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Islam and Gender Violence: Exploring Spousal Abuse in Kumasi Zongo

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Islam and Gender Violence: Exploring Spousal Abuse in Kumasi Zongo

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of two esteemed individuals who have profoundly impacted my life: **Mallam Mohammed**, my biological father, and **Ustaz Habib**, my Islamic teacher and spiritual guardian. Both individuals played crucial roles in my upbringing throughout my life. It is my prayer that Allah, The Almighty, would bestow mercies on their souls, forgive their sins, and admit them to paradise.

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Abstract

The discourse on gender-based violence has taken a central stage in global advocacy on gender equality, human rights, affirmative action, and other issues pertaining to gender discrimination. Gender-based violence (GBV), or Sexual and Gender-based violence (SGBV) is a harmful act of sexual, physical, psychological, mental, and emotional abuse that is perpetrated against a person's will. It is usually based on certain socially ascribed differences between males and females. Although men also experience gender-based violence, women and girls are mostly victims of socio-political, cultural, and religious factors that perpetuate direct and indirect experiences of violence. Globally, one in three women will experience physical or sexual abuse in their lives. In Ghana, the manifestation of GBV cuts across socio-political and cultural dimensions. It is indicated that 31.9% of Ghanaian women face at least one form of domestic violence: physical, economic, psychological, social, or sexual. Recent studies have established that structures of domination and subordination are present in religious narratives of marriage as an institution. Other studies also show the link between religious affiliation and variations in intimate partner abuse. In the Zongos, some women in marriages are forced to condone spousal abuse with consolatory statements like "*Awure Ibaada Ney*" (Marriage is an act of worship) and '*Awure Ba soyyaya bane hankuri ney*' meaning that marriage is not always about love but patience, among other consoling words. These socio-religious narratives and words of consolation form the normalized feature of spousal relations in Ghana's Zongos. Thus, this research explores the link between the practice of Islam and IPV in Ghana's Zongos using a qualitative approach. The study further examines empirical cases of spousal relations and violence, the role of Islam, and family in IPV mediation, and how women victims interact with IPV mediators such as DOVVSU and the Imams who mediate spousal violence according to Quranic teachings in the Zongos of Kumasi.

Keywords: Islam, gender, DOVVSU, Intimate partner violence, Zongo, Sexual and Gender-based violence, Zongo lifestyle, physical, economic, psychological, social, and sexual abuse, Qur'an

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-based violence
IPR	Intimate Partner Relations
IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
DOVVSU	Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit
DVB	Domestic Violence Bill
CSO	Civil society organizations
CDC	Center for Disease Control and Prevention
WHO	World Health Organization

Introduction

The discourse on gender-based violence has taken a central stage in global advocacy on gender equality, human rights, affirmative action, and other issues pertaining to gender discrimination. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Gender-Based Violence (GBV), or Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is a harmful act of sexual, physical, psychological, mental, and emotional abuse that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed differences between males and females. Globally, one in three women will experience physical or sexual abuse in their lives (OCHA, 2019). Although men also experience gender-based violence, women and girls are mostly victims of socio-political, cultural, and religious factors that perpetuate direct and indirect experiences of violence.

Furthermore, much as victims of GBV comprise all genders, this thesis focuses on the experiences of women in the context of spousal or intimate partner relations (IPR) in the Muslim community (Zongo)¹. This thesis explores the issue of intimate partner violence (IPV) in Ghana's Zongos, which manifests in many ways. IPV is generally defined as a pattern of behavior or actions used to gain and maintain power and control over an intimate partner. Such patterns of behavior lead to physical, sexual, emotional, economic, and psychological consequences for the victim. At the intimate partner level, these acts of violence are used to frighten, intimidate, manipulate, humiliate, blame, wound, or injure a partner, culminating in domestic abuse (UN 2021).

¹ The term 'Zongo' is the popular nomenclature for Muslim communities in Ghana. The term will be used throughout this thesis to refer to the Muslim community.

In Ghana, the manifestation of GBV in socio-political and cultural dimensions continues to attract research from various areas of study. As of August 2020, official figures reported by Ghana's Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) indicated that 31.9% of Ghanaian women face at least one form of domestic violence: physical, economic, psychological, social, or sexual (WAGGGS, 2020). Based on these findings, Ghana's government passed the Domestic Violence Bill (DVB) to deal with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. To complement the government's efforts, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are embarking on nationwide campaigns to educate the public about the effects of gender-based violence. In all these efforts, however, an important area that attracts less attention is Ghana's cultural milieu, which upholds religious edicts on gender relations in Ghanaian societies. The cultural milieu is an area where religious rules on gender relations are intrinsically linked and thus visible in the institution of marriage.

Takyi and Lamptey (2020) posit that structures of domination and subordination are present in religious narratives of marriage as an institution. They contend that there is a link between religious affiliation and variations in intimate partner abuse (Takyi & Lamptey, 2020). Takyi and Lamptey (2020) form the premise of this study. Thus, this research explores the link between the practice of Islam and IPV in Ghana's Zongos using a qualitative approach. The study further examines empirical cases of spousal relations and violence in Kumasi-Zongo, the role of Islam in spousal relations, and how other Islamic practices in Kumasi-Zongo reinforce or relate to patterns of IPV experienced by women.

