

Einarsdottir, Jonina (2004) *Tired of Weeping: Mother Love, Child Death, and Poverty in Guinea-Bissau*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press

Guinea-Bissau is a small country in West Africa with a tumultuous past and is one of the poorest countries in the world. This book talks about the people's suffering in that country due to the combination of a very high infant mortality rate and high fertility rate. These two demographics combine to form a "Malthusian nightmare" where the population is too great to support the people on a limited resource base.

The book focuses on the strain that this puts on women and mothers in the society, where in some areas there is a 33 percent infant mortality rate. The book discusses that, despite the obvious disheartening effects of having children, the women there seem to love their children as much or more than mothers in other countries. The fertility rate is one of the highest in the world and women continue to desire children. Part of this is due to the fact the society is maternal and the women desire to continue their family lines. Also, is the fact that successful mothers are respected in the society and a women who has many children is seen as strong and "powerful." The refusal of women to stop having many children is evident in the almost nonexistent use of contraceptives in the country. Those who have even heard of the pill or condoms refuse to use them.

The difficulties surrounding pregnancy, birth, and infant death are all endured because of the benefits that outweigh them. Children will not only continue their lineage but will increase their social position, be able to aid in working, and generally make them happier in their lives. Having children also provides for someone to care for them when they are older and some to assure a proper funeral. In their society having children is an obvious sacrifice but to them it is definitely worth the price.

Because of the great love for and benefits of children, when an infant dies there is incredible amount of sadness and mourning. Because of the great strain the death of an infant puts on a mother and family, people naturally want to look for a cause of death. Many different things are thought to cause death but mainly it is thought to be sorcery that kills children.