Children of Ewe Migrants Living Outside Marriage In The City Of Accra: Some Consequences and Policy Implications

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INTRODUCTION

Socio-economic status of parents is a critical factor that affects the wellbeing of children (Engel et al. 1995, Ramakrishnan 1995, UNICEF 1995). The marital status of the mother of a child, in particular, has implications for the maintenance of the child by the father (Lloyd and Desai 1991, Abu 1983). A number of research findings indicate that children who are co-resident with both parents have their material needs more adequately provided while those living with their mothers only more often than not neglected by their fathers (Badasu 2004, Oppong 2003, Moore 1997).

In traditional African societies, childbearing and child raising were normally expected to be done within marriage. Children may live outside marriage or be fostered for two main reasons: 1) institutional fostering that aims at forging or sustaining relations or ties among kin and 2) crisis fostering arising from separation, divorce, or death of parents (Goody 1982). Modernization has brought about many transformations in society and the family, however, and they have had implications for the living arrangement of children. Marital instability is not uncommon in many contemporary societies and the increasing proportion of children who are living with their mothers only has been used as one of the indications of this situation.

THEORETICAL AND CONTEXTUAL BACKGOUND

Theoretical formulations that attempt to link child health and nutritional status to conditions of their households identify maternal marital status and support that mothers receive in caring for their children as a contributing factor to child development. Anthropology and other disciplines that have examined socio-cultural and household dimensions of child care practices and their effect on the development

of children identify the functioning of the conjugal family, based on a network of kinship obligations and rights, as the main element of traditional social structure that ensures care for children (Caldwell and Caldwell 1987, Fortes 1975, Gordon 1975, Oppong 1973). Kinship is a vital component of traditional life and is maintained through the enforcement of customary sanctions and beliefs.

Anthropological accounts on care for children indicate that the fear of lack of maintenance of children outside marriage is a fundamental reason for the observation of taboos and stigma that are attached to premarital childbearing. Divorce is also scorned mainly for experiences of discontinued maintenance of children whenever couples separate. Marriage between close kin is, therefore, preferred to union with strangers in some traditional societies since the offspring of a couple who are close kin, upon separation or divorce, will still receive support from the extended family to which they and their parents belong. Since the survival of the lineage is very important in traditional societies, children are valued and both parents are expected to maintain their offspring. There is a collective responsibility of all members of a lineage to ensure the perpetuation of the lineage or extended family. Members of a lineage or kin group have the obligation to assist in child rearing of their non-biological children too. These are explained by African demographers such as Caldwell (1982) in his theory of fertility decline and elucidated further by Caldwell and Caldwell (1987) in their work on the cultural context of high fertility in sub-Saharan Africa. Hollos and Larsen (1997: 362), in their study on the social context of fertility decisions among the Pare of Northern Tanzania, commented on the Caldwell and Caldwell (1987: 419) analysis of the linkage of kinship and marriage to fertility as follows:

> "There is consequently an enormous spiritual weight given to behaviours which ensure this linkage and replenishment. Authority is age graded and resources are controlled by the elders who consider all descendants and their spouses as members of a single unit. These most frequently in associated compounds and where the patriarch is buried after his death 'so that he could better observe the behaviour of his descendants'".

Other studies identify sanctions and superstitious beliefs such as postpartum abstinence and the practice of polygyny that are associated with care for children and the value attached to children (Amankwa et al. 2003). To ensure support for child

bearing and prevent child neglect, traditional societies have some characteristics of residential arrangements. In traditional Ewe society, for example, certain residential arrangements made it easy for mothers to receive support in caring for their children. Kin groups are essentially corporate units and houses of members of a kin group occupy a continuous stretch of land, forming a residential unit and thereby provide proximity that encourages interdependence among kin group members (Nukunya 1969).

Socio-cultural transformations resulting from modernization, particularly migration and urbanization, have brought about changes in societal values regarding child bearing. Most sanctions and beliefs about social reproduction are eroded by processes of modernization; secular societies replace traditional ones and myths and taboos are not normally adhered to. Anonymity in urban communities where inter-ethnic marriages are also common and respect for authority of elders may not be recognized contribute to disregard for responsible parenthood for children. There has been limited enforcement of many traditional sanctions on marriage and child maintenance. Early childbearing results often from unwanted pregnancies (Kwankye 2007, Tawiah, 2002). Contemporary constitutional provisions and instruments are also not very effective in ensuring child maintenance in some settings where traditional values conflict with secular approaches to child protection (Townsend 1997).

