

GLOBALIZATION AND MALE SEX TRADE IN GHANA: MODERNITY OR IMMORALITY?

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Abstract

Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, the authors argue that globalization with its associated global tourism and the development of new communication technologies has promoted and propagated male sex trade, a phenomenon which hitherto was unknown in the Ghanaian society. Globalization has not only conspicuously 'legitimized' homosexuality, it has festered the increasing commercialization of the act, and has thus attracted widespread opposition, resistance and debate. While a section of the society considers the act immoral due to their religious faith, cultural beliefs and attitudes, others defend it raising human rights concerns. The authors call for a civil, dispassionate, apolitical and less hypocritical way of discussing the issue devoid of criminalization, in the quest for solutions to this emerging social issue.

Résumé

En utilisant des méthodes qualitatives et quantitatives, les auteurs de cet article tentent de prouver que le tourisme international dans la mondialisation et le développement des nouvelles technologies de communication ont encouragé et propagé le commerce du sexe masculin, qui jusque-là était inconnu dans la société ghanéenne. Non seulement la mondialisation a «légitimé» l'homosexualité de façon ostensible, mais aussi elle a avivé la commercialisation croissante de cette pratique, et a ainsi attiré de l'opposition, de la résistance et des débats. Alors qu'une partie de la société ghanéenne avance sa foi religieuse et ses croyances et attitudes culturelles pour justifier l'immoralité de l'acte, d'autres le défendent

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soulevant des appréhensions liées aux droits de l'Homme. Afin de trouver des solutions à ce problème social émergent, les auteurs de cet article appellent à une discussion plus civile, objective, apolitique et moins hypocrite en considérant le problème de manière dénuée de criminalisation.

Key words: Globalization, homosexuality, male sex trade, sex culture, Ghana.

Introduction

Globalization, which, according to Horst *et al.* (2001), implies a strong cultural, technological and economic interconnection among societies, has been widely hailed as a process which has the potential to improve and transform the general wellbeing of man. In most developing countries, it is seen as the magic wand for economic salvation and poverty alleviation. It is perceived to potentially bring lots of opportunities, especially in those cities that can be key centres for production, distribution and services. There is however, increasing evidence which suggests that the process is creating an increasingly unequal world in terms of the distribution of economic power and the impact on cultural values and traditions. While a few cities are incorporated into it, others are virtually excluded, or at best, incorporated but at huge social costs.

In Ghana, the globalization process has raised some concerns. One such concern is its perceived modernity potentials and the socio-cultural ramifications that go with it, particularly in the cities. Cities are traditionally engines of social modernization and economic growth. They also tend to be theatres where globalization stages its actions and, for most developing countries, this appears to be fuelling the socio-cultural challenges that cities experience. Notwithstanding the fact that Ghanaian cultural practices have been adulterated ever since coming into contact with 'foreign' societies, there is a general belief that the current globalization process is also affecting some of our cultural practices and norms including changing fashion, eating habits, music and dance, and recently, sexual practices. The effects in these directions are immense and diverse.

Traditionally in Ghana, prostitution or the sex trade has been associated with women and has been defined in relation to women (Anarfi and Fayorsey 1995; Adomako Ampofo 1995). Akyeampong (1997) writing on Akans in pre-colonial times describes the presence of 'whores' or 'prostitutes' who were women coerced into a social institution designed to serve the sexual pleasures of men.

The 1960 Criminal code of Ghana, section 276, defines prostitution as "the offering by a female of her body commonly for acts of lewdness for payment although there is no act of ordinary sexual connection". By implication, this means that commercialized sex is seen as characterized by the elements of payment, promiscuity, indifference and femaleness (Adomako Ampofo 1995). However, the recent globalizing world has brought in its wake, at least in the Ghanaian context, another dimension of this trade: a male sex trade, which hitherto was unknown or might have been operating under cover in the Ghanaian cultural terrain. Momsen (2004) reveals not only increasing female prostitution in tandem with globalization and increasing tourism, but also men are being attracted into the trade as prostitutes. She recounted the situation in Bangkok, where about 30,000 male prostitutes were recorded in 2002, while in Thailand it was observed that some male sex workers were as young as 12 years (Momsen 2004 p. 213).

In Ghana, the media is replete with reports of similar practices, yet there has been very little research on the subject. This might be as a result of some Ghanaian cultural norms which abhor open discussions of sexual issues. The few studies in this direction look broadly at gay culture (see for instance, Anarfi and Fayorsey 1995; Adomako-Ampofo 2005), creating an empirical vacuum on male sex trade. It is against this background that this paper seeks to examine the linkage between globalization and this observed phenomenon. It is not the aim of this paper to enter into a moral argument in favour or in criticism of the practice, or even to defend the rights of prostitutes. The paper only examines how globalization has ostensibly facilitated male sex trade in the Ghanaian society.

