's brother and father for the period before delivery. Then the woman reminded the officer that she should be refunded money as well.

[Woman]: [My brother and father] will collect the chopmoney during the last five months of pregnancy, but what about after delivery when I bought soap and kerosene? What about it? He gave to me 3,000 [cedis]. Can 1,000 a week buy soap?

[Man]: I gave you 1,000; 2,000; 1,000. I carry food and give it to you

Finally, an agreement was reached but another issue needed to be addressed: the Social Welfare officer tried to make the husband fix a daily amount of *adidisika* which he should supply to his wife. The issue again gave rise to ill feelings between the wife's brother and the

husband. The former provoked the latter by questioning his capacity as food provider; the husband responded with anger.

[Social Welfare Officer]: We have now found a solution. Ehi, I haven't finished. [To woman] You have to eat! [To man] How do we do it? Before you pay your debt and take her to your village, you and her have to sit down and decide the money you will give her and the children for eating every day. From today onwards, until you pay the debt. How much will you give her every day?

[Man]: For that, I can not tell you. What God gives me ... Because they go to my farm and uproot cassava. If I don't have money, she can go to the farm and uproot cassava, they sell it and take some [money].

[Woman's brother]: Do you have cassava?

[Man- angrily]: Don't I have cassava? Don't I have cassava on my farm?

[Woman]: I won't get enough cassava to sell and get chopmoney.

[Man]: Okay, she says she will not get some. I will go and uproot it and sell it myself.²²⁴

The quotations from this settlement exemplify the negotiability of marital relationships and calculations of debts within the accepted framework of the husband acting as food-provider on behalf of the wife and household members. The way in which food was provided to the wife was questioned and discussed: the husband claimed that his food provision consisted of the supply of an amount for trading and the permission granted to the wife to sell food-crops; the wife and her brother claimed that the money thus furnished was insufficient.

Food transfers in the Akan area are often said to be linked to sex. The same word "*di*" is used for both having sex and eating (eating however is usually referred to as "*adidi*"). Men and women can express their feelings concerning the relationship by means of food transactions and by where and with whom meals are consumed. Transfers of "good" food show affection and desire while the interruption of these transfers or the degradation of their quality express the strained state of the relationship. This is true for food transactions in both directions: men provide food by granting the *adidisika* and by clearing new farms, women cook and serve food.

²²⁴ Audio recording, Social Welfare Office, Akosua Adze vs. Kofi Acqua, Wiawso, 10-7-1997, Twi.

Some examples help clarify this. A boyfriend who clears a farm for his girlfriend shows that his intentions are serious and marriage is in prospect. On the other hand, a husband's refusal to clear a plot for his wife means that he does not intend providing her with foodstuffs for the following year. While the man may rely on his or on another wife's labour, the woman's situation may become critical. Not clearing a plot for the wife or providing low or irregular *adidisika* are breaches of the husband's marital obligations which show a lack of interest towards the wife and often lead to divorce (cf. Hagan 1983: 194-195; Tashjian 1995: 176-180).

Husbands who supply *adidisika* to their lovers normally consume two meals at evening time, one cooked by the wife and, later, another by the lover. The man goes to his girlfriend's house secretly at night to consume a second meal; this evening meal is an occasion to meet and build on the relationship. Men normally eat alone or with other adult men, kin or friends. For a husband, father, or boyfriend to consume his meal with his wife, children, or girlfriend is a sign of affection. A girlfriend may add some of her own money to her boyfriend's *adidisika* to make his meal more abundant and attractive, thus making plain her love. By contrast, a wife who refuses to cook or purposely degrades the quality of the husband's meal by apparently careless cooking, expresses her dissatisfaction with the relationship (cf. Abu 1983: 159-162; Clark 1989, 1994: 346-347).

The fact that food transactions are used by both partners as a way of expressing their feelings towards the relationship does not, however, mean that food transactions between spouses are symmetrical. The husband, being the food provider, stops granting food, while the wife, in charge of household chores, stops processing it. Europeans may be tempted to define food transactions as the cooking and serving of comestibles from wives to husbands, but Sefwi perceive food-transactions as flowing in the opposite direction. It is the husband who provides the food by furnishing the ingredients. Women do not supply food, they just cook it. The "work" of the husband provides the household's food, while cooking (not viewed as "work") is simply a household chore (chapter 10). When the wife brings the evening meal to her husband she is not providing him with food, she is just serving him part of the food he has procured.

The provision of food follows the direction from the hierarchically superior to the inferior, but the ways in which food is transferred vary greatly. The code of food transactions is applied beyond relationships within the nuclear family. If regular help is demanded to assist in household chores, the helper -usually a youngster- acquires the rights of a child. He or she should be provided with food, alongside medical and scholastic expenses. Apprentices are often offered small amounts as *adidisika* at lunch, while they normally eat the evening meal in their houses. A work master who does not supply *adidisika* to his apprentices is said to be cruel. Guests are offered food and drinks during funerals. Chiefs have numerous dependants to whom they should transfer food. Visitors are hosted in the chief's palace and are asked to eat to their satisfaction before leaving. On certain ritual occasions chiefs are supposed to offer food to the entire community -including immigrants. By contrast, it is considered disgraceful for chiefs to accept food from strangers.²²⁵

Chiefs accumulate a vast number of dependants within the palace. They need to provide food for all those residing with them. A notable example typifies chiefs' maintenance responsibilities. Kwadwo Aduhene II, the Sefwi Wiawso *omanhene* who ruled from 1953 to 1996, had a very large number of subordinates, easily over hundred. Most of them derived from a previous proliferous *omanhene*, Kwame Tano I, who ruled in the first three decades of the present century. After the death of Kwame Tano I, his progeny maintained the role of stool sons with subsequent office holders. Kwame Tano II ruled for a few years after his namesake; Kwame Nkuah II and Kofi Ahinkorah followed and then Kwadwo Aduhene II was nominated as *omanhene*. The descendants of Kwame Tano I, identified through their patrilineal link with the king, are termed either *ahenemma* or *ohenenana* according to the number of generations dividing them from Kwame Tano I.

This numerous and ever-increasing group, spread over three generations, lived in the king's palace until its demolition in 1976. They performed little or no work and were catered for by grants provided by Aduhene II, the fourth successor of Kwame Tano I. They maintained the privileges of *amanhene*'s sons and grandsons even though their biological

²²⁵ See Fortes (1975: 234); Arhin (1974b, 1981: 15, 30); Palumbo (1991: 105-110, 1992); Pavanello (1995a). McLeod (1987:189) mentions that "gifts" made from the Asante to incoming Europeans in the nineteenth century consisted of "consumables, mainly food".

father had long died. One of the DDS of Kwame Tano I narrated how the third generation descendants, the *ahenenana*, went to Aduhene II in the 1970s, and asked for money to eat.

We used to go there [Nana Aduhene II's palace] every week-end, I and my elder brother Thomas and at times also during the week-days Immediately we reached the hall, the living room, we sit on the floor. We greet him. We sit on the floor. Maybe he would be chatting with some of my uncles. They would be there in their numbers and he would call one of them He would call them and at times whisper to them, whisper. And all I could see [is that he] was taking something [money] from under his cloth, pull it and give it to him... At times too what I see, after whispering to my uncle, my uncle would sit there counting [those present]: "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven...". Then, afterwards he brings the money to us. At times in bulk and at times to each and everyone At times whenever we go there he tells us: "Go and see your mother. Go and see your mother". And if you go there, your mother maybe will not tell you the exact amount [given to her by the *omanhene*], she would buy some rice and say: "this is what I got; so if you go there and Nana asks you, don't say I have not given you anything".

In the 1980s, the king felt that the continuous demands for *adidisika* by the descendants of Kwame Tano were untenable and decided he would provide them with money in a different way. At first, he allotted Kwame Tano's progeny farming land and tools so that they would farm and produce their own food: "Nana used to buy cutlasses for my uncles and show them lands but they don't go. They just sell the cutlasses and come back to the palace".²²⁶ Later, the adult descendants of Kwame Tano were found employment in the enterprises operating in Sefwi. The company's manager would be approached by the king and asked to employ one or more of his junior kin. Managers were seldom in a position to refuse. The *omanhene* thus provided his dependants with food indirectly, without having the daily duty of handing out *adidisika*.

Food transactions are important parts of agricultural labour contracts as well. Annual labourers who live with their landlords are provided with food, besides accommodation, medical expenses and their pay at the end of the year. Food is offered to daily agricultural labourers. When the employer questions prospective labourers if they intend working for

²²⁶ Francis Mensah 18-11-1997, New Adiembra, English.

him, he may ask their food preferences. Work normally begins at around 8 a.m. and continues until the lunch break at around 11 or 12 a.m.. The employer's wife cooks on the farm or carries food from the house. After lunch, work continues until approximately 2 p.m. Likewise, the king and important chiefs occasionally ask communities to provide unpaid labour for their farms. The men of the village work on the chiefs' farms and are supplied with food.

Sharecropping contracts in cocoa production also imply food transfers. When land is given to *abunu* caretakers, they are entitled to at least half of the food-crops grown on the new farm. When the cocoa approaches maturity and the inter-cropping with food-crops ceases, the caretaker asks his landlord for a separate parcel of land for food-crop farming. When a mature cocoa farm is given to *abusa* sharecroppers, no food-crops are grown on the farm but it is the landlord's responsibility to provide a separate parcel of land to enable the caretaker to grow food-crops (cf. Beckett 1944: 90; Addo 1974: 216; Robertson 1982: 466-467).

Food is also believed to be provided through land transfers. Husbands provide land to wives; elders allot land to younger kin: sons, daughters, nephews and nieces. These latter transfers usually coincide with the beginning of the youth's independence. The provision of land from elder kin is often a necessary condition for a young man to marry: he needs to have sufficient land to produce food for his household (chapter 7). The alienation of usufructuary land rights to immigrant tenants is also viewed as related to food-provision. Rattray (1929: 354-355; cf. Kyerematen 1971: 39) distinguished "gifts" of land, "*kyee*", in which the ownership of the soil is transferred, from land given "*ha didi so*" literally "to eat upon it". This latter type of transaction does not transfer ownership but implies the subordination of the one who received the plot: "the donee knows that, subject to his services and good behaviour, the title he has to 'eat upon the land' will never be taken away from him" (Rattray 1929: 355). Sefwi who lease -or sell, according to one's point of view their land to immigrant tenants, claim the land was granted for them "to eat upon it" (cf. Hill 1963a: 42, 216). Tenants may cultivate their land but should not try to turn themselves into landlords by sub-letting or selling it. In 1986, when the government and stranger tenants challenged Sefwi's monopoly over land transfers, violent resistance ensued (see chapter 5). Sefwi are not prepared to accept the replacement of the hierarchical code of food and land transfers by strangers' monetary

payments. Rather, the devolution of money by tenants for usufructuary rights is accepted only alongside the established hierarchical patterns.

Land transactions symbolize food transfers. Invariably the superior is responsible of supplying food, literally or metaphorically, to his subordinate (younger kin, wife, apprentice, sharecropper, tenant). Husbands, fathers, work masters and landowners do not establish a solely monetary subordination. Rather, they seek to perpetuate relations of dominance by preserving ways of ordering experience through a system of shared signs and symbols. These organize society according to roles -such as food-providers and food-receivers- which accompany and justify economic inequalities -ownership of sources of revenue, payment of taxes, division of labour and responsibilities.

Drink transactions

Studies concerning transfers of alcoholic drinks in the Akan world have lacked a unitary perspective. Economists and sociologists provide only brief accounts of the offering of drinks in agricultural contracts, concentrating on labour issues instead (Beckett 1944: 91; Kimble... 1963: 20; Robertson 1982: 466; Arhin 1986a: 17-23; Vellenga 1986: 68). Anthropologists describe Akan transfers of alcoholic drinks with almost exclusive reference to their use in marriage ceremonies, as a form of bridewealth (Amoo 1946: 230-231; Fortes 1950: 280; Kyei 1992: 26-39). Akyeampong (1996a, 1996b) analyses several aspects of the relationship between alcohol and authority but not the pattern of drink transfers in rituals. The scarce attention to the multiple uses of drinks in rituals and public gatherings is surprising because Rattray (1927: 84) had hinted at the wider meanings of what he termed "wine".

I am of the opinion that the payment or passing of wine as part of the '*tiri aseda*', or 'bride-price', was originally a very important, if not the essential part of the ceremony. This wine is used in the religious part of the marriage rites ... and is also handed round to those who are present, who, along with the ancestral spirits, thus become the witnesses of the marriage contract Wine, and later 'rum', were undoubtedly originally used to propitiate the gods (*abosom*), or shades of ancestors (*'samanfo*), where a blessing was invoked.

Little effort has since been made to analyze drink transactions as forming a coherent code. I would argue that alcoholic transfers during marriages are part of a wider use of drinks as markers of roles and duties.

Transfers of alcoholic drinks, known as *nsa* are common in the Akan world.²²⁷ Drinks are handed over on a variety of occasions and for different purposes. In Sefwi palm wine or its local distillate known as *akpeteshie* may be used, but gin or other imported liquors are preferred. Akyeampong (1996a: 21, cf. 30-39) notes that alcoholic drinks "were treasured fluids for they bridged the gap between the physical and spiritual worlds". Besides being used when chiefs and elders are addressed in formal occasions, alcoholic drinks are transferred in numerous rites of passage such as funerals and enstoolments of chiefs. Drinks may be actually transferred or reference may be made to them to mean a monetary transaction. For example, court fines or license purchase are often referred to as drinks even though no alcohol is actually transferred.

I focus on transactions of alcoholic drinks in formal ceremonies. Drinks are offered and accepted in a set of rituals marking the beginning of new relationships: namely, marriages, ceremonies of apprenticeship, meetings which transfer usufructuary rights over land, rituals of establishment of annual labour contracts, as well as *abunu* sharetenancy and *abusa* sharecropping agreements. These six rituals share similar procedures and in each of them the transfer of *nsa* is an essential part of the ceremony. These rituals are held to sanction the transfer of scarce goods from the hierarchically superior to the inferior. What is passed over by the hierarchically superior may be land (in the *abunu* agreement and in the transfer of usufructuary rights), a cocoa farm (*abusa*), a wife (marriage), knowledge (apprenticeship) or a salary (annual labourer). The parties in these agreements are: the landlord and the labourer in *abusa*, *abunu* and annual labour contracts; the landlord and the tenant in ceremonies marking the transfer of usufructuary rights; the work master and the apprentice (or his/her household head) in rituals of apprenticeship; and the father of the bride and the bridegroom (or his family) in marriages.