Meanwhile, increasing poverty and lack of material provision for children also accounts for child neglect (Ocholla-Ayayo 2000, Fayorsey 1999), though much of this is also due to changing attitude to the value and needs of children (Erny 1981). Again dwindling social capital for child care (Oppong 2004, Baron et al. 2000) as well as poor development policies such as the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) that have been implemented since 1980s in many developing countries (Boateng 1996), including Ghana, also contribute to the inability of households to meet the material needs of children.

Feminist discourse also stresses the sexual division of labour that has largely been disadvantageous to women as they continue to have greater responsibility for childrearing, and especially when children are not co-resident with their fathers. The increasing proportion of children living with their mothers only has therefore been

recognized as negative for child well being. Female-headed households have been used synonymously with children deprived of material needs, to a very large extent, though the findings of some studies indicate that female-headed households devote their resources, more often than not, to child maintenance (Moore 1994).

Surveys and other types of researches have examined the living arrangements of children as an indication of their access to parental maintenance, whether adequate or otherwise. An analysis of the DHS data of 19 developing countries (including Ghana) on children's living arrangements by Lloyd and Desai (1991) indicates that, contrary to the assumption that children have access to the resources of both parents, children reside separately from one or both parents for significant periods of their childhood. Moreover, the mothers of a large proportion of these children do not live with a partner and the marital circumstances of these mothers have the potential of bringing about attenuation of the link between the child and the father. According to Lloyd and Desai, such family formation rules vary across societies and those directly observed by them were members beyond the nuclear unit in several types of arrangements: co-residence of three generations within the same household, the inclusion of a single mother and her children as a sub-family within a more complex household and the exchange of children between kin. All these involve financial support as well as the provision of child care. They concluded that children's living arrangements are likely to be an important factor in their welfare and recognition of this will broaden the scope of demographic inquiry in developing countries and will also strengthen the link between research and policy formulation.

The main findings by various studies on family structure in Western populations indicate that mother's marital status or co-residence of parents and of father and children contributes to children's welfare. Access to other family members depends on their proximity to them. Researches done in the U.S. generally show that fathers' presence in the home is closely linked to the extent of his financial and emotional commitment to his children (Moore 1994). Macunovich and Easterlin (1990), for example, found out that a father's absence substantially lowers children's economic status. Earlier studies, such as Duncan and Rogers' (1988) and Weiss' (1984), also found out that the likelihood of the child's poverty and its duration and severity increases with the absence of the father.

Less information is available on the precise effect of a father's presence or absence on children's welfare in developing countries. This is because many surveys focus on women, for example, the World Fertility Surveys (WFS) and the Demographic and Health Surveys (DHSs). A lot of work has been done comparing the income of female-headed and male-headed households though. Some works on Ghana indicate that since most Sub-Saharan African women are in lowly-paid jobs and among the poor in society with little or no access to critical resources for production (land and education), resources available for child care in female-headed households are limited, compared to those of male-headed households (Awumbila 2001, Manuh 1997). Meanwhile, women increasingly have had the greater share of the cost and time input for child care and maintenance and associated greater work burden (Oppong 2001, Moore 1994 UN 1995).

Some studies on West Africa also show that some children living with neither biological parents exhibit more emotional stress and relative lack of attention and access to critical resources (Atobrah 2005, Appiah 2001), though fostering may rather be a means by which some children may receive care, as indicated in earlier studies (Ardayfio-Schandorf and Amissah 1996, Page 1989, Abanihe 1985, Fiawoo 1978).

Emphasis on gender in the organization of household work, access to resources and their implications and impacts on the living arrangements of members of households, including children aim at that drawing attention of policy makers to the social contexts within which development policies that address wellbeing of people are being implemented. Examination of the social transformations and contexts of childbearing in urban settings considered in the foregoing analysis should be of interest to researchers and policy makers. The present study examines the consequences and policy implications of children of Ewe migrant mothers living outside marriage in the city of Accra. The main objective is to draw attention of policy makers to the underlying factors involved in the conditions of the children and the need to adopt social policies that can tackle them, as research evidence is provided.

