

# The appearance of gender division in a Ghanaian community



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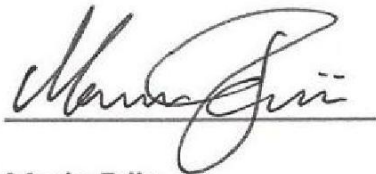
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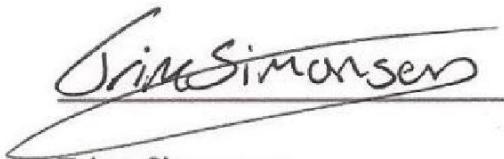
Trine Simonsen

" It is hereby solemnly declared that undersigned personally and independently made this project.

All quotations are marked as such and the project or substantial parts of it have not been previously presented in other assessment contexts".

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Marie Friis

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Trine Simonsen

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## 1. Introduction

The premodern society of Ghana was influenced by a higher level of gender equality than known today. Women's main purpose was considered to be reproduction, but they were also seen as farmers and collective owners of land and natural resources. After the commercialization, brought from dominant outsiders, conditions changed. Women lost their rights to natural resources and land, and a division in roles appeared, placing women in the house to take care of their family and men outside of the house providing for their family (un.org:2014). Gender equality had a setback making the man the head of the house and the woman subordinate to the man. These are still conditions faced by women today, especially in rural areas of Ghana women are not only in charge of the domestic chores, because of the tough economy, these women are also forced to enter into hard labor conditions, while subjected to male dominance (countrystudies.us:2014). A report from the U.S. Department of State from 2012 states women still to be subjected to male dominance while, in addition, a discrimination of access to employment takes place (state.gov:2014).

Many religions also have reputations of oppressing women (Famafrique.org:2014). Ghana is a Christian country but includes different religions whereas Christianity, Islam and Traditional religion are mostly known. Christianity accounts for about 71 % of the total population while Islam accounts for about 17% and Traditional religion for about 5% (ghanaembassy.org:2014). The Traditional religion distinguishes itself from the other two religions as it does not have any divine records such as the Bible or the Koran, to follow. The belief follows a higher God or a supreme being which is thought of as remote from daily life and is therefore not directly worshipped. Ancestors are also an important factor as they are worshipped and thought of as a direct link to the spiritual world, as somehow present and observing actions of the living. State chiefs, priests and family elders are therefore very important in the Traditional religion (Library of Congress Country Studies:2014). The Christian historical view upon women encloses women as property of the man. Women were not seen as independent individuals and they had no legal rights. Man was thought of as the head of the family, while women were in charge of reproduction and household chores. The classic statement of Eve, who was created from the rib of Adam, has been used throughout history as a rightful explanation of why women are inferior and unequal with men. Christians follow the word of the Bible and though the Bible is interpreted in many different ways

today, many still refer to- and live by specific passages from the Bible (religion.dk:2014). Within the New Testament, 1. Corinthians 14:34-35 it states: *Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law(...)* (www.lds.org:2014). This passage is especially discussed by female Christians today as they seek an explanation of none-suppressing character (newlife.id.au:2014). The Islamic religion is known to be very radical when it comes to the female view, and it is highly discussed worldwide today. In verse 4:34 in the Koran it is stated that: *Men are in charge of women (...)* *But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance – [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them (...)* (quran.com:2014).

Whether religion is dominating the view on females within Ghana or not, many Nongovernmental organizations (NGO) participate in development and welfare projects in e.g. education, women's status and family planning. Projects Abroad have their Human Rights office in Accra, Ghana, where they work with many different gender issues and goes on outreaches to educate locals. Within this office they run an anthropology project, seeking better knowledge about the different areas and people of Ghana (Projectsabroad.dk:2014). As part of our internship abroad, we joined this project wherein we were asked to look at a patriarchal society within a religious perspective.

### 1.1. Research question

Based on our inductive research and the above mentioned, we reached our main question:

*How are gender roles in a domestic setting influenced by culture in contemporary Ghana?*

In order to answer this question, we will base our analysis on three sub-questions:

- *How are the gender roles portrayed and are there any differences between the religions?*
- *How does the oppression of women manifest itself and what is it caused by?*
- *Which cultural factors are present in the maintaining of the gender roles?*

Our project is based on six weeks of inductive research, field notes and qualitative interviews. Our research has been done in a domestic view, for which we have followed six different families – two families of each religion. We spent three days with each family doing participating observations, and several weeks attempting to do interviews with respectively men and women from each

religion. Because of different problems, we did not get an interview with the Muslim men, and including our great amount of data, our emphasis will be on the Christians. Hence our project will look upon the cultural impact on gender roles within a domestic setting and in a Christian comparative view.

## 2. Literature review

The purpose of this section is to review different theoretical perspectives within our subject of gender roles and the cultural impact hereupon. This will be enlightened through literature on the subjects; gender roles and human rights. The literature within the subject of gender roles brings the oppression of women into different perspectives which will be drawn upon in our suggestions for further research in regards to our results and unused empirical data. The concepts covered in the human rights section will be included in the organizational section with an advising approach.

### 2.1. Gender roles

The report *“On the Origins of Gender Roles – Women and the Plough”* from 2011 is intended to give a better understanding of the historical genesis of different norms and beliefs about the role of women. This is explained based on the thesis that traditional practice of agriculture affects the historical division in labor, the development and the consistent traditional view upon gender. The result is that current differences and attitude towards gender roles have been formed by historical differences within the agricultural systems. Therefore it is stated that individuals whose ancestors used the plough, have beliefs in relation to gender roles which creates larger differences and inequality between the genders (Alesina et. al. 2011:40-41). An exclusive paternity over children and change from matriliney to patrilineal descent was a result of the control of private property and it caused men to require submission from the women. This made women even more dependent upon the man and their property, and the consequence became the inability for women to participate equally with men and so the differences between the genders grew (Ibid.).

In relation to the oppression of women and their lack of rights within these cultures, Margrethe Silberschmidt describes how long it has been on the national and international agenda to improve women’s rights, within the report *“Changing Gender Roles and Male Disempowerment in Rural and Urban East Africa ”*. Included in these rights are health and the right to say no to sex. Silberschmidt focuses on the negative consequences that can occur through this kind of empowerment of one gender. She describes how the patriarchal structures and stereotypes of gender conceal the increasing disempowerment of many men in East Africa (Silberschmidt, 2001:2). Through this empowerment of women there remains no doubt that they have achieved some



control and power over their lives, yet they still remain vulnerable in many areas, including their sexual relations (Ibid.:10-13).

Silberschmidt believes this is caused by frustration on the male side – norms and values are so deeply rooted in our perception of identity, and alongside with the socioeconomic changes, the patriarchal ideology has been deprived its legitimate activities. She points out that many organizations do not include men when working to improve the rights of women which is a shame as this is necessary in order to create better conditions for women. She claims there to be a need for men to be equally counted for within studies of masculinity and the male sexual behavior in different cultural and social connections. This requires a national and international will to approach the men and focus on equality and the benefits it can bring for both genders (Ibid.).

## 2.2. Human Rights

Human Rights are an international way of thinking equality, though these do not stand without problems either. In the texts *“The Origins and Indigenism, chapter 4: Relativism and Rights”* by Ronald Niezen and *“The Concept of Human Rights”* by Alison Dundes Renteln, the universality of human rights are being discussed. Niezen places universality next to relativism within the argument that universal ethic and norms are being pushed upon different cultures (Niezen, 2003:94-95). Renteln agrees with this perspective, and claims that despite cultural diversity these universal human rights have never seriously been questioned before. Traditional westernized views are being generalized, and there is a tendency of projecting our own moral categories upon other cultures (Renteln, 1988:349). She calls for a broader variety of Human Rights when practiced within different cultures (Ibid.:343).