1.1 Who are 'Zongo' people? – History of Kumasi Zongo

The word Zongo is a Hausa word that means 'camping place of a caravan' or a lodging place of travelers (Abraham, 1962). The community was also referred to as the Hausa or Mohammedan settlement during the colonial era by the British. The Zongos in Kumasi are not

clustered in a particular vicinity but are scattered across the Ashanti regional capital. The first and oldest of these is called Yelwa. It is located a few meters from Kumasi Central, also known as the Kejetia Market, the largest open-air market in West Africa.

The creation of Kumasi Zongo began after the British conquered Asante in 1874. Prior to the creation of the Zongos, immigrants within Kumasi were divided into two groups. The first group was made up of traders or foreign merchants from Nigeria (Hausa and Yuroba), the Upper Volta (Mossi), and Niger/Mali (Zabarma and Mandinka people). These merchants, especially the Hausa and Malians who were largely Muslim and educated, provided important services to the Asante Kingdom (Schildkrou 1978). They served as court scribes, keeping accountants and records in Arabic. They also acted as hosts for visitors from distant countries in the North, and they also tutored the royal family and palace children in the Arabic language (reading and writing). The second group of immigrants was composed of Ghanaian traders and laborers from the Northern Territory, specifically the Dagomba, Gurunshi, Gonja, and Frafra ethnic groups. The laborers served as head carriers and errand boys while others worked in the cocoa farms, and gold mines and provided domestic services for the rich Ashantis and their families (Schildkrou, 1978).

Kumasi is an important trading center because it is situated in the middle belt of Ghana. It serves as a link between the northern part of the country and the southern coast. During the pre-colonial era, the Ashantis controlled the trade routes from the North to the coast. They took advantage of this privileged geographical position to impose road taxes and also controlled the movement of traders and travelers alike. At some instants, they prevented the movement of goods and merchandise to the coast by imposing high taxes on caravans and road tariffs. The aim then was to deny the traders/merchants, direct access to the coastal merchants and compelled them to sell their goods, cheaply to the Asante merchants who would then transport

the goods to the coast for more profit. This action also lured the coastal and other southern traders to Kumasi to trade thereby making Kumasi a major trading center for the Northerners and Southerners alike. As one British official wrote “The Ashantis would like to obtain control over all roads leading from the interior. Let this but happen and no more trade from the interior will get beyond Ashanti; the flow of the interior trade will all be directed to Coomassie” (Lonsdale, quoted in Johnson: I, SAL 41/3, cited in Schildkrout (1978), pg. 68). This action also made the Ashanti kingdom very rich and powerful at the expense of the foreign merchants because the Ashantis determined the prices of goods and services within the Kumasi trading center (Market). This continued for years, and thus increased anger and hatred for the Ashantis among some foreign merchants. However, there was nothing they could do because the Ashanti had a strong army, as they were able to recruit some of the strong Northern men into their army and other security services. Therefore, when the British Colonialists started the campaign against the Ashantis in 1869, most of the foreign merchants quickly aligned with the British thus, joined the British armed forces (Schildkrout, 1978).

Several ethnic groups, including Hausa, Mossi, Yoruba, Zabarma, Grusi, and others from the northern regions of the Gold Coast and the surrounding nations, were represented in the British force. According to government statistics in the northern regions, the Mossi ethnic group made up nearly a quarter of the force. They were the most recruited people in any one year throughout the first decade of the century. The police force was separated into companies according to ethnicity when it relocated to Kumasi. A sizeable portion of the early Zongo population was made up of individuals from this diverse army who had fought alongside one another for the British (Schildkrout,1978). He added that during the colonial period, two populations contributed to the early Muslim strangers' society of Kumasi: northern soldiers hired by the British to fight the Asante and northern tradesmen and laborers who were able to freely enter

Kumasi once Asante hegemony was broken. Thus, the settlement of the Zongo was dependent on British support and was a development that was directly linked to the destruction of the Asante empire. This undoubtedly affected the type of community that emerged, and it contributed in a minor way to its increasing social and cultural differentiation from Asante society (Schildkrout, 1978).

In present times, Zongos remain densely populated ethnically heterogeneous neighborhoods characterized by the commonly spoken ‘Hausa’ language, which, in addition to the Islamic faith, brings the different ethnic groups together (Cassiman, 2019). While Zongos can be found in all the major cities across Ghana, the most populous and oldest of the Zongos are located in Kumasi. The commonly known Zongos in Kumasi are located in areas such as *Aboabo*, *Asawasi*, *Yelwa*, *Old/New Zongo*, *Moshi Zongo*, *Sawaba*, and *Ayigya Zongo*.

1.2 Problem Statement

Historically and traditionally, marriages in Kumasi Zongo were arranged between Kinsmen and Tribesmen. There are two reasons for this: first, among the wealthy, to consolidate the wealth within family and kinship, and second, for political and tribal/language preservation. For the first reason, the exchange of gifts between affines who are also kins were inevitably more elaborate than the exchange of gifts between unrelated families (Schildkrout, 1978). That form of kinship marriage which is called ‘*Auren Gida*’ literally means ‘Marriage within the House/Family’ and is sanctioned by Islamic laws of marriage. This arrangement usually fosters peace and sustains family bonds.