The study is in five parts. The first discusses the methodology of the study. It is followed by an examination of the sociocultural background of the Ewe. The third and fourth describe the nature, consequences and policy implications of the living arrangements of the children. The fifth is the conclusion on the study.

METHODS

The study was a component of a wider one that investigated the patterns of child care and their relationship with the health and nutritional status of 208 children of Ewe migrants in the city of Accra. The study examined the variations of child care practices at the household level and within residential levels and socio-economic subgroups of the study population.

The Study Areas

The children were studied in three types of residential areas – high, middle and low-income areas. The purpose for this was to examine the spatial variations in the conditions of care for the children. The parents and/or care givers of the children had different socio-economic status and the households had various levels of resource availability for child care and were as such examined.

Research Design and Data Sources

Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed to study a total of 208 children in households, streets and hospital a ward. The main research instrument was a questionnaire with both open and close-ended questions.

Qualitative techniques consisting mainly of indepth interviews and ethnographic methods (narratives, life stories and observational methods) were also used. Regarding living arrangements of the children, the mothers with children living with them only were interviewed indepth to collect data and other information on how they cared for the children. Further information was also collected from secondary sources

and from interviews with officials of the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service.

The module socio-economic status of parents examined how parents' educational income, marital, occupational and other related characteristics relate with child care and health and nutritional outcomes of the children. The marital status of the parents and consequent the living arrangements of the children form the basis for the present study.

Traditional Ewe Social Organization and Domestic Life

Independence and freedom is cherished in the social organization of Ewe states has largely been extended to domestic life. This independence is emphasized in marriage. Among the Anlo Ewe, for example, it is expected that a man must be independent of his parents and should have his own house before thinking of marriage. In his anthropological work on *Kinship and Marriage Among Anlo Ewe,* Nukunya (1969: 128)

> In fact, the household consisting of a man, his wife and unmarried children was regarded by the Anlo as the ideal, and this is still largely the case today, though it is not always realized in practice.

In the conjugal relationship, though a complete obedience is expected from the wife, a man and his wife cannot be said to co-operate in economic venture. Women derive considerable independent income from farming, trading and other forms of business. In Nukunya's (1969: 156-157) account on the Anlo, he wrote:

> The family is an economic unit in so far as its members jointly provide for their daily needs. … Spouses only contribute part of their incomes to the expenses of the household, the remainder is their own. Thus the woman can acquire a fortune to which the husband has no claim. It is therefore not surprising to find a family in which the wife is very rich while the husband is

> poor. … The far-reaching economic independence of the spouses makes close marital union difficult. This is especially the case in polygynous families.

In this regard, a wife can seek divorce when the husband fails to provide maintenance for the family. Religious affiliation of spouses need not be that same. At her death, the wife is taken by her siblings or extended family who are also largely responsible for her funeral rites. As such, characteristics of the family can result in marital instability. Marriage among close relatives or kin is preferred and stigma is attached to divorce and adulthood spent without marriage (Nukunya 1969).

Paternity of a child is very important; for it is in the establishment of paternity (identifying the biological father or genitor) that the child has a right to support or maintenance as well as identity in wider society. A girl or a woman who conceives whilst not married or not residing with her sexual partner is said to have *gbomefu* (literally meaning a pregnancy on the street). (See chapter 3 for full discussion on this). Indeed, kinship has been the most important source of security and welfare for the individual member of Ewe traditional society though the nuclear family has been the basic unit that maintains and supports both children and adults.

The Value of Children

Like other traditional African societies, pronatalist values encourage kin groups to ensure that their numbers increase. A popular Ewe proverbs, *Vi vo nyo wu ko tsitsi*, (Translation: It is better to have a rebellious child than to be childless) and *Vi vo noafe dze afe* (Translation: A delinquent child befits a home) illustrate the value of children in Ewe society (Dzobo1997: 207).