The paper is divided into five sections. The next section presents a conceptual overview of globalization and issues of culture, sex and sexuality in Ghana. The third section highlights the study area and research methodology, while the fourth analyzes the question of the male sex trade and the perceived factors influencing the practice. The final section draws on the findings to highlight the major conclusions and recommendations.

Conceptualizing globalization

Globalization is a term that has a broad and elastic meaning. It denotes the process in which economic, financial, technical and cultural transactions between different communities and countries are increasingly interconnected, and it embodies common elements of experience, practice and understanding. Even though globalization is known to have started many centuries ago (Mazrui, 2001), according to Stiglitz (2002), globalization is the generic term referring “to the fact that over the last ten, twenty years there has been an enormous reduction in transportation costs, communication costs and the artificial barriers to trade and that has led to huge increases of trade, capital flows and knowledge flows”. The Department for International Development (2010) of the United Kingdom also defines globalization as the growing interdependence and interconnectedness of the modern world.

Helleiner (2000) attributes the process to the shrinkage in space and time as a result of the technological revolutions in transport, communications and information processing. The Secretary-General of UNCTAD³ defines it as “a process whereby producers and investors increasingly behave as if the world economy consisted of a single market area with regional or national sub-sectors, rather than a set of national economies linked by trade and investment flows” (UNCTAD 1996, 6, cited in Panos 1999). In Ghana, a former Minister of Finance and Economic Planning defined globalisation as an irreversible process which connotes the interplay of world trade, flow of money and communication (*Daily Graphic*, 2005).

³ UNCTAD means United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

There is thus the tendency for many to focus only on the economic aspects of globalization, yet there are socio-cultural aspects too. This is manifested in changing patterns of peoples' consumption and lifestyles influenced by access to television, videos, fashions, popular music, etc. According to Ghai (1997 p. 41), the socio-cultural impact of globalization is noticeable among the affluent minorities and the youth, and "even if the global spread of different cultural practices does not destroy the local and national equivalents, it greatly weakens them". The influence of dominant cultural practices on indigenous social relations, behaviour and values can affect relations, for example, those between men and women and among the members of the different social groups.

An equally important consequence in both rich and poor countries relates to the fact that many people appear left outside the circuits of consumption and leisure activities, thus creating a sense of frustration; a situation engendered by deprivation and fuelled by relentless exposure through the media, and the temptations and seductions of "the good life" enjoyed by the fortunate few. This sometimes induces in the vulnerable ones a "get-rich-quick" attitude, which is typically associated with illegal acts such as prostitution (Ghai, 1997).

In the Ghanaian context, the influence of globalization on culture can be seen as a process of monolithic and materialist homogenization of cultures in ways that imperil the special values (not aesthetic, but moral values) that people hold very dear; values some are willing to "kill" to preserve. A classic example of such extremism was exhibited when the Muslim community in Takoradi, a city in Western Region of Ghana, on 4th June 2010, presented a petition to the government after some homosexuals performed a wedding ceremony in the city. The demonstrators, numbering over 1000, called on government to enact Sharia law in Ghana.⁴ On the same issue, the Ghana Baptist Convention also issued a statement, urging the government to prevent any attempt by any individual or group of persons to introduce

⁴ (<http://news.myjoyonline.com/news/201006/47211.asp>).

any legislation that would legitimize homosexuality in the country (*Daily Graphic*, August 28, 2010). Failure to appreciate and address such regional sensitivities and concerns can potentially lead to a series of unending media “wars” and social unrest.

Indeed, most critics of globalization have contended that even if increased trade promotes material prosperity, it comes with a high irreparable socio-cultural cost, riding roughshod over the world’s distinctive cultures and threatening to turn the globe into one big, tawdry strip mall. At the same time, adherents to the tenets of globalization on the other hand debunk this socio-cultural suicide ramification, claiming that evidence from well-developed market economies indicate that what people want to buy is not fixed or biologically constructed (Cowen, 2004). Cowen (2004) further argues that in most cases when the cost of supplying products goes down, people tend to use culture to differentiate themselves from others, to pursue niche interests or to pursue hobbies. He opines that it is in the poorer and primitive societies that people specialize in one type of consumption (Cowen, 2004). He maintains that globalization liberates difference from geography, adding “We’re used to a certain pattern or model of difference. Different peoples are different, and they live in different places. We rapidly identify difference with locale. But that’s only one kind of difference. Another kind of difference shows up in the paths we choose to take through our lives, and I believe that individuals will always wish to choose different paths for their lives” (Cowen, 2004 p. 24).