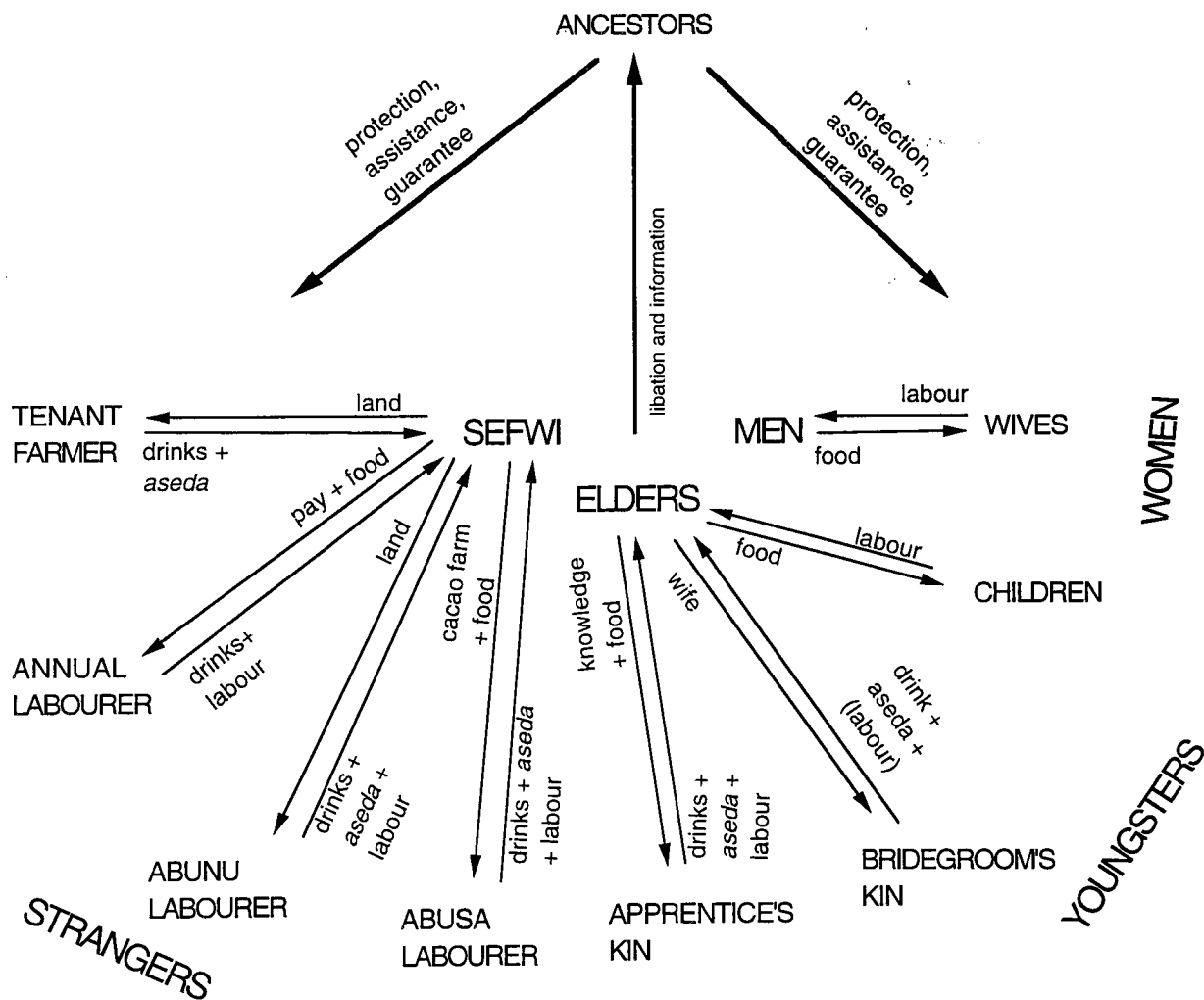
²²⁷ While some informants stated that *tiri nsa*, literally head drink could be used to refer to all drinks exchanged in ritual occasions, other believed that it was preferable to use *tiri nsa*, for marriage and *nsa* for other transactions.

The date of the ritual is normally fixed well in advance to enable the two parties to call their witnesses. The venue is a place identified with the hierarchically superior, the one who hands over the scarce good: it is usually the palace if the chief grants usufructuary rights, the house of the landlord for *abunu*, *abusa* and annual labour contracts, the shop of the work master in contracts of apprenticeship, and the residence of the bride's father in marriages. The party of the hierarchically superior waits for the arrival of the other group, welcomes them and asks them the purpose of their visit, which is then explained by the spokesman for the incoming party. The next step of the ritual is normally the negotiation of the *aseda*, literally "thanks giving". The *aseda* is the sum of money which accompanies the drink towards the hierarchically superior. The transfer, from the hierarchically superior to the inferior, of the scarce good is compensated by an inverse transaction of drinks, *nsa*, and *aseda*, an actual monetary payment. Sefwi normally state that the drink is paid, *tua nza* (Twi: *tua nsa*), meaning that the drink is accompanied by the monetary thanks-giving offer known as *aseda*. The amount payable as *aseda* and the terms of the contract are negotiated between the two parties until an agreement is reached.

The transfer of the alcoholic drink normally occurs after the conclusion of the negotiation. Gifts and acceptances of drinks act as definers and markers of hierarchical roles implying obligations and rights. The transaction of *nsa* ratifies and compensates the inverse transfer of scarce goods. The one holding the hierarchically inferior position provides the drink so that his newly acquired right -granted by the hierarchically superior- will be remembered. The drink is accepted by the superior -or by one of his representatives- and is partially drunk by those present and partly used to pour a libation. Rituals normally continue with the demand of their fee by the witnesses. After that, the incoming party asks for permission to leave.

In figure 5 I represent graphically the transactions of goods involved in these rituals and the relationships they establish. Those in hierarchically dominant roles are placed at the centre of the figure according to the three hierarchical domains (from left to right: Sefwi, elders, men); those in inferior positions are arranged on the margins (from left to right: strangers, youngsters, women). A unitary transactional pattern is common to the various relations: scarce goods (land, women, food, payments and knowledge) have centrifugal flows, from the hierarchically superior to inferior while labour, drinks and *aseda* move towards the

Figure 5. Food and drink transfers and hierarchical relations



centre.²²⁸ I have included in figure 5 two relationships which share the same transactional pattern but for which no ritual transfer of drink is demanded: husband-wives and elders-children. No transfer of *nsa* is required in these two relationships as they are not ritualized: the level of incorporation of the subordinate is a domestic rather than a public one (see chapter 8).

The alcoholic transaction implies and justifies transfers of services and material goods. The flow of money and labour towards the hierarchically superiors is inserted in a ritual context characterized by the handing over of drinks towards those holding higher social status. The drink is offered by the hierarchically inferior to the superior for the latter to contact the ancestors on behalf of the former. The ancestors are thought to be able to intervene in people's lives and grant prosperity or misfortune. This notion is explained by Busia (1951: 201; cf. Rattray 1923: 97-98; Oyedipe 1966: 6-7; Gilbert 1989: 66-67).

An Ashanti has his ancestors constantly in mind. At meals, the old Ashanti used to offer the first morsel of food to the ancestors, and to pour libations to them daily. It is believed that success and prosperity in this life depend on the favour of the ancestors They are believed to be constantly watching over their living relatives. They punish those who break the customs, or fail to fulfil their obligations to their kinsfolk. To such people they send misfortune and illness or even death On the other hand, those who obey the laws and customs and fulfil their obligations receive the help and blessing of the ancestors. The latter see to it that the crops of such people are plentiful, that children are born to them, and that their undertakings prosper.

The capacity to address ancestors, and supernatural powers more generally, to pacify them and seek their services is an important privilege. The transfer of drinks is precisely the recognition that the hierarchically superiors holds this privilege. They receive the drink and contact the ancestors through a libation, *nsa gu*. The superior pours the drink on the ground and informs the dead of the transaction through a conversational monologue (cf. Kilson 1969; Kopytoff 1971: 130). The ancestors are asked to use their powers on behalf of those present and in particular to grant prosperity to the drink-giver; specific assistance is demanded for the enterprise the drink-giver is starting through the transfer of goods obtained from the drink-

²²⁸ Kyei (1992: 42, cf. Fortes 1950: 283) states that bridegrooms were asked to work for the bride's mother. This no longer happens in Sefwi. In figure 5, the term labour was therefore put in brackets.

receiver. Mensah-Brown (1968: 76) summarizes the contents of the libation in Sefwi marriage rituals: "Libation is poured to call the ancestors, and all the transcendental vital forces protecting the community, to witness the contract and bless the newly wedded couple". Access to the ancestors to request such blessings is a privilege of those in dominant positions: Sefwi are to contact the ancestors rather than strangers, especially when rituals have to do with land; women do not usually pour libations if a man is present (Yankah 1995: 77-79; Akyeampong 1996a: 27); libations are the monopoly of elders rather than youngsters. The transfer of drinks towards Sefwi, elders and men is justified by the fact that they are the ones who manage the relationship with the ancestors.

Libations are patterned but not stereotyped. I quote below the words which accompanied the pouring of palm wine by a Sefwi elder during a marriage ritual in 1997. The drink was provided by the bridegroom and the libation recited by the bride's father.

[Bride's father]: [While pouring drink] God Kwame, this is a drink. Earth Yaa, a drink. My grandmother Tene, come and collect a drink. My Father Yaw Gyammrah, come and collect the drink. Akua Mako, come and collect the drink. Mister Kookye, Adu and Nana Abena, you as well, come and take these drinks. For our health and our safety today which is Saturday. And my son [the bridegroom] Nsuhum, says he has seen Tene [the bride and the speaker's daughter], he likes her and so he came to marry her. He has made all the arrangements for the ceremony. And now what they say is that only little [of the bridewealth] is left. It may not reach tomorrow for them to take [and pay] the rest. For the health and safety of all of us, all those gathered here, especially those going away, don't let any accident reach them. Now that he has completed the rites, he takes her and let them do the thing well. Yes, the thing so that children will follow. I need them as in this village there are no children at all. For our health and our safety. Let their marriage be blessed by God. Make the woman be gentle when she goes to see her in-laws and recognize them. Also see that the man sees his in-laws and recognizes them. For our health and our safety. Take this drink. Protect us and let things go well.

[Audience]: Thanks for your speech.²²⁹

The spread of Christianity has introduced the belief that ancestors should not be revered, as all praises should go to God. Strict Christians therefore refuse to accept drinks and do not pour libations during rituals. Nevertheless, the structure of the ritual does not change.

²²⁹ Marriage ceremony Kwabena Nsuhum & Grace Nsowah, Kwame Bua, 8-11-1997, Sefwi; cf. Rattray (1927: 85).

Ancestors are replaced with the Christian God who is called upon to provide the services that ancestors no longer grant. Prayers replace libations. Those in superior hierarchical positions maintain their role as mediators between those present and the unearthly power which can assist and protect. What follows is the prayer of a Christian seamstress on acceptance of a new apprentice.

[Master]: Father, we thank you because through your power and your might these neighbours took their child here to learn the work. And everything has gone on successfully in your name. Father, always thanks to your name.

[Audience]: Amen.

[Master]: Father, this child has come to learn the work. Father, open her mind to learn the work so that some day she will use it to earn a living as she deserves. Father, give me patience and a good mind to be able to teach the child so that in later days she will say: 'My master is walking there and this master of mine taught me the work and everything'. We give you thanks in your name. What we ask in your name, let it be a blessing to us, today and everyday, forever. Amen.

[Audience]: Amen.²³⁰

Transfers of food and drinks are highly symbolic acts: the hierarchical position of the donor and of the receiver is represented by their role in the transaction. Even though there are negotiations (e.g. on the calculations of *aseda* and of food debts) and variances (e.g. the strict Christians' refusal to accept drinks), patterns of transfer and the positions they establish are regulated. Food provision is part of the wider responsibility of the hierarchical superior to cater for dependants; this assures his/her right to the food-receiver's labour and subordination. Similarly, receiving drinks sanctions a privileged relationship with the ancestors and the power connected with the access to the supernatural. The hierarchical role in the relationship is made manifest by giving or receiving.

²³⁰ Apprenticeship ceremony, Doris Ahinkorah & Magda, New Adiembra, 26-10-1997, Sefwi.

Chapter 13.

Hierarchical codes and hierarchy

In part two I delimited three hierarchical domains (ancestry, gender, seniority), which were considered separately even though they were not explicit local categories. In part three an examination of hierarchical codes, meaningful ways of interpreting and ordering experience through a system of shared signs and symbols, shows that hierarchy in Sefwi is in fact presented and perceived as unitary. Inequality may be examined by considering codes which cut across all three domains.

Kinship idioms (chapter 9) are used as tools of subordination in different hierarchical relations. Northern labourers, with a low status according to ancestral origin, are termed "sons" of landlords. Their low ancestry is presented as a generational issue. Similarly, inferior chiefs refer to the king as their senior brother, uncle, father or grandfather. Apprentices, who undergo a form of hierarchical subordination arranged according to eldership, are termed and act as junior relatives. Kinship terminology describes hierarchical relations characterized by both ancestry and seniority. Notions of ownership, caretakership and help (chapter 10) also invest all three domains. The master-caretaker relation informs both agreements between chiefs and sharecropping contracts. The master-subject opposition refers to both marital relations and the role of commoners. Helpers may be both wives and children. Supernatural intervention (chapter 11) both in the form of swearing oaths and drinking spirits is used to achieve subordination in different hierarchical relations. Chiefs control their subjects' fealty and husbands their wives' sexuality through appeal to divine powers. Sefwi have prevented slaves' escape and chiefs have checked foreigners' land access by resorting to oath swearing. The transfer of food and drinks (chapter 12) flows in established directions in relations involving different hierarchical domains. Food is handed over from the superior to the inferior: husbands provide food to wives, parents to children, landlords to workers, craftmasters to apprentices, chiefs to commoners and immigrants. Drinks are transferred in the opposite direction: bridegrooms offer drinks to elders, trainees to masters, labourers to owners, tenants to chiefs.

These codes apply across various relations and all three hierarchical domains. Hierarchy is therefore unitary and transferable: the one who receives food, who offers drinks, who is called a "son" or a "wife", and is forced to "drink the spirits" is identified as subordinate regardless of the particular relation established. The ethnographic evidence supports the idea of the convertibility of hierarchical relations and of a unitary view of hierarchy. Forms of dominance and subordination may be converted among themselves. I provide some concluding examples.

Slaves as youngsters: Associations between low ancestral origin and young age are common in the literature on the Akan world. Some examples are provided by historians concerned with the nineteenth or early twentieth century. Terray (1982: 256-257; cf. 1975: 112-114) referring to Gyaman states that "slaves ... may be viewed as the last of the youngsters, and as perpetual youngsters". McCaskie (1995: 98) describes slaves in Asante as "perpetual minors". Delafosse (1900: 208) holds that the Anyi in 1900 were stratified in four "classes" according to seniority and ancestry: "the rich and the elders; the poor and the young men; slaves' sons; slaves". In the twentieth century immigrant labourers replaced slaves in inferior social roles. The agricultural role of the youth and strangers is similar: they act mostly as landless workers or sharecroppers. Etienne (1971) holds that wage labour was disliked by the Baule youth as it was perceived as a form of captivity reserved to strangers in precolonial times. Robertson (1982: 465) compared the twentieth-century northern immigrant to the local young man.

Until he has acquired some capital through his own industry or through the assistance of his relatives, the young Southerner's circumstances do not differ greatly from those of the young, landless immigrant from the north.

Slaves as women: Household tasks are considered women's labour. Household chores, however, are often re-allocated to youngsters, equating gender hierarchy with seniority. Gender inequality can also be transformed into an issue of ancestral origin, the third hierarchical domain. When women and children hold a high status due to their forbears' rank, household chores are allocated to adult men with a very low ancestral background, usually slaves. Household chores in palaces are a common example of employment of male

subordinate labour to perform tasks from which men would normally be exempted. Slaves used to carry out women's work such as cooking, cleaning and fetching water (Danquah 1928: 154-155). With the end of slavery, the subordination continued in renewed forms. A *ohenenana*, a grandson of a late king, who lived in the Wiawso palace in the 1970s describes the role of ex-slaves.