Niezen brings out another interesting view within the known religious aspects of indigenous societies. First and foremost he states that human rights and universalism is fighting against tenacious rules maintained by religions. He then brings in the perspective of how the human rights code of social conduct does not include the aspect of hatred and exclusion that is often seen within religions, instead it is based on a broad consensus. Though he acknowledges the positive side of religion, the spiritual element. Loyalty and conviction is a powerful source which lacks within the conduct of human rights, and there is a need of revolutionary passion. This is perceived

as one of the most important problems within the work of human rights (Niezen, 2003:95-96). Renteln does not include this perspective but persists to the fact that the assumption of universality includes the belief that everybody thinks in the same way. Moral and ethic are not universal and therefore neither should human rights be (Renteln, 1988:349). Through the same thought, Niezen asks the question of whether or not the conduct of human rights can be perceived as assimilation (Niezen, 2003:99). Indigenous societies are no longer excused by cultural differences when direct violence or oppression is happening, yet he and many anthropologists believe that society should be understood in perspective to itself, and not be dominated by universal perceptions of social conduct (Ibid.:109-110). Niezen concludes that policy can only succeed with knowledge of the cultures it is intended for, and contribution of local understanding of prosperity is crucial for development to arise (Ibid.:109).

### 3. Theory

In correlation to our research question this section will account for parts of theories from respectively Pierre Bourdieu and Max Weber. Based on the book, '*Den maskuline dominans*', Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and symbolic power will be accounted for, along with Weber's theories on ideal types of social action and of legitimacy will be accounted for.

#### 3.1. Pierre Bourdieu

'*Den Maskuline Dominans*' from 1998 is concerned with how the structure of power is constituted and reproduced. The book is based on his wonder of the historical mechanisms that impact the ways of which we divide genders. Bourdieu believes in structuralism, and therefore does not consider femininity and masculinity as substances that can be understood in relations to themselves or separately, on the contrary they should be defined in consideration and relation to each other (Bourdieu, 2007:158).

#### *Habitus*

The concept of habitus should be understood as the individual incorporates those objective social structures under which they grow up, are raised and educated, consisting of mental or cognitive structures. These cognitive structures shall be considered as cognitive dispositions which predisposition the individual to think, act and perceive in certain ways. These dispositions only work in relation to something which causes the individual to act differently according to its correlations and the applied norms and values. Habitus thereby indicates that individuals carry their own socially and historically determined pre-history which stays active in their mind as habitus works as systems of tables for perception, thinking and action. The tables should be understood as generative principles that can be theoretically reconstructed as pairs of opposites (Ibid.:160-161). Bourdieu believes that there has been a tendency throughout history to focus on the differences between the genders and thereby unconsciously precluded their similarities. Through time it has developed into an andocentric logic which is based upon a determined distinction in gender. Hereby it is a gender based habitus that has emerged through the socially constructed tables where the genders have been placed opposite of each other. These tables are,

according to Bourdieu, exercising a symbolic power which has a determined affect on the possibilities and limitations of the genders (Ibid.:15-20).

### *Symbolic power*

Symbolic power is to be considered as a non-physical execution of power which is accepted by the individual because the individual has the same cognitive dispositions as the executer, and thereby either denies or acknowledges the relation of power. Bourdieu believes in this relation, that the structure of gender division which exists in society, where a single gender or specific values are being preferentially treated, has become generally valid (Ibid.: 47-50).

## 3.2. Max Weber

### *Ideal types*

Weber considers sociology as a science, attempting to understand the motives and opinion- and value factors of social agents' actions, to subsequently identify the consequences. Based on this he developed his ideal type methodology as an analytical instrument to understand the complexity of reality (Jacobsen, et. al.,2010:107-108). The ideal types are not to be understood as an ideal in itself, but is created as a way to understand reality. Therefore these types do not exist in their pure nature, contrarily they will emerge in impaired or mixed forms (Andersen, et. al., 2003:210).

### *Ideal types of social action*

Weber developed four ideal types of social action; traditional-, affective-, value rational- and instrumental-rational social action.

- **Traditional social actions** are types of actions which are controlled by tradition or ingrained habits. Most daily actions are not deliberate but unconscious and entrenched, which classifies them as traditional social actions.
- **Affective social actions** occur as a reaction to direct affects or emotional conditions.
- **The value-rational social actions** are intentional actions that do not consider known consequences, but are based on duties or ethical, esthetic and religious value, staging the agent as an individual who experiences values as demanding a specific action.

**Instrumental-rational social actions** occur when the agent calculates the best and most effective solution to obtain a specific goal (Andersen et al., 2007:95-96).

The two first types thereby differentiate from the value-rational- and instrumental-rational social actions as they do not enclose the perspective of meaningfulness within their actions, and the agents are not always aware of the connection between action and motive (Ibid.).

### *Ideal types of legitimacy*

Weber states that many individual actions are part of an organizational or institutional order, making the agents' social actions orientated from the perception that a legitimate authority exists. Based on the types of social action, Weber produces four ideal types for legitimacy, explaining why the individual perceives the social order as legitimate and submits to the execution authority. The four ideal types for legitimacy are:

- **Traditional legitimacy** involves the individual perception of social order as legitimate based on tradition; an understanding that this specific order always has been legitimate.
- **The charismatic legitimacy** is based on the individual's emotional belief in an ideal, a vision or a role model.
- **The value-rational legitimacy** is based on a rational belief in the legitimacy of the value.
- **Instrumental-rational legitimacy** is based on the perception of authority as legitimate based on social rules or laws, and the individual perceives these as legitimate laws. This legitimacy includes two perspectives; the legitimacy is based on a common agreement between the agents or the fact that they are produced by an authority which the individual perceives as legitimate and therefore consents with (Ibid.:96).

The ideal types of social action and of legitimacy differ in ways of awareness. The types of social action refer to the factors describing the reason of a social act, while the types of legitimacy provide an understanding of why a social act may be perceived as legitimate. The most important distinction between the two ideal types is how the types of legitimacy refer to a deliberately known and chosen social order or authority to assign to, whereas the types of social actions are often subconscious in reference to the social order and authority or not deliberately chosen (Ibid.:97).

## 4. Method

The following section will account for the research methods of the project. The section is divided into three parts; 'before the research', 'data collection' and 'after the research'.' Before the research' includes the methodological choices and thoughts we did before hand. The section 'data collection' is a review of our empirical collection of data and the section 'after the research' consists of an exposition of our data processing and the validity and sources of errors within our project.

### 4.1. Before the research

This section entails our research considerations done previous to our data collection, a description of Anthropological fieldwork and our scientific theoretical approach.

#### 4.1.1. Research considerations

As we chose to do our internship at an anthropology project we were noticeably aware that we would do anthropological fieldwork. In relations to this fieldwork, we had our considerations towards the inductive approach and towards Grounded Theory as a method as well, as these of course influence our choice of field and the development of our research. Because of the inductive approach, our considerations have been just as much about not considering and letting the field lead the way. Before we went to Tema we spoke a lot about how to enter the field and be a part of its natural environment. We were concerned by how our presence would affect the field and interrupt the collected data, and as a result of this influence the relevance of a given result. As the difference of culture especially brought its concerns we decided to handle our thoughts and considerations as quickly as possible when the situation called for it. This way we would, as part of the inductive approach, have the opportunity to collect as much cultural understanding as possible allowing us participate more naturally within the field and thereby obtain a bigger knowledge within these issues before making a choice.

#### 4.1.2. Anthropological Fieldwork

Anthropology concerns the aspect of trying to understand the individual, individual actions and the correlations and diversities in which they figure (Fyam:2014). Anthropology began as a study

of alien cultures and was originally based upon non-western societies (KU.dk:2014). Methodically it makes use of qualitative methods including participating observations which is where the empirical data is created (Fyam:2014). Individuals do not always act and express themselves in the same way, therefore the explanation of these individual differences must stem from the fieldwork carried out amongst the individuals researched (KU.dk:2014).