Children are believed to be given by the Almighty God, *Mawu.* Such a belief is recognized in a popular song that is sung to barren women either to encourage or taunt them:

Evi ye menye nusi wofle le asime o
Dogbeda Mawu ana wo

Translated: A child is not something you can buy on the market
Pray and the Almighty God will give you

Stigma is attached to childlessness and it is believed to be caused by many factors: a curse by the ancestors; one's own witchcraft or another's, especially a father's sister or father's mother or any paternal relative and in-law; *juju* or one's own immoral lifestyle. The stigma is suffered not only by the individual but by the extended family too. Should the individual die childless, he or she is given a humiliating funeral rite. A broomstick is stuck in the genitals of the corpse before burial and the soul is warned never to return or never to return in such fruitless manner. For the extended family therefore, the need to avoid such humiliation is the reason why care must be taken to have members of the family live moral lives and avoid childlessness that may be due to one's own doing. As a result all possible means are sought to have the individual get pregnant. A medium may be consulted to find out the cause of the childlessness or a deity may be consulted to seek divine intervention.

Childlessness within marriage is blamed on the wife since it is believed that a man cannot be infertile. Should it even be established that the problem lies with the husband, with the assistance of the man and sometimes some elderly members of the extended family, a sexual partner is found for the wife so that she may bear children for her husband. An unmarried or married woman or couple have to foster a number of children of their sibling or others'. The couple or individual will then de addressed as the father or mother of one of these children. Among the Ewe, a man and a woman must be addressed as the father or a mother of a child, normally the first born, at a certain age when one is expected to have married or to have children. If this title is not "achieved" it is embarrassing, especially in the public domain and even in the domestic where a woman may have co-wives who bear children and for that matter taunt her and accuse her of witchcraft (Field Work 2004).

The birth of a child therefore calls for celebration by all members of the kin group. The support that a woman and a couple receive to care for a child is explained by such reasons quite apart from it being obligatory.

Kin Support

Kinship was a vital component of traditional life and was maintained by enforcement of customary sanctions and beliefs (Nukunya 1992, 1969; Oppong 1973). The residential pattern of lineage among the Ewes contributes to the shared rights and responsibilities regarding care for children in traditional Ewe communities. The lineage, according to Nukunya (1969:28), is largely a residential unit. A number of nuclear families may reside in one big compound or area or close to one another. The houses of lineage members occupy a continuous stretch of land in the section of the ward that bears its name. In few cases, some lineage members may not live in the area that bears the name of the lineage due to economic and demographic factors, for example, where the land is too small to support all lineage members. Land is a unifying force among the Ewe. In traditional Ewe society, land was the main property owned and used by lineage members, making them corporate units.

The analysis of the information on the children studied in Accra showed that their living arrangements show the evidence of socio-cultural transformations that have taken place in Ghana. Their lives present evidence of the need for adoption and implementation of social policies that can address the challenges and consequences of childbearing and/or child raising outside marriage in an urban setting.

Living Arrangements of the Children

Out of the 161 children who resided in only one household, almost two- thirds (64.6%) were living with both parents as can be seen on Table 1. A quarter of them were living with their mothers only but none of the children was living with his/her father only. A little over five percent (5.5%) of the children were living with their mother's mother and their mother's sister, while the rest were living with other relatives. Thus, a little over a tenth (11.6%) of the children were living with persons

who were not their biological parents. The patterns of the living arrangements of the children are comparable with those in the total national population. According to the 2003 GDHS, the most recent source of information on living arrangement of children

Table 1 Living Arrangements of the Children

Living Arrangements	Number	Percent
Mother and father	104	64.6
Mother only	40	24.8
Mother's mother	7	4.3
Mother's sister	2	1.2
Other	8	4.9
Total	**161**	**100.0**

Source: Field Work 2004-2005

in the total national population, 64.3% of children below five years were living with both parents and 26.9% were living with their mothers only and the rest, 8.8%, were with persons who were not their biological parents. The GDHS results indicated further that 4.4% of the children who were living with persons who were not their biological parents had both parents alive and the same proportion had lost both parents. In the present study population, however, there was only one child whose mother was deceased and none had lost the father. This means that, with the exception of one child, orphanhood did not account for the lack of co-residence of the 11.6% of the Ewe children who were not co-resident with their parents.