They were very near to Nana [the *omanhene*'s] wives. They serve them: if Nana's wives need somebody to split firewood, they will do that Some of them helped in cleaning. Especially when the festival [*elluo*] gets near they will be polishing the swords and the stools too. Initially, there were many of them He [the *omanhene*] used to pay them but not on an agreed amount, he gave them something to keep them going Some of them are mates [apprentices] on Nana's bus. If the car spoils on the road, they are going to watch the car. The *ahenenana* [the *omanhene*'s grand-children] were drivers and the *nkoa* [slaves] were mates One is now old, so she is given daily chop by Nana and those who are serving at the palace are provided with chopmoney.²³¹

Adult male ex-slaves were apprentices, cooked and cleaned. Their ancestry justified subordinate roles usually assigned to women and children. Slaves were identified with inferior roles allocated according to both gender and seniority.

Subordinate chiefs as wives: The rank of chiefs within the political structure is normally a question of ancestral origin. It may, however, be approached also as an issue of gender and seniority. Higher office holders refer to subordinate ones as their younger lineage kin or sons. Similarly, chiefs' subordinates are often presented as their wives. McCaskie (1995: 146, cf. 263) describes how, during the *odwira* festival, the Asantehene's subordinate chiefs might be "called upon to offer a symbolic artefact - ... a grinding stone, for example- that denoted fealty and subordination, in the way of the wife to the husband. This relationship may be further cemented and solemnized in 'marriage'". Gilbert (1997: 518) states that the *omanhene* of Akuapem in 1994 compared his role in a dispute between two of his subordinate chiefs to that of a husband in a quarrel between co-wives. Yankah (1995: 86-94) discusses the similarity between the rituals performed by chiefs' linguists on taking office and those of wives at marriage.

²³¹ Francis Mensah 18-11-1997, New Adiembra, English.

Hierarchical relations are inserted in a locally-meaningful unitary framework which is based on the opposition between hierarchically superior and inferior. The *locus classicus* for such ideas is of course Dumont's work on India, to which we turn next. We should be aware before we start that in the Indian case, or at least in the Brahmanic ideology, politics and religion are separate, the first being subordinate to the latter, while in the Akan world this is not so. Nevertheless the principles deduced from the Indian material are broadly applicable to our on.

Conclusion:

Hierarchy in comparative perspective

The conclusion is aimed at gathering wider insights on inequality in Sefwi by addressing the notion of hierarchy in comparative perspective. First, I examine Dumont's proposal for a cross-cultural study of hierarchy focused on the notion of the encompassment of the contrary. Second, I explore Donham's use of the Marxist concept of fetishization; the link between hierarchy and redistribution of wealth and services is examined in relation to Akan notions of the person and, in particular, to the concepts of *tumi* and *sunsum*. Finally, I apply these insights to Sefwi marriage.

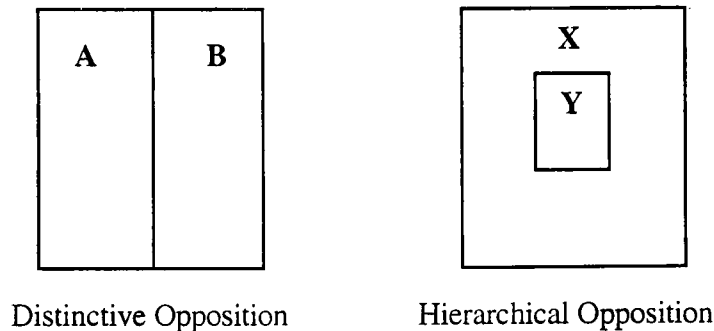
Hierarchy as the encompassing of the contrary

Dumont examines the notion of "encompassing of the contrary" in the last part of his paper "The Anthropological Community and Ideology" (Dumont 1979: 806-815) and again in the postface to *Homo Hierarchicus*. This latter work is Dumont's (1980: 239-245) attempt to formulate a comparative theory of hierarchy. In both studies, Dumont distinguishes two types of opposition: a "distinctive" one and a "hierarchical" one. The "distinctive" opposition between two classes (A and B in figure 6) leads to two perspectives. First, a "structural" perspective which examines the composition of the "universe of discourse" and views the two classes as complementary. Second, a "substantial" perspective which examines one of the classes in its logical relation to the other and views them as contradictory (Dumont 1979: 806, 1980: 241).

The second type of opposition is the "hierarchical" one. In the case of hierarchy one class is coextensive with the "universe of discourse", and the other is a set within it. This opposition consists of the relationship between encompassing and encompassed or between ensemble and element (represented by X and Y respectively in figure 6). While the "distinctive" opposition identifies a relation between classes, the "hierarchical" opposition examines the unity of the two classes. While the former examines the relation between elements as "simple polarities", hierarchy considers their value differentiation: the superior

class encompasses the inferior. Hierarchy, according to Dumont, is given by a separation and combination of the two forms of opposition. At an inferior level ("distinctive"), there is complementariness or contradiction; at a superior one ("hierarchy"), there is unity (Dumont 1980: 240-245).

Figure 6. Dumont's (1980: 242) graphic illustration of "distinctive" and "hierarchical" oppositions



Dumont provides two detailed examples of hierarchical opposition. The first is the story of the creation of Adam and Eve:

God creates Adam first, the undifferentiated man, the prototype of 'mankind'. In a second stage he extracts a different being from this first Adam. Adam and Eve stand face to face, prototypes of the two sexes. In this strange operation, on the one hand Adam has changed identity; from being undifferentiated, he has become a male. On the other hand, a being has appeared who is both a member of the human species and different from the main representative of this species. In this entirety, Adam or 'man' in our language- is two things in one: the representative of the species mankind and the prototype of the male individuals of this species. On a first level, man and woman are identical; on a second level, women is the opposite or contrary of man (Dumont 1980: 239-240).

The second example consists of a discussion of right-left relations. Dumont (1979: 806-815) holds that this opposition is normally approached as a "distinctive" one, while in fact there is a hierarchical side to it as the two polarities do not have equal status and are better understood if considered in relation to the whole (the human body). The right is usually "more important ...

more essential, more representative". In an examination of Evans-Pritchard's ethnographic evidence on the use of the spear amongst the Nuer, Dumont shows that the spear is identified both with the right hand and with the self.

Dumont's hierarchical perspective is relevant to the study of inequality among the Akan. While in Dumont's examples the whole or "universe of discourse" consists of mankind or the human body, here the argument applies to Akan social groups. These may be viewed as resting on an opposition between superior head of the group and inferior members: king and population of the kingdom; head of a matrilineage and lineage members; head of an household and its members; craftmaster and trainees. A set of oppositions (high/low ancestry, male/female, elder/younger) are key principles in the allocation of headship.

While gender hierarchy consists of a contradictory, exhaustive opposition, i.e. male/female, eldership and ancestry, are contraries, they admit gradation and middle terms between two ideal poles (cf. Barnes 1985: 12-13). The same pattern holds, however. The superior element may be viewed in a "distinctive" perspective as opposed to the inferior one, while in a "hierarchical" perspective the superior is the encompassing whole and the inferior one is encompassed. The head is consubstantial or identical with the whole not only in the sense that it is essential and the most important element. The head *is* the whole as it represents all members of the group in political, juridical and social settings; accumulates wealth produced by a group effort and redistributes resources to members; and is the religious medium between members and the supernatural.

Hierarchy and fetishization

This leads us to some considerations on the notion of "corporate group". While the first proponent of the notion was Maine (1861: 134-136), Fortes (1970) applied it to the Asante and the Tallensi. Fortes's idea was that lineages were moral, political and jural entities. A hierarchical approach to Sefwi suggests that the notion of corporate group is useful as individuals can hardly be considered in isolation. In two ways, however, my approach to hierarchy differs from Fortes's usage of the notion of corporate groups. First, in Sefwi the concept of corporate group is not applicable to matrilineages alone, the kingdom, the household and the workshop may be viewed as corporate groups as well. Second, corporate

groups are not formed by an undifferentiated set of individuals, rather their unity rests on the opposition between head and members. Membership implies being incorporated in a group which is identified with its head.

In this regard, Rattray (1929: 18) compares the prerogatives of uncles -but it appears that he refers to lineage heads more generally- and chiefs. Both offices embody and represent the wealth of groups.

The authority vested in the uncle is in virtue of his position as chosen representative of a group, bound together by the common tie of blood. The power which he possesses is very great, but its force and ultimate sanctions lie in the fact that it is a kind of corporate authority in which all the blood relations have a voice. He administers an estate in which every member of his kinsmen has a stake, but in which his position really does not confer on him any special monopoly. His status is in these respects ... exactly similar to that of the Chief.

The author here illustrates the exercise of power as a civic duty. Rattray and Sefwi informants alike often state ideals rather than analysing them as meaningful justifications of hierarchical relations. But why is such analysis lacking? Why do people accept being inserted into hierarchical relationships? Why does so little organized resistance occur to exploitative forms of labour mobilization? Why don't subordinates seek to care for themselves instead of delegating the need to be cared for? In the last instance, why, in Rattray's words, is "authority vested" in particular roles rather than being exercised directly?

A tentative answer may be provided by the concept of "fetishization", introduced by Marx with reference to commodity production and discussed by Donham (1990: 104) in relation to the Maale of Ethiopia in the twentieth century. The fact that persons living and dead, in certain social relations were "invested with an aura of creative power" was a form of fertility fetishism in Maale.

Whereas in reality the success of men and women in accumulating wealth and in bearing children depended on their own productive and procreative powers, the way that labor was organized in Maale made it *appear* as if that success depended on other people's fertility: that of the king and chiefs in the first place, that of descent-group elders in the second, and finally that of the husband-fathers in the third [emphasis by the author].

Donham holds that this "mystical endowment of others with one's own productive and procreative powers" (p. 105) existed "because it instituted and upheld a certain degree of social inequality" (p. 133).

A process of fetishization occurs in Sefwi as well. Sefwi fetishism does not revolve around notions of fertility, very much linked to the female gender amongst the Akan, but rather around the notions of *sunsum* and *tumi*. The two are related concepts, part of the notion of person amongst the Akan. *Sunsum* "is the essence of the being or object, its intrinsic activating principle" (Minkus 1980: 182; cf. Rattray 1923: 46, 1927: 154-155; Danquah 1944: 66-67; Gilbert 1989: 78). *Tumi* is "the ability to produce change" according to Akyeampong (1996a: 13); Gilbert (1987: 305, 1989) and most Sefwi simply translate it as "power". Even though *tumi* is usually associated with spiritual power, when used as a name (Rattray 1927: 44), as a verb its meaning is closer to "being able" and can be used to mean economic, social or political potency as well (Gilbert 1989; McCaskie 1995: 314). *Tumi* incorporates the notions of spiritual, religious power as well as a political and economic capacity to produce change.

Akyeampong holds that *tumi* is a question of knowledge. This is only partly so. Knowledge can be acquired by all through experience. If *tumi* rested on knowledge alone, it should be available to slaves, women, and youngsters just as to elder male chiefs. This is not the case. Access to *tumi* rests not principally on knowledge, but rather on the natural attributes of the person. It is not only an issue of understanding cosmology, but of being accepted as the appropriate person to intervene in reality and produce desired change. *Tumi* rests principally in stools and in stool-holders (Gilbert 1987). Similarly, the *sunsum* resides in many beings of different kinds, but each one has its own, different one (Gyekye 1987: 62, 72-75). Even though the *sunsum* is partly developable, its general distribution among humans reveals a hierarchical pattern: women are completely excluded; children have an extremely fragile *sunsum*; chiefs have special forms of protection of their *sunsum* which may be strengthened by those of their ancestors (Rattray 1929: 145; Minkus 1980; McCaskie 1995: 312). In Asante, the mere gaze of the Asantehene was viewed as "capable of modifying or altering reality" (McCaskie 1995: 260, 301). In Akwapem, the king's words and eyes are

powerful and dangerous, the water with which the king bathes preserves some of his power (Gilbert 1987: 328).

While these issues are seldom openly discussed, it appears evident from practice that most individuals and groups simply do not have the appropriate *sunsum* and *tumi* to produce required change while those in dominant hierarchical positions do. By being encompassed the subordinates become part of social/political units headed by holders of a strong *sunsum* and of *tumi*. The encompassing relation is organized around transactional patterns in which the head's exercise of *tumi* for the subordinate's benefit is viewed as crucial. Akan hierarchy rests on the notion that not everybody can produce desired effects, but only those who encompass the needing rest.

By defining established directions in which goods flow, the differentiation of society is made manifest: individuals are different in their *sunsum* and *tumi*, and transfers should respect and reinforce these differences. The hierarchically superiors are thought to receive and accumulate wealth so that they may exercise their powers which produce benefits for the whole group. They obtain farm assistance so that they can supply food, they receive drinks so that they may pour libation. They receive goods which enable them to set their *tumi*, their ability to produce desired change, in action. The process of accumulation and distribution is presented and viewed not as enhancing the individual but as a communal progress.

Notions of *sunsum* and *tumi* contribute to the widely accepted understanding of society as potentially little subject to change in its essential features. They indicate that the preservation of inequality coincides with the preservation of society. A threat to hierarchy is presented as a menace to the perpetuation of the cultural order itself. Hierarchy is made to fall in the realm of the "natural" and irreversible; its questioning is thus removed from possible discourse. Moral cohesion is seen as resting upon this continuous transactional process. When the flow of labour, wealth and services is interrupted, a social crisis occurs. If the wife stops working for the husband, hindering the household's accumulation, or if he stops providing food, the "correct" running of society is threatened. Similarly, if drinks are not provided and libations not poured, the ancestors will not be informed of earthly matters and their supernatural protection will not assist the living or, even worse, ancestors may become annoyed and cause disasters. Powerful *sunsum* and *tumi* guarantee a safe and controlled environment. When

these are lacking, society is threatened: humanity loses its capacity to produce desired change and inhuman forces take over.

Hierarchy in Akan marriage

Encompassment and fetishization apply to all social groups examined. Here, I apply the insights from Dumont and Donham to hierarchy in marital relationships as most works on the Akan world examine marriage from an egalitarian perspective, stressing the equality and the autonomy of spouses. Studies focus on budgets in particular. They most frequently follow a three-step argument to affirm the independence of wives' economic resources. First, the fact that spouses do not manage property jointly is recognized. Second, the "separateness" of spouses' budgets is affirmed. Third, spouses' contribution to the household are viewed as unequal.

The second step of the argument has drawn a great deal of attention. Rattray (1923: 79) holds that "all her [the wife's] individually acquired and inherited property is hers and her clan's, and her husband cannot touch it". Woodford-Berger (1981: 7) holds that "all able-bodied women are expected to be and usually are, largely self-supporting". Mona Etienne (1983: 309-310) expresses a similar view:

As for the productive relationship [between spouses], it was founded on principles of reciprocity and complementarity, with an intricate defined balance of rights and obligations giving women control over certain products and men control over others.

Hill (1975: 124), Abu (1983), Vellenga (1983: 147-148), Vercrujsse (1983) as well as Asante-Darko and van der Geest (1983: 246) have described relationships between spouses as characterized by the separation of budgets. Tashjian (1995: 140-141) addresses the first two of the three steps in most arguments concerning marriage patterns. She holds that:

in most matrilineal societies property has been owned by one spouse or the other instead of being jointly owned by both. That is any resource may be the property of the husband, or the property of the wife, but they have not been owned jointly by the couple as a single conjugal unit.

She then qualifies the separation of budgets within the household.

Separate ownership of property has not meant a complete void of assistance, in the form of labor or money, from one spouse to the other. Rather, separate ownership means that any such assistance is recognized as assistance to an enterprise which is wholly owned by another.