#### 4.1.3. Scientific theoretical approach

**Social constructivism** is a basic philosophical and social perception which states that concepts, things and phenomena are maintained through different social practices which makes it socially constructed. Typically these phenomena are considered to exist independent or naturally, but according to constructivists they do not exist independently of the social activities they are embedded in. These phenomena are neither necessary nor universal as they are considered to be contingent (Jacobsen et.al., 2012:335). There are two different branches within social constructivism: epistemological- and ontological constructivism (Ibid.:336). The epistemological constructivism, which we ascribe to, is the philosophical view that our realization of physical and social reality is a product of social circumstances (Ibid.:337). This means that our realization of daily life and scientific realization are socially constructed; the social context of the process of realization is therefore what creates our realizations (Ibid.:336-337).

Observations can be applied in two different ways in correlation to scientific activity – inductive and deductive approach. **Induction**, which we ascribe to, is based on the development of theory, for which the empirical data sets it ground. It is required to move from specific to general meaning from empirical data to theory (Ibid.:41). This approach also ascribes to Grounded Theory whereas it applies that theory and concepts are not decided beforehand but emerges from the data (Kvale et. al., 2009:224). When drawing conclusions from empirical data it presupposes quantification. It is never possible to obtain 100% certainty by this approach; therefore you must try to reach the greatest possible probability (Thurén, 2003:18-20).

**Abduction** is an inference form which allows the researcher to conclude the best explanation. This is often a question of interpretation which also can be explained as following; the observed is unexpected and breaks with our understanding, If we know the explanation then the observed is understandable, therefore it is allowed to claim the explanation. When reaching the part of the

interpretational work where an explanation of the observed is required, you are through abduction allowed to use your imagination. The researcher is thereby allowed to be creative and develop an understanding which makes sense of the observed (Jacobsen et. al., 2012:84). Within our analysis we make use of abduction as a scientific way of explaining our data.

## **4.2. Data collection**

This section entails our empirical collection of data including our field of research, selection of respondents, participating observations, field notes and focus group interviews.

### **4.2.1. Selection of respondents**

For the participative observations the respondents were chosen by the organization based upon our request that the families should include both male and female respondents. Hereby the families should represent three religions – Christians, Muslims and Traditionals, including two families of each religion with the result of six families. The respondents for our focus-group interviews were also chosen by the organization. We asked them to find respectively 8-10 women and men within each religion, resulting in six interviews, though we only succeeded in doing five interviews (see section 4.3.4. for further elaboration).

### **4.2.2. Participating observations**

As previously mentioned, participating observations are often used in relations to anthropological fieldwork and Grounded Theory. It implies observations of individuals in their own natural surroundings. These can of course be questioned as the presence of the researcher will to some extent cause changes, which is why it is important for the researcher to consider this affect upon the research. Participating observations should be understood as an intense social interaction between the researcher and the subjects studied within their own social environment. The purpose of the observer is to speak, interact and conform to the subjects and their social environment in order to access a position where it is possible to evaluate the dynamics and the different sources that are played out in the field (Kristiansen et. al., 2012:7-8).

Our participating observations were made over six weeks in Tema New Town. We followed six different families three days in a row – two of each religion. Already during our first day it was very



clear that all the arrangements had been made with the husband of the family, and therefore we decided to spend our first day, among all the families, with the husband. This way we showed the husband respect, and he could feel comfortable with the situation and have an understanding of our purpose as well.

#### **4.2.3. Field notes**

In relation to our participating observations we have written down field notes. We wrote down cues and small sentences to make sure we could remember our experience and exact phrasings. We had discussed the necessity of writing down cues instead of elaborating thoughts in advance, in order to return our focus to the respondent as fast as possible and to avoid impinging on the situation. As soon as we returned to our house, we would write down our field observations based upon the cues we had written.

#### **4.2.4. Focus group interviews**

Focus group interview is a type of interview that tries to bring out as many points of view as possible. The interviews are directed by a moderator who makes sure the focus stays on the intended subject. This type of interview is characterized by the lack of control, therefore the moderator is to present the subjects wished to be discussed and ease the exchange of words between the respondents (Kvale et. al., 2009:170). Our focus group interviews include five interviews made with Christian men and women, Traditional men and women and Muslim women. They consist of six to ten participants though some came and left during the interviews. Our interviews lasted between 1.08 and 1.32 hours. During the interviews we used a dictaphone to record where after we transcribed the recordings. It requires special considerations when interviewing across cultures, which is why it is important for an interviewer placed in a foreign culture to be conversant with the new culture. This includes learning some of the verbal and nonverbal factors that can cause the purpose to be abortive (Ibid.). This we were acquainted with, and quickly we noticed that there were many cultural differences and the way of which the participants answered was very limited to yes and no. When doing interviews across cultures certain specific factors can be vital, this includes asking direct questions and having eye contact with the person speaking (Ibid.:164). We tried to make a semi structured interview guide, but it became clear to us that these questions would not be understood as they were not direct enough.

Based on this we ended up making a structured interview guide where each question was precise and formulated in ways the respondents would hopefully understand. When doing interviews within a foreign culture it is also very important to choose a translator with care, one who is culturally accepted and excellent at the language as well (Ibid.:164-165). We were aware of the importance of the translator as a significant aspect in relations to research in a foreign country, though it was not possible to get an educated translator (see section 4.3.4. for elaboration).

### 4.3. After the research

This section reviews Grounded Theory as a method and describes our data processing including our use of the computer program Nvivo10 and how our coding and categorization has been done. Lastly there will be an exposition of the validity and sources of error within the project.

#### 4.3.1. Grounded Theory

Grounded Theory (GT) is a research method which focuses on a systematic strategy with the purpose of developing a theory inductively instead of testing existing theory (Kvale et. al., 2009:224,350). It provides the researcher with the possibility of legitimizing their research method. There are four methods or phases within GT; theoretical selection, coding, comparison and conceptualization which together constitutes GT. The theoretical selection holds a deliberate selection of data which happens successively from different data sources with the purpose of receiving optimal information about a specific issue. As GT adjoins to induction, the theoretical selection will be open in the beginning (Guvå et. al., 2005:38). Coding is very important within GT as it refers to analysis, research, comparison, conceptualization and categorization of data. It is a way of carefully handling the material, and coding should be direct, short and define the action or experience described by the respondent (Kvale et. al., 2009:224). Comparison is conducted paralleled with the coding process and refers to a testing of the order that has occurred through the coding. New indicators are compared with the already coded indicators and the researcher hereby gets ideas of how the coded indicators can be accumulated into different categories and be coded again (Guvå et. al., 2005:44). Conceptualization is when the researcher tries to develop new concepts and writes down ideas, thoughts and abductive endings that emerge, throughout the

entire research process (Ibid.:45-46). Our specific coding process including categorization will be elaborated in section 4.3.3.

#### 4.3.2. Nvivo

For the processing of our data we have used the computer program Nvivo.

Nvivo is a computer-software which can be used to systematize, shape and manage unstructured data. The software is designed to facilitate common qualitative techniques for organizing, analyzing and sharing different data (QSR (a):2014). Nvivo can help secure validity because it can be used to demonstrate coherences within the empirical data (QSR (b), 2014:5).

#### 4.3.3. Coding and categorization

When coding data a text is fragmented into manageable pieces or sections after which one or more keynotes are attached in order to identify and retrieve statements (Kvale et.al., 2009:223-224,351). Categorization is a systematic conceptualization of a statement which presents opportunity for quantification (Ibid.:224,350). We uploaded all of our data in Nvivo and started our coding. In order to do this together and effectively discuss every code we used the facilities of our university including a projector. We started out by doing open coding where we fragmented our field observations and interviews and attached keynotes to these, which ended up in 63 different codes and 1429 references (App. 10.5.).