Some of the children resided in more than one home. In some of these cases, the mother and father were separated and each enjoys custody of the child. Some children were also living with their grand-parents during weekdays who find it more

convenient than the working parents to take the children to school. The children spend the weekend with their parents. Other children also stay in their grand-parent(s) home every week day during their mother's working hours; this could be day or night time depending on their schedule. They stay with their parent(s) only when they are off duty; and this could be day or night time. Others were also living in between two homes.

The living arrangements of the children were determined by a number of factors. Marital status was found to be a major reason why children were either living or not living with both parents. Thirteen percent of the mothers were single and 3.1% were separated while the others married at one time or another. Some were heads of their own households and others (with their children) were part of other households. The latter group, in most cases, was part of their natal homes or that of a relative.

Matters of Choice

Three of the mothers who are single parents by choice narrated how they decided to raise their children as single parents.

> **Mani**
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> At age 23, Mani had two children and lived as a single parent in one of the slums in Accra. She also had three abortions because the pregnancies were not wanted. She had used injectables in the past as contraception but uses none presently. She had the abortions, according to her, out of ignorance. She said, "Now I belong to a Pentecostal church so I cannot have any abortion again. But I do not want to marry my sexual partner. I want to raise my children alone. So he gives me money to maintain our child. That is enough". Mani helps her mother to bake bread and sell. She has financial problems and does not have enough material resources to care for her son.

Hotovi

Having a child was the major reason why Hotovi had sexual relations with the father of her daughter Nuna. She said she did not have to live with Nuna's father or marry him. "I don't want to marry him because he already had a wife". Even if Hotovi had desired to do so, she would have had to find someone to take care of her father's estate which she was taking care of and said she must continue to do so. She explained that she preferred to have maintenance allowance from Nuna's father to take care of her. Hotovi was also collecting rent from tenants who lived in part of her father's house which she had rented.

Davi

While studying abroad on a postgraduate degree programme, Davi met Mr. Yovo and through their relationship they had one child. Their child was the first-born child to the mother but second-born to the father. Davi and Yovo did not get married, she has since the birth of their daughter kept custody of the child while the father, who was a citizen of a foreign country but born to Ghanaian parents, visit the child from time to time. Davi does not intend to marry Mr. Yovo. He is already married too.

There were three other women who left their husbands and decided to live alone with some of their children. They said they could not stand their extra-marital sexual behaviour. Two of them, whose husbands were drivers, came from the Volta and Northern regions. The third one was a resident of Accra, where the rest of the family also live.

To Secure Marriage

There were other mothers who wanted to regularize their marital status after living with the fathers of their children. Examples are the following three cases.

Case 1

After the birth of her daughter, Ami stayed beyond the period when she needed postpartum care in her parents home. Her daughter was almost four

months old when I first visited her to include the child. She stayed for this length of time for one reason which she stressed as she explained when asked about her martial status: " I want the father of my daughter to marry me before I go back to join him. He did not marry me before I got pregnant. Now, I want him to marry me before I go back to him with our daughter." After the child was 18 months, Ami was married customarily to her husband and she moved out of her parents home to join her husband. She had another child.

Case 2

Yevu was born to her Syrian father by a Ghanaian mother. She has since birth lived in Accra. When Yevu was pregnant with her fourth child at 271/2 years she decided to leave the man responsible for the pregnancy and go back to him only after he has married her. She got pregnant while they were not yet married but co-habiting. She already has four children earlier (Three are alive and one dead) from a previous marriage. She sells beans and fried plantain to care for her children. The father of Yevu's son, a 46 years old fridge mechanic had not married the mother of her two other children who were living with their mother. According to Yevu, she expects him to marry her before she goes back to live with him. She had financial needs and hopes that she will be married soon.

There were other mothers whose circumstances that led to single-parenthood were not by choice. Moreover, the consequences affected their access to paternal maintenance for their children. The paternity of some could not be determined.

Paternal Maintenance of the Children

There were consequences of the living arrangements of the children for their care, particularly the paternal maintenance. The biological fathers of the children with whom the children were not co-resident were expected to maintain the children, as is normally done in Ewe traditional society, where fathers maintain their patrilineage by building their family and maintaining their children. Maintenance could be by cash, clothes and other material needs. Such maintenance could be regular or occasional.