Spousal abuse was also minimal due to kinship ties between the couple or due to the respect and good relationship that exists between the headsmen of both families. In recent times, due to factors such as urbanization, modernity, and an increased population, house/arranged

marriages are gradually losing popularity. Interethnic marriages have become part of a normative culture. Some parents do not pay much attention to the ethnic or family background of a suitor, but rather to their economic or social status. Poor families prefer their wards to marry rich or prominent families. Such marriages sometimes become violent and abusive, not just from the husbands but also from their families. Women in such marriages are forced to condone such inhumane treatments in the interest of their poor family, as when she report a case of abuse to either her family or the husband, less is done to address it. Affected women are usually consoled with statements like “*Awure Ibaada Ney*” (Marriage is an act of worship) and ‘*Awure Ba soyyaya bane hankuri ney*’ meaning that marriage is not always about love but patience, among other consoling words. These socio-religious narratives and words of consolation form the normalized feature of spousal relations in Ghana’s Zongos, which need further exploration in relation to IPV.

1.3 Relevance to peace and conflict studies

In international campaigns for gender equality, human rights, affirmative action, and other anti-discrimination measures, the discussion of gender-based violence has assumed a prominent position. One in three women worldwide is a victim of physical or sexual abuse at some point in their lives. Even though men can also experience gender-based violence, it is more common among women and girls because of sociopolitical, cultural, and religious variables that support both direct and indirect experiences of violence. IPV takes many different forms in Ghana's Zongos, including behavioral patterns that have negative physical, sexual, emotional, economic, and psychological effects on victims. Intimate partner violence results when certain acts of violence are used to terrorize, intimidate, control, embarrass, blame, wound, or injure a partner. The goal of peace and conflict studies, a subfield of the social sciences, is to recognize, examine, and research both violent and peaceful behaviors, as well as the structures, causes, and dynamics underlying social, political, and economic disputes (Dugan, 1989). The

multifaceted approach of the course, such as conflict prevention, management, and resolution as well as peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts, aligns with the subject matter of my study.

1.4 Research objectives

The objectives of this research includes the following:

- i) Explore the conception of spousal violence in Kumasi-Zongo and how they interplay with scriptural understanding of spousal relations in the Quran.
- ii) Examine the causes and forms of abuse from first-hand empirical accounts of women victims.
- iii) Investigate the role of family in IPV mediation, and how women victims interact with IPV mediators such as the Imams who mediate spousal violence according to Quranic teachings.

1.5 Research questions

In line with the research objectives outlined above, this thesis will attempt answering the following research questions:

- 1) What are the gendered impressions of violence among married Muslim couples in Kumasi-Zongo?
- 2) How do the gendered impressions of violence reflect Quran-based normative guidance on marital relations?
- 3) How do socio-cultural avenues modeled along Quran-based normative guidance for addressing IPV mediate issues of IPV in Kumasi-Zongo?

- 4) What are the consequences for the marital satisfaction of Muslim women in Kumasi-Zongo?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study is significant and worthy of consideration because it makes compelling contributions to knowledge. There is an outstanding volume of literature on Islam and Gender because of growing interest in this topic in the academic field. However, there is a dearth of literature relevant to this thesis that focuses on IPV. Therefore, there is a gap in the literature on IPV in Zongo communities, perhaps because of a lack of documentation. This study investigates and fills this gap in the literature. This study also provides data on spousal relations in Ghana's Zongos, especially the link between the practice of Islam and IPV in Zongos. Moreover, since there is a link between religious affiliation and variation in intimate partner abuse, this study complements the government's efforts and other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) embarking on nationwide campaigns to educate the public on the effects of gender-based violence. Again, the data generated from this research can guide policymakers working with Zongo communities in making decisions regarding IPV in Kumasi Zongo. Finally, this study establishes the relationships between how gendered impressions of violence reflect Quran-based normative guidance on marital relations and provides empirical data that can be used for further research on IPV.

Literature review

This chapter reviews the relevant literature on IPV. It discusses empirical IPV concepts in thematic headings and presents some gendered impressions of violence that reflect Quran-based normative guidance on marital relations.

1.7 General overview of intimate partner violence

The advocacy of women's rights, liberty, and equality championed by scholars and feminist movements in the 20th century has caused countries, governments, and institutions to adjust their systems and ways of doing things to accommodate women in every sphere of life. The beginning of the 21st century could be a headway for this feminist advocacy, as there has been a remarkable increase in women in politics, government, sports, and several other professions hitherto, preserved for men. Some countries like Norway have taken deliberate steps in the form of affirmative action in addition to the formulation and enforcement of laws to avoid gender discrimination and to make it possible for women to compete favorably for opportunities. The Global Gender Gap Index 2021, places Norway third in terms of gender parity, with a score of 84.9%, closely behind Finland and Iceland. Despite these successes, there is a growing rate of Intimate Partner Violence among couples, of which women are mostly victims (Global gender gap report, 2021).