The diverse perspectives being espoused tend to question whether globalization, especially in the developing world, is a reality or just a reflection of how an economy is opening itself to the international market. This is not only because the concept lacks a precise definition but because it connotes a big idea that captures everything from cultural fusion to global financial markets as well as international crime syndicates. It is seen as a process of geographical realignment of networks of production and consumption as well as sites of power (Beall 2002:42). In the main, adherents of the neo-liberal school suggest that the concept is new. However, scholars like Mazrui (2001 p. 27) have challenged such assertions and have noted that, “though the word globalization is new, the process has been going on for centuries.” Mazrui maintains

that the expansion of religion, the rise of empires, the triumph of technology and the internationalization of the economy have been the engines of change.

Africa's enmeshment in globalization is summarized by Simon: "Over the past millennium, Africa's people and cultures have been subjected to dramatic external interventions and influences enmeshing them firmly within the world system. The successive conquests, colonization and associated cultural imperialism of Arab and European, Islam and Christianity, the hemorrhaging of literally millions of Africans constituted by the slave trade and more recently, the rapid modernization and spread of capitalist consumerism have all transformed and internationalized cultures, conceptualizations, and commodities" (Simon 1997, p. 1). While Simon's observation may be true, the pace of transformation has certainly been more remarkable in the last two decades as a consequence of new media technologies, etc. The process forms part of a continuum of the development of electronic communication technologies which began with the use of the telegraph and telephone in the 19th century; broadcast media like radio and television in the mid-twentieth century; and more recently, networks like Ernet in India or Ethernet in the U.S (Keniston, 2003).

The growth in information and communication technology (ICT) has been dramatic, rapid, and far reaching. According to Keniston, (2003) while it took at least a century before the printing press touched 50 million individuals, it took 38 years for the radio and only 13 years for the television to reach the same number. Even more dramatic is the worldwide web which exceeded the 50 million user mark in only four years, inspiring life, optimistic hopes and fantasies. In Ghana, it is not difficult to catch the fever of globalization. In most cities, the airwaves are filled with FM gossip. Accra, which as at 1990 had only one station each of radio and television offering only 18 hours service, currently has as many as 29 radio and 7 television stations, all offering 24 hours service. The number of registered television sets countrywide rose from 268 in 1991 to 10,500 in 2009.⁵ Though these figures are likely to be conservative, since most people are reluctant to pay user fees, they nonetheless give an indication of how

⁵ Courtesy the total number of TV sets captured through the payment of TV license - Personal Interview at Ghana Broadcasting Corporation [GBC] June 2010.

people are joining the technological age. The use of mobile telephony and internet services has also witnessed an astronomical increase. Mobile phone subscription in Ghana increased from 90,000 in year 2000 to almost 15 million by the end of 2009, showing a tele-density growth from about 5 phones to 100 people in 2000 to 49 phones per 100 in 2008, an increase of about 190% (Oteng-Ababio, 2010). Thus, the reality is that the world is undergoing a new technologically-driven revolution, leading towards “the Information Age” (Keniston, 2003). This has led to a phenomenal proliferation of computers and information devices propagated by a worldwide network of satellites and broadband fiber optic cables. Indeed, the “digital age” has brought universal access to information, the riches of the world’s many cultures for all, and access to knowledge of democracy and prosperity for mankind. At the same time, there are some real and or perceived socio-cultural costs that come with this change. One such cost is the emergence of male sex trade.

Culture, Sex and Sexuality in Ghana

The way people think, believe and act is determined to a great extent by social forces and groups. It also has something to do with the psychological makeup of the individual, his/her culture, which is the force with the most indirect impact on people’s behaviour. Stanton *et al.* (1994) note that culture is the complex of symbols and artifacts created by a given society and handed down from generation to generation as determinants and regulators of human behaviour. The symbols may be intangible (attitudes, beliefs, values, languages, religion) or tangible (tools, housing, material products, works of arts, etc.). Thus culture implies a totally learned and ‘handed-down’ way of life. It does not include instinctive acts. However, standards of performing instinctive biological acts (eating, eliminating body wastes, and sexual relationships) can be culturally established (*ibid*). Kluckhohn (1949) further observes that culture regulates the lives of human beings at every stage and that the moment humans are born until they die there is constant conscious and unconscious pressure upon them to follow certain types of behaviour that other people have created. People living in a culture share a set of similarities that can be different from those of other cultures. Cultural influences also do change over time as old patterns gradually give way to the new.

The literature on African culture, sex and sexuality reflects divergent views. Earlier studies on sexuality in sub-Saharan Africa assume that urbanization, industrialization and proletarianization provided the socio-economic setting for prostitution (Busia 1950, cited in Akyeampong and Agyei-Mensah 2006; White 1990). Yet same-sex practices in African contexts seem to have been quite effectively silenced, even to the extent that Heads of State claim that these are western imports (Arnfred 2005 p. 73). A large body of literature for example has noted that homosexuality in Africa predates colonialism (Bosman 1705, cited in Akyeampong and Agyei-Mensah 2006; Murray and Roscoe, 1998, cited in Tamale, 2007). Dirberg (1923, cited in Tamale 2007) shows how, among the Langis in Northern Uganda, certain “males” were treated as women and could marry men. Homosexuality was also acknowledged among the Iteso, the Bahima and Banyoro in Uganda (Tamale, 2007).