The third and final step of the argument consists of the recognition that transactions between spouses are unbalanced: the husband provides more than the wife does. Abu (1983: 165-166) states that spouses' responsibilities are unequal:

the husband pays for most things and the woman contributes a little of her income. For example, the man might pay school fees and 'chop money', and the woman would buy her own clothes, her children's clothes and, if any of them are at boarding school, their provision of pocket money.

Clark (1994: 336; cf. 341-348) lists husbands' "ideal responsibilities": paying for "the formal schooling and apprenticeships. He should provide his children with food and shelter and contribute generously to their clothing and other expenses". Similarly, Tashjian (1995: 170) notes that spouses' contribution are different. She holds that there is a "one-way flow of money" from man to woman, and focuses on "two key areas: chop money, given by husbands to wives for purchase of food and seed money provided by many husbands for their wives' trading".

The third step of the argument presented by most works on Akan marriage consists of a theory of unbalanced exchange. Spouses hold symmetrical and separate positions while the pattern of transactions is unbalanced. The husband ought to provide chopmoney, clothes, medical expenses for household members. The wife tends to furnish a lesser monetary contribution. I would argue that the unbalanced exchange theory accounts neither for the local ideology of marriage nor for certain significant practices.

Figure 7. Hierarchy in Akan marriage

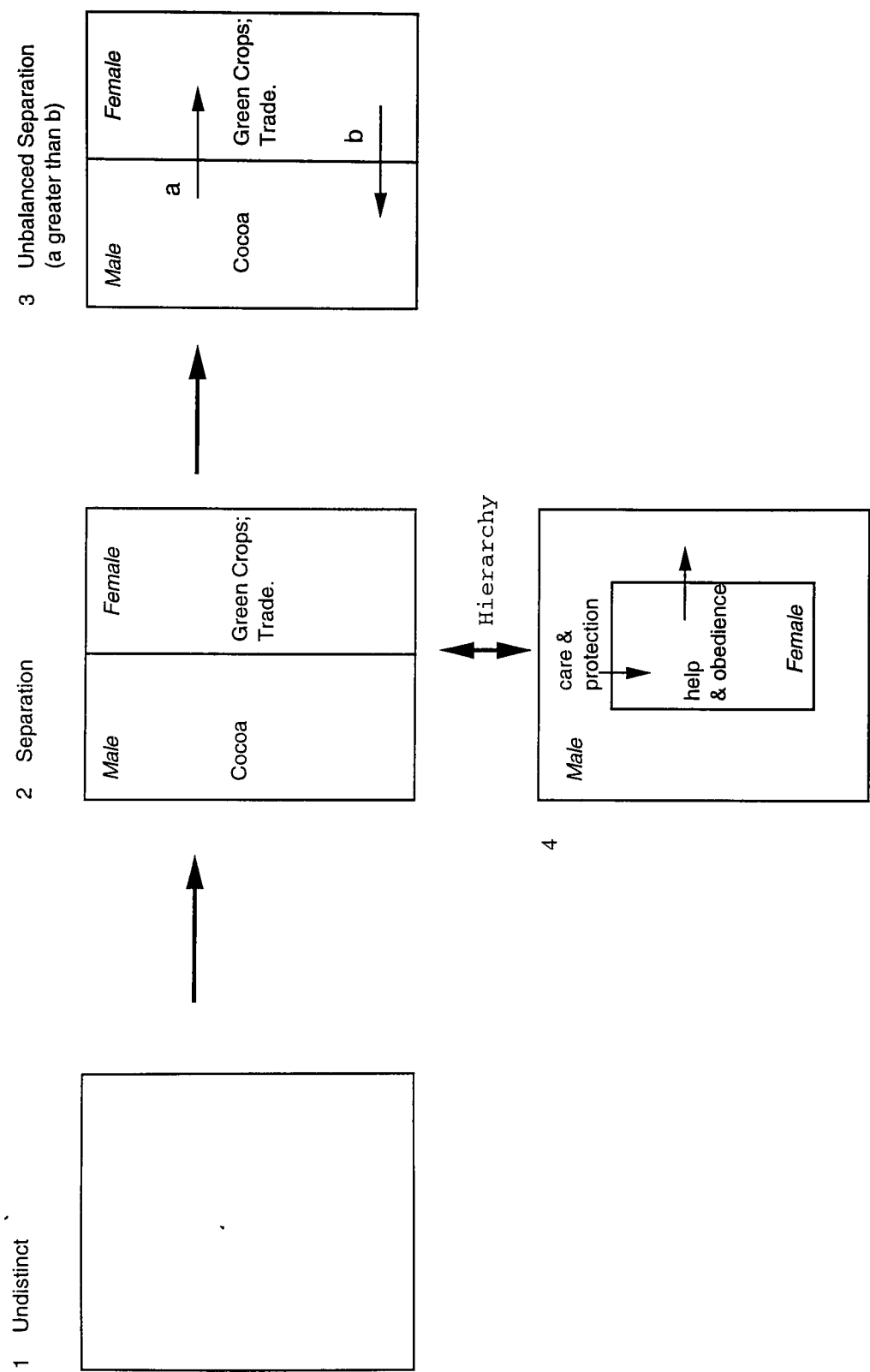


Figure 7, a graphic illustration of the three-step argument followed by most studies concerned with the monetary implications of Akan marriage, provides a useful summary. Most works have proposed an horizontal reading of marriage. Step 1 represents the unity of the spouses. The jointness of resources is denied. This leads to step 2 which describes the separateness of spouses' resources characterizing Akan marriage: husband and wife are viewed as equal and distinct partners in the household's framework. Finally, in step 3 unbalanced transfers are acknowledged. This reading of marriage prevents one from grasping the importance of marriage and from seeing the household as a unity. The separation of spouses leads Rattray (1929: 22) to the following comment on the wife's status: "To her husband she does not appear to be bound by any tie that -in Ashanti- really counts". Similarly, Clark (1994: 334, cf. 340-341) argues that no such thing as households exists in Asante, as the household's main characteristic i.e. "resources pooled and allocated for joint benefit ... is openly disavowed".

Most writers have analysed Akan marriage through what Dumont would consider a "distinctive" opposition (represented by steps 2 or 3), Dumont seeks to combine the "distinctive" opposition with a "hierarchical" one which focuses on the logical relation between the two elements and the whole (Dumont 1980: 241-243). Through the "separation and combination" of these two levels the hierarchical relation is clarified. Applied to Akan marriage, at a first, inferior level, the husband is a part of the household in opposition to the wife (steps 2 or 3). At a second, superior one, he is the encompassing whole -the household- while the wife is an element encompassed (step 4). To speak of equal spouses at this second level is simply misleading. The elements are not only asymmetrical, their value and the logic of their relationship are altered (cf. Aphorpe 1984; Callan 1984).

A hierarchical approach to Akan marriage produces a closer picture of how Sefwi view and practice their marital unions. First, it enables one to account for aspects of the relationship which the theory of unbalanced exchange neglects; second, it explains the working principle and importance of marriage and of woman's household membership which Rattray and Clark failed to grasp.

A hierarchical ideology explains issues which may not be addressed if marriage is viewed as a symmetrical relationship between spouses characterized by unbalanced exchange. First,

if spouses were equal and autonomous, wives should consider requirements of the labour by their husbands to be unfair. That is not the case (Boaten 1993a). Or rather, marriage becomes unfair only when the encompassing relationship is not fully achieved. That is, when husbands accumulate labour and wealth but fail to distribute "care" (chopmoney, clothes, medical expenses, etc). Second, a wife complains when the husband -and therefore the household- is increasing his status substantially while he offers her no opportunity to increase her own rank. If marriage is viewed as a relationship of distinct unbalanced symmetry, wives would have no reason to complain about the husband's failure to share his status. This, however, is not the case. Suitors' rank is examined before marriage and wives partly participate of the spouse's status. Husbands' unwillingness to increase the amount being redistributed when they achieve wealth is viewed negatively as it signifies the refusal of a hierarchical perspective of encompassment. A further, non-economic example confirms this point. After marriage, some husbands insist that wives make their church membership conform to theirs. The household head's faith, should be the creed of all household members. Finally, the payment of debts exemplifies the limits of women's economic autonomy. Women are not considered economically self-sufficient, hence husbands are responsible to pay their debts. The aspects of Akan marriage mentioned above are overlooked if one approaches marital relationships as unions of separate spouses, equal in rights but offering an unbalanced contribution to the family budget.

In Sefwi, the husband is identified with the household and encompasses the wife in the sense that he owns the household, for marriage is virilocal. Uxorilocal unions are considered unusual and dangerous as the husband could be dismissed from the house by the wife after a quarrel (Boni 1998). The encompassment is not just a question of house ownership, the husband represents the household within society. Public settlements which involve the wife are ideally managed by the head. He maintains formal relationships with other households and controls the ritual, political and judicial involvement of household members. He is the spiritual head of the household and contacts spiritual powers on behalf of members through libations.

Finally, he manages the joint household budget. Transfers of goods and services exemplify the differentiated roles of husband and wife. Work is transferred from the wife to

the husband/household (in its devalued form of "help") while "care" flows in the opposite direction. The husband's budget is at the same time his own (as in step 2 of figure 7) and the whole household's (as in step 4). It is his own in so far as he administers the money and decides how to direct expenditures. It is a family budget, however, in a double sense. Firstly, the budget is the product of a largely unacknowledged collective effort: incomes are viewed as men's achievement while women's and children's labour goes into unvalued household chores and is regarded as "help" when employed on cash-crops. Secondly, expenses of household members -wife, young children, incorporated subordinates and labourers- should be covered by the household head: as the money is used to care for household members, the head acquires rights over members' labour. The moral justification of the household head's encompassing role rests on this process of accumulation and redistribution; at the same time, the differentiation of household members confers unity on the household.

Glossary

Terms are written in Asante Twi, unless otherwise stated. The Asante term is followed by the Sefwi one in parentheses should it differ.

Asankera

The group holding the stool of the king of Sefwi Wiawso.

obosom, pl. *abosom*

Supernatural powers; usually translated as 'fetishes' or 'gods'. I refer to them as 'spirits'.

obosom nom, pl. *abosom nom*

Drinking spirits. It is a ritual procedure consisting of the swallowing of a drink made up of a variety of substances which are believed to contain the spirit. The one receiving the drink swears to speak the truth or refrain from a certain course of action. If he fails to do so, it is thought that the *obosom* will kill him.

abrantee, pl. *mbrantee*; [Sefwi: *abrandee/mmrantee*]

Young man, also translated as 'commoner' with reference to those not holding political offices. Normally associated with low status and lack of experience.

boa; [Sefwi: *boka*]

To help, to offer a contribution in an enterprise without being the owner (*owura*) of it. Used to refer to labour contributions for which the full status of work is not acknowledged.

abunu

Literally, divided into two parts. It refers to forms of sharing following such a criterion. It is nowadays mostly used to refer to a sharetenancy contract. The owner provides land to the labourer who develops it into a cocoa farm. The farm is then divided into two parts: one allocated to the owner, one to the labourer.

abusa

Literally, divided into three parts. It refers to forms of sharing following such a criterion. In the 1950s it was used to refer to a form of sharetenancy. Today it is mostly used to refer to a sharecropping contract. The owner provides a developed cocoa farm to the labourer who is in charge of maintaining the farm and collecting the cocoa. The produce is then sold and the income divided into three parts: two allocated to the owner and one to the labourer.

abusua, pl. *mmusua*

Matrilineage, kin reckoned by matrification. It is occasionally used, however, to refer to household members more generally.

odehyee, pl. *adehyee*; [Sefwi: *dehyee/nnehjee*]

Member of the matrilineage holding the stool to which reference is being made. At times used to refer to patrilineal descendants of the stool holder as well. Normally translated as 'royal' or more generically 'free born person'.

adidi; [Sefwi: *adidie*]

To eat. Hence *adidi so*, to 'eat upon', to gain subsistence from something.

adidisika; [Sefwi: *adidiesika*]

Eating money. Also referred to as *akroma* or 'chop money'. It consists of the amount paid by the household head to subordinate members (wives, children, dependants) for their eating expenses.

odwira

The Asante annual festival of purification.

adwuma

Work. Opposed to labour contributions termed 'help' (*boa*) which are considered of a lesser quantitative and qualitative status.

ohemma, pl. *ahemma*

The female counterpart of male political offices. Normally translated as 'queen mother'.

ohene, pl. *ahenenom*

King, chief, head, office-holder. Hence, *omanhene*, 'ruler of the nation'; Sefwihene, 'king of Sefwi'; and Debisohene, 'chief of Debiso'.

ohenefie, pl. *ahemfie*

Chief's house, palace.

oheneba, pl. *ahenemma*

Child of an *ohene* normally used with reference to a particular stool. With the passing of generations, the genealogically founded relationship between father and son, may be transferred to their successors together with their offices, thereby becoming a structural bond.

ohenenana, pl. *ahenenana*

Grand-child of an *ohene* normally used with reference to a particular stool. The position is held also after the death of the biological father.

hwesoni, pl. *hwesofoo*; [Sefwi: *ekoniani/ekaniafoo*]

Literally, the one who looks over. Normally translated as 'caretaker'. The term has a wide range of applications: it may be used to refer to a sharecropper as opposed to the owner or to a caretaker chief as opposed to his superior chief.

eka, pl. *nka*; [Sefwi: *kre/kire*]

What is missing, what is lacking to achieve completion, debt. Hence *bo eka*, 'to incur a debt', money which should be paid but has not yet been transferred.

akoa, pl. *nkoa*; [Sefwi: *akoalngoa*]

Subject. The term has a wide range of applications: it may be used to refer to a citizen as opposed to a chief or to a slave as opposed to his owner.

kyee

To give out, to dash, to give as a present. It is a spontaneous transaction which results from generosity, opposed to the obligatory transfers sanctioned by contracts.

elluo [Sefwi term]

Yam. Here used to refer to the Sefwi annual agricultural festival celebrating a new yam harvest, also known as *alielolie*. The whole state gathers in Wiawso for the three-day celebration.

oman, pl. *aman*

State, nation, people.

amantem

Literally, did not come early. Fee paid by the one who joins an established institution to those already present.

momome [Sefwi term]

A cleansing ritual held by women in Sefwi villages when threatened with disaster. It consists in a parade with white cloths in the village streets while singing and praying. It is held during wars, epidemics or when the village's fertility is menaced by women's death during child-birth.

nnobua

A rotating self-help system involving co-operative work. A group of persons, usually youngsters, works together; one member gets the benefit from the labour of all; the next time round, another member directs the labour and derives the benefits.

nsa [Sefwi: *nza*]

Alcoholic drink. Used both to refer to spirits in day-to-day consumption and to drinks transferred in ritual occasions. Hence, *nsa gu*, 'to pour the drink', refers to the pouring of libations.

ntam

Forbidden utterance. A short phrase referring to a past misfortune. Normally translated as 'oath'. Hence, *ntam kasa*, literally to mention the *ntam*; normally translated as 'oath swearing'. The mention of the prohibited word-sequence is a political and religious offence. The culprit is arrested. *Ntam kasa* is normally used to start legal proceeding.

opanyin, pl. *panynfoo* [Sefwi: *paain/mpainmo*]

Elder. Notion usually connected with respect and knowledge. Hence, *osuani panyin*, senior apprentice. It may be used to mean head, owner; for example *adwuma panyin*, literally work elder, refers to the owner of the enterprise; *abusua panyin*, is the head of the matrilineage, always an elder, possibly the eldest living member.

asase, pl. *nsase*; [Sefwi: *asee/nnzee*]

Earth, soil.

aseda; [Sefwi: *asina*]

Thanks, gratitude. Used also for the thanks-offering, normally in the form of money, which accompanies the transfers of drinks (*nsa*) in rituals and other social occasions. At times translated as "customary consideration money".

asoso; [Sefwi: *akuan*]

A picker mounted on a long palm stalk used to cut cocoa pods from the branches of tall trees.

osuani, pl. *suafoo*; [Sefwi: *osualenie/sualefoe*]

Apprentice. A worker for a craftmaster while learning the job before starting his/her own enterprise.

sunsum, pl. *asunsum*

Spirit. A supernatural spirit which may occupy persons and other natural beings. In humans, normally connected to one's character. Partly obtained by birth, but can be cultivated.

tiri nsa [Sefwi: *eti nza*]

Literally, head drink. It refers to alcoholic drinks transferred during rituals and in particular in marriages. It is usually said that the *tiri nsa* is 'paid' (*tua*) because it is accompanied by a monetary payment termed *aseda*.

tumi

To be able to, when used as a verb; power, normally with reference to the supernatural, when used as a noun. The notion implies ability to produce a desired change.

owura

Sir, gentleman but also master, lord, owner. The one responsible for a certain activity. Hence *asase owura*, 'landlord'; *afuo owura*, 'farm owner'; *adwuma owura*, 'craftmaster', etc.