The analysis of the responses to questions on paternal maintenance of the children showed that of the 57 children who were not living with their fathers, only small proportions of them were being maintained by money (10.1%) and money and other material needs (8.5%) regularly from their fathers. Very small percentages were receiving money (3.4%) and money and other material needs (1.7%) occasionally from their fathers. Another 10.1% of the children had maintenance in the form of money and school fees only, material needs only regularly or occasionally or they went to stay with their fathers sometimes. Altogether, just a little over a third (33.8%) of the children who were not living with their fathers received some form of maintenance from their fathers.

Almost all the children who were not being maintained by their fathers were born to teenage and young mothers, who were not married to the fathers of their children. (Examples are given in below). All the teenage mothers, except two, said they had financial problems and were finding it difficult to feed their children. These mothers, including the two, were under the household headship of their fathers, mothers or a relative. Some were apprentices and continued to stay with their mistresses from whom they were learning some trade before they got pregnant.

Paternity

In some of the cases where the biological fathers of the children were not maintaining them, it was because they have not even accepted responsibility for the pregnancy; and identifying the genitor for the children is a prerequisite for securing paternal maintenance for them. Two case studies illustrate this situation.

Tadze

Tadze was born to her teenage mother, Abra, who was staying with a non-relative to learn baking. His mother had two sexual partners before she got pregnant. She informed one of them, called Kofi, about the pregnancy. He initially agreed to assume responsibility for the pregnancy but declined soon afterwards. According to Tadze's mother, he explained to her that the people living in her compound house advised him not to accept the pregnancy anymore because she was keeping two boy-friends all along before she got pregnant and that the other boy friend might have impregnated her. She was not able to give the pregnancy to the second boy-friend. Abra's mistress did not send her to her parents, but allowed her to stay with her and deliver the baby. The mistress also provided for her needs and later Tadze's. So Tadze has, since birth, not been supported by any of her mother's sexual partners. When Tadze was about two years, her mother was trying to re-establish relationship with the second sexual partner but had not asked him to assume responsibility for Tadze. Abra had no relationship with Kofi any more but was trying to persuade him not to take her co-tenants' advice but accept responsibility for Tadze. She had not yet succeeded.

Cecil

Cecil lives with her 27-year old mother in one of the slums in Accra. Their compound house had a very large number of occupants. Almost all of them were Ewe. When I visited the house to inform the tenants about my study, I counted ten households; some tenants were not in. Cecil's mother had not yet come back from selling bread on the street. She could leave her four-year old son, Cecil, in the house, because everybody was each other's keeper in the compound house. As everybody knows everybody in the house some tenants gave me

> the full name of Cecil and his mother during my first visit. When I returned on my second visit to conduct the interview with the mothers, I met Cecil's mother and more tenants. She had returned from her daily round of selling bread on the street. When I approached her to interview her and called her son's name, she asked me to cancel the last name that the co-tenants had given me. She explained that the father of the child has refused to accept the child. She decided to give him her surname. Cecilia lives in the same compound with Tadze's mother.

The tenants in Tadze and Cecil's compound house behave as in a traditional Ewe community setting where the traditional values stigmatize a child whose genitor cannot be identified. Bearing one's mother's surname is equally unacceptable in traditional Ewe society. Thus, in Tadze's case, the need to ensure that the actual biological father accepts responsibility for him was deemed necessary by the "small community" (Ewe community) in the slum. However, Cecil bearing his mother's name seemed not to be acceptable to them.

In-depth interviews with some of the single parents, teenagers and young mothers who have never married before, also revealed that some of the fathers of the children do not intend to marry the children's mothers and have the family live together in future. These included those who were already married and were not ready to marry another woman. Their extra-marital sexual relations with the teenagers and young women were not intended for childbearing. Some of the mothers were in school or awaiting their examination results to enter a higher institution of learning and were also, therefore, not ready to start a family. Some of them were just having "sugar daddy" relationships with married elderly men. This is a relationship where a young girl, usually in secondary school, has a married elderly male sexual partner who, by age, qualifies to be her father. The elderly man gives her material gifts in exchange for sexual favours. Some of the teenage mothers who got pregnant from the sugar-daddy

relationships were in Senior Secondary School or waiting to enter such or similar institution after completing the Junior Secondary School. The birth of their children meant the interruption of their education and a hindrance to the development of their future career. They may or may not be adequately supported by their parents and sexual partners to go back to school when their children have attained the age at which they may be left in the care of another person. Afi's situation represents those of many other young unmarried mothers in the study areas.

