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GLOBALIZATION, SURVIVAL AND CARE

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Notes on Contributors

Akosua Adomako Ampofo is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of African Studies

Delali Badasu is a Research Fellow at the Institute of African Studies

Takyiwaa Manuh is a Professor at the Institute of African Studies

Brigid Sackey is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of African Studies

David Lackland Sam is a Lecturer/Professor of Psychosocial Science at the department of Psychosocial Science, Centre for International Health, University of Bergen.

Kjell Soleim is at the Centre for Women’s and Gender Studies at the University of Bergen, Norway.
EDITOR’S PREFACE

This volume is the second set of papers presented at a workshop on GLOBALIZATION AND CHANGES IN CULTURES OF SURVIVAL AND CARE, jointly organized by the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana and scholars from the Women’s and Gender Studies Centre, University of Bergen, Norway. The first set was published as Vol. 17. No.1 of the Research Review. The workshop was held at the Institute of African Studies from October 10–12, 2001. The papers cover a wide range of topics, even as the theme of the workshop suggests. The first volume contains eight papers which examine a number of issues in the globalization process and associated effects on the cultural practices of care for people and even the environment, the disruptions of care and responses. In this second volume, the authors consider a number of related issues.

The first paper by Akosua Adomako Ampofo, is on the sex trade in sub-Saharan Africa in the context of a globalizing world and survival and care in the era of HIV/AIDS. She discusses conceptualization of the demand for and supply of commercial sex in a historical perspective. She then discusses the sexual market and trade in contemporary Africa and identifies three broad categories of female sex workers in the market with their own social forms, rate of accumulation, areas of operation and organization of labour. She examines the emerging phenomenon of the male sex worker in Africa which is explained by the burgeoning tourist industry. She links new features in the sex market such as trafficking in women within and across national borders for sex trade to the processes of globalization and the resultant economic and political restructuring and their associated complex processes that have liberated people from local and even international regulation. She concludes that women and children are the major victims of sex trade, HIV infection and death from AIDS, and at the same time those who are most likely to provide care and support for people living with HIV/AIDS. She thinks governments have failed to acknowledge this double vulnerability, but must do so and even consider payments to women who provide home care for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Delali Badasu’s paper examines the alternative resources for child birth and care that probably undermine government’s effort at increasing the contraceptive prevalence rate in the Ghanaian society as the preferred means of birth control. She notes that the high rate of unmet need for contraceptives still justifies the continuation of family planning programmes. She observes practices such as abortion, fostering, child labour and opportunities for migration, both within and across the national borders and also observes that these post-natal practices may be preferred by a society that is predominantly pronatalist and still attaches high social and economic value to children. She concludes that the resort to the alternative resources for childbirth and care has implications for socioeconomic development. Policy makers need to examine them as part of the challenge of socioeconomic development as well as problems facing the promotion of family planning.

In the third paper, Takyiwaa Manuh writes about decision-making patterns among Ghanaian migrant couples who live in Toronto, Canada and returned migrants in Ghana with respect to their assistance to their family, kin and friends, and some resultant tensions. Her study is based on field work undertaken in 1996 and 1997. In the first part of her paper she discusses the socioeconomic context of migration in Ghana over the past few decades. Economic crisis in the African sub-region and governments adoption of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) have forced many
Ghanaians to leave for greener pastures elsewhere. Their travels are often sponsored by family or kin, which is the basis for an obligation to provide for those they left behind. This obligation, which is discussed within the framework of reciprocity and kin network, explains the transfer of resources back home by the migrants. In discussing the process of couples' decision-making about this social activity, the study focuses on the gender relations that manifest as observed in the research.

In the fifth paper, David Lackland Sam examines the effect of globalization on fertility behaviour and child-rearing practices in Ghana. The paper draws upon ideas emerging from an ongoing project on the value of children (VOC) undertaken in nine countries and being replicated in another nine. It proposes that a similar research program could be undertaken in Ghana in some communities where earlier research, on which the present study is based, found to be responding to processes of socioeconomic change or broadly globalization.

In the sixth paper, Kjell Soleim opens his argument on the spread of HIV/AIDS by noting how modernization and associated migration and urbanization and the "destruction of traditional social bonds" do not offer a complete explanation as to why HIV/AIDS has developed into a pandemic now and not earlier, during the second half of the 20th century when massive urbanization weakened the authority of all kinds of local institutions. He argues that a drift towards a factor named "excess", which constitutes a menace against all social bounds susceptible of restraining a disease like AIDS, underlies the spread of the disease. He explains the concept "excess" in a historical context using the tradition of Western philosophy, noting the ethical concern about it since the beginnings of Western philosophy in ancient Greece, 2500 years ago – intemperance, and now liberation/freedom. He notes that understanding of the dynamics of excess can contribute towards the adoption of more culturally appropriate policies that can help combat the pandemic.
FOREWORD

GLOBALIZATION AND CHANGES IN CULTURES OF SURVIVAL AND CARE

This volume of the Research Review contains the eight of the papers presented at a workshop jointly organized by the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana in Collaboration with scholars from Bergen University. The rest of the essays will appear in volume 2 of this issue. The apt title for the workshop - Globalization and Changes in Cultures of Survival and Care - was suggested by Professor Kari Waerness, Director of the Bergen University Centre for Women's and Gender Studies. She herself has pioneered scholarship on care and caring in the North and the theme proved to be a fitting umbrella to encompass the various papers presented and the far reaching discussions which ensued.

Globalization has no doubt brought about diverse transformations in African Societies and their cultures. Associated with the process have been changes in living conditions both positive and negative. Threats to sustainable livelihood practices have also increased, as gaps between the rich and poor have widened.

In Ghana as in some other developing countries, sustainable human development has become an illusion as policies and programs and new categorizations, such as the Structural Adjustment program (SAP) and the designation Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) have been put in place, and as the condition of many citizens appears to be worsening. Real wages of many have fallen below the level accounted necessary for survival. Longer working hours and consequent stress and role conflicts characterize the daily life of women. Such conditions affect their child care activities and the survival of their infants and children. Among the youth and adults survival in the midst of such changes has included migration for work and risk-taking reproductive behaviours that make them more vulnerable to infections from HIV and STDs.

High rates of malnutrition, morbidity, mortality and fertility still prevail, in spite of the recent lowering of family size. Rates of incidence of HIV/AIDS are rising rapidly and imperceptibly. Improved understanding of these problems and processes is vital, if governmental and non governmental agencies are to design and put in place the required policies and programs.

In view of its comparative advantage in documenting and explaining cultural phenomena and processes, the Institute of African Studies is currently strengthening its capacity and resource base and improving its links of communication and collaboration with partner organizations inside and outside Ghana, so that it can better develop and carry out the applied research and graduate training needed in this endeavor in Ghana and in the region. This seminar was one more step in this direction. The publication of papers presented at the seminar goes yet further along this road.

Dr Irene Odotei
Ag. Director.
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