Afterwards we did another round of coding to sort and organize our codes as we had experienced that it is easy to forget existing codes, resulting in similar codes which includes the same references, during the coding process when dealing with this amount of data. Based on previous experience with Nvivo we decided to do the second round of coding by hand, using a blackboard, as it creates a better overview of existing codes and therefore is more palpable.

After the second round of coding we started categorizing our codes, but because of the comprehensive amount of data we were compelled to confine ourselves and therefore we chose the most relevant categories in perspective to the subject gender roles. Consequently we printed out our chosen categories and did another thorough audit of our codes and categories. Some codes were moved and we created new categories and merged some together in order to make

them analytically manageable, cohesive and understandable for the reader. Lastly we ended up with six categories; Gender, Violence, Sex, Birth control, Multiple Wives and Work.

#### 4.3.4. Validity and sources of error

Our cooperation with the organization was very problematic, and brought with it, the majority of our sources of error. The original supervisor of the anthropology project left after two weeks and the replacements did not know anthropology or the meaning of validity. We made countless attempts efforts trying to explain to the organization and write down exactly how and why everything had to be (App.10.6) yet only very few issues were resolved:

- Our observations were arranged by the organization, making our observations more like interviews as we were placed in front of family members who had taken the time off to sit with us.
- As they selected the families for our observations, they chose families with priests and imams' etc. despite of us explaining to them that they should be average.
- Sometimes the organization did not arrange for a private place to do our interviews. When this happened we called off the interviews as the amount of people around us and the statements from the respondents would not make the interview valid.
- Despite asking otherwise, the respondents within the same interview (meaning only one religion) would be collected from the same specific area of Tema New Town, resulting in the respondents knowing each other.
- The selection of respondents was not accurate at all in regards to religion. During each interview multiple respondents would be of a dissimilar religion.
- The organization defined each religion themselves, resulting in almost no Traditional women in the Traditional women's interview. The organization viewed Traditionals as people who do not go to church (a Christian view) but most of the respondents defined themselves as not believing in anything including ghosts and ancestors.

- The respondents became very upset with us because they were promised biscuits and soda which never arrived. We were also late every time because we had to wait for our security man who was never on time, which also made the respondents very upset.

The organization would also not pay for a translator or provide a permanent translator as promised, which consequently brought along many issues as well;

- The translator was found around the area from day to day
- Sometimes the translator was a family member which also influenced the respondents
- Often we were left without a translator.
- Some of the translators did not know English well enough for the job intended.
- Even though we always spoke to the translators about their conduct in the specific scenarios they often selected what they believed to be the relevant point of a respondent's statement.
- The translators often included themselves and answered on their own
- The translators would talk on the phone during interviews so we could not understand anything.
- Sometimes the translator found did not speak the language of the respondents

Despite many manageable issues the organization would not admit to any misunderstandings or errors. Within every aspect of our research we asked the organization if it would be possible and the answer was always yes, so when these problems were presented to them they simply denied it and positioned us as liars.

In regards to cultural differences we experienced some new sources of error which we did not expect, or expect the necessity of;

- It was difficult to participate in the families' everyday lives, as they did not do much, and when they did we could not join them.
- Many people also gathered around us making it difficult to blend in and be a part of their social environment.

- As women we were approached by men, even family members, who wanted to be 'friends' or marry us. As white people we were constantly approached to give out money and presents, by families and respondents as well.
- Sometimes during our observations we would be observed as well. Respondents would watch our reactions and then give us the answer they thought we would like.
- We had to ask leading questions in order to minimize misunderstandings.
- During the interviews we deliberately decided to lie about our marital status in order to avoid focus on us and dealing with multiple proposals.

All of this has unquestionably affected the validity of our data, though this has been accounted for in our observations and managing of data. A solid amount of data is still very valuable, and can be validated by our coding and in single striking statements. These errors and relating explanations are elaborated in App.10.7.

## 5. Analysis

Within this section our empirical results will be reviewed and analyzed in regards to our research questions.

### 5.1. Empirical Results

This section gives a presentation of our field of research, Tema and our empirical results will be introduced in relation to the respondents' views on the subjects; gender, violence, sex, birth control, multiple wives and work, divided by religion and gender.

#### *Tema*

The city of Tema is geographically placed about 25 kilometers east of the capital city, Accra, and encloses the largest seaport of Ghana today. Tema was originally a small fishing village by the name of Torman which the government decided to remodel into a modern seaport in 1952. In order to carry out this project the government told citizens of the fishing village to move to an area which today is called Tema New Town (Ghanaweb.com:2014). Back then the area was a bush-area and therefore the newcomers did not have to pay for the land but simply build their own houses. The harbor in Tema officially opened in 1962 and within the following years is grew massively and became the industrial core of Ghana. Initially Tema New Town was part of the development plan, but as the rumor of a huge modern harbor with lots of labor possibilities spread, many immigrants settled within Tema New Town. This overwhelmed the planners and the development of Tema New Town therefore never happened (Ibid.). Today Tema New Town is referred to as the richest slum of Ghana as the residents work and owns expensive material things (App. 10.1.1., L. 68-70) yet they live much cluttered with no access to water or toilet facilities, there are no rubbish containers or drain system and the roads are consisting of ingrained rubbish. This has fatal consequences as many houses are flooded during the rainy season every year due to the lack of drain systems. As there also has been a lack of control with the fishery the harbor is now over-fished which, together with climate changes, have resulted in fewer fish to catch and therefore fewer jobs (Ghanaweb.com:2014).

Table 1- Gender

Muslims		Christians		Traditionalists	
Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Not equal -Adam and Eve -Women cannot control the man	Not equal -Adam and Eve	Not equal	Equal	Not equal	
	Difference: Men are wise + strong Women are not smart, they are sensitive + weak	Difference: Physical	Difference: Men are stronger, smarter and reproductive longer		Difference: Physical
Men decide in the house	Men decide in the house	Men decide in the house	Men decide in the house	Men decide in the house	
Men have the responsibility	Men support wife and family		Men have the responsibility + support the women	Men should take care of women	Men have the responsibility + protect the women
Women should be in the house	Children are divided by gender when seven years old			Girls are taught how to behave	Raise boys and girls Differently
Men have every right over women	Women should be suppressed and are owned by the man.	Women should submit to the man	Women should submit to the man	Women should submit to the man	
Women should respect the man	Women are happy when men are happy	Women should respect the man		Women should respect the man	Women should respect the man
Women have to ask for permission	Women need permissions			Women should obey the man	Women should obey the Man
	Women are close with the devil		It is not good for men to live alone	It is in the nature of men to lie	

Tabel 1. above deals with different aspects of the respondents' perception of gender. There is a general perception amongst the respondents of inequality between men and women. The men describe themselves as stronger and wiser than the women. The Muslim men describe women with negative adjectives as well including weak, sensitive and not smart which indicates a degrading of the woman and her status. All the respondents states the man to be in charge of the house, he is the head of the family and it is his responsibility to support and provide for his family. Everyone agrees that the female role is to submit, respect and obey men. The Christian men say that men should love their wives yet this statement only considers the man's feelings as it might be a matter of course for the women to love the man. In correlations they also state that it is not good for men to live alone. Once again only the man's needs are being considered.