In Ghana however, sex relationship is generally seen as an act between a man and a woman. Indeed, heterosexuality is perceived as the norm or most acceptable form of sexual expression, whether in monogamy or polygamy (Adomako Ampofo, 2005; Machera, 2005; Akyempong and Agyei-Mensah, 2006; Oduyoye 2005) and what is important in African systems of kinship and marriage is fertility (Arnfred 2005 p. 73). This perspective is rooted in a cultural framework that defines heterosexuality as compulsory and homosexuality as deviant (Machera 2005). This probably explains why in same-sex relations one person takes on the persona of a male and the other the persona a female, thereby mimicking heterosexual relations. The literature on sexuality mainly focuses on females and how women’s sexuality is most often controlled by men (Akyeampong 1997; Akyempong and Agyei-Mensah, 2006; Oduyoye, 2005). For instance, among the cultural norms that underpinned sexual relations among pre-colonial Akans is the institution of the “public women”, which permitted even a small village to corporately acquire female slaves to service the sexual needs of the young bachelors in the community (Akyeampong 1997). Female sexuality is thus meant to be controlled by men and these are directed towards reproduction or the satisfaction of male sexual needs (Akyempong and Agyei-Mensah 2006). Adomako Ampofo and Prah (2009) argue that males and females experience their sexualities in different ways due to their different socialization experiences. Men

are socialized to expect to exercise control over females, while females are socialized to defer to men regarding decisions affecting their lives; thus men generally feel a sense of ownership and entitlement in relation to women's bodies.

Adomako Ampofo (1995) argues that women's sense of entitlement regarding acceptable sex is framed within a context of their feelings about the sex act itself, which are sometimes ambivalent. According to her, most women see sex as an inevitable part of a relationship with a man and feel obliged to have sex with their male partners when and how the men want it, even if they feel disinclined. Extra-marital affairs by a man are often rationalized as the necessary step for a man to increase his offspring. A "real man" also does not tolerate his wife questioning him about his sexual adventures, or refusing to have sex with him (Adomako Ampofo 2005; Diallo 2005). Even in male-female relationships, as described in folktales, men see themselves under pressure to prove themselves; they perform heroic deeds, risking life and limb to win and retain the affection of the women in their lives (Oduyoye 2005).

Obioha (2010) further notes that traditionally, Africans valued communalism, the extended family, respect for elders, chastity and modesty in dressing. On the other hand, they abhorred the idea of unwed mothers, pre-marital sex and public romance by both married and unmarried couples. These virtues are responsible for moral decorum in traditional African societies. In the Ghanaian context, sexual activities among unmarried adults are usually perceived as adultery. Divorced or widowed men unwilling to remarry are simply viewed as stubborn, whereas women's preference for remaining unmarried is usually understood as a tendency towards prostitution. Machera (2005) notes that social sanctions are brought against women who are not identified as attached to men, and women who remain single are labelled negatively as rebels or prostitutes. Remarriage is often arranged for or even imposed on women. The hostility to sexual activities among unmarried women is matched with a great control of their behaviour and a clear reluctance to promote their sexual life (Diallo 2005). While some women may resort to prostitution for economic gains, others do so due to recognition of men's sexual needs and the acknowledgement of a woman's

right to be rewarded for sex (Adomako Ampofo 2005; Haram 2005; Akyempong and Agyei-Mensah 2006).

Even though people think of sexuality as a private matter, social institutions such as the family, church and school direct and control it. Thus, some forms of sexual expression are seen and treated as more legitimate than others. Generally, in most African societies, heterosexuality is a more privileged status than homosexuality and is justified from a religio-cultural perspective (Machera 2005: 168). Tamale (2007, p.18) argues that socio-cultural norms and religious beliefs (such as virginity testing, female genital mutilation and taboos around polyandry) constitute the screws that keep the clamp of sexual repression firmly in place. Prominent sex outlaws that have historically resisted and subverted dominant cultures in Africa are homosexuals, bisexuals and transgendered individuals. Other less tolerated expressions of sexuality include sex outside marriage for women. How the upsurge of globalization has contributed to the upsurge in sexual deviance, especially the commercialization of homosexuality in Ghana, will be the focus of discussion in the subsequent sub-sections.

Research methodology

The literature discussed so far covers issues of globalization, sex and sexuality in Ghana, with some highlighting of some of the sexual deviant practices. What seems to be limited is the emerging commercialization of homosexuality. This study, which is mainly exploratory, intends to contribute towards bridging this knowledge gap. The research design had three parts. First, a total of 400 respondents were randomly selected from 3 geographical locations in Accra and interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. The locations as well as their immediate environs are Madina market, Kwame Nkrumah Circle and the University of Ghana.