Appendix 1- Cases of pawnship in Sefwi court records

What follows is a summary of information concerning cases of pawnship in the Sefwi court records of the early twentieth century and in particular of GNA ADM 48/4/1 (from 21st December 1898 to 30th December 1904) and 48/4/3 (9th August 1911 to 28th August 1915). I have recorded cases where reference to pawnship involving work was evident. I have not recorded cases where "security" for debts was mentioned but there was no reference to work.

GNA ADM 48/4/1:

Number of cases	Age of pawn when pawned	Relation of pawn with pawner	Relation of pawn with master	Sex of pawn	Amounts for which pawn was security
20	adult: 10 child: 8 unknown: 2	daughter: 2 brother: 1 son: 2 wife: 1 sister's son: 1 sister's daughter: 1 belongs to stool: 5 stool slave: 2 unknown: 5	wife: 4 unknown: 16	male: 11 female: 9	£9; £6; £4.3; £57 (2 pawns); £30 (4); £12; £5.3; £6; £6; £19 (2); £12 (2); £9; unknown: 2

GNA ADM 48/4/3:

Number of cases	Age of pawn when pawned	Relation of pawn with pawner	Relation of pawn with master	Sex of pawn	Amounts for which pawn was security
13	adult: 5 child: 7 unknown: 1	daughter: 4 son: 4 wife: 1 stool's grandson: 1 himself: 1 unknown: 2	brother's wife: 1 unknown: 12	male: 7 female: 6	£6; £8; £12; £18; £18.7; £16; £12 (2 pawns); £40; £4; unknown: 3

Note: When sons and daughters were pawned, the father was the pawner.

Appendix 2- Data on cocoa production in Sefwi

The following table summarizes data on cocoa production in the Sefwi area. The data derives from a variety of sources which are not equally reliable. Data from the 1920s and 1930s are estimates which are partial in many respect. Data was collected in a more systematic fashion from the 1950s. Production figures from the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s are probably underestimated as great amounts of cocoa were smuggled across the Ivory Coast border. The sources and the area to which the data refers to are specified below.

Years/Thousand Tons																				
	1925	1933	1934	1952	1953	1961	1963	1967	1968	1972	1973	1975	1981	1982	1985	1987	1988	1989	1992	1993
				-53	-54	-65				-73	-74	-76	-82	-83	-86	-88	-89	-90	-93	-94
Main Crop Only				8,1	5,7		12,1	11	12											
Total	4,5	4,7	5			10				15	10	18,4	19,2	16	29,6	27,8	54,5	45,8	126	127

Sources:

- 1925: CO/96/656, "Western Province Railway- Traffic Reconnaissance", p. 25. The data refers to estimates from the area east and west of Wiawso towards Bibiani and Goaso respectively. Data from the region south of Wiawso to Asankragwa was not included (800 tons) as mostly part of the Wassa area.
- 1933: GNA Sekondi WRG 13/2/155, "Annual Report for the Sefwi District for the year 1933-1934". 4,718 tons were recorded at "gate check at Diaso" compared to the 4,474 of the previous year.
- 1934: Rhodes House, Duncan-Johnstone, A.C. Papers of Lt. Col. A.C. Duncan-Johnstone, vol. III, "Confidential Diary of the Honorable A.C. Duncan-Johnstone, Commissioner, Western Province, from 5th April to 30th April 1934", p. 2. The data refers to the Sefwi District.
- 1952-53 & 1953-54: GNA Sekondi WRA 6/2A/24, "Analysis of Cocoa Purchases" The data refers to the West Dunkwa purchasing district which comprehends the whole of Sefwi and possibly parts of Wassa.
- 1961-65: Beckman (1974: 283). The area of Sefwi Wiawso and Jaboso are described as producing an average yearly 5,000 tons each in the 1961-65 period. I have excluded figures for Sefwi Bekwai and Sefwi Anhwiaso.
- 1963: GNA Sekondi WRA 13/2/68, "Analysis of Cocoa Purchase". The data refers to the Wiawso purchasing district which does not comprehend the Bekwai area of Sefwi.
- 1967 & 1968: Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Ministry of Agriculture, Dept. of Agric Extension Services, P.O. Box 63. Annual Report, Crop Production Division. 1972/73-1989/90: Cocobod, Produce Buying Company, "Analysis of Cocoa Purchases". Production figures of the districts of Anhwiaso, Asawinso South, Bekwai, Wiawso, Jabeso Sud, Akwantombra, Boako, Amoyaw, Asampanaye, Jabeso (North), Adabokrom, Essem, Kaase, Fosukrom, Asawinso (North) were added.
- 1992-93 & 1993-94: Archives of Sefwi Wiawso, Cocoa Quality Control Division, Cocobod Regional Office. The figures refer to the Northern and Southern sub-districts of Sefwi Wiawso.

Bibliography

- K. Abu (1983) "The Separateness of Spouses: Conjugal Resources in an Ashanti Town", in C. Oppong (ed.) *Female and Male in West Africa*, Allen and Unwin, London, pp. 156-168.
- N.O. Addo (1974) "Some Employment and Labour Conditions on Ghana's Cocoa Farms", in R.A. Kotey, C. Okali and B.E. Rourke (eds.) *The Economics of Cocoa Production and Marketing*, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, Legon, pp. 204-218.
- R. Addo-Fening (1987) "Customary land tenure in Akyem-Abuakwa", *Universitas*, vol. 9, pp. 95-107.
- R. Addo-Fening (1990) "The Native Jurisdiction Ordinance, Indirect Rule and the Subjects' Well-Being: The Abuakwa Experience C1899-1912", *Research Review- New Series*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 29-44.
- A. Adomako Ampofo (1997) "Costs and Rewards-Exchange in Relationships: Experiences of Some Ghanaian Women", in E. Evers Rosander (ed.) *Transforming Female Identities: Women's Organizational Forms in West Africa*, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Stockholm, pp. 177-194.
- J. Adomako-Sarfoh (1974) "Migrant Asante Cocoa Farmers and their Families", in C. Oppong (ed.) *Domestic Rights and Duties in Southern Ghana*, Institute of African Studies, Legon, pp. 129-144.
- L.K. Agbosu (1983) "The Origins of Forest Law and Policy in Ghana during the Colonial Period", *Journal of African Law*, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 169-187.
- L.K. Agbosu (1990) "Land Registration in Ghana: Past, Present and the Future", *Journal of African Law*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 104-127.
- A.A. Aidoo (1977) "Order and Conflict in the Asante Empire: A Study in Interest Group Relations", *African Studies Review*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 1-36.
- J.B. Aidoo (1996) *Tenancy and the Land Reform Debate in Ghana*, The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

S.K. Akomiah (1992) *Festivals are History in Pageantry: A Study of the Elluo Festival of the People of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Area*, Unpublished Long Essay Presented to the Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Postgraduate Certificate in Education.

K. Akwabi-Ameyaw (1974) "The development of the cocoa industry in Eastern Ashanti", in R.A. Kotey, C. Okali and B.E. Rourke (eds.) *The Economics of Cocoa Production and Marketing*, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, Legon, pp. 183-195.

K. Akwabi-Ameyaw (1982) "Ashanti social organization: some ethnographic clarifications", *Ethnology*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 325-333.

E. Akyeampong (1996a) *Drink, Power and Cultural Change: A Social History of Alcohol in Ghana, c. 1800 to Recent Times*, James Currey, Oxford.

E. Akyeampong (1996b) "What's in a drink? Class struggle, popular culture and the politics of akpeteshie (local gin) in Ghana, 1930-1967", *Journal of African History*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 215-236.

J. Allman (1991) "Of 'Spinsters', 'Concubines' and 'Wicked Women': Reflections on Gender and Social Change in Colonial Asante", *Gender & History*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 176-189.

J. Allman (1994) "Making Mothers: Missionaries, Medical Officers and Women's Work in Colonial Asante, 1924-1945", *History Workshop*, vol. 38, pp. 23-47.

J. Allman (1996) "Rounding up Spinsters: Gender Chaos and Unmarried Women in Colonial Asante", *Journal of African History*, vol. 37, pp. 195-214.

J. Allman (1997) "Fathering, Mothering and Making Sense of Ntamoba: Reflections on the economy of child-rearing in colonial Asante", *Africa*, vol. 67, no. 2, pp. 296-321.

J.W.A. Amoo (1946) "The Effects of Western Influence on Akan Marriage", *Africa*, vol. 16, pp. 228-237.

K.A. Anaman (1986) "The Role of Women in the Production of Cocoa Beans in the Techiman Cocoa District of Brong-Ahafo, Ghana", in Y.T. Moses (ed.) *African Agricultural Development Conference: Technology, ecology and society*, State Polytechnic University, Pomona, California, pp. 119-121.

R. Apthorpe (1984) "Hierarchy and Other Social Relations: Some Categorical Logic", in J.-C. Galey (ed.) *Différences, Valeurs, Hiérarchie: Textes offertes à Louis Dumont*, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, pp. 283-298.

K. Arhin (1970) "Papers on Ahafo Landholding", *Research Review- Supplement*, no. 3.

K. Arhin (1972) "The Ashanti Rubber Trade with the Gold Coast in the Eighteen-Nineties", *Africa*, vol. 42, no.1, pp. 33-43.

K. Arhin (1974a) "Some Asante Views on Colonial Rule: As Seen in the Controversy Relating to Death Duties", *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 63-84.

K. Arhin (1974b) "State Intervention in the Asante Economy", *Universitas*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 40-58.

K. Arhin (1976) "The Pressure of Cash and Its Political Consequences in Asante in the Colonial Period", *Journal of African Studies*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 453-68.

K. Arhin (1980) "The Economic and Social Significance of Rubber Production and Exchange on the Gold and Ivory Coasts, 1880-1900", *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, 77-78, XX-1-2, pp. 49-62.

K. Arhin (1981) "The political economy of the expansionist state", *Rev. franç. d'Hist. d'Outre-Mer*, LXVIII, no° 250-251-252-253, pp. 13-35.

K. Arhin (1983a) "Peasants in Nineteenth Century Asante", *Current Anthropology*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 471-480.

K. Arhin (1983b) "Rank and class among the Asante and Fante in the nineteenth century", *Africa*, vol. 53, no. 1, pp. 2-22.

K. Arhin (1983c) "The Political and Military Roles of Akan Women", in C. Oppong (ed.) *Female and Male in West Africa*, Allen and Unwin, London, pp. 91-98.

K. Arhin (1986a) *The expansion of cocoa production in Ghana: The working conditions of migrant cocoa farmers in the Central and Western Regions*, Institute of African Studies, Legon.

K. Arhin (1986b) "A note on Asante Akonkofo: A non-literate sub-elite, 1900-1930", *Africa*, vol. 56, no. 1, pp. 25-31.

K. Arhin (1986c) "The Asante Praise Poems: The Ideology of Patrimonialism", *Paideuma Frobenius Inst.*, vol. 32, pp. 163-197.

K. Arhin (1988a) "Economic Differentiation among Ghanaian Migrant Cocoa Farmers", *Research Review- New Series*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 10-18.

K. Arhin (1988b) "Trade and Accumulation in Asante in the Nineteenth Century", Unpublished paper presented at the ASA Conference on the State and Economy, Chicago, October 28-31, 1988, Institute of African Studies, Legon.

K. Arhin (1990) "Trade, accumulation and the State in Asante in the nineteenth century", *Africa*, vol. 60, no. 4, pp. 524-537.

K. Arhin (1995) "Monetization and the Asante State", in J.I. Guyer (ed.) *Money Matters*, James Currey, pp. 97-110.

A. Arthur (1990) *Illegal Farming Activities in the Tano-Ehuro Forest Reserve in the Western Region of Ghana*, Unpublished Thesis, Institute of Renewable Natural Resources, Department of Silviculture and Forest Management, University of Science and Technology, Kumasi.

N. Asante-Darko and S. van der Geest (1983) "Male Chauvinism: Men and Women in Ghanaian Highlife Songs", in C. Oppong (ed.) *Female and Male in West Africa*, Allen and Unwin, London, pp. 242-255.

G. Austin (1987) "The Emergence of Capitalist Relations in South Asante Cocoa-Farming, c. 1916-1933", *Journal of African History*, vol. 28, pp. 259-279.

G. Austin (1988) "Capitalists and Chiefs in the Cocoa Hold-Ups in South Asante, 1927-1938", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 63-95.

G. Austin (1993) "Indigenous Credit Institutions in West Africa, c. 1750-c. 1960", in G. Austin and K. Sugihara (eds.) *Local Suppliers of Credit in the Third World, 1750-1960*, Macmillan, London, pp. 93-159.

- G. Austin (1994) "Human Pawning in Asante, 1800-1950: Markets and Coercion, Gender and Cocoa", in T. Falola and P. Lovejoy (eds.) *Pawnship in Africa*, Westview Press, Boulder, pp. 119-159.
- G. Austin (1996) " 'No Elders were Present': Commoners and private ownership in Asante, 1807-1896", *Journal of African History*, vol. 37, pp. 1-30.
- G. Austin (1997) "Introduction", in P. Hill *The Migrant Cocoa Farmers of Southern Ghana: A study in rural capitalism*, James Currey, Oxford.
- K. Awusabo-Asare (1990) "Matriliny and the New Intestate Succession Law of Ghana", *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 24, no.1, pp. 1-16.
- K. Bame (1974) "Domestic tensions reflected in the popular theatre in Ghana", in C. Oppong (ed.) *Domestic Rights and Duties in Southern Ghana*, Institute of African Studies, Legon, pp. 145-161.
- R.H. Barnes (1985) "Hierarchy without Caste", in R.H. Barnes, D. de Coppet and R.J. Parkin (eds.) *Contexts and Levels: Anthropological Essays on Hierarchy*, Ashford Press, Southapton, pp. 8-20.
- R.H. Barnes and D. de Coppet (1985) "Introduction", in R.H. Barnes, D. de Coppet and R.J. Parkin (eds.) *Contexts and Levels: Anthropological Essays on Hierarchy*, Ashford Press, Southampton, pp. 1-7.
- R.H. Barnes, D. de Coppet and R.J. Parkin (eds.) (1985) *Contexts and Levels: Anthropological Essays on Hierarchy*, Ashford Press, Southampton.
- W.H. Beckett (1944) *Akokoaso: A survey of a Gold Coast Village*, Percy Lund, Humphries & Co. Ltd, London.
- W.H. Beckett (1945) "Korasang: a Gold Coast cocoa farm", in W.H. Beckett (1972) *Korasang cocoa farm: 1904-1970*, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, Legon.
- B. Beckman (1974) "Government policy and the distribution of cocoa income in Ghana", in R.A. Kotey, C. Okali and B.E. Rourke (eds.) *The Economics of Cocoa Production and Marketing*, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, Legon, pp. 277-285.

