

The Life Chances of Women and Children: Does development make a difference?

A Case Study of the Management of NGOs and Competing Interests in the Volta Region of Ghana.

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Summary

The thesis explores the management and the competing interests of NGOs providing development programs to marginalised women and children exploited by a cultural practice in the Volta Region of Ghana. The thesis considers the extent to which women's and children's citizenship and human rights are violated, to what extent international perspectives on the customary 'enslavement' are constructed through international fund-raising initiatives and what the women and children gain from development programs offered by the NGO.

The thesis develops a social justice and rights based argument ¹ based on a case study and participant observation of the management of an international NGO. Fieldwork spanned five months and included observation and interviews with the international NGO, as well as interviews with local NGOs and government officials. The thesis concludes that on the one hand, some National NGOs are driven by cultural relativist values and power, buttressed by patronage networks. On the other hand, the international NGO is driven by welfarist and anti-poverty policy approaches that place the women and children as passive victims, rather than empowering the women by meeting strategic needs. The thesis develops an argument based on empirical research by:

- Assessing the life chances of women and children in Ghana
- Exploring the citizenship rights of Ghana's women and children and assessing the extent to which the women and children are able to access these rights

¹ Nussbaum, 1999. Page 232.

- Assessing the extent to which Africa's imperialist history impacts on the life chances of women and children
- Analysing contested reports concerning customary servitude and critiquing stakeholder interest in denying and/or constructing the practice
- Analysing intervention approaches using a Social Relations Approach²
- Building on Schaffer and Smith's 'Human Rights and Narrated Lives, the Ethics of Recognition',³ to not only explore the ethical considerations surrounding human rights and the narrated story, but to explore the impact of the stories on the life chances of women and children
- Positioning women within the struggle against neo-colonialism in Africa and questioning if these positions have changed since Ghana's independence struggle
- Critiquing the extent to which NGOs are able to meet women's and children's strategic needs when they function without diverse values
- Extending current understanding concerning diversity management within NGOs and the impact on women and children when NGOs do not employ diverse values
- Extending current understanding concerning the extent to which strategic needs can be met when decisions are not widely informed through the inclusion of key stakeholders in decision-making processes

² March C, Mukhopadhyay M and Smyth I. 2003. Page 102.

³ Schaffer K and Smith S, 2004. *Human Rights and Narrated Lives, The Ethics of Recognition*. Published by Palgrave Macmillan.

Declaration of Originality

I, Rachel Outhred, certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

All research procedures reported in the thesis were approved by Flinders University's Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "R. Outhred". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rachel Leanne Outhred

Dedication

To my husband Michael Yiyi Annoh

Who cared for me when malaria rendered me unconscious,
Who supported and encouraged me to finish the task that I had began,
Who loves me 'plenty plenty'.

To my daughter, Luanna Afadua Annoh

I pray that you grow into a strong, proud black woman, who values the great privilege you have in belonging to two cultures. I pray that you might truly value the great heritage you have as the great granddaughter of a chief and the great granddaughter of a minister. Your father and I celebrated our engagement in Kenya, as the world celebrated the inauguration of America's first black president. The advances that this generation has achieved in challenging racism and sexism are great, but there is so much more left to be achieved. I pray that you *value* the traditions of your diverse cultural heritages but that you also *challenge* the unequal positions created by them.

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Given the immense task that writing a PhD thesis is, it spans many years within the life of the researcher. Within the life of *this* researcher, the process has been underway through many major life events; including two international relocations, an engagement, a marriage and the birth of a child. Over the years I have evolved as both a researcher and as a person, and on most occasions one was a direct result of the other. As I reflect on the years that have passed since I first began this adventure, I am aware that the people who have supported me most in my aim to conclude this thesis, are the same people who have supported me in all of my life goals. Therefore, as I thank the people below for their input, support and strength during this process, I thank them also for their friendship and for their belief in me, in so many ways.

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My gratitude, and that of my family, goes out to both Janet and Yvonne, for their regular contact, support and wise advice during the fieldwork period. I am particularly grateful for the immediate and wise advice to exit the field when danger became imminent.

It is with sincerity that I thank the NGO for the opportunity to observe their work in the field. Though I am sure the outcome of the research is far from what the organisation expected; this is the very purpose of empirical research. I applaud the NGO on the ways in which its programs have improved the life chances of women and children and I hope that we can all learn the lessons that working together has provided for us.

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List of Acronyms

AFROL	African News Agency
CHRAJ	Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Woman
FESLIM	Fetish Slaves Liberation Movement
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries
HDI	Human Development Index
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslav
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
IMF	International Monetary Fund
GAD	Gender and Development
GDI	Gender Development Index
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
NDP	National Democratic Party
NPP	National Patriotic Party
NRM	National Resistance Movements
NGO	Non – Governmental Organisation
NMG	Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft

OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee
PAR	Participatory Action Research
UN	United Nations
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
WAD	Women and Development
WID	Women in Development
WLV	Women in the Lord's Vineyard