The Madina market and its environs is a microcosm of the cosmopolitan nature of Accra, where most of the various ethnic groupings in the country can be captured; Kwame Nkrumah Circle is the hub of night club activities in Accra and where the sex trade is perceived to be at its peak in the Greater Accra region; the University of

Ghana is an academic institution, where the target group were the students (the youth) who have affinity for technology. Being an exploratory research, the questionnaire survey randomly sampled 150 respondents each from the Madina and the Kwame Nkrumah Circle research locations and 100 students at the university, thus making a total of 400 respondents. Respondents were interviewed over a two month period in 2010, using semi-structured questionnaire.

The questions sought information on respondents' knowledge about homosexuality and its commercialization, the causes and motivations of those who engage in the act, as well as possible remedies relevant to the Ghanaian socio-cultural context. In addition, a total of 16 key informant interviews (mainly traditional rulers, legal experts and religious leaders) were conducted to ascertain the legal, cultural and religious views about the act. The fact is that 'sex trade' in general tends to have a spasmodic "work schedule" and participants tend to shy away from unfamiliar people prying into their business. Consequently, the leader of a gay society in Accra was contacted via e-mail and he obliged an interview request.

This afforded the research team an opportunity to bring the perspectives of some participants on board. There was also a comprehensive review of literature related to the subject from the various libraries as well as extracts from both electronic and print media. The information from secondary sources was content-analyzed. The raw data were processed using SPSS 17 and provided graphics, tables and descriptive statistics for analysis. Personal observations and responses to interviews were organized into themes and were used to complement the survey research results.

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

To achieve the objectives of the study, a total of 400 respondents were sampled, as earlier noted. Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents in the ratio of 55% male and 45% female. The percentage of males was slightly higher because the focus was on homosexuality.

The sample shows that almost all the major ethnic groups in the country were fairly represented, with the Akan group being conspicuously higher (38.7%). This is probably because the Akans form the majority of the ethnic groups in the southern part of the country which, incidentally, is the most populated and economically endowed.

The data shows that respondents are mostly youth, with 27% and 35% within the 15-24 and 25-34 age categories respectively. This was to underscore the general perception that the youth have more affinity to technology and therefore are more vulnerable to the dictates and perceived potential promises of globalization. The 40% adult representation was to solicit information on culture and sexuality from the Ghanaian perspective. The data also captures the views of both married and unmarried people, since earlier studies had revealed that, while those who are single are arguably more vulnerable to such socio-cultural deviant tendencies, many also tend to conceal their actual sexual orientation by entering into “proper marital procedure” (Tamale, 2007). In terms of respondents’ educational status, only 3% had no formal education. The result shows that most of the respondents do not only have basic numeracy and literacy, but also have what it takes to join the technological revolution and reap its benefits or other externalities.

Results and Discussions

Public Perception of Homosexuality in Ghana

In this study, the authors sought the perception of the general public on the whole issue of homosexuality and male sex trade in particular. The findings show that although male sex trade is a topic clouded with emotions, passions and morality, the practice is gaining currency in the Ghanaian cultural fabric. However, the findings show that society (about 94% of our respondents) oppose the practice on religious, cultural and moral grounds. This is not surprising in a country where over 90% of the population look to religious faith (GSS 2000) as their main source of moral guidance and believe in the literal truth of the teachings of their respective scriptures (Bible, Quran, etc).

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Item	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	220	55.0
	Female	180	45.0
Age	15 – 24	108	27.0
	25 – 34	138	34.5
	35 – 44	64	16.0
	45 – 54	43	10.8
	55 – 64	33	8.3
	Above 65	14	3.5
	Highest level of education	University/other tertiary	216
Senior High /Secondary		115	28.8
Junior High/Middle school		58	14.5
No formal education		11	2.8
Marital status	Married/cohabiting	178	44.5
	Separated/divorced/widowed	23	5.8
	Single/never married	199	49.8
Ethnicity	Akan	153	38.3
	Ga/Ga-Adangbe	85	21.3
	Ewe	93	23.3
	Northern Extraction	59	14.8
	Others	10	2.5
Occupation	Informal (self-employed)	119	29.8
	Formal(public/private)	133	33.3
	Student/national service	121	30.3
	The Retired (pensioner)	15	3.8
	Unemployed	12	3.0

Source: Field Data, 2010

The then president of Ghana's response to the UK Prime Minister, who had warned African leaders to be prepared to take a slash in British aid if they failed to adhere to what he called "proper human rights", is a microcosm of general sentiments of the respondents. The British Prime Minister was concerned about the recent anti-gay hysteria in some African countries including Ghana and had already suspended its budgetary support to Malawi over the same concerns. Yet the then president of Ghana asserted Ghana's sovereign right to adopt its own laws and reminded the British Prime Minister that Ghana was no longer under colonial rule, stating emphatically that 'homosexuality is totally inconsistent with Ghanaian cultural values.