Table 2- Violence

Muslims		Christians		Traditionals	
Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Koran says it is <i>not</i> okay	Koran says it is <i>not</i> okay	Bible says it is not okay	Bible says it is not okay	It is <i>Not</i> good	It is <i>Not</i> good
Never been beaten	<i>Do</i> beat their women	Some have been beaten	<i>Do not</i> beat their women	Some have been beaten	<i>Do not</i> beat their Women
Punished by whipping scarf	Punished by whipping the scarf		-	When misbehaving: begs for forgiveness	Punishment in other ways
		-	-	Knows how to behave	-
Men have to give a warning first	Advise the women first	Men like to beat	Talk instead	Normal for Traditional men to beat	Talk instead
-	Women should be caned when raped	-	-	When beaten: considers divorce	-

This tabel 2. shows that everyone agrees that violence is bad. Some of the women admit they have been beaten while others do not, yet they all agree that there is a certain way to behave in order to avoid being beaten. Even though violence is not a direct problem it is interesting how the women are aware that they have to submit to the man and how to behave in order to avoid violence. The men generally do not think violence is good either and therefore one must assume that they expect the women to behave well so violence will not be necessary.

Table 3 - Sex

Muslims		Christians		Traditionals	
Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<i>Some</i> men decide when to have sex	Men decide when to have sex	Men decide when to have sex	Men decide when to have sex	<i>Most</i> men decide when to have sex	Men <i>do not</i> decide when to have sex
<i>Do not</i> ask for sex	Would like women to ask for sex	-	Women <i>can</i> ask for sex	<i>Do not</i> ask for sex	Women <i>can</i> ask for Sex
Can say no if good reason	If women say no, they do not love you	Can say no if good reason	Women can say no if good reason	Cannot say no-wish they could	Women can say no
Cannot force you – will find new woman	Men cannot force her - will find new women	If you say no – men will find new women, cheat, beat or force you	Do not fully enjoy when forcing the woman	If you say no – you get no money	If she says no -ask why -control yourself -find it elsewhere
-	Cannot have sex when: -she is sick -has menstruation -is pregnant	If you have sex in the morning = no money	If we want sex, we will have sex	-	Traditional men fornicate – wife is not allowed to fornicate
-	-	sex before marriage is bad	sex before marriage is bad	have sex before marriage is bad	-

-	-	Have had sex before marriage	*one pastor had sex before marriage and told the girls that he loved them	-	Have had sex before Marriage
-	-	men leaves after sex	-	Men say they will marry you to have sex	-
-	-	Has sex to please the man – do not like it - gets hurt	-	-	-

Within tabel 3. the majority says that it is the man who decides when to have sex. Even though the women claim that only some or most of the men decide, they still say that they never ask for sex which indicates that the man makes the decision. This puts women in an objectified position where they are required to take care of their husbands' needs. The table also display that women need a good reason in order to say no to sex. The women say that even though they have the opportunity to say no, it can entail consequences such as not give them money for food, cheat or force them to have sex. Based on this the opportunity to say no should probably be understood in relation to when it physically is not possible like illness, pregnancy or, by the Muslim view, menstruation. There is a broad agreement that sex before marriage is bad yet the majority of the respondents have done it. The women state that men tell them they want to marry you in order for them to have sex before marriage yet they explain that if they in fact do have sex the men might lie and leave afterwards. The same accounts if the women refuses. This way women are pressured into sex before marriage especially considering their undermined role and economic dependence upon the man.

*Table 4 – Birth control*

Muslims		Christians		Traditionals	
Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Koran says it is <i>not</i> okay	Koran says it is <i>not</i> okay	Bible says it is <i>not</i> okay	Bible says it is <i>not</i> okay	If you like it	It is okay
Men do <i>not</i> like It	Would allow it (one man)	Men are not use to it	-	Some men like it - some do not	-
Not normal in Ghana	-	You have to hide it for the man	Will not allow birth control	-	-
-	-	Men will beat you	Sperm is good for the women	-	-
-	-	Radio says: Abortion = go to hell	Birth control can make you sick or kill you	-	-

Table 4. concerns the respondents' view upon birth control which is a common right for women to be in charge of their own bodies. This is perceived as something very bad amongst the respondents and a picture emerges that men are dominant and their needs are more important than the women's. The Christian women state in continuation hereof that if they want to use birth control they are compelled to hide it from their husbands, otherwise they will be beaten. Everybody agrees that birth control can make you sick or even kill you. A women shares: "(...)they say in the radio that you will go to hell if you do it." (App.10.1.5., L. 173). This indicates a general ignorance and that the society, through the belief in religious aspects such as hell, takes part in the retention of oppressing women.

Table 5 – Multiple wives

Muslims		Christians		Traditionals	
Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
It is okay	It is okay	It is okay	It is okay/ it is <i>not</i> okay	Men are allowed but <i>not</i> our men	It is okay
Have to have the money	Have to have the money	-	-	Have to have the money	Have to have the Money
A gift to give your husband	Prevents cheating	-	-	It is bad	-
Koran says it <i>is</i> okay	Koran says it <i>is</i> okay	-	Bible says it <i>is</i> okay/ it is <i>not</i> okay	-	-
-	Wife cannot say no	-	-	If the man wants it – he will do it	-

Table 5. reflects the respondents stance towards polygamy, which also is a male dominant aspect. There is a broad agreement that men are allowed to have multiple wives though they have to be able to support them equally. Polygamy is therefore perceived as something normal and maybe even men's right, there right to women.

Table 6 - Work

Muslims		Christians		Traditionals	
Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
1× no work 5× sells (on head) 2× fishmonger 3× shop	-	3× no work 3× sells (on head) 1× seamstress 2× shop	1× no work 4× fisherman 1× driver 1× student 2× pastor	7× no work 2× fishmonger	4× no work 4× fisherman 1× private 'security' 1× 'fashion designer'
It can be necessary to have a job	-	Women should have a job	Women have to have a job	Women should have a job	Women should have a Job
Women should work in the house	-	Women should work in the house	Women should work in the house:	Women should work in the house	Women should work in House

Tabel 6. shows that even though the common preferred way of life is when the man is working and the woman takes care of the house chores, the women often have to have a job while working in the house. This is substantiated in the economy as there is a need for double income yet the fact is that the concept of supporting and taking care of the women is replacing women to both work and take care of the house, meaning women will do more work than men. This is also reflected in the division of labour where it is clear that the men have the more educated and prominent jobs whereas the women must settle with whatever brings a small profit based on their existing skills. Amongst these respondents it is the majority of men who fish while the majority of women sell.

### *Muslims*

If focus is turned towards the Muslim, then they generally appear more radical than the Christians and Traditionals (for an enhanced understanding of this, reference is made to App.10.8 which entails additional statements from the Muslims which could not be included in the tables above). A Muslim man explains that the man's happiness is crucial – if the man is happy then so will the woman be. In relation he states that it is men who decide and they own all rights over women:

“(…) a man has every right over a woman.. right? So if your man, your husband, tells you please do this, and you do not do it, it is against Allah” (App. 10.3.5., L. 457-459).

So the man holds all rights and the woman has to obey according to the Koran, hence religion is used to justify the male dominance. The Muslim men describe different reasons that could cause a divorce including if the woman runs around with other men, cheats, is disrespectful, stops praying or refuses to have sex. The interesting part here is that it is only the woman who can be at fault. The men also describe women as unclean and dirty when they menstruate and that menstruation is a sign of sickness. Therefore it is not allowed for women to enter the mosque during this period, and sex is not possible either. Once again ignorance is emerging, an ignorance that demeans women. The Koran also seems to be such a vital part of the Muslims that it can be difficult to have an honest conversation about opinions and emotions:

*(…) It was very clear that she said what is expected of her to say, what she is allowed to say, and what the Koran says that she can say (...) perhaps she really did not have*

*an opinion herself as she has never been allowed to have one (App. 10.1.7., L. 100-104).*

In this case the question is if women are oppressed in such a degree that they are no longer allowed to utter their own opinions or if this female role has been incorporated in them from such an early age that they no longer *have* an opinion. It is also a fact that Muslims divide their children by gender when they are seven years old. This is based upon the fact that the girls are getting older and now need to cover up. You can imagine this separation to have a psychological affect on the girls that contributes to this acceptance of submission amongst the women. Women are therefore not considered as independent individuals, in fact they are being treated much like children, constantly obeying the head of the family and snitched on to her parents when not behaving. Women are even being compared to the devil in regards to her body and sex: “(...) God let the man love the woman, therefore the devil enters his mind when he sees her not covered and he will hurt her” (App. 10.1.6., L.71-77). Women are considered to be close with the devil, and the devil will enter into the men which results in rape, therefore women are to be blamed for rape. There are multiple empirical examples of this heavy oppression of women amongst the Muslim, and even though many aspects are not practiced every day – men do not rape women every day – there is a fundamental view on women as neglected and inferior to men while the male dominance is ruling.