Afi

> Afi was in her second year in senior secondary school when she got pregnant. Her sexual partner was a married man, highly qualified professional, already married with children. He accepted responsibility for the pregnancy and was maintaining the child. He however declared to Afi that he could not marry her because he already had a wife. After dropping out of school to deliver her baby, Afi became so concerned about her future. She looked very unhappy as she narrated the prospects of returning to school when her son is about two years. Her mother has promised to take care of her and her son and help her to go back to school soon. Her concern and bitterness about the outcome of her "sugar-daddy" relationship was evident in her speech as she narrated her story and this might have affected her psychological disposition to care for her son.

Some of the parents of such mothers took their infants from them and sent them back to school soon after delivery. This kind of decision was found to be necessitated by the financial investment made into the education of the teenage or young mother. It was also possible in families that had the care resources (financial/material and time) and were capable of providing care for both the infant and the mother. Thus the socioeconomic background of the parents of some teenage and young mothers influenced the availability of care for them and their children, as well as the prospects for the development of their future career. Some of the young mothers who were married and got pregnant while still in school had financial support from their husbands and were therefore better off than their counterparts who got pregnant from

premarital sexual relationships. But those among them who wanted and could continue their education also needed substitute mothers to care for their children. Their mothers played this role for them, as in the case of Tatavi.

Tatavi

Born to a 22-year old mother who was still in school and wanted to continue her education, Tatavi was weaned at two weeks. Her mother's mother, a forty-six year old mother of four grown-up children, became his substitute mother. She explained that her daughter had to continue her professional training because a lot of financial investment was involved in that training. She herself is a self-employed professional who had a number of apprentices and the husband is a well-paid professional in the public sector. Tatavi's father is a university graduate. He provides the baby's financial and material needs. The apprentices at Tatavi's mother's mother workplace are his secondary care givers. There are five adults also in the house, Tatavi's mother's father and siblings, who also help to care for him. Tatavi's mother leaves for school and the grand-mother also works from 7am to 8pm but he received care from the secondary care givers at home. He is brought to the grand-mother's work place to spend part of the day there. At four-and-half months he had no anthropometric failure and had never had any malarial attack or diarrhoea.

For cases such as Tatavi's, the socioeconomic background of the grandparents and the father and the availability of care resources (both material and time) explain his good health and nutritional status, though he was denied exclusive breastfeeding. When such opportunities are not available for care, the health and nutritional outcomes of children were found to be poor in most cases.

Some of the pregnancies resulted from casual sexual relationships with sexually active teenage boys who were not yet ready to start a family. The circumstances surrounding the birth of some of the relationships from which the pregnancies resulted encompass a whole range of changes in the socioeconomic and cultural contexts of childbearing. Some of these include the breakdown of traditional values regarding childbearing and

aspects of the processes of modernization and globalization, particularly the movement of people, as can be seen in the following case studies:

