

and development projects, but also community leaders, personalities, big business and start-ups being innovative, inventive, successful and above all, sustainable in all the senses of the word. It could be a useful tool for redressing (a little) the image that people outside Africa have of the continent – I am continually surprised at how little most people know, let alone understand about Africa whilst feeling free to make pronouncements and sometimes very important decisions which involve Africa and Africans.

*africleads* is a coffee table book with a serious message. Any NGO with dealings in Africa should have a copy in their office and public libraries outside Africa should seriously consider acquiring it.

C.L.

## Demography

Acheampong Yaw Amoateng and Tim Heaton, eds.

### **Families and Households in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Socio-Demographic Perspectives.**

Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council Press, 2007. 182 pp. R180 pap. ISBN 9780796921901 [Eurospan Group]

The new South Africa needs reliable and comprehensive social and economic data for planning and evaluation. The post-apartheid period has brought demographic and social flux as new patterns assert themselves while older ones, such as the old apartheid era racial categories, continue to have validity.

This scholarly work analyzes current available statistical data from South Africa, using the family as the basic social unit. There are eight well-chosen chapters. The first discusses the importance as well as the limitations of this approach for socio-economic planning. The second chapter takes a careful look not only at various theoretical approaches but also the methodological and logistical limitations within the South African context. Its conclusions are that family relationships are myriad and highly adaptable but that family remains the best indicator of and unit for social change.

The third chapter uses the life course of household types to explore the living arrangements of individuals and finds a growing preference for inter-generational living within all population groups. The fourth chapter examines the economic dimensions of the family. In contrast to the opening chapter, which indicates a buoyant macro-economic South Africa with low inflation and sustainable balance of payments, this chapter finds, that at the micro-economic level, household incomes have dropped by around a third, and households with no incomes have sharply increased.

The fifth and sixth chapters examine family formation and dissolution respectively. Dissolution includes child mortality and that some 40% percent of black children die before their fifth birthday. That HIV/AIDS continues to devastate the nation, although somewhat mitigated by the insistence by the old apartheid regimes on the availability of contraceptives for non-whites.

Chapter seven discusses the usually neglected topic of economic contribution by children. Tragically, one conclusion is that the servitude or rather near-slavery of young females is a significant feature in household economy.

The final chapter uses the family to analyze child survival and mortality rates. Optimistically, using regressive analysis it finds that basic pre- and post natal medical care,

contraceptive use to space childbirth and basic female education have already made a significant contribution to child survival and well-being. All these factors indicate the tangible benefits of further investment, notably in rural areas.

*Families and Households in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Socio-Demographic Perspectives* is an important and useful addition to any academic or research collection concerned with southern Africa or development and is therefore highly recommended.

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## Gender Studies

Alice P. Tuyizere

### **Gender and Development: The Role of Religion and Culture.**

Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2007.

447 pp. £29.95 pap. ISBN 9789970026180

[African Books Collective]

The second half of the eighteenth century was the most significant period in human history for two things: the American Independence and the French Revolution. The American Declaration of Rights in 1774 had manifestly described certain realities as being inalienable rights, since they were God-given. These included equality before the law, the right to life and the pursuit of happiness *inter alia*. Of course, the American draughtsmen were not thinking of the millions of African Americans living under slavery. Neither were they thinking of American women who did not qualify under the “equality” provision in the Constitution of 1787. Inspired by American Independence, the French revolution of 1789 ushered in a new dispensation of freedom, equality and brotherhood. Indeed, the motto of *liberté, égalité, et fraternité* became the rallying call for all peoples of the world that were desirous of rolling up the old order of feudalism and dynastic decadence in Europe. Ironically, women in France despite the emblematic roles of Joan of Arc, remained disenfranchised until after the Second World War. The situation in America was not any better where Black people and women were not allowed to participate actively in national development.

The author of *Gender and Development: The Role of Religion and Culture* chronicles the historical development of gender imbalance in the world. She presents eight powerfully written and well-researched chapters that encapsulate the gender paradigm in Africa. She begins by analyzing the role played by culture and religion in creating myths and belief-systems that vitiate human development by undermining the role of women in society. If a culture is the sum-total of values and norms that regulate a given society, the author explains that gender as a social role is predicated on culture. Needless to say, religion is an off-shoot of culture and therefore it reinforces sanctions and promotes the same values and norms enunciated in the culture in question. Viewed from the cultural prism, religion becomes an agent for the perpetuation of gender oppression and violence.

The author reviews the holy books to assess to what extent they can be termed as gender sensitive. The Old Testament, for instance, is notable for its insensitive treatment of women, a clear cultural trait of the time. However, the New Testament is replete with liberation theology from Jesus Christ, a balm to oppressed women of the world. The Qu’ran like the Old