### *Christians*

Amongst the Christians it is interesting how the men, despite an otherwise general agreement of inequality between men and women, state that men and women in fact are equal. This might be a result of our presence or the fact that they understand inequality as a concept with a negative connotation. The Christian men also admit for men to be stronger than women and believe that women should submit to men which obviously does not reflect equality. Both men and women agree that men are to carry the responsibility and women must submit to men, indicating a knowingly division in gender.

In some areas it seems like the men acknowledge the oppressing aspects of certain actions, and the fact that it is wrong, therefore they do not admit to these actions. On the other hand there are also oppressing actions they do ascribe to while recognizing and accepting the present division of

gender. Just as they state that women have to submit themselves, they also explain that it is the man who decides when to have sex.

“(….)if you force to do it you will not have the essence you are supposed to have(…)” (App. 10.3.4., L. 663-665). This citation illustrates how men emphasize that how *they* feel when forcing a woman and that their needs are primary. The aspect of cruelty and violation of the woman’s rights is not included, they simply stress their own pros and cons. Generally the women explain that they never ask for sex, their men do not treat them well and that sex is a kind of duty whereas the women consent to sex because they are economically dependent on the men. A Christian woman even adds that sometimes her husband is too rough with her during sex: “(…) maybe the man has sex with you and you get hurt then you have to boil water and then put salt inside it.. and sit in the water (...) for the sore to get clean” (App. 10.3.3., L. 553-555).

It is not all the women who has experienced sex so rough that they have to sit in saltwater, but some do and they all know people who do and know the method with saltwater. They all agree that sex is on the man’s term and they simply have to please him: “If it is rough, if it is normal, if it is... you just take it” (App.10.3.3., L. 541). This clearly indicates how women just submit and accept whatever men bring them. In relation to birth control both men and women agree that it is bad and the women explain that they are compelled to hide it. The men acknowledge that it can be hard on the women and on themselves when having to provide for a big family, yet they state that they just cannot help themselves. They substantiate that the use of birth control is wrong because sperm is good for the women: “(…) you are suppose to generate, be professional with the sperm that is coming out.. that is supposed to do something good for the woman” (App. 10.3.4., L. 698-699). In this case sex is almost considered a job from the male perspective where he needs to be professional. This also refers the perception that the female role is to give birth, therefore the man is helping the woman sustain her purpose. It reflects ignorance amongst the men when they believe sperm to be good for women and once again the women’s right to decide over their own body is undermined.

What also is very interesting is how they use the Bible to justify why they do not use birth control: “(…) for the woman to just give birth to just 4.. no they are working according to the rules of the bible” (App.10.3.4., 734-735). According to the Bible they are not allowed to control the numbers

of children to have which is very fascinating as they say they live by the Bible yet they defy it in other relations. When this paradox was presented for the men in relation to them having sex before marriage they explained it with them being young and ignorant before they got married and therefore did not understand the Bible. This indicates that the Bible is being used as an excuse where it is possible and left out in other aspects where there is no biblical favor.

### *Traditionals*

The Traditionals explains that boys and girls are being raised differently in relation to the roles they are to fill. Girls are being trained in taking care of the house whereas boys simply are trained in the most basic necessities. The understanding of gender roles is hereby implemented in the upbringing and regenerates the differences between genders as the boys have more time for school and education than the girls. There is a broad agreement that it is the man who decides in the house and that the woman has to submit. In relation to violence, half of the women admit to have been beaten yet all the men denies it and explain, in correlation to the Christian men, that they talk about their problems. Once again the negative connotation can be referred to especially since they also state that they punish in non-violent ways. This means that women should be punished if they do something wrong, and one can imagine that it would be completely unthinkable for them to be punished themselves. This way they acknowledge that violence is bad, yet the oppression of women may not be as clear to them since they practice punishment and therefore maintains the oppression. Even though Traditionals, like all the other religions, say that it is okay to have multiple wives they stand out as the Traditional women state that it is generally allowed but not for their husbands. They have made an agreement on this based on their economy. At the same time they do know their place and admits that if their husbands decide to have more wives they cannot do anything about it. Despite an equal decision it is the husband's choice.

Interestingly the women state that it is in men's nature to lie and therefore they can never trust them 100 %: "(...) she knows that she cannot trust him 100%. She said that it is a part of the culture, and in this community all men lie" (App.10.1.2., L. 183-185). It is interesting how there is this acceptance amongst the women about their men lying. It seems like they know and accept it because it is in their nature and therefore is not something they can change. Traditionals are often

considered as troublemakers and people who does not believe in anything and have not found their way yet. A Traditional man, who has eight wives that, according to them, have left him for not supporting them and their children, is living with his eighth wife. This wife is a Christian and honestly believes that she is married to a Christian man and that her husband does not have any other wives:

*(...) Christian men do not lie as much, and that is why she is married to a Christian. She said that she does not like Traditional men, because it is not good to worship ancestors (App.10.1.2., L.193-195).*

It is interesting how this woman's perception of Traditional men is what she, herself, is caught in. The fact that she obviously is not aware of this simply validates her statement that Traditional men lie, and their reputation of troublemakers therefore seems fitting.

#### *How are the gender roles portrayed and are there any differences between the religions?*

It is now possible to infer that the perception of gender is clearly portrayed. Men are dominating and women are subjects to men. There seems to be different degrees of this male dominance within the religions because the Muslims are more radical within their view upon women. It seems to be rooted in their religion which also explains why the Muslim women do not think of it as suppressing. The Christians and Traditionals also have a clear division in gender roles as the women know how to behave and seem to accept the situation as long as it remains within the allowed setting. The Christians claim to follow the Bible which lays out guidelines for acceptable behavior, yet these only seem to be followed when the result is in favor of the men. Both Christians and Traditionals seems to have a better sense of reality than the Muslims as the Muslims appear to be indifferent with how they are perceived as Islam is their main priority. The Traditionals are very similar to the Christians, yet they come off as a bit more free spirited. They seem less solemn than the Christians as the men do as they want and the women are better at expressing their dislikes. The division in gender nonetheless is still obvious and the oppression of women is accepted. Both Christians and Traditionals therefore seems to have an understanding of their society and of what is socially accepted in regards to women and how they should be treated, even if this conduct does not consent with the laws of Ghana. This portrays social rules which are internally accepted despite of the legislation.



## 5.2. Analysis and Interpretation

In the following section our data will be analyzed based on the empirical categories. It will entail theoretical views from respectively Max Weber and Pierre Bourdieu.