These sentiments were also expressed in secondary sources. In an article published in *The Gully*, an online magazine addressing homosexual issues, the author described the general situation of homosexuals and his personal experience as a gay man in Ghana. According to the author, he was evicted from his first apartment because of his sexual orientation; he was beaten on more than one occasion and when he sought the help of the police they threatened to imprison him. He concluded that homosexuals are viewed as "pedophiles" and "criminals" and that thieves and muggers target homosexuals because "the police won't do anything about [such treatment], and most victims are also too ashamed to report it." He added,

... we are isolated, harassed, and beaten. Friends commit suicide from despair. Poverty is a big problem because a lot of us have been thrown out of our houses by our families. Many don't have any education past elementary school. Those few gay men who do have good jobs are deep in the closet and won't have anything to do with gay associations.

Country Reports for Human Rights Practices 2005 state that "gay men were particularly vulnerable to extortion by police" (US 8 Mar. 2006, Sec. 5), and that gay men whose sexual orientation is discovered could face discrimination, blackmail, imprisonment and torture (*The Ghanaian Chronicle*, 6 May 2004). A leader of a gay, lesbian, bisexual and transsexual organization in Ghana also noted in "Afrol News" that homosexuals face discrimination and they are beaten by police and members of the communities and treated as outcasts. They do not have access to health services, as they are asked to provide their partners before obtaining treatment, all because most doctors are hostile to homosexuals.

The President of the Gay and Lesbian Association of Ghana (GALAG), who is also the Executive/National Director of the Centre for Popular Education and Human Rights Ghana (CEPEHR), intimated:

...communities consider it a taboo and see it as an abominable offence that attracts beating and even killing. Homosexuals face discrimination, name calling and stigma because of their sexual orientation. There have been cases in previous years where gay men were arrested because the act is "illegal" in Ghana.

He added,

... there is no protection of any kind [for] homosexual men or women. Judges are mostly very religious individuals and as a consequence it is very difficult for homosexuals to obtain justice. Lawyers are reluctant to take on such cases as [doing so] puts their credibility in question. Although the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) has stated that they will investigate cases of discrimination against homosexuals, it is unclear who would be receiving the complaints in the CHRAJ offices and whether homosexuals would be willing to come forward with a complaint. (Personal Interview, June 13, 2010).

Level of respondents' awareness about male sex trade

Whilst society tends to abhor the practice of homosexuality in general, respondents perceive the commercialization of the act (male sex trade) as a reality. The results of the survey show that 79% of the respondents have heard about the emergence of male sex trade in the country. The remaining 21% know of sodomy but not its commercialization. Of those who claim to be aware of the practice, 40% indicate the electronic medium as their source of information, while 12% are informed by the newspapers. Additionally, 23% of the respondents heard of the practice through friends and relations while only 4% learned about it through "personal experiences". Those who cited personal experiences as their source of information would not confirm whether they practice it themselves. Be that as it may, the results show the power of the mass media in the dissemination of information.

About 43.6% of the respondents thought that the upsurge of homosexuality, and indeed the male sex trade, is as a result of foreign influence and poverty. They explained that with the liberalization of the airwaves coupled with improved transportation and communication connectivity, internet services have exposed the youth to hitherto unknown practices. Thus, in a country where 43% of population live below the poverty line of one US dollar a day (World Bank, 2007), the vulnerability of the youth is exposed with the result that they would do “anything” for survival and with some, to quench their “get-rich-quick” desire and inclination.

The results however also show that 44.2% hold a contrary viewpoint about the novelty of the phenomenon. This segment of the respondents maintains that the practice is not new in Ghana. They argue that the practice has been kept in the closet for a long time due to the fear of public ridicule, blackmail and discrimination. This affirms the historical antecedents of same-sex relations, as Arnfred and others attest. On the question of who is likely to perpetuate the act, majority of the respondents (62.5%) unanimously opined that it is usually the youth and the unemployed who are virtually coerced into the act by the perceived foreign goodies and promises as well as by the rich men in society. They perceive the increasing tourist trade in the country as a major contributing factor. This resonates with an earlier observation which alludes to the fact that with globalization and increasing tourism, men are also moving into the sex trade (Momsen, 2004).

Table 2: Relationship between Age and knowledge of Male Sex Trade

Category	15- 24	%	25-34	%	35- 44	%	45- 54	%	55- 64	%	Above 65	%
Aware (Yes)	84	26.6	108	34.2	52	16.5	31	9.8	29	9.2	12	3.8
Unaware (No)	24	28.6	30	35.7	12	14.3	12	14.3	4	4.8	2	2.4
Total	108	27	138	34.5	64	16.0	43	10.8	33	8.2	14	3.5

Source: Field Data, 2010.