- G. Benneh (1970) "The impact of cocoa cultivation on the traditional land tenure system of the Akan of Ghana", *Ghana Journal of Sociology*, vol. 6, no.1, pp. 43-61.
- G. Benneh (1973) "Small-scale farming systems in Ghana", *Africa*, vol. 43, no. 2, pp. 134-145.
- G. Benneh (1975) "Traditional Political Systems, Titles to Land and Tenures in Ghana", *Bulletin of Ghana Geographical Society*, vol. 17, pp. 56-64.
- G. Benneh (1988) "The Land Tenure and Agrarian System in the New Cocoa Frontier of Ghana: Wassa Akropong Case Study", in W. Manshard and W. B. Morgan (eds.) *Agricultural Expansion and Pioneer Settlements in the Humid Tropics: Selected papers presented at a workshop held in Kuala Lumpur, 17-21 September, 1985*, United Nations University, Tokyo.
- K. Bentsi-Enchill (1964) *Ghana Land Law: An exposition, analysis and critique*, Sweet and Maxwell, London.
- S. Berry (1998) "Unsettled Accounts: Stool Debts, Chieftaincy Disputes and the Question of Asante Constitutionalism", *Journal of African History*, vol. 39, no 1, pp. 39-62.
- M. Berti and C. Contini (1995) "La coltura del cacao in Akontombra (Western Region), Ghana", *Rivista di Agricoltura Subtropicale e Tropicale*, vol. 89, no. 1, pp. 75-96.
- W. Bleek (1972) "Geographic Mobility and Conjugal Residence in a Kwahu lineage", *Research Review*, Institute of African Studies, Legon, vol 8, pp. 47-55.
- W. Bleek (1975) "Parents and Children in a Kwahu lineage", in L. Engberg (ed.) *Aspects of Family Welfare and Planning*, Institute of African Studies, Legon, pp. 30-38.
- F.O. Boadu (1992) "The Efficiency of Share Contracts in Ghana's Cocoa Industry", *The Journal of Development Studies*, vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 108-120.
- A. Boahen (1966) "The Origins of the Akan", *Ghana Notes and Queries*, vol. 9, pp. 3-10.
- B.A. Boaten Abayie I (1992) "The Changing Role of Queenmothers in the Akan Polity", *Research Review- New Series*, vol. 8, no. 1-2, pp. 90-98.

- B.A. Boaten Abayie I (1993a) "The Status of Women in the Akan Society", *Research Review- New Series*, vol. 9, no. 1-2, pp. 92-103.
- B.A. Boaten Abayie I (1993b) *The Akan Concept of Death and the Making of an Ancestor: The Case of Barfu Nyamaa Ampem I*, Institute of African Studies, Legon.
- K. Boaten (1973) "Commercial Agriculture in Asante", *Bulletin of Ghana Geographical Association*, vol. 15, pp. 40-49.
- K. Boaten (1974) "Problems facing cocoa farmers in Mampong, an old cocoa growing district in Ashanti", in R.A. Kotey, C. Okali and B.E. Rourke (eds.) *The Economics of Cocoa Production and Marketing*, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, Legon, pp. 196-203.
- S. Boni (1993) *Study on Fertility and Analysis of Economic Household Budgets in the Rural Areas of Sefwi-Wiawso District*, Unpublished Report presented to the NGO "Ricerca e Cooperazione", Roma.
- S. Boni (1995) *Parentela e Insediamento tra i Sefwi del Ghana: Le Relazioni tra Politica, Residenza e Rapporti Parentali in un'Etnia Akan*, BA Thesis, Università di Siena, Cattedra di Etnologia.
- S. Boni (1997) "Storia e Parentela nella Creazione e Affermazione dell'Oman di Sefwi Wiawso (c. 1650-1887)", *Africa* (Roma), vol. LII, no. 1, pp. 28-61.
- S. Boni (1998) "History and Social Structure: A study of the Sefwi residential system (Ghana)", *Ethnology*, vol. 37, no. 3, pp. 239-262.
- W. Bosman (1704) *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea*, London, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd. [1967].
- P. Bourdieu (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press [1997].
- T.E. Bowdich (1819) *Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee*, London, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd [1966].
- T.E. Bowdich (1821) *An Essay on the Geography of North-Western Africa*, L.-T. Cellot, Paris.

R.P. Brady (1978) *Hierarchy and Authority among the Hausa with Special Reference to the Period of the Sokoto Caliphate in the Nineteenth Century*, D. Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford.

D.E. Brown (1988) *Hierarchy, History, and Human Nature: The Social Origins of Historical Consciousness*, The University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

J. Bukh (1979) *The village woman in Ghana*, Publications from the Center for Development Research, Copenhagen, Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala.

K.A. Busia (1951) *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti*, Oxford University Press, London.

K.A. Busia (1954) "The Ashanti of the Gold Coast", in D. Forde (ed.) *African Worlds*, Oxford University Press, London, pp. 190-209.

J. Caldwell (1966) "Extended Family Obligations and Education: A Study of an Aspect of Demographic Transition amongst Ghanaian University Students", *Population Studies*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 183-99.

J. Caldwell (1967) "The Erosion of the Family: A Study of the Fate of the Family in Ghana", *Population Studies*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 5-26.

H. Callan (1984) "Introduction", in H. Callan and S. Ardener (eds.) *The Incorporated Wife*, Croom Helm, London, pp. 1-26.

J.P. Chauveau and J.P. Dozon (1985) "Colonisation, Économie de Plantation et Société Civile en Côte d'Ivoire", *Cahiers ORSTOM sér. Sci. Hum.*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 63-80.

G. Clark (1989) "Money, Sex and Cooking: Manipulation of the paid/unpaid boundary by Asante market women", in B. Orlove and H. Rutz (eds.) *The Social Economy of Consumption*, The University of America Press, Lanham, pp. 323-348.

G. Clark (1994) *Onions are my husband: Survival and Accumulation by West African Market Women*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.

F.-J. Clozel (1902a) "Land Tenure Among the Natives of the Ivory Coast", *Journal of the African Society*, vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 399-415.

- F.-J. Clozel (1902b) "Introduction", in F.-J. Clozel et R. Villamur (eds.) *Les Coutumes Indigènes de la Cote d'Ivoire*, Challamel, Paris, pp. 1-74.
- J. Crisp (1984) *The Story of an African Working Class: Ghanaian Miners' Struggles 1870-1980*, Zed, London.
- B. Cruickshank (1853) *Eighteen years on the Gold Coast of Africa, including an account of the natives tribes and their intercourse with Europeans*, 2 vols., Hurst and Blackett, London.
- K.Y. Daaku (1966) "Pre-Ashanti States", *Ghana Notes and Queries*, vol. 9, pp. 10-13.
- K.Y. Daaku (1971) "A History of the Sefwi: A survey of oral evidence", *Research Review*, vol. 7, no. 3, pp. 32-47.
- K.Y. Daaku (1974) *Oral Traditions of Sefwi*, 2 vols, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.
- K.Y. Daaku and A. van Dantzig (1966) "Map of the regions of Gold Coast in Guinea", *Ghana Notes and Queries*, vol. 9, pp. 14-15.
- J.B. Danquah (1928) *Akan Laws and Customs*, George Routledge and sons Ltd., London.
- J.B. Danquah (1944) *The Akan Doctrine of God: A fragment of Gold Coast ethics and religion*, Lutterworth Press, London.
- H.W. Debrunner (1959) *Witchcraft in Ghana: A study on the belief in destructive witches and its effect on the Akan tribes*, Presbyterian Book Depot, Kumasi.
- H.W. Debrunner (1967) *A History of Christianity in Ghana*, Waterville Publishing House, Accra.
- I. De Garine (1996) "Food and the Status Quest in Five African Cultures", in Wiessner and Schiefenhövel (eds.) *Food and the Status Quest: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, Berghahn Books, Providence & Oxford, pp. 193-217.
- G.J.S. Dei (1994) "The Women of a Ghanaian Village: A Study of Social Change", *African Studies Review*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 121-145.

M. Delafosse (1900) *Essai de Manuel de la Langue Agni*, André, Paris.

M. Delafosse (1930) *Enquête Coloniale dans l'Afrique Française Occidentale et Équatoriale*, Société d'éditions géographiques, maritimes et coloniales, Paris.

D. Donham (1990) *History, Power, Ideology: Central Issues in Marxism and Anthropology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

M. Douglas (1969) "Is matriliney doomed in Africa?", in M. Douglas and P.M. Kaberry (eds.) *Man in Africa*, Tavistock Publications, London, pp. 121-135.

R. Dumett (1971) "The Rubber Trade of the Gold Coast and Asante in the Nineteenth Century: African Innovation and Market Responsiveness", *Journal of African History*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 79-101.

R.E. Dumett (1979) "Precolonial gold mining and the State in the Akan region: With a critique of the Terray hypothesis", in G. Dalton (ed.) *Research in Economic Anthropology*, vol. 2, JAI Press, Greenwich, pp. 37-68.

R.E. Dumett (1983) "African Merchants of the Gold Coast, 1860-1905- Dynamics of Indigenous Entrepreneurship", *Comparative Study of Society and History*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 661-691.

R.E. Dumett (1987) "Precolonial Gold Mining in Wassa: Innovation, Specialization, Linkages to the Economy and to the State", in E. Schildkrout (ed.) *The Golden Stool: Studies in the Asante Center and Periphery*, American Museum of Natural History, New York, pp. 209-224.

R.E. Dumett (1990) "Traditional Slavery in the Akan Region in the Nineteenth Century: Sources, Issues, and Interpretations", in D. Henige and T.C. McCaskie (eds.) *West African Economic and Social History: Studies in memory of Marion Johnson*, University of Wisconsin African Studies Program, Madison, pp. 7-22.

R. Dumett (1998) *El Dorado in West Africa: The Gold-Mining Frontier, African Labor, and Colonial Capitalism in the Gold Coast, 1875-1900*, James Currey, Oxford.

R. Dumett and M. Johnson (1988) "Britain and the Suppression of Slavery in the Gold Coast Colony, Ashanti, and the Northern Territories", in S. Miers and R. Roberts (eds.) *The End of Slavery in Africa*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, pp. 71-116.

- L. Dumont (1966) *Homo Hierarchicus: Le système des castes et ses implications*, Editions Gallimard.
- L. Dumont (1979) "The Anthropological Community and Ideology", *Social Sciences Information*, vol. 18, no. 6, pp. 785-817.
- L. Dumont (1980) *Homo Hierarchicus: The caste system and its implications*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- J. Dunn and A.F. Robertson (1973) *Dependence and Opportunity: Political change in Ahafo*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- J. Dupuis (1824) *Journal of Residence in Ashantee*, Henry Colburn, London.
- D.K. Dutta-Roy and S.J. Mabey (1968) *Household Budget Survey in Ghana*, Institute of Statistics, Legon.
- V. Ebin (1989) "Transfers of Power: The King and the Secret Society in a Time of Crisis", in W. Arens and I. Karp (eds.) *Creativity of Power: Cosmology and Action in African Societies*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington-London, pp. 59-90.
- P. England (1993) "Forest Protection and the Rights of Cocoa Farmers in Western Ghana", *Journal of African Law*, vol. 37, no. 2.
- E.V.T. Engmann (1986) *Population of Ghana, 1860-1960*, Ghana University Press, Accra.
- M. Etienne (1983) "Gender Relations and Conjugality among the Baule", in C. Oppong (ed.) *Female and Male in West Africa*, George Allen & Unwin, London, pp. 303-319.
- P. Etienne (1966) "Phénomènes religieux et facteurs socio-économiques dans un village de la région de Bouaké (Côte d'Ivoire)", *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, vol 5, no. 3, pp. 367-401.
- P. Etienne (1971) "Les Baulé face aux Rapports de Salariat", *Cah. ORSTOM, sér. Sci. hum.*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 235-242.
- K. Firmin-Sellers (1996) *The Transformation of Property Rights in the Gold Coast: An empirical study applying rational choice theory*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

- M. Fortes (1948) "The Ashanti Survey: A Preliminary Report", *The Rhodes-Livingstone Journal*, vol. 6, pp. 1-36.
- M. Fortes (1949) "Time and Social Structure: An Ashanti Case Study", in Fortes (1970) *Time and Social Structure and other essays*, Athlone Press, New York, pp. 1-32.
- M. Fortes (1950) "Kinship and Marriage among the Ashanti", in Radcliffe-Brown and D. Forde (eds.) *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, Oxford University Press, London, pp. 252-284.
- M. Fortes (1953) "The Structure of Unilineal Descent Groups", in Fortes (1970) *Time and Social Structure and other essays*, Athlone Press, New York, pp. 67-95.
- M. Fortes (1963) "The 'Submerged Descent Line' in Ashanti", in I. Schapera (ed.) *Studies in Kinship and Marriage*, Occasional Paper of the Royal Anthropological Institute No. 16., Royal Anthropological Institute, London, pp. 58-67.
- M. Fortes (1968) "On Installation Ceremonies", *Proceedings of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland for 1967*, pp. 5-20.
- M. Fortes (1970) *Kinship and the Social Order: The Legacy of Lewis Henry Morgan*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.
- M. Fortes (1971) *The Family: Bane or Blessing?*, Ghana University Press, Accra.
- M. Fortes (1975) "Strangers", in M. Fortes and S. Patterson (eds.) *Studies in African Social Anthropology*, Academic Press, London, pp. 229-253.
- J.-C. Galey (ed.) (1984a) *Différences, Valeurs, Hiérarchie: Textes offertes à Louis Dumont*, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris.
- J.-C. Galey (1984b) "Présentation", in J.-C. Galey (ed.) *Différences, Valeurs, Hiérarchie: Textes offertes à Louis Dumont*, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, pp. xi-xxxiii.
- J.-D. Garceau (1982) "L'économie du cacao dans une chefferie Akan (Ghana): Appropriation des terres et exploitation d'une main-d'oeuvre étrangère. Une approche diachronique", *Culture*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 99-112.

M. Gilbert (1987) "The Person of the King: Ritual and Power in a Ghanaian State", in D. Cannadine and S. Price (eds.) *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 298-330.

M. Gilbert (1988) "The Sudden Death of a Millionaire: Conversion and consensus in a Ghanaian kingdom", *Africa*, vol. 58, no. 3, pp. 291-304.

M. Gilbert (1989) "Sources of Power in Akuropon-Akuapem: Ambiguity in Classification", in W. Arens and I. Karp (eds.) *Creativity of Power: Cosmology and Action in African Societies*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington-London, pp. 59-90.

M. Gilbert (1997) "'No condition is permanent': Ethnic construction and the use of history in Akuapem", *Africa*, vol. 67, no. 4, pp. 501-533.

R. Gocking (1990) "Competing Systems of Inheritance before the British Courts of the Gold Coast Colony", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 601-18.

R. Gocking (1993) "British Justice and the Native Tribunals of the Southern Gold Coast Colony", *The Journal of African History*, vol. 34, no. 1, pp. 91-113.