### 5.2.1. Social actions

In order to address how the oppression of women is manifested and what it is caused by, it is relevant to consider how the different oppressing actions arise. First and foremost there is the aspect of upbringing and how boys and girls are raised differently. The Christian women explain that they teach their girls how to behave and to obey the man. Even though they think violence is bad they do not teach their boys not to beat. This way the women are contributing to the preservation of these gender roles as the girls are taught to comply and the boys can act as they wish. Inspiration from Bourdieu can be included as he would consider this to be a cognitive disposition meaning a social structure which is incorporated in the individual through its upbringing. When these children are taught that their genders have specific roles which states women to obey and men to carry responsibility, it is not simply something they are taught, it also becomes a cognitive structure which constructs their *habitus* and thereby constitutes their identity. It is no longer something they have been told, but a fact which they live by and sets the ground for their perceived existence. Individuals act in relation to the existing norms and if the social norm is that women should submit to men then both men and women will act accordingly. This oppression of women will by Bourdieu also be viewed as *symbolic power* which is accepted based upon the fact that the individual and the executor of power have the same cognitive dispositions. This upbringing is therefore contributing to the sustain of female oppression and creating the same cognitive dispositions amongst the children which evolves into a *symbolic power* when the understanding of norms occurs within the children. This means that the oppressing actions are considered an execution of *symbolic power* based on the cognitive dispositions created through upbringing and history.

Upbringing is therefore a crucial perspective, when discussing gender roles and social conduct, as identity is established hereof and thereby contributes to the maintaining of the gender roles. Norms and values are also an aspect that cannot be avoided as these create the basis of the social structure. The norm within these domestic settings is that the husband decides.

There is a seethed respect amongst women and children towards men, as values that are incorporated in the individual from a very early age. Even though it is obvious that not everybody agrees with all actions there are some fundamental values and norms playing out: "He told us that he would feel really bad if his wife was the one who earned the money >>as a man you have to carry the responsibility<<" (App.10.2.4., L. 73-74). This Christian man states, in agreement with all the other religions and genders, that men should carry the responsibility and his perception is therefore in consensus with the existing norms and values. A sense of responsibility is reflected and it is interesting how it would affect him if his wife was the one earning the money, not because it would be hard on her, but because it is his role to carry responsibility and support the woman. When following this thought it can be deduced that the social surroundings expect women to submit and men to take care of their family. This respect and sense of responsibility which occurs within the individuals is thereby incorporated in them and creates a socially and historically determined *habitus*. Personality is hereby affected by the social structure which indicates that respect and male dominance are important values within this society.

A subject like sex, which is illustrated in table 3, reflects an obvious female oppression and male dominance. As mentioned earlier this subject entails rather harsh aspects in relation to violence as well. There is a broad agreement amongst women that sex is about pleasing the man, which also counts in relation to the economic aspect. "If you do not have sex with them in the morning they will not give you money to buy food" (App.10.3.3., L. 538-539). This citation illustrates an economic dependence and a sense of responsibility towards the family. This cannot be considered direct force as the woman does consent to sex even though she does not feel like it, yet if she does not consent it is disrespectful to the man and she will not receive any money. When this emerges as the norm in the society all individuals know the situation and the proper conduct. Women's cognitive dispositions informs, through their upbringing and surrounding norms, that they have to obey, yet the economical dependence complicates the situation furthermore and results in an action which according to Weber is *instrumental-rational*. When the woman decides to consent even though she does not feel for it, including the fact that if the man wants sex he will have it, it is based on the consequences of saying no. The best solution is therefore calculated according to the goal which is to not make the man angry and to get money for food. Weber makes room for other entailing aspect though as one action can have multiple reasons. Maybe this

specific action is based on habits or a sense of obligation. One can imagine how the woman might feel a sense of marital duty when consenting to sex, which makes her action both *traditional*, *value-rational* and *instrumental-rational*. Yet the *instrumental-rational* is the main action as this woman bases her consent on the knowing consequences.

To include the emphasized importance of the men's role in relation to the oppression of women, one can imagine that feelings or lust might be dominating within their action in the same situation. This action is most likely rooted in the *traditional action* whereas habit is essential and the *affective action* where this sudden feeling of lust emerges. Empirically it is stated that the man gets what he wants and one must therefore assume that his action in this situation is based upon that. Maybe there is also an aspect of *value-rational actions* as the man might also feel a marital duty to have sex. The interesting part though, is that the man most likely does not consider why he acts as he does as it is rooted in him and based on emotions. Contrarily the woman is conscious about her actions and understand the connection between actions and motive. This indicates that men and women experience the same situation completely differently. The women do not like it, yet they consent. The man does not force her but resorts to psychological extortion. Based on the common agreement between the respondents about the relations, these actions must be considered socially accepted derived from norms and values that are created on a societal level. These norms and values are so incorporated in the individuals that men and women experience same situation completely differently based on their gender. This brings a gender based *habitus* which according to Bourdieu is a determined distinction between genders. By this mean, culture affects these actions, based on history, through social surroundings and structure.

The cognitive dispositions of the individuals are in addition to upbringing also founded in education according to Bourdieu. As earlier mentioned boys have more freedom and better opportunities to education than the girls as they are caught in their role inside the house. This way it is logical to include the lack of education as a perspective contributing to the sustaining of these women in their inferior position. Education has not been present in the influence on the women's *habitus* and their cognitive disposition, and the lack hereof might contribute to the acceptance of the male dominance.

### *How does the oppression of women manifest itself and what is it caused by?*

It is generally a form of non-physical violence that exists in this society. The oppression of women is expressed in both actions and perceptions and the gender division is obvious. The norms and values are so institutionalized within the society and culture that you do not question it as an individual but instead chooses to conform in order to attain a stable order. The culture consists of norms and values that have consequently affected the gender roles. Therefore the historical focus upon gender and the aspect of upbringing seems to be inevitable focus points when understanding culture. It is a vicious circle that emerges through these influences where the women are contributing to regenerate the same oppression amongst next generation. As long as education amongst women is not valued it seems that this societal order will adhere.

#### **5.2.2. Legitimacy**

It now becomes interesting to explore why this division in genders exists, meaning why this specific way of life and the existing norms and values are accepted. This can be enlightened through Weber's ideal types of legitimacy where he explains the individuals' actions from the perception that a legitimate authority exists. First of all there is the historical aspect where the individuals experience this societal order as something that has always been. Women are not considered equal with men and men are superior existing to provide and take care of their family. In relations to the societal norms there seems to be some legitimate rules which all the individuals know, accept and live by. This is according to Weber a combination of *traditional-, charismatic-and instrumental-rational legitimacy* whereas the order is legitimate because it always has been, because of the emotional belief in the man as an ideal and because the social rules are based on a common agreement. All of these aspect are knowingly chosen and renowned by the individuals which indicates a voluntary submission from the female perspective. It is interesting though, that some of these actions, accepted or not, are basically illegal in regards to the legislation. This means that there is a deviation from the law but an addition to cultural societal rules. Maybe the law enforcement authorities are not receiving the legitimacy intended which might also be caused by the corrupt police in Ghana and the present prominent culture.

Ghana is a Christian and religious country whereas norms and values must be considered in a Christian favor. As the majority of Ghanaians are Christians, the social surroundings and the

societal structure must be influenced by Christian principles. Therefore it is interesting to view the religious influence on the gender division. The Traditional men have a reputation of being troublemakers, non-believing and men with multiple wives who cannot support them. This reputation is very negatively charged and indicates that different norms and values are in play, where it is socially accepted to oppress women but expected from men to support them. It indicates that this indifferent and unreligious conduct from the Traditional men is not socially accepted most likely because of a lack of legitimacy. If this is considered, from the before mentioned types of legitimacy and with the understanding that the legitimacy is based on Christian norms and values, an understanding emerges. The *traditional legitimacy* will disappear as this conduct is not common or traditional. The *instrumental-rational legitimacy* might also vanish as there no longer is a common agreement that this conduct is legitimate and it therefore it is not in accordance to the existing social rules. As far as the charismatic legitimacy goes, the emotional belief in the man is an ideal might still exist which also can explain why the Traditionals 'simply' have a reputation. This way one can imagine that no one will interfere with these actions as the man, because of his gender, always acts legitimate.