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines IPV as any kind of violence ranging from physical and sexual violence, stalking, and psychological aggression by current or former intimate partners regardless of whether the partner is a spouse (CDC, 2017). It is worth noting that this definition states some kind of violence that some people perpetrate

against their intimate partners. The kind of violence perpetrated by one intimate partner differs and in diverse ways, but in some cases, as in the cases I covered during my interview, some victims of IPV experienced up to three kinds of abuse from intimate partners. IPV is prevalent in places with a high rate of poverty, such as in developing countries or countries with a wider gender gap, as in developed countries where gender equality is still a goal yet to be achieved.

Scholars from different fields have widely defined intimate partners, but they all tend to connote the same understanding and implications. Jewkes (2002) defined intimate partner violence as physical abuse directed at a woman by a current or former husband or boyfriend. She added that the term frequently includes sexual violence as well as psychological abuse; both types of abuse frequently, but not always, accompany physical violence. However, inconsistencies in the definitions used in research, particularly with regard to the inclusion or exclusion of sexual and psychological abuse by male intimate partners, have resulted in most global quantitative studies on the causes of intimate partner violence focusing solely on physical violence (Jewkes, 2002). Similarly, Takyi and Mann (2006) define IPV as any kind of physical, sexual, or psychological violence perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. This definition simply associates IPV with sexual and psychological violence because all forms of IPV that a victim may experience have psychological consequences. For this reason, IPV has been recognized not only as a human rights issue but also as a health issue in developed and developing countries.

The majority of global quantitative studies on the causes of intimate partner violence, however, have only focused on physical violence due to ambiguities in the definitions used in research, particularly with regard to the inclusion or exclusion of sexual and psychological abuse by male intimate partners (Jewkes, 2002). Therefore, the issue of intimate partner violence is global, and it affects all of sub-Saharan Africa. In fact, scholarly research on several types of

intimate partner abuse has revealed that this practice is very common in Africa, affecting all racial, religious, and socioeconomic groups. Even though there is a dearth of reliable information on the many types of intimate partner violence in Africa, the few existing studies show that married women in diverse African nations experience varying degrees of abuse. For instance, it is estimated that 46% of women in Uganda, 60% of women in Tanzania, 42% of women in Kenya, and 81 percent of women in Nigeria reported having suffered some type of violence from their partners (Takyi & Mann, 2006).

The effects of intimate partner violence are well known, as are the connections that have been drawn between it and some of the most difficult social, health, and legal issues that currently confront women, such as the spread of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV and AIDS, poor birth outcomes, an increase in infant and child mortality, mental health problems, low self-esteem, and depression, which in some cases leads to an increase in suicide rates and esophageal cancer (Takyi & Mann, 2006). Again, the World Health Organization (WHO) noted that intimate partner violence has replaced diseases such as cancer, malaria, traffic accidents, and even war as the leading cause of death and disability in women between the ages of 15 and 44. In a different context, the World Bank reported that rape and domestic abuse caused African women in their reproductive years to lose 5% of their healthy years of life (Takyi & Mann, 2006).

In Ghana, where this research is focused, wife beating is the norm in most parts of the country. The classification of beating as a discipline does not appear to be in doubt among men or wives. Even though most Ghanaian women believed that the abusive behavior of their husbands had a negative impact on the environment in which their children were growing up, they often felt reluctant to report their husbands to the elders or law enforcement agencies fearing the consequences of such actions on their image in society. Therefore, most people concluded that

counseling or mediation would be ineffective because they would be held responsible by their partners and both families for the failure of the relationship. Also, the challenge in discussing domestic violence against Ghanaian/African women has the potential for importing Western norms that are at odds with traditional African culture. Many Africans believe that feminist theories are incompatible with their culture. Therefore, any effort to address domestic abuse is perceived as a foreign invasion of deeply ingrained norms (Ofei-Aboagye 1994).

Ghanaian women are beaten by their husbands daily. Neither men nor their wives seem to question the categorization of beating as a discipline. Ghanaian women interviewed for this study felt that their husbands' repeated abuse was detrimental to the atmosphere in which their children were growing up. Most participants found that mediation or counseling would be useless because they would be blamed for the breakdown in the relationship by their partners and families. The difficulty in speaking about domestic violence faced by African women is the risk of importing Western values that conflict with traditional African culture. Many Africans perceive feminist analysis as an anathema of culture. Any attempt to address domestic violence seems like an invasion of "foreign" values into deeply rooted traditions.

In this study, intimate partner violence describes physical violence directed against a woman by a current husband, ex-husband, or boyfriend. The term "intimate partner violence" often includes sexual violence and can also include psychological abuse; both these forms of abuse are often, but not always, accompanied by physical violence. The risk of violence is greatest in societies in which the use of violence in many situations is a socially accepted norm. Thus, understanding the causes of intimate partner violence is substantially more difficult than studying the disease itself.

However, the ramifications of intimate partner violence around the world are well recognized, as are the links that have been made between it and some of today's most challenging social, health, and legal problems facing women, including the spread of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, poor birth outcomes, increased infant and child, mental health issues, low self-esteem, and depression, which in some cases leads to increased suicide rates, especially among black and pregnant women. In addition, the World Health Organization (WHO) has observed that among women aged 15-44, intimate partner violence has emerged as a major cause of death and disability in this sub-population, more than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents, and even war. In another context, the World Bank noted that rape and domestic abuse accounted for a loss of 5 percent of healthy years of life among African women in their reproductive years (Takyi & Mann, 2006).

