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LEGON FAMILY RESEARCH PAPERS

No. 3

CHANGING FAMILY STUDIES

edited by
Christine Opong

The second volume of proceedings of the Second Interdisciplinary Family Research Seminar held at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, June 1972.

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FOREWORD

The current series of the Institute of African Studies Family Research Seminars began in 1971. These seminars have served as an arena for the presentation of a wide variety of papers and for the generation of lively discussions on matters related to the domestic sphere of contemporary Ghanaian life. They have reflected the interdisciplinary approach to academic and social problems which this Institute continually seeks to promote.

The first volume in this series of *Legon Family Research Papers* dealt only with domestic rights and duties in southern Ghana. In the present volume the geographical scope is wider and reports of studies carried out in neighbouring states are included.

It is appropriate at this time in Ghana's history—when policy makers, administrators, planners and academics alike are wrestling with problems of social change,—that such a volume as this should focus on domestic situations brought about by demographic, legal and economic change.

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PREFACE

This is the second volume of proceedings of the Institute of African Studies interdisciplinary Family Research Seminar which was held in June 1972. The earlier volume *Legon Family Research Papers No. 2* included those papers read at the seminar which were to a large extent concerned with matters *cultural* and *traditional*—including marriage ties, and organization and behaviour patterns within lineage systems.

The general theme of the conference was a broad one, being no less than *Urban and Rural Family Life in West Africa*. We cast the net wide in the hope that an interesting and varied collection of papers might be presented. We were not disappointed as these two volumes show. In this second one we present those papers dealing with four major themes—urbanization, law reform, migration and elites. All the papers have a common focus that of change; what is happening in the family behaviour and attitudes of a number of sections of the community who find themselves in novel changing situations, including old people, migrant labourers, university students and lecturers, religious minority groups and families settled in new towns. Questions are asked such as what are the norms influencing their behaviour in these contemporary situations and what are the laws regulating them.

For greater clarity and coherence the papers have been put into four sections. The first includes three papers examining different aspects of the family lives of urban dwellers. The second part contains three elite studies, which discuss data collected from university students and lecturers. Part three contains legal studies and the last part concentrates on the situations and attitudes of migrants in Ghana, Togo and Nigeria.

The success of the conference and the subsequent publication of the proceedings have been made possible by the enthusiastic co-operation of many people not only those who read papers but also those who ably took the chair and also steered the course discussions. These included Professor K. E. de Graft Johnson and Dr Fiwoo of the Sociology Department, Dr N. Addo of the Population Dynamics Program and Professor K. Bentsi-Enchill of the Faculty of Law—all in the University of Ghana and Professor P. Morton Williams, Head of the Sociology Department of the University of Cape Coast.

Professor K. Little, Professor of Urban African Studies of the University of Edinburgh was unable to be present to read his paper entitled *Methodological Perspective and Approach in African Urban Studies* which here forms the prologue. One other contribution was unfortunately not read at the seminar too, that of Dr Ahiany Akakpo, Director of the National Institute of Scientific Research in Togo. We were happy to receive it later and to include it.

We were very fortunate indeed to have with us at the seminar Professor Jack Goody of Cambridge University whose opening paper appears in the earlier volume of proceedings. His contributions from the floor and in the chair did much to enrich the conference as a whole.

Contributions by two other visitors from abroad have been included in this volume; those of Dr A. Hauser, then of O.R.S.T.O.M. Lome and Dr M. Peil, then a visitor at the University of Lagos.

During the seminar provision of hospitality to guests was partly financed from a generous grant for family research from the Ford Foundation, for which we are most grateful. The untiring and efficient editorial assistance rendered by Mr Arthur Johnson in the production of this volume is also gratefully acknowledged.

Editorial policy in this series has been to leave the papers substantially in the form in which they were presented and as they were amended by participants after discussion and criticism. They thus represent a cross-section of view points, perspectives and styles of presentation.

Christine Oppong
Institute of African Studies —Legon
March 1974.



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