We assume that the youth in the country are more computer literate than the older generation and therefore all things being equal will be more likely to be aware of the practice (should it exist). The results clearly show that the youth are much more knowledgeable and conversant with this emerging cultural trait thus confirming earlier submissions that they are more likely to be vulnerable to the influence of globalization. It must however be acknowledged that greater knowledge alone does not necessarily make one more vulnerable to such less tolerated sexuality. On the contrary, it could indeed protect one from exploitation and make one aware of the modus operandi of homosexual predators. Thus, various factors come to play but the knowledge of it and how to manage such information, especially in times of difficulty, is paramount. From Table 2, about 61% of the respondents who indicated having knowledge of the male sex trade are less than 35 years old while only 4% are above 65 years. This result compares positively with the level of education attained (see Table 3).

Table 3: Relationship between Level of Education and Knowledge of Male Sex Trade

Category	University	%	Senior high	%	Junior high	%	No formal education	%
Yes	178	56.3	87	27.5	44	13.9	7	2.2
No	38	45.2	28	33.3	14	16.7	4	4.8
Total	216	54	115	28.8	58	14.5	11	2.8

Source: Field data, 2010

From Table 3, 265 of the respondents (84%), who have knowledge of the practice, have at least senior high school education. A chi-square test conducted on the level of education attained and knowledge of the male sex trade gave a value of 4.198 at 3 degree of freedom (df). It can be inferred that there is a systematic significant relationship between the level of education attained and having knowledge of the male sex trade. In other words, the higher one's level of education, the more likely it is that one would be privy to this emerging cultural trait, possibly because of the enhanced access to information, communication and technology.

Our study further revealed that the majority of the respondents (91.3%) of the different ethnic, religious and professional backgrounds were also of the view that it is not right for men to engage in such a practice. Explaining their reasons, 63.6% of the respondents described the act as immoral from the religious point of view, while 20.7% believed it is culturally unacceptable. Even though 15.7% appeared indifferent they were still concerned about the health implications.

Thus, the majority opposed the practice on religious, cultural and moral grounds, as echoed by a Head pastor of a Pentecostal church, during an interview. Reacting to a suggestion that Ghana is a democratic country and restricting the practice may infringe on peoples' human rights, he exclaimed:

What is happening in Mother Ghana? This has nothing to do with human right. It is an abomination. How many times have you seen a male animal mating another male? Even if animals can't do this stupidity why should we human beings with God given right mind do that? Don't compare yourselves to Americans and other parts of the world. This is just not right.

(Interview record).

By inference, many respondents abhor the emerging male sex trade, because of their belief that sex intercourse is an act between male and female ordained by God. In their considered opinion, nature expects man *to procreate and multiply*, and the only possible way to realize this is through the sexual act between a man and a woman. These beliefs reinforce the general societal perception that heterosexuality is the only natural form of sexual expression (Machera 2005; Oduyoye 2005).

The 'Legal Status' of Homosexuality in Ghana

We also explored the legality of some entrenched societal perception of same sex relationship, be it for pleasure or commercial purposes. Our results show that 12% of the respondents indicated that homosexuality in general is legal and indeed, a human rights issue, and that those who practice it have their rights, which must be respected. A comprehensive literature search through the statutes of Ghana did not reveal any legislation which explicitly prohibits same sex relationships and the male sex trade for

that matter. The closest legal impediment to the practice is Section 104 of the country's Criminal Code (last amended in 2003), which states inter-alia:

Whoever has unnatural carnal knowledge-
of any person of the age of 16 years or over without his consent shall be guilty of a first degree felony and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term of not less than five years and not more than 25 years;
or of any person of 16 years or over with his consent is guilty of a misdemeanour;
or of any animal is guilty of a misdemeanour.

Suffice it to explain that "Unnatural carnal knowledge is sexual intercourse with a person in an unnatural manner or with an animal" (Criminal code I imagine 12 Jan. 1961). Notwithstanding this provision, discussions with some legal practitioners during the study revealed some ambiguities in the country's legal regime in relation to same sex relationships. In an interview with a lawyer and criminologist, he submitted that the very disposition of section 104 of the Criminal Code of Ghana makes the subject very confusing and controversial. He argues that:

By the very tenets of the law as it stands today, couples or any other consenting adults who have sex through any other 'route' than through the vagina are flouting the laws of Ghana.... If two consenting adults engage in anal sex, under our law it is unnatural carnal knowledge; if married people do that, it is illegal.... Natural carnal knowledge is per vaginum. It is sexual intercourse between a man and a woman of adult, approved age but through the vagina. If it is through other places, then it is unnatural sex.