Amongst the Muslims it is unavoidable to recognize that religion plays a vital part in relation to the gender roles. They are way more radical in female oppression but is not mentioned by Christians and Traditionals as they almost have their own society within the society. This way it might seem like the Muslims are not part of the society in the same way and thereby reject the Christian norms and values in order to live by their own and the Koran. This way religion does influence the gender roles but the societal aspect cannot be forgotten. If the Muslims encloses themselves while not interacting voluntarily with Christians and Traditionals they are no longer a part of the societal structure. Even though this structure is based upon the Christians norms and values, the Christians still uses the Bible and Christianity in their favor. When actions that are against Christianity are legitimate, religion cannot be viewed as a direct influence on the gender roles. Amongst the Traditionals it is also not the fact that they are unreligious that counts instead it is how the man fills his role. There is an obvious female oppressing aspect within the execution of gender roles, but there is also expectations towards the men and it might be harder to live up to expectations than it is to submit to a dominance that has been incorporated in you from birth. This division in gender roles is thereby based on cultural norms and values which not only oppress women but

also makes expectations to men to provide and support their families. Based on this it can be envisioned that more equality between genders might not only lead to less oppression but also to a more equally divided responsibility in relations to providing for one's family.

*Which cultural factors are present in the maintaining of the gender roles?*

We are considering a society with a very special set of cultural social rules that the individuals live by and where history and tradition is determining the societal structure which is thereby legitimate. Once again the vicious circle is active, wherein the legitimacy of the actions is what prevails the circle. History and culture is creating the dispositions to act pressingly and this is legitimized by both men and women. Education is once again an aspect that might eventually change this legitimacy and make women consider this social order as unacceptable. It is important to remember that not all the legitimate actions are actions that the women care for. The actions are in favor of the men and even though the women acknowledge the actions as legitimate they still express a wish for change. The relationships are like a barter deals – if the man provides for his family, then the woman will submit. But like the empirical results show, the women are also forced to work due to the economy. This way the barter deal does not seem fair anymore. But if this these actions need change, the legitimacy needs change and therefore it is important to generate a will amongst the women as they are in fact upholding the legitimacy. Fundamentally there seems to be some social-legitimate rules within this society which upholds these gender roles and which only can be changed if they are no longer considered legitimate.

## 6. Conclusion

Ghana is a Christian country which societal structure is based on Christianity. Nevertheless different religions live side by side which also is characteristic for Tema New Town. Generally there is a male dominance implemented in this community whereas a clear division in gender is present. Women have to submit to men and men have to carry the responsibility and support their families. Within this way of life, three religions are contemplated: Christianity, Islam and Traditional religion, whereas the Muslims are the most radical. In this regard, women are completely dominated without any opinions or stands and men own all rights over women. Amongst both Christians and Traditionals the oppression of women is also present, though not quite as radically, and is expressed through actions and perceptions. It is generally a *symbolic power* that is executed and even though physical violence also is performed it is not the dominating execution of power. These female oppressing actions are caused by societal dispositions which impact the individuals and contribute to the construction of their personalities. This has let us to answer the following research question:

*How are gender roles in a domestic setting influenced by culture in contemporary Ghana?*

The societal dispositions stem from history, upbringing and education. This has created various social rules which are perceived as legitimate by the individuals especially because of the male position. Men are per se perceived as legitimate as they are conferred special qualities. Women are also contributing to sustain this legitimate oppression, as they through their children's upbringing create the same cognitive dispositions within boys and girls. Women are, because of their upbringing and the existing norms and values, adversely affected to legitimize this way of life. The existing gender roles are hereby affected by culture in the sense that it is composed of different factors which are performed everyday and thereby creates these actions. The societal structure based on Christianity is also a cultural impact as it, despite Christianity, also is based on history. Christians do not live by Christianity but by a Christian societal structure which also entails non-Christian values in favor of the man, which is why religion does not seem to have a direct influence. The historical aspect is passed on to society and combined with upbringing this creates a vicious circle which is maintained due to the legitimacy. The oppression is thereby generated

amongst new generations and education and insight might be a parameter worth focusing on in order to change the legitimacy.



## 7. Recommendations for the organization

This section is intended, based on our results, to present our recommendations to Projects Abroad and their Human Rights office in relation to their future work with the residents of Ghana.

In relation to the Human Rights work Project Abroad carries out, especially their outreaches, we can, based on our results, infer some important areas for the organization to focus on. Our results have shown that religion is not an especially important perspective to include in the conduct of Human Rights. Those empirical subjects that can be related to Human Rights are part of people's actions and perceptions which are founded in the culture. Within the area of culture it is inferred that history, upbringing and education are important to focus on. These three factors compose the societal structure and therefore it is important to understand each of them and their position:

- History bears the mark of a divided pattern in gender roles and figures as traditions amongst the people. It is never easy to change traditions which is why it is important to understand history as a fundamental perception of how things should be.
- Upbringing is where tradition, norms and values are reproduced. This is why it is important to influence the upbringings, not just amongst children but also amongst the parents.
- Education is an aspect which historically has shown to cause changes. It is not simply in regard of the education in Human Rights but an understanding of the importance of education. Therefore it is vital to encourage the participants to education as this may also have an effect on both tradition and upbringing.

In regard to the conduct of Human Rights, multiple problem areas have been shown in the section with Niezen and Renteln. They emphasize that Human Rights have become universal and therefore should not be used directly when dealing with alien cultures. Because they are known as westernized ethics it may not be favorable to project these onto non-western cultures which is why it is suggested to:

- Be careful not to assimilate the culture in accordance to westernized human rights.
- Use a broader variety of Human Rights

- Include a passion within the conduct of Human Rights in order to create a will and motivation amongst the inhabitants.
- Have a suitable amount of knowledge about the intended culture including a local understanding.

Based on this, our recommendations for the organization are as following:

It is important to understand the intended culture and the intended local area before going on outreaches. When an outreach is arranged, focus should not solely be on the preparation of what to say but also about acquainting with the participants' minds, history, upbringing and level of education. Each outreach should therefore be planned based on the participants' positions in order to gain the biggest impact. Religion is a parameter which only should be directly included when dealing with Muslims. Their way of life is influenced by the Koran in such a degree that you cannot simply tell them what to do differently as many Human Rights aspects are against the Koran. Human Rights are an understanding of what is right and wrong and therefore it should be considered in regards to the participants. Preferably an assimilating approach should be avoided which is why it is important to create a will and desire amongst the participants where they are present, not because of biscuits, and soda but because they are interested in the chosen subject and open to suggestions. Equally it is important to include the men. Men carry per se legitimacy hence it is difficult for a woman to return home and share her desire for change. Therefore men should not only be inspired to participate in outreaches but also be able to imagine some benefits. This might be attempted by proclaiming that equality within gender is also equality within responsibility, thus the men do not just lose their favors.

## 8. Suggestions for further research

Many interesting aspects have appeared through our collection of data but have not been relevant in relation to our research question. Through the process of coding, the category 'children' emerged, reflecting the views the respondents had on upbringing including beating children in order not to 'spoil' them. Therefore it would be interesting to explore this perception and how it is embedded. The concept of beating children is something that eventually has become very distant to the western world yet it is still practiced countless places worldwide. An interesting view might not be *why* they beat their children but rather why they refuse to use the discipline methods that have replaced beating in the western world. Another interesting study could be to take a deeper look upon the Ghanaians' values such as material things. When poor people run around with gold jewelry and iPads, what does it really mean to them and how is the western world really influencing Africa. In relations to gender roles, the report '*On the Origins of Gender (...)*' it is stated that ancestors' use of the plough has affected current generations and their perception of gender. This specific historical element could inspire to look upon the agricultural system in its present form in relation to it can be renewed in a gender perspective. In the report written by Silberschmidt it seems that even though women have achieved more control, they are still vulnerable because of male frustration. In addition to this it could be interesting to look at the male perception of patriarchy. Men could possibly hold some interesting views on their dominance which are not included when regarding equality.

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