Finally, the prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence is a well-recorded phenomenon, especially in the healthcare sector, due to its negative health implications, as it affects the physical, mental health, and social well-being of the affected people and their children. According to Miller and McCaw (2019), IPV is more prevalent during the lifetime of a woman than health conditions such as diabetes, depression, or breast cancer; however, it has not received much attention from health professionals and social welfare workers alike (Miller & McCaw, 2019).

1.8 Perspectives on Violence

The World Health Organization (WHO) report on violence and health defines violence as the “intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, or deprivation” (WHO, 2002). The idea of intentionality is captured in Potter’s (1999) definition of violence: ‘Violence is a violation of a character’s physical or emotional well-being. It includes two key elements—intentionality and

harm—at least one of which must be present’ (p. 80). The UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (UN, 1993) defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or mental harm to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private”.

A national study on violence undertaken by the Ghana Gender Centre (Appiah & Cusack, 1999) did not succinctly define violence but cataloged behaviors and injuries that respondents saw as violence against them. These were not only physical, but also psychological, socioeconomic, sexual, and traditional practices deemed to be harmful and degrading to women. Violence against women is thus observed to be a violation of their physical and/or emotional well-being, which manifests in various forms. However, whatever its form, it constitutes a means of social control in which the subservient position of women is highlighted, and their vulnerability is accentuated (Carter & Weaver, 2003). It is a debilitating experience perpetrated largely by people (usually men) who have promised to love the victims through matrimonial or conjugal pledges, or those who are expected to love and care for them because they are kith and kin: husbands, boyfriends, partners, relations, and parents (Carter & Weaver, 2003; Clark, 1992; Schlesinger *et al.*, 1992).

1.9 Global statistics of violence against women

According to World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, around one-third (30%) of women worldwide have experienced physical and/or sexual intimate relationship abuse or non-partner sexual violence at some point in their lives (WHO, 2021). Nasir and Hyder’s (2003) extensive review of the literature on violence against (pregnant) women shows that an estimated 28% of all women in developed countries and between 18% and 67% of those in developing countries report at least one incident of physical abuse. Similarly, Heise and colleagues’ (Heise,

Pitanguy, & Germain, 1995) review of international literature shows a range of 16% and 39% of women reporting physical and/or psychological abuse by a spouse. A 1999 review of 50 population-based studies conducted in 36 countries showed that between 10% and 60% of ever-married or partnered women experienced at least one episode of physical violence from an intimate partner (Heise *et al.*, 2002). Jewkes (2000) reported that the prevalence of abuse in South Africa is between 20% and 30%, similar to estimates for many countries, including Ghana.

1.10 Marriage in Islam

Islam is keen on marriage, as it is the only ‘Halal’ (legal/legitimate) way to engage in any kind of intimate relationship with the opposite gender. For this reason, the Holy Qur’an has made several calls on marriage, as well as the Hadiths (the sayings/tradition of the Prophet). In the Qur’an, Allah says:

“And marry those among you who are single; If they are needy, God will make them free from want out of His grace”. (Qur'an, Surat An Nur, 24:32)

In another verse, it says:

“One of His signs is this; that He has created mates for you from yourselves that you might find quiet of mind in them, and He put between you love and compassion. Surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect” (Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rum, 30:21).

These verses are supported by the Hadith of the Prophet (PBUH) which was narrated by one of his companions, Abdullah who said:

“The Messenger of Allah said to us: 'O young men, whoever among you can afford it, let him get married, for it is more effective in lowering the gaze and guarding chastity, and whoever cannot then he should fast, for it will be a restraint (wija') for him” (An-Nasai, 3209, book 26, hadith 14).

The Islamic religion has laid down rules and guiding principles that Muslims must follow to deal with issues regarding marriage, polygamy, spousal abuse, divorce, and inheritance. Islamic laws on marriage also recognize the rights that each partner has over the other. Allah says in the Holy Qur'an:

“Do not covet something in which Allah has made some of you superior to others. For men there is a share of what they earned, and for women, a share of what they earned. Pray to Allah for His grace. Surely, Allah is All-Aware of everything” (Qur'an, Surat An-Nisa, 4:32).

In another verse in the same chapter, Allah says:

“Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand (Qur'an, Surat An-Nisa, 4:34).

These are the verses that most Muslim men misinterpret and use as justification for violence against their spouses. Islamic Scholars have written exegeses of this verse with the support of several Hadiths to clarify and also debunk the assertions of domestic violence or spouse abuse that some people perceive in those verses. The Scholars, depending on the situation, permit striking one's spouse but not in a harsh way, and neither must it be on the face nor leave marks on their bodies. Thus, a Muslim feminist writer has argued that “indeed, Muslim scholars and leaders have long been doing what I call ‘the 4:34 dance’ they reject outright violence against women but accept a level of aggression that fits contemporary definitions of domestic violence” (Nomani, 2006).