Mawuko

Mawuko was 19 years old when she first met a young man in Tema. He was a refugee from one of the African countries, who fled to Ghana in the heat of the conflicts in his country. He dated Mawuko a number of times. After some time, Mawuko got pregnant. She told the young man. That was the last time she was to see him. She tried to chase him to the refugee camp at Budumburam, where he sometimes stays, but was not successful. She, therefore, contacted the Department of Social Welfare to take over the matter on her behalf. According to her, the officers in the Department asked her to pay their transport fare, C60,000.00 (Sixty thousand cedis) to the refugee camp. Since she could not afford it, she left the matter at that point. Later, a woman near Mawuko's house told her that she could trace the refugee to the camp for her if she could give her his picture. But Mawuko's mother decided that they should not pursue the matter any longer because God will take care of the child. Her brothers have also promised her that when her son is about two years, they will help her learn some trade. Mawuko was, however, struggling with the stigma of having a child whose father has not claimed responsibility for him in a part of a city where community life is like that in a traditional setting where illegitimate child bearing is scorned. She said her financial situation has also been so bad that she always wishes she could still find her partner so that he can help her to look after their son. Mawuko narrated how she escaped death narrowly during her labour for the same financial reason. She said that she was warned by the nurses at the antenatal clinic not to attempt to deliver her baby at home since she had a breach pregnancy. Knowing that they could not afford the hospital fee for the delivery, her mother advised her to deliver the baby at home though they were aware that it was risky. She had a very long labour. Her mother used her traditional birth attendant skills to help her deliver the baby. She was successful but nearly at the cost of Mawuko's life. She is presently selling fried yam by the road side near her house. The stigma surrounding the birth of Mawuko's baby, the difficult financial condition that she faces presently and the uncertainty of the future were not easy for her to unravel. It took several attempts before she finally agreed to be interviewed. She, however, smiled a lot towards the end of the interview and showed so much gratitude for the information on complementary feeding and other areas of care probably because her son already shows symptoms of malnutrition at seven months and has a very low appetite.

Dzodzome

The process of globalization, specifically the movement of people enhanced by the desire to seek greener pastures, took Dzodzome's mother to the Cote d'Ivoire. When Dzodzome's mother died she was brought to Ghana by her

mother's sister. Her mother's sister raised her since her father failed to do so. Dzodzome actually said she doesn't know anyone who could be her father. She was brought to Ghana when she was four years old. Her mother's sister sent her to school. While in her final year in the vocational institute she became pregnant. Her sexual partner was working by then and promised to send her back to school after the delivery of their baby. He, however, left Ghana soon after accepting responsibility for the pregnancy. He was off to an unspecified destination, a greener pasture in Europe, where he could find better living conditions. He told Dzodzome that he might go to Germany or Britain, depending on how the journey went. He called Dzodzome two times since he left, and had not called for the last six months before I interviewed her. Meanwhile, Dzodzome's aunt died when her baby was three months old. She was her only support. The widower, a retired army officer, asked her to continue to stay with him and care for him, so that he could also support her and her baby financially. Dzodzome wishes to work, but caring for the aged widower and her son single-handedly was enough for her at the moment .She was praying that "her-husband-to-be" would get in touch with her or else life would continue to be one of helplessness. She concluded her narrative with the following words: "*Ele Mawu si*" (We are in God's hands).

Policy Implications

Socieconomic and cultural transformations taking place in Ghanaian society account for changes in reproductive health behaviour and the consequent living arrangements of children and the associated patterns of care for them. The breakdown of traditional values of marriage and childbirth resulting from modernization and globalization processes, especially the movement of people, have impacted the lives of mothers and their children, such as those indicated in the cases cited. The marital status of mothers, premarital sex among unmarried young people and extramarital sexual relationships resulting in unintended pregnancies were found to be important maternal and paternal factors that are associated with paternal maintenance of the children. Two out of every three (67.9%) mothers who were not married to the fathers of their children were not receiving any support from them. To a very large extent, the living arrangements of children influenced the availability of resources needed to care for the children under

study. Such situations contributed to the inability of some households to provide adequate food, for example, for the children.

Though some of the mothers help assistance from DOVVSU and Department of Social Welfare, they could not be assisted since their cases were beyond what the institutions were willing to do. The children in such circumstances need to be offered special assistance that could be determined as such cases are recognized. The social policy framework of Ghana on child wellbeing must therefore be informed by such research so that one policy is not applied to all categories of children.

Conclusion

Living outside marriage resulted from a number of circumstances for the children of the Ewe migrants. A policy framework addressing their situation is important as government has begun to implement social policies to address the conditions that affect the wellbeing of children in the country. Evidence-based policies are necessary in this regard and micro studies such as the present one is important. They can provide an understanding of the conditions of children and also make it possible for policy makers to appreciate the cultural practices that may be promoted as sources of social protection for children in Ghana. Some are examined in the present study as the basis for understanding the circumstances of the children.

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