He further concedes that whilst male sex trade may also fall under unnatural sex, the 1992 constitution of Ghana guarantees the fundamental rights of citizens, including sexual orientation, thereby creating a conundrum. He also argues that majority of those who engage in the practice do so voluntarily. He remarks:

Some are absolutely situational; the environment people find themselves in some instances forces them into homosexuality. Where there is an

unbalanced sex ratio, you tend inexorably to have unbalanced sexual behaviours as in the case of monasteries, single-sex boarding schools, prisons where because of the deprivation, [people] compensate for it by resorting to what we call unnatural carnal knowledge.

Commenting on the perceived legal ambiguity in the Ghanaian legislation, a member of the International Lesbian and Gay Association intimated that although the criminal code does not expressly prohibit sexual relations between same-sex individuals, "it states that such action is 'unnatural' and when caught, you will be sentenced to [imprisonment]". The analysis of mainly newspaper reports substantiate the argument that the male sex trade may fall under the unnatural sex category, which is punishable under the country's legal system. In December 2005, a religious leader in Accra was charged with "having anal sex with a male student aged 18" (*Public Agenda*, 16 Dec. 2005), while in March 2006, an Austrian man was deported from Ghana after having been arrested for participating in homosexual activities (*Public Agenda*, 10 Mar. 2006; *Pink News* 14 Mar. 2006). Similarly, a student at the University of Cape Coast was assaulted by four other students in March 2005 because he was suspected of being a homosexual. The four students responsible for the attack received suspensions of two to four semesters (*Behind the Mask*, 1 Mar. 2005). In 2005, four homosexual men were jailed two years each (see *Daily Graphic*, 2005). Additionally, in September 2006, the Ghanaian government banned a much publicized gay and lesbian conference that was scheduled to take place in Accra (*GNA* 6 Sept. 2006). These incidents clearly demonstrate the prevalence of homosexuality in the country and the apparent commercialization of the act. On 28th June, 2008, an undercover reporter of *The Mirror* reported of his experience with a gay harlot in Adabraka. His "host" promised to do anything to satisfy him provided he could pay good money (a minimum of GH¢50 a rate which is about 3 times what female sex workers of a similar class charge). The host even suggested he could handle another man for 100 Ghana cedis (*Mirror*, June 28, 2008).

On Monday, September 5, 2010, the Greater Accra regional police command arrested a 23-year-old male prostitute who had been "servicing" men while dressed as a woman. "She" had breasts like a woman, but apparently, they were two gloves filled with water and nicely tucked into a brassiere. In his response to the court's caution

statement, he revealed that he started practicing prostitution at Aflao (a border town in the Volta Region) years ago but “only came to Accra recently to look for greener pastures when a soldier man hired my services for a fee of GH¢20 for the night.” He further revealed that since his arrival (five weeks prior to his apprehension), he had had sexual intercourse with ten men (see *Daily Graphic*, September 6, 2010).

Conclusions

The paper sought to explore the relationship between globalization and the male sex trade in Ghana. Our findings reveal that though same sex relationship is not a new phenomenon in Ghanaian society, the practice is abhorred. This is because according to most respondents, sex is an act between a male and female ordained by God and they believe that nature expects a man to procreate. Heterosexual behaviour is thus most revered in the society as noted by Machera (2005). Our findings also point to the fact that the commercialization of the homosexual practice, which was virtually unknown in the country, appears to be an emerging phenomenon with increasing globalization. Awareness has been created on the subject through the media and via the upsurge of the information society. The majority of the respondents (70.5 percent) reported that they had heard about the male sex trade through the media. Many respondents cited foreign influence and poverty as major causes for this development. There is thus the general feeling that Ghanaian culture has been inundated with foreign values which have had a negative impact on the traditional cultural values and ethics. This socio-cultural impact of globalization, especially regarding the emergence of the male sex trade, has aroused widespread opposition, resistance and debate. Yet there is no clearly defined law that makes the homosexual practice illegal. This state of affairs, coupled with the fact that the 1992 Constitution of Ghana guarantees the fundamental rights of all citizens, creates a conundrum. The authors therefore advocate for a civil, dispassionate and less moralizing approach to the topic. To win the consent of those involved for a dialogue in a bid to curb it, the practice should not be criminalized.

In conclusion, we maintain that there are enough indications that the male sex trade has gained currency in the Ghanaian cultural fabric due mainly to the rapidly

globalizing world. Recent public debates have also placed the topic within the wider ambit of democratic practice. The government should therefore provide the necessary resources to strengthen the capacity of agencies with some oversight responsibility, such as the Department of Social Welfare and the National Media Commission, to effectively execute their mandate with regard to prostitution and related practices. These agencies should collaborate with civil society groups so as to advocate for parliament legislation on age restriction in the burgeoning film industry with a view to restricting the level of exposure of the youth to 'unwanted material'.

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