1.11 Marriage and spousal abuse among Muslims

Numerous studies have been conducted on Islam and gender, particularly on topics pertaining to Muslim women's rights and liberties. In a study on marriage and spousal abuse among American Muslims, Hassouneh-Philips (2001) observed that among some American Muslims, marriage serves as an arena for the emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of women in families and that battered women are usually stigmatized, and because they may fear reprisal, the problems of battering are likely to be significantly underreported. She also observed that, because of the religious overtone associated with Islamic marriages, some American Muslim wives view the roles of their husbands as those that include a partner in faith because, to them, marriage is an integral part of their religion and social life. This power position that Muslim husbands wield in their families puts the women in abusive marriages at a disadvantage as they have to come to terms not only with the abuses they are experiencing but also with their perceived religious duty to obey their husbands, even in the context of abuse.

Furthermore, she observed that the conflicts between faith and self-determination, obedience, and the need to break free and resist abuse were mostly in tension with one another. When this tension gave way to submission on the part of wives towards their husbands, they assumed a position that she termed the "negation of the self." Negation of the self is a result of a process wherein others define who you are; it is what allows some women to accept abuse and witness abuse of other women without recognition or intervention (Hassouneh-Philips, 2001). Additionally, in a study of spousal relationships in Egyptian Muslim households in the light of abuse and domestic violence, what causes the victims, who are mostly women, continue to stay in such marriages, and why some justify the domestic violence that has been levied against them? To answer these, six reasons were discovered as to why some Egyptian women stay in abusive or violent marriages (Yount, 2009).

Firstly, children are central to women's identity in Egypt, and they also serve as supporters and providers as they age. Egyptian divorce laws also award custody to the father. Therefore, when divorce occurs, children are taken from their mothers outright, and having access to them is sometimes denied by the husband or his relatives. This forces the women to condone all kinds of violence or mistreatment from the family and their families for fear of losing their children and their social and economic security.

Secondly, the research also discovered that one-third of the marriages in the Muslim-dominated regions are endogamous, or among blood relatives. This kinship also ties women to marriage and the abuses that come along with it.

Thirdly, women often live with their in-laws when their husbands migrate to work in another city or country. Living with these relatives reduces women's marital power because most of the family's decisions are made by them.

Finally, the research discovered that approximately 30% of the women interviewed were between the ages of 25 and 49 and had been married before attaining the age of 18. These women had less education than those who married later. Early marriage is associated with justifying the wife hitting or beating cross-culturally (Kishor & Subaiya, 2008). The research also discovered that in most Egyptian Muslim households, there existed a general norm of gender complementarity, which upholds separate but balanced family roles for men and women, in which the husband's father is the head of the household and the economic provider, and the wife or mother is the obedient housekeeper (Yount, 2009). This discussion of patriarchal practices and other information gathered sparked two hypotheses: (a) Women who live in settings where women marry at earlier ages will more likely agree that hitting or beating

a wife is justified and (b) women who are members of or who live in religious settings tend to condone domestic violence and will more likely agree that such treatment is justified.

The ramifications of intimate partner violence around the world are well recognized, as are the links that have been made between it and some of today's most challenging social, health, and legal problems facing women, including the spread of sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, poor birth outcomes (Awofeso, Degeling, and Ritchie, 1999), increased infant and child mortality (Asling-Monemi, Pena, Ellsberg, and Persson, 2003), mental health issues (Fischbach and Herbert, 1997), low self-esteem, and depression, which in some cases leads to increased suicide rates, especially among Black and pregnant women (Stark and Flitcraft, 1996), especially among Black and pregnant women. Not only that, the World Health Organization (WHO) has observed that among women aged 15–44, intimate partner violence has emerged as a major cause of death and disability in this sub-population, more than cancer, malaria, traffic accidents, and even war (Krug et al., 2002; Koss, Heise, and Russo, 1994). In another context, the World Bank has noted that rape and domestic abuse account for a loss of 5 percent of healthy years of life among African women in their reproductive years (Heise, Pitanguy, and Germain, 1994).

In contrast, only a handful of studies have examined men's attitudes and behaviors regarding intimate partner violence in Africa. Therefore, it is not surprising that very little is known about African men's beliefs and attitudes regarding intimate partner violence. This lack of knowledge is surprising since existing studies have implicated men as aggressors or perpetrators of abuse in the first place (Coker-Appiah and Cusack, 1999). More importantly, it also reduces our comprehension of the forces that shape men's attitudes toward intimate partner abuse. A particularly disturbing finding was that younger men in Ghana felt that wife beating was

justifiable more often than older men. Other studies in Zimbabwe have also shown this to be the case for women (Hindin, 2003).

1.12 Gap in Literature

In Ghana, there is literature on the presence of structures of domination and subordination in religious narratives of marriage as an institution. Some studies contend that there is a link between religious affiliation and variations in intimate partner abuse (Takyi & Lamptey, 2020). However, there is no literature on socio-religious narratives and words of consolation such as '*Awure Ibaada Ney*' (Marriage is an act of worship) and '*Awure Ba Soyyaya Bane Hankuri Ney*' meaning marriage is not always about love but patience. This study sought to examine and fill the literature gap on these normalized features of spousal relationship in relation to IPV in Ghana's Zongos.

Theoretical Framework

This chapter discusses some key theories and concepts that shed light on the study. These theories and concepts include intersectionality, social learning, and investment model.

1.13 Intersectionality

Recently, there has been an upward surge in African feminist scholarship and practice (Tamale 2020). However, the theorization and organization of an intersectionality framework have always been crucial parts of the feminist discourse in Africa (Alidou, 2013; Ekine & Abbas, 2013). Intersectionality is a theoretical framework that analyzes the diversity, complexities, and interconnectedness of the various dimensions of oppression, dominance, and discrimination leveled against minority or oppressed groups, in this case, women (Crenshaw, 1989). The term helps to understand the ways in which social factors, such as religion, politics, economic status or class, gender, race, and other multiple factors compound themselves to create obstacles, inequalities, discrimination, subordination, and oppression on the one hand, and opportunities, privileges, and favoritism on the other, depending on which side of the societal grouping one finds herself (Crenshaw, 1989). To put it more clearly, Vidal (2014) states that intersectionality refers to how different people experience oppression, dominance, or discrimination of varying degrees of intensity that are influenced by the intersectional system of society (Vidal, 2014).

The term gained prominence in the late 1980s through an advocacy campaign championed by Kimberle Williams Crenshaw to create awareness regarding the different forms of oppression

or discrimination experienced by women of color, poor women, immigrant women, etc., in contrast to those experienced by white and middle-class women, and to identify and showcase the multiple factors within our societies that place women in either advantageous or disadvantageous positions. Crenshaw argues that to understand the plight of black women in the light of discrimination or subordination, one needs to consider the intersectionality of their situation, that is, the fact that they are black in a white-dominated environment in addition to their gender, class, and economic status (Crenshaw, 1989).

Furthermore, women's lived experiences are also shaped by their geographical location and socioeconomic class, aside from their gender (Bowles, 2021). In light of this argument, the situation of women in abusive marriages within Zongo also has several intersectional underpinnings. As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, almost all the women (victims) I interviewed attributed their unfortunate experiences to poverty, social class, culture (ethnicity), and, to some extent, religion. Some women alleged that their bitter experience in their marital homes was because they were unemployed and therefore solely reliant on their husbands for all their basic needs. One of the victims recounted that her husband abused her verbally and sometimes physically when she asked for money to buy basic items, such as sanitary pads for her child. She added that if she were employed or was from a good home (a rich or prominent family), she believed her husband would be acting with caution regarding how he handled their matter. The complexity is not solely based on her gender; it also includes her class, economic status, culture, and ethnicity. Thus, this is a clear case of the intersectionality of the factors that individually, contributes to her plight.

Intersectionality as a concept is relevant to my research because it allows me to consider, understand, and analyze the various structures within the social division that perpetrate such violence within the community. However, even though these social structures or factors differ,

they are interconnected in diverse ways. This makes it too many and difficult to choose from several factors that concentrate on or draw conclusions regarding the main factors that influence spousal abuse (Phoenix, 2006). Additionally, the theory came as a challenge to mainstream feminist theories, which, according to Crenshaw, do not consider every social element that contributes to the subordination of black women. Therefore, social elements such as race, class, gender, and sexuality should be considered when addressing the plight of black women, especially in white-dominated societies. While the intersectional perspective will allow me to analyze the layers of Zongo women's experiences in abusive marriages, another theory is needed to explain why women in abusive marriages choose to stay in such relationships despite their experience of IPV. In considering the influences of sociocultural norms on the life choices of Zongo women, I draw upon the theoretical vision of social learning theory to understand women's unique choices in such cases.

1.14 Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory explains how humans learn certain types of behavior through environmental influences, observation, or their own experiences and those of others. Albert Bandura (1997) has identified three ways in which humans learn or adopt certain kinds of behaviors from their daily interactions with the environment. First, he argues that human beings' capacity to learn by observation enables the acquisition of some integrated units of behavior without having to build a pattern for those behaviors through consistent trials. Human emotional responses to certain acts can be developed by witnessing the reactions of others undergoing painful or pleasurable experiences. Additionally, human beings' superior cognitive capacity determines how they will be affected by their experiences and directs the actions they will take in the future when faced with a similar experience. In other words, a person's experience may guide their actions or inform their understanding of the consequences of a

particular action. This also guides people to adjust their behavior accordingly. Finally, a person can create a self-regulatory influence. They achieve this by managing or controlling the results of the given activities to produce consequences for their actions. To some degree, this is controlling a person's behaviors (Bandura & Richard, Social Learning Theory, 1977).

The positions in this theory would enable me to understand and analyze the social and environmental factors that influence spouses' behaviors to engage in violent feuds. From the interviews, I identified some patterns of behaviors that were common to all perpetrators of domestic violence. For example, all the women I interviewed complained of verbal abuse from their husbands when shouldering their basic needs. One of the victims added that her husband tells her to "act like a responsible woman and go to the market and sell stuff like most women do." This happens whenever she demands financial support from her spouse. From this example, it is clear that husbands' behaviors towards their wives are reflections of what they observed in their society, namely, responsible women are those who work to make money to support the husband in taking care of the family. This theory will feature prominently in the analysis of my data, where I will be able to connect it to the causes of spousal abuse within Zongo.