M. Godelier (1991) "L'Objet et les Enjeux", in M. Godelier (ed.) *Transitions et Subordinations au Capitalisme*, Fondation de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, Paris, pp. 7-56.

E. Goody (1982) *Parenthood and Social Reproduction*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

J. Goody (1982) *Cooking, Cuisine and Class: A Study in Comparative Sociology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

J. Goody and E. Goody (1995) "Food and Identities: Changing Patterns of Consumption in Ghana", *Cambridge Anthropology*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 1-14.

M. Grenstreet (1981) *Females in the Agricultural Labour Force and Non-Formal Education for Rural Development*, Institute of Social Studies, The Hague.

B. Grier (1981) "Underdevelopment, Modes of Production and the State in Colonial Ghana", *African Studies Review*, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 21-47.

B. Grier (1987) "Contradiction, Crisis and Class Conflict: The State and Capitalist Development in Ghana Prior to 1948", in I.L. Markovitz (ed.) *Studies in Power and Class in Africa*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 27-49.

B. Grier (1992) "Pawns, Porters, and Petty Traders: Women in the Transition to Cash Crop Agriculture in Colonial Ghana", *Signs*, vol. 17, no. 2, pp. 304-328.

D.H. Groff (1980) *The Development of Capitalism in the Ivory Coast: The Case of Assikasso, 1880-1940*, Stanford University, Ph.D. Thesis.

D.H. Groff (1989) "The 'Revolt' of Assikasso of 1898: an Episode in the Colonial Restructuring of an African Regional Economy", *African Economic History*, vol. 18, pp. 1-24.

V.L. Grottanelli (1977) *Una società guineana: gli Nzema*, Torino, Boringhieri.

P.C.W. Gutkind (1989) "The Canoeman of the Gold Coast (Ghana): A Survey and an Exploration in Precolonial African Labour History", *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, no. 115-116, vol. 39, no. 3-4, pp. 339-376.

K. Gyekye (1987) *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

G.P. Hagan (1983) "Marriage, Divorce and Polygyny in Winneba", in C. Oppong (ed.) *Female and Male in West Africa*, Allen and Unwin, London, pp. 192-203.

E. Hansen and K.A. Ninsin (eds.) (1989) *The State development and politics in Ghana*, Codesria, London.

M. Hardiman (1974) "A Preliminary Study of the Role of Women in some Akan Rural Communities", in C. Oppong (ed.) *Domestic Rights and Duties in Southern Ghana*, Institute of African Studies, Legon, pp. 102-128.

K. Hart (1982) *The political economy of West African agriculture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

P. Hill (1963a) *Migrant cacao farmers of Southern Ghana*, Cambridge University Press, London.

- P. Hill (1963b) "Three Types of Southern Ghanaian Farmer", in D. Biebuyck (ed.) *African Agrarian Systems*, Oxford University Press, London, pp. 203-223.
- P. Hill (1970) *Studies in Rural Capitalism in West Africa*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- P. Hill (1975) "The West African Farming Household", in J. Goody (ed.) *Changing Social Structure in Ghana*, Clarke, Doble & Brendon Ltd, London and Plymouth, pp. 119-136.
- P. Hill and C. McGlade (1957) *An Economic Survey of Cocoa Farmers in Sefwi-Wiawso*, Economics Research Division, University College of Ghana, Cocoa Research Series no. 2.
- F.P. Holtsbaum (1925) "Sefwi and its People", *Gold Coast Review*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 76-94, in K.Y. Daaku (1974) *Oral tradition of Sefwi-Wiawso*, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.
- R. Howard (1980) "Formation and Stratification of the Pesantry in Colonial Ghana", *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, vol. 8, no.1, pp. 61-80.
- W. Hutton (1821) *A voyage to Africa*, London.
- C.U. Ilegbune (1976) "Concessions Scramble and Land Alienation in British Southern Ghana, 1885-1915", *African Studies Review*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 17-31.
- W. James (1978) "Matrifocus on African Women", in S. Ardener (ed.) *Defining Females. The Nature of Women in Society*, Billing and Sons Ltd., London, pp. 140-162.
- P.W. Jones-Quartey (1974) "The Effect of the Maintenance of Children Act on Akan and Ewe Notions of Paternal Responsibility", in C. Oppong (ed.) *Domestic Rights and Duties in Southern Ghana*, Institute of African Studies, Legon, pp. 292-304.
- S.B. Kaplow (1978) "Primitive Accumulation and Traditional Social Relations in the Nineteenth Century Gold Coast", *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 19-36.
- R.K. Kasanga (1988) *Land Tenure and the Development Dialogue: The Myth Concerning Communal Landholding in Ghana*, Department of Land Economy University of Cambridge, Cambridge.

R.A. Kea (1982) *Settlements, Trade and Politics in the Seventeenth century Gold Coast*, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London.

M. Kilson (1969) "Libation in Ga ritual", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, vol. 2, pp. 161-178.

D. Kimble (1963) *A political history of Ghana: The rise of Gold Coast Nationalism*, Claredon Press, Oxford.

B. Kimmerling (1971) "Subsistence Crops, Cash Crops, and Urbanization: Some materials from Ghana, Uganda and the Ivory Coast", *Rural Sociology*, vol. 36, no. 4, pp. 471-487.

A.N. Klein (1980) "The two Asantes: Competing Interpretations of 'Slavery' in Akan-Asante Culture and Society", *Research Review*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 37-51.

G.K. Kobiri (1997) *Sehwi Forever*, Unpublished Pamphlet.

P. Konings (1986) *The state and rural class formation in Ghana: A comparative analysis*, Monographs from the African Studies Centre, Leiden.

I. Kopytoff (1971) "Ancestors as Elders in Africa", *Africa*, vol. 41, no.1, pp. 129-142.

R.A. Kotey, C. Oppong e B.E. Rourke (eds.) (1974) *The Economics of Cocoa Production and Marketing*, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, Legon.

T.E. Kyei (1992) *Marriage and Divorce Among the Asante: A Study Undertaken in the Course of the Ashanti Social Survey (1945)*, African Studies Centre, Cambridge.

A.A.Y. Kyerematen (1964) *Panoply of Ghana*, Longmans, London.

A.A.Y. Kyerematen (1969) "The Royal Stools of Ashanti", *Africa*, vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 1-7.

A.A.Y. Kyerematen (1971) *Inter-state Boundary Litigation in Ashanti*, African Studies Center, Cambridge.

V. Lanternari (1977) "L'agricultura: Tecniche e rituali", in V.L. Grottanelli (ed.) *Una società guineana: Gli Nzema*, Boringhieri, Torino, pp. 213-290.

V. Lanternari (1988) *Dei, Profeti, Contadini*, Liguori, Napoli.

R. Law (1978) "Slaves, Trade and Taxes: The Material Basis of Political Power in Precolonial West Africa", in G. Dalton (ed.) *Research in Economic Anthropology*, JAI Press, Greenwich, pp. 37-52.

R. Law (1995) "Introduction", in R. Law (ed.) *From slave trade to 'legitimate' commerce: The commercial transition in the nineteenth century West Africa*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 1-31.

D. Luccini (1992) *L'organizzazione politica tradizionale e i processi di modernizzazione nel distretto di Sefwi-Wiawso (Ghana)*, Università degli studi di Roma 'La Sapienza', Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia.

M. Lynn (1997) *Commerce and economic change in West Africa: The palm oil trade in the nineteenth century*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

R.A. Lystad (1959) "Marriage and Kinship among the Ashanti and the Agni: A study of differential acculturation", in W.R. Bascom and M.J. Herskovits (eds.) *Continuity and Change in African Cultures*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, pp. 187-204.

D. Maier (1980) "Competition for power and profits in Kete-Krachi, West Africa, 1875-1900", *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, vol. 13, pp. 33-50.

D.J.E. Maier (1990) "Military Acquisition of Slaves in Asante", in D. Henige and T.C. McCaskie (eds.) *West African Economic and Social History: Studies in memory of Marion Johnson*, University of Wisconsin African Studies Program, Madison, pp. 119-132.

H.S. Maine (1861) *Ancient Law*, John Murray, London [1912].

T. Manuh (1988) "The Asantehemaa's Court and its Legal Jurisdiction over Women: A Study in Legal Pluralism", *Research Review- New Series*, vol. 4, no. 2, pp. 50-66.

T. Manuh (1995) "Changes in Marriages and Funeral Exchanges Among the Asante: A Case Study from Kona, Afigya-Kwabre", in J.I. Guyer (ed.) *Money Matters*, James Currey, pp. 188-201.

T. Manuh (1997) "Wives, Children, and Interstate Succession in Ghana", in G. Mikell (ed.) *African Feminism: The Politics of Survival in Sub-Saharan Africa*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, pp. 77-95.

L. Marlow (1997) *Hierarchy and egalitarianism in Islamic thought*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

T.C. McCaskie (1980a) "Office, Land and Subjects in the History of the Manwere Fekuo of Kumase: An essay in the political economy of the Asante states", *Journal of African History*, vol. 21, no. 2, pp. 189-208.

T.C. McCaskie (1980b) "Time and the Calendar in Nineteenth-Century Asante: An exploratory Essay", *History in Africa*, vol. 7, pp. 179-200.

T.C. McCaskie (1981) "State and Society, Marriage and Adultery: Some considerations towards a Social History of Pre-colonial Asante", *Journal of African History*, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 477-494.

T.C. McCaskie (1983) "Accumulation: Wealth and Belief in Asante History I. To the close of the Nineteenth Century", *Africa*, vol. 53, no. 1, pp. 23-43.

T.C. McCaskie (1985) "Power and Dynastic Conflict in Mampon", *History in Africa*, vol. 12, pp. 167-185.

T.C. McCaskie (1986) "Accumulation: Wealth and Belief in Asante History II. The twentieth century", *Africa*, vol. 56, no.1, pp. 3-23.

T.C. McCaskie (1989a) "Death and the Asantehene: A historical meditation", *Journal of African History*, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 417-444.

T.C. McCaskie (1989b) "Asantesem: Reflections on Discourse and Text in Africa", in K. Barber and P.F. de Moraes Farias (eds.) *Discourse and its Disguises: The Interpretation of African Oral Texts*, Centre of West African Studies, University of Birmingham, pp. 70-86.

T.C. McCaskie (1995) *State and Society in Pre-colonial Asante*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

M.D. McLeod (1980) *The Asante*, British Museum Publications, London.

M.D. McLeod (1987) "Gifts and Attitudes", in E. Schildkrout (ed.) *The Golden Stool: Studies in the Asante Center and Periphery*, American Museum of Natural History, New York, pp. 184-191.

- A.K. Mensah-Brown (1967) "An African Chiefdom in Modern Ghana", *Présence Africainè*, vol. 62, pp. 94-120.
- A.K. Mensah-Brown (1968) "Marriage in Sefwi-Akan Customary Law: A Comparative Study in Ethno-Jurisprudence", *Présence Africaine*, vol. 68, pp. 61-86.
- A.K. Mensah-Brown (1970) "The Nature of Akan Native Law: A Critical Analysis", *Sociologus*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 123-146.
- J. Middleton (1979) "Home town: A study of an urban center in Southern Ghana", *Africa*, vol. 49, no. 3, pp. 246-257.
- G. Mikell (1984) "Filiation, Economic Crisis, and the Status of Women in Rural Ghana", *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 195-219.
- G. Mikell (1986) "Ghanaian Females, Rural Economy, and National Stability", *African Studies Review*, vol. 29, no. 3, pp. 67-88.
- G. Mikell (1989) *Cocoa and Chaos in Ghana*, Howard University Press, Washington, [1992].
- G. Mikell (1995) "The State, the Courts, and 'Value': Caught Between Matrilineages in Ghana", in J.I. Guyer (ed.) *Money Matters*, James Currey, pp. 225-244.
- G. Mikell (1997a) "Introduction", in G. Mikell (ed.) *African Feminism: The Politics of Survival in Sub-Saharan Africa*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, pp. 1-50.
- G. Mikell (1997b) "Pleas for Domestic Relief: Akan Women and Family Courts", in G. Mikell (ed.) *African Feminism: The Politics of Survival in Sub-Saharan Africa*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, pp. 96-123.
- H.K. Minkus (1980) "The Concept of Spirit in the Akwapim Akan Philosophy", *Africa*, vol. 50, no. 2, pp. 182-192.
- K.A. Ninsin (1989) "The Land Question Since the 1950s", in E. Hansen and K.A. Ninsin (eds.) *The State development and politics in Ghana*, Codesria, London, pp. 165-183.
- P. Nugent (1996) *Big Men, Small Boys and Politics in Ghana*, Asempa Publishers, Accra.

C. Okali (1974) "Labour Inputs on Cocoa Farms", in R.A. Kotey, C. Okali and B.E. Rourke (eds.) *The Economics of Cocoa Production and Marketing*, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, Legon, pp. 3-19.

C. Okali (1975) *Dominase- a mobile farming community in Brong-Ahafo*, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, Legon.

C. Okali (1982) "Family Labour on Cocoa Farms", *Research Review*, vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 1-13.

C. Okali (1983a) *Cocoa and Kinship in Ghana: The matrilineal Akan of Ghana*, Kegan Paul, London.

C. Okali (1983b) "Kinship and Cocoa Farming in Ghana", in C. Oppong (ed.) *Female and Male in West Africa*, Allen and Unwin, London, pp. 169-178.

C. Okali, M. Owusuansah and B.E. Rourke (1974) "The development pattern of some large cocoa holdings in Ghana", in R.A. Kotey, C. Okali and B.E. Rourke (eds.) *The Economics of Cocoa Production and Marketing*, Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research, Legon.

N.A. Ollennu (1962) *Principles of Customary Land Law in Ghana*, Sweet and Maxwell, London.

N.A. Ollennu (1976) "Chieftancy Under the Law", in W.C. Ekow Daniels and G.R. Woodman (eds.) *Essays in Ghanaian Law*, Ghana Publishing Corporation, Accra, pp. 38-56.

C. Oppong, C. Okali, B. Houghton (1975) "Women Power: Retrograde steps in Ghana", *African Studies Review*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 71-84.

F.P.A. Oyedipe (1966) *Ancestor Worship in Ashanti*, Unpublished paper, Institute of African Studies, Legon.

B. Palumbo (1991) *Le noci della discordia: Terra, eredità e parentela in una comunità Nzema (Ghana)*, Tesi di Dottorato in Scienze Etnoantropologiche (III° ciclo), Università degli studi 'La Sapienza', Roma.

B. Palumbo (1992) "Marriage, Land and Kinship in a Nzema Village", *Ethnology*, vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 233-257.

B. Palumbo (1994a) "Storia, spazio e potere in un villaggio nzema", *Etnosistemi*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 102-126.

B. Palumbo (1994b) "Come Venere in cielo. Paradigmi di identità Nzema", in P.G. Solinas (ed.) *Africa- Luoghi e pratiche dell'identità*, La Nuova Italia Scientifica, Roma, pp. 129-200.

M. Pavanello (1995a) "The Work of the Ancestors and the Profit of Living: Some Nzema Economic Ideas", *Africa*, vol. 65, no. 1, pp. 36-57.

M. Pavanello (1995b) "Parentela e Potere tra gli Nzema. Note preliminari di una ricerca tra gli Akan del Ghana Sud-Occidentale", *L'Uomo*, vol. VIII n.s., no. 2, pp. 273-306.

M. Pavanello (1996) "Parenté, catégories économiques et theorie du pouvoir: Les cas des Nzema du Ghana", *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, vol. 143, XXXVI-3, pp. 373-396.

