

Changing Family Life in East Africa: Women and Children at Risk, Philip Leroy Kilbride & Janet Capriotti Kilbride, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1990. (ISBN 0-271-00676-5). Price £28.45.

This is not a book for the casual reader or for those allergic to sociological "inspeak". The book's message is not reassuring: Kilbride and Kilbride offer a bleak prognosis of the risks that women and children increasingly face in modern East African society, and they offer impractical and weak conclusions on how to redress the problems they so convincingly characterise. Kilbride and Kilbride are social anthropologists with more than 20 years contact with the same communities in Uganda and Kenya (thus their advocacy of fieldwork methodology of the "repeated visit" type and they have produced here a very solid, if turgid, contribution to understanding the current predicament of the African child and woman. The book has significance for anthropological theory, as well as for the development worker engaged in working with women and children in modern Africa. It is strongly recommended. This review will address itself to the development worker.

The book is divided into three parts. In the first part the authors describe their theoretical orientation (Interpretive Framework) and methodology (using the phrase "Interactive Ethnography" instead of "Participant-Observation"), but reiterating their commitment to structural-functionalism. They posit their theme of delocalisation (the process whereby old village-based agrarian economies become incorporated into and dependent upon the modern national and international economies) and the particular predicament and increasing vulnerability of women and children in this process. For Kilbride and Kilbride, modernisation has produced a move from a "genuine" culture towards a "spurious" one; their intent is to show that "moral erosion" is threatening children with child abuse and neglect, in a hostile modern environment where the extended family is under siege.

In the second part of the book, unfortunately the shortest section, the authors offer a few examples of pregnancy, childrearing and childhood experiences. This section is not the standard anthropological description of rites of passage and quaint exotic customs; rather it provides a backdrop for what is to follow in the third section. Given the Kilbrides' undoubted rich ethnographic experiences, this section is disappointingly short and does not offer the *smorgasbord* of experiences that the preface would have the reader expect. They are especially successful in depicting the socialisation of the young and in defending the importance of mothering and affective experiences. In particular, the sixth chapter has valuable discussion of birth and infant mortality, the infant's home environment, clothing, food practices, infant care practices, and a fascinating discussion of comparative infant sensorimotor development.

The third part of the book is the "meat" of the book: in this section Kilbride and Kilbride describe the role that industrialisation, nationalism, missionary activity, formal education and a monetised economy are playing in marriage and family life, and argue that the process of cultural and moral delocalisation is now well underway. This section begins with a chapter on the increasing powerlessness of women, especially on the predicament of the bar-girl in Kampala. The second chapter in this section dwells on the alarming phenomenon of pre-marital pregnancy and the challenge it poses to the extended family. Kilbride and Kilbride include here a very pertinent discussion on the role of grandparents in relation to their grandchildren and also the increasingly precarious role of the extended family in modern marriages. This is followed by a chapter on polygamy and the economic and social tensions and threats which this presents to women and children. The Kilbrides successfully depict the increasing strain and friction within polygamous homes and the moral disorientation that now surrounds polygamous marriages in modern East Africa. This is followed by the penultimate chapter of the book which dwells expertly on the issue of child abuse and neglect. The book concludes with a summary chapter on women and children at risk.

The Kilbrides propose that a solution to the problems they have described resides in an acknowledgement of three basic principles: that power differentials between individuals, social groups and nations exist and that those with this "power" have a responsibility that comes with such influence; that all action to redress the problems should be intra- and cross-cultural; and that a universal perspective must be an integral part of any resolution. Their specific conclusion is that there must be a "convergence of interpretative frameworks" and that socioeconomics, feminist theory and child-centred ideology should be combined and harnessed to resolve the problem. For the Kilbrides the answer lies in a "locally derived child-centred Africanity". This tantalising idea that whets the appetite is, unfortunately, never satisfactorily explored and is only articulated through the partial reporting of newspaper editorials: the reader is left feeling disappointed that this "Africanity" is not investigated more thoroughly.

There are, moreover, inevitably in a book of such scope, some glaring omissions. One searches in vain, for example, for a more profound insight into coping mechanisms that are presumably currently evolving in the urban context for single mothers or, even more crucially, for more than a cursory mention of the implications of AIDS on the situation of children - especially in Uganda. In particular, the rather forced conclusion serves to detract from the work as a whole. Academic anthropologists might also take issue with some of the theoretical positions inadequately described in the first section. The book's limited conclusion and the excessive sociological jargon notwithstanding, it is highly recommended reading, especially for those interested in grappling with the difficulties and complications

that besiege the African family, and the enormous and growing threat that African children are currently confronted with. Most important, the authors give a welcome and unequivocal emphasis to a child-centred perspective that encompasses all aspects of what we normally think of as "development work".

Reviewed by Gerry Salole, former Southern Africa sub-Regional Director, Save the Children Federation (USA).

Faces in the Revolution: The Psychological Effects of Violence on Township Youth in South Africa, Gillian Straker with Fathima Moosa, Rise Becker, and Madiyoyo Nkwale, Cape Town: David Philip and Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992 (156 pp). ISBN: 0-86486-203-2 (David Phillip); ISBN: 0-8214-1040-7 (Ohio Univ) No price listed.

Through the use of composite vignettes based on extensive interviews with 60 girls and boys, ages 12-22, Gillian Straker brings into clear telephoto view some of the psychological struggles of youth engaged in the fight against apartheid during the mid-1980s in Leandra, South Africa.

Straker's analysis seeks to shed light on the diversity of trauma experienced by youth, to explore the self-perception of youth, and to examine the psychological resilience and vulnerabilities of the youth within a war context. In addition, she addresses the important question of whether violence begets violence.

The book represents scholarly, clinical research done in the real world. The method is a qualitative case-study approach involving over 300 hours of audio tapes. The vignettes themselves are masterful compilations of individual experiences. An initial reading of the appendix serves to orient readers concerned with methodological issues. The experiences of the youth, which form the basis of Straker's analysis, are presented in six well-organised chapters. The theoretical underpinnings are wide-ranging, from the political analysis of Fanon (1963), to the mythological focus of Campbell (1956), to more psychological theories of behaviour and group process (Slater, 1966; Anthony, 1987; Bion, 1961).

Following violent confrontations with authorities in the Leandra Township, a group of youth fled to the Wilgespruit Fellowship Centre seeking shelter. The author was part of a counselling team called on to provide services to the youth. The data were collected during the initial stay of the youth at the Centre and during follow-up interviews conducted with 40% of the youth three years later. Straker's focus is on the individual and psychological, the boys and girls; nonetheless, she is careful to stress the powerful impact of war and poverty on the psychological development of these youth.