1.15 Investment Model

It is interesting to note that there is a high frequency of marriages in Zongo. There are no weekends that pass without witnessing several marriage ceremonies held all over the Zongo communities. Despite this, the rate of divorce is low amidst the challenges that some spouses face in their marriages. During my interviews with the victims, I raised questions relating to divorce, and I observed from the responses that divorce is the last thing partners tend to consider. Those who wanted it presented reasons that discouraged them from asking for divorce from their abusive partner. This aspect of the research requires a different theory to be analyzed,

which is why I considered a third model, an investment model, which would help explain why people in abusive relationships choose to remain amidst all the challenges that they face.

The investment model is based on interdependence theory, which suggests that to understand why individuals remain in an interdependent relationship, one needs to be able to identify the distinction between satisfaction and commitment (Thibaut & Kelly, 1959 cited in Rusbult, 1995, p. 559). The investment model therefore asserts that the decisions to remain in or end a relationship are mostly directly mediated by feelings of commitment, and commitment ought to be affected by three variables, namely, satisfaction level, quality of alternative, and size of investment (Rusbult & Martz, 1995). The Satisfaction Level refers to the degree to which the individual favorably evaluates a relationship, whereas the commitment level refers to the degree to which the individual intends to maintain a relationship, feel psychologically attached to it, and sustain a long-term orientation toward it. Commitment level is key to understanding decisions to remain in a relationship (Rusbult & Martz, 1995). It goes on to state that alternative quality and investment also determine a person's commitment to a relationship.

Alternative quality refers to the attractiveness and availability of the alternatives. This means that the rate of commitment will be higher if there is no better alternative, the victim anticipates a change in behavior of the abusive partner to be better in the future, or the victim has no one to depend on financially when they divorce, which forces them to stay instead of taking the risk to opt-out. Conversely, the commitment level will be low if the alternatives available are more promising and reliable than the current partners (Rusbult & Martz, 1995). Investment size also refers to the number and magnitude of resources tied to a relationship. Some of these investments are put directly into a relationship, such as emotion, time, and self-disclosure, while others are indirect and serve as proceeds from the relationships, such as children, mutual friends, and shared material possessions. This model is important for my thesis because it

focuses on the structural features of relationships rather than relying on the unique history of abused individuals. Thus, it focuses on social factors that prevent or constrain women from leaving rather than on the causes, type, or severity of the abuse that they are experiencing in their relationship (Bograd, 1988, p. 2, cited in Rusbult & Martz, 1995). Additionally, the model works on the assertion that individuals sometimes feel strongly committed to a completely unsatisfying relationship, which they refer to as no voluntary dependence. This type of dependency refers to a situation in which a person is forced to stay, even though he would prefer not to.

Methodology and methods

1.16 Introduction

This chapter discusses the study area, research design, sample, and sampling process. It also provides a thorough explanation of the research methodology, tools, and ethical considerations in the study, as well as a discussion of the challenges encountered in conducting the study. The discussion of the methodology and procedures has a set structure, first, a description is provided, then it is examined for its application and significance to this study, and finally, a discussion of its use in the context of this study is provided.

1.17 Study area

This study was conducted in the Zongo communities of Kumasi, the second capital city of Ghana. Zongo is the name for a type of settlement in the inner cities of Ghana that is populated mostly by people who came from different parts of West Africa (Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, etc.), who are identified as Muslims, and who speak Hausa as a common language. Zongos are densely populated, multicultural, and ethnically heterogeneous neighborhoods, and an appreciable percentage of residents trace their roots to the northern part of Ghana (Cassiman, 2019). Within the Ashanti region, the majority of the Zongo communities are located in the Asokore Mampong Municipal Assembly. The Zongo area includes *Aboabo* (1 and 2), *Sabon Zongo*, *Asawase*, *Nima*, and *Sawaba*. There are other Zongo communities in different districts and municipalities within the region, but I have focused on those located in the Asokore Mampong Municipality. According to the 2010 census in Ghana, the Muslim population within the municipality is about 168,786 people, representing 54.7% of the total population of people within the municipality (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). Additionally, the majority of

Muslims live in one of the Zongo communities listed above, with only a few living in non-Zongo neighborhoods. This makes the study area ideal for my research.

1.18 Research design

This study requires a qualitative research approach. This approach incorporates methods that would help unravel the answers that the research questions seek to find. According to Bryman (2016), qualitative research encompasses diverse research methods that are different from each other but work coherently in arriving at research findings. In addition, a qualitative research design deepens the understanding of a phenomenon in a particular context rather than presenting generalized findings. Additionally, adopting a qualitative approach enabled me to employ qualitative interviews while relying on a language-based approach for data collection through discourse or conversation analysis (Bryman, 2016).

The sensitive nature of my research topic required me to apply due diligence during my interactions with my targeted respondents as well as during the data analysis to present the real nature and causes of abuse within the Zongo areas. Significantly, a researcher employing a qualitative method is required to express a commitment to viewing events and the social world through the eyes of the people that they study (Bryman, 2016). This important consideration can be achieved through face-to-face interaction, interviews, and observation (Lofland and Lofland 1995, cited in Bryman 2016, p. 393). However, as a result of the challenges pertaining to COVID-19, I used an online interview approach relying on a semi-structured interview guide for the respondents' views.

This study also employed an exploratory case-study design. A case study design is relevant