M. Peil (1970) "The Apprenticeship System in Accra", *Africa*, vol. 40, no. 2, pp. 137-150.

A. Perbi (1992) "The Relationship between the Domestic Slave Trade and the External Slave Trade in Pre-Colonial Ghana", *Research Review- New Series*, vol. 8, no. 1-2, pp. 64-75.

C.-H. Perrot (1979) "Femmes et pouvoir politique dans l'ancienne société anyi-ndenye (Côte d'Ivoire)", *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, vol. 19, no. 1-4, pp. 219-223.

C.-H. Perrot (1982) *Les Anyi- Ndenye et le pouvoir aux 18e et 19e siecles*, Publications de la Sorbonne, Abidjan and Paris.

C.-H. Perrot (1987) "L'appropriation d'un espace et controle politique. Pour une histoire du peuplement", *Questions sur la paysannerie au Burundi*, Université du Burundi, pp. 364-383.

A.K. Quarcoo and R. Sieber (1967) "A Note on Tradition and the History of Art in Western Ghana- Brief Extempore Traditional History of Sefwi-Wiawso", *Research Review*, vol. 3, no. 3, pp. 84-90.

F.A. Ramseyer and J. Künhe (1875) *Four years in Ashantee*, London.

R. Rathbone (1993) *Murder and Politics in Colonial Ghana*, London University Press, New Heaven & London.

- R. Rathbone (1996) "Defining Akyemfo: The Construction of Citizenship in Akyem Abuakwa, Ghana, 1700-1939", *Africa*, vol. 66, no. 4, pp. 506-525.
- R.S. Rattray (1916) *Ashanti Proverbs*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- R.S. Rattray (1923) *Ashanti*, Claredon Press, Oxford.
- R.S. Rattray (1927) *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, Claredon Press, Oxford.
- R.S. Rattray (1929) *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, Claredon Press, Oxford.
- P.A. Roberts (1975) "The Village Schoolteacher in Ghana", in J. Goody (ed.) *Changing Social Structure in Ghana: Essays in the comparative sociology of a new state and old tradition*, Clarke, Doble & Brendon Ltd, London and Plymouth, pp. 245-260.
- P.A. Roberts (1983) "The Sefwi-Wiawso Riots of 1935: The deposition of an Omanhene in the Gold Coast", *Africa*, vol. 53, no.2, pp. 25-46.
- P.A. Roberts (1985) "The court records of Sefwi Wiawso, Western Region, Ghana", *History in Africa*, vol. 12, pp. 379-383.
- P.A. Roberts (1987) "The State and the Regulation of Marriage: Sefwi Wiawso (Ghana), 1900-1940", in H. Afshar (ed.) *Women, State and Ideology*, MacMillan Press, Hong Kong, pp. 48-69.
- P.A. Roberts (1988) "Rural Women's Access to Labor in West Africa", in S.B. Stichter and J.L. Parpart (eds.) *Patriarchy and Class: African Women in the Home and the Workforce*, Westview Press, London, pp. 97-114.
- P.A. Roberts (n.d.a) "Towards a History of 'Sefwi' in the 19th Century", Unpublished Paper.
- P.A. Roberts (n.d.b) "The Origins of Cocoa Production in Sefwi: Ghana", Unpublished Paper.
- A.F. Robertson (1976) "Ousting the Chief: Deposition charges in Ashanti", *Man*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 410-27.

- A.F. Robertson (1982) "Abusa: The structural history of an economic contract", *The Journal of Development Studies*, vol. 18, pp. 447-478.
- C. Robertson and I. Berger (1986) "Introduction: Analyzing Class and Gender- African Perspectives", in C. Robertson and I. Berger (eds.) *Women and Class in Africa*, Africana Publishing Company, New York, pp. 3-24.
- G.A. Robertson (1819) *Notes on Africa*, London.
- D. Robotham (1989) *Militants or Proletarians? The Economic Culture of Underground Gold Miners in Southern Ghana, 1906-1976*, African Studies Centre, Cambridge.
- L. Roniger (1990) *Hierarchy and Trust in Modern Mexico and Brazil*, Praeger Publishers, New York.
- J.M. Sarbah (1897) *Fanti Customary Laws*, William Clowes and Sons, London.
- P. Sarpong (1971) *The Sacred Stools of the Akan*, Ghana Publishing Corporation, Accra-Tema.
- K. Shillington (1992) *Ghana and the Rawlings Factor*, MacMillan, London.
- I. Silverblatt (1988) "Imperial Dilemmas, the Politics of Kinship, and Inca Reconstructions of History", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 83-102.
- J. Simensen (1974) "Rural Mass Action in the Context of Anti-Colonial Protest: The Asafo Movement in Akim Abuakwa, Ghana", *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 25-41.
- W. Snelgrave (1754) *A New Account of Guinea and the slave-trade*, J. Wren, London.
- I. Sutton (1983) "Labour in Commercial Agriculture in Ghana in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries", *Journal of African History*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 461-483.
- V.B. Tashjian (1995) *It's Mine and It's Ours are not the Same Thing: A history of marriage in rural Asante, 1900-1957*, D. Phil. Thesis, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.
- B. Telban (1996) *Hierarchy and Social Institutions in a Sepik Society*, Communiqué Print Services, Manchester.

M. Tellier (1902) "Coutumes des Agni de l'Indénié", in F.J. Clozel and R. Villamur (eds.) *Les coutumes Indigènes de la Cote d'Ivoire*, Challamel, Paris, pp. 147-170.

E. Terray (1975) "Class and class consciousness in an Abron Kingdom of Gyaman", in M. Bloch (ed.) *Marxists Analyses and Social Anthropology*, Malaby Press, London, pp. 85-135.

E. Terray (1976) "Contribution à une étude de l'armée asante", *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, vol. 16, no. 1-2, pp. 297-356.

E. Terray (1979) "Un mouvement de réforme religieuse dans le royaume Abron précolonial: Le culte de Sakrobundi", *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, vol. 19, no. 1-4, pp. 143-176.

E. Terray (1980) "The Political Economy of the Abron Kingdom of Gyaman", *Research Review*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 1-36.

E. Terray (1982) "L'économie politique du royaume abron du Gyaman", *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, vol. 22, no. 3-4, pp. 251-275.

È. Terray (1987) "Le Royaume Abron du Gyaman" in C. Tardits (ed.) *Princes et Serviteurs du royaume*, Société d'ethnographie, Paris, pp. 24-57.

E. Terray (1995) *Une Histoire du Royaume Abron du Gyaman: Des origines à la conquête coloniale*, Karthala, Paris.

S. van der Geest (1976) "Role Relationship between Husband and Wife in Rural Ghana", *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, vol. 38, no. 3, pp. 572-578.

S. van der Geest (1997) "Money and Respect: The changing value of old age in rural Ghana", *Africa*, vol. 67, no. 4, pp. 534-559.

N. Van Hear (1982) "Child Labour and the Development of Capitalist Agriculture in Ghana", *Development and Change*, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 499-515.

D.D. Vellenga (1974) "Arenas of Judgement: An analysis of matrimonial cases brought before different types of courts in the Eastern Region of Ghana in the nineteen-thirties and nineteen-sixties", in C. Oppong (ed.) *Domestic Rights and Duties in Southern Ghana*, Institute of African Studies, Legon, pp. 77-101.

- D.D. Vellenga (1977) "Differentiation among Women Farmers in two Rural Areas in Ghana", *Labour and Society*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 197-208.
- D.D. Vellenga (1983) "Who is a Wife? Legal Expressions of Heterosexual Conflicts in Ghana", in C. Oppong (ed.) *Female and Male in West Africa*, London, Allen and Unwin, pp. 144-155.
- D.D. Vellenga (1986) "Matriliny, Patriliney, and Class Formation among Women Cocoa Farmers in Two Rural Areas of Ghana", in C. Robertson and I. Berger (eds.) *Women and Class in Africa*, Africana Publishing Company, New York and London, pp. 62-77.
- E. Vercrujssse (1979) "Class Formation in the Peasant Economy of Southern Ghana", *Review of African Political Economy*, no. 15/16, pp. 93-104.
- E. Vercrujssse (1983) "Fishmongers, Big Dealers and Fishermen: Co-operation and Conflict Between Sexes in Ghanaian Canoe Fishing", in C. Oppong (ed.) *Female and Male in West Africa*, Allen and Unwin, London, pp. 179-191.
- F. Viti (1988) "I Baule e la terra: aspetti sociali, politici ed economici dell'accesso al suolo", *Africa* (Roma), vol. 43, no. 2, pp. 163-190.
- F. Viti (1994) "La formazione di uno spazio politico baule nel XVIII-XIX secolo: l'Aitu nvle", *Etnosistemi*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 55-81.
- F. Viti (1998) *Il Potere Debole: Antropologia politica dell'Aitu nvle*, Franco Angeli, Milano.
- A. Wade-Brown (1979) "L'affidamento infantile fra gli Nzema: Ridistribuzione e circolazione delle risorse umane in una società dell'Africa Occidentale", *L'Uomo*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 275-308.
- P. Wiessner and W. Schiefenhövel (eds.) (1996) *Food and the Status Quest: An Interdisciplinary Perspective*, Berghahn Books, Providence & Oxford.
- I. Wilks (1967) "Ashanti Government", in D. Forde e P. Kaberry (eds.) *West African Kingdoms of the Nineteenth Century*, Oxford University Press, London, pp. 206-238.
- I. Wilks (1975) *Asante in the Nineteenth century*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

- I. Wilks (1979) "The Golden Stool and the Elephant Tail: An essay in wealth in Asante", in G. Dalton (ed.) *Research in Economic Anthropology*, vol. 2, JAI Press, Greenwich, pp. 1-36.
- I. Wilks (1982) "The State and the Akan States: A discursion", *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, vol. 22, nos. 3 and 4, pp. 231-249.
- I. Wilks (1987) "What manner of persons were these? Some reflections on Asante officialdom", in E. Schildkrout (ed.) *The Golden Stool: Studies in the Asante Center and Periphery*, American Museum of Natural History, New York, pp. 109-130.
- I. Wilks (1993) *Forests of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the Kingdom of Asante*, Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio.
- E.R. Wolf (1982) *Europe and the People without History*, University of California Press, Los Angeles [1990].
- P. Woodford-Berger (1981) "Women in Houses: The Organization of Residence and Work in Rural Ghana", *Antropologiska Studier* (Stockholm), nos. 30-31, pp. 3-35.
- P. Woodford-Berger (1997) "Associating Women: Female Linkage, Collective Identities and Political Ideology in Ghana", in E. Evers Rosander (ed.) *Transforming Female Identities: Women's organizational forms in West Africa*, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Stockholm, pp. 37-51.
- G. Woodman (1974) "The rights of wives, sons and daughters in the estates of their deceased husbands and fathers", in C. Oppong (ed.) *Domestic Rights and Duties in Southern Ghana*, Institute of African Studies, Legon, pp. 268-284.
- G.R. Woodman (1988) "Land Title Registration without Prejudice: The Ghana Land Title Registration Law, 1986", *Journal of African Law*, vol. 31, nos. 1-2, pp. 119-135.
- K. Yankah (1995) *Speaking for the chief: Okyeame and the politics of Akan royal oratory*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- M. Young (1971) *Fighting with Food: Leadership, values and social control in a Massim society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Archives

United Kingdom

British Parliamentary Papers

1883: C. 3687, "Further Correspondence regarding the affairs of the Gold Coast".

PRO CO: Public Record Office- Colonial Office Papers

Rhodes House, Oxford

Bowring, T.L. "Typed letter, signed by Nana Adjage, Omanhene of Anhwiaso, congratulating T.L. Bowring, District Engineer, upon the completion of the road from Asawinso to Ahinkrome, Gold Coast, and presenting him, in the name of the people of Anhwiaso, with two gold nuggets", Nov. 21, 1927. MSS. Afr. s. 141, ff 121-122.

British Records Association "Leases relating to mining companies in the Gold Coast: 1900-1902". MSS. Afr. s. 2037

Duncan-Johnstone, A.C. "Papers of Lt. Col. A.C. Duncan-Johnstone", 4 vols.

Wilkinson, A.F.L. "Correspondence as D.C., relating to Gold Coast administration, 1907, 1921-1931, including memoranda on adultery fees for the Asantehene, diaries of the disturbances of Nov. 15, 1935 at Wiaso, and co. 1935-36". MSS Afr. s. 713.

Wilkinson, E.D. "Diary letters home, 1931-35, as a wife of administrative officer, Gold Coast". MSS Afr. s. 1044.

Pepe Roberts Papers

Native Tribunal Court Archives, Sefwi Wiawso 1927-1959.

Methodist Mission Society Records, SOAS.

MSS 5A Gold Coast 1835-1931; Box 770, General File 1918, Item 27.

Ghana- National Archives

GNA- Accra: National Archives of Ghana, Accra.

GNA- Kumase: National Archives of Ghana, Kumase.

Note: References for the Kumasi Archives follow the new criterion established in 1997.

GNA- Sekondi: National Archives of Ghana, Sekondi.

Ghana- Cocobod

Produce Buying Company.

Data on cocoa production in the Sefwi District: 1973/74, 1975/76, 1981/82, 1982/83, 1985/86, 1987/88, 1988/89, 1989/90, 1990/91.

Archives of Sefwi Wiawso

Cocoa Quality Control Division, Cocobod Regional Office, Sefwi Wiawso

Data on cocoa production 1992/93 and 1993/94.

Ministry of Agriculture, Division of Agric. Extension Services, Wiawso, P.O. Box 45.

Miscellaneous papers.

Forestry Department, Ministry of Land and Natural Resources, P.O. Box 28, Sefwi Wiawso.

Miscellaneous papers.

Traditional Council, P.O. Box 42, Sefwi Wiawso

Minutes of the Judicial Committee of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council, October 1959 to March 1973.

Minutes of the Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Council September 1961 to August 1996.

Miscellaneous documents.

Lands Commission Secretariat, P.O. Box 92, Sefwi Wiawso

Miscellaneous documents.

NGO "Ricerca e Cooperazione", Kessekrom.

Miscellaneous documents.

Department of Social Welfare, P.O. Box 25, District Administration, Sefwi Wiawso

Audio recordings of cases heard, mostly concerning the maintenance of children and inheritance.

Miscellaneous documents.

Western Region Settler Farmers' Union

Miscellaneous documents.

Commissioner for Oaths, Sefwi Wiawso

Land and labour contracts, mostly from the 1990s.

Miscellaneous documents.

Recordings

Video

Video recorded and commented by Mr. Mintah: "Funeral Rites of Nana Kwadwo Aduhene II, Omanhene of Sefwi Wiawso Traditional Area 28th January -24th February 1997, part I and II".

Video recorded and commented by Mr. Mintah: "40th Anniversary Celebration of Nana Kwadwo Aduhene II Enstoolment, 29th November -5th December 1993".

Video recorded by the author: "Ceremony of land transferal to Akosua Kye, Kwame Bua, 23-10-97".

Video recorded by the author: "Apprenticeship ceremony Doris Ahinkorah & Magda, New Adiembra 26-10-97".

Video recorded by the author: "Marriage ceremony Kwabena Nsum & Grace Nsowah, Kwame Bua, 8-11-97".

Audio

Audio recording by the author: "Ceremony of arrival of Nana Nkoah Okodom II, Ahenefie, Wiawso, 6-11-97".

Audio recording by Francis Mensah: "Apprenticeship ceremony of Shirley Fuakyewa & Magda, Wiawso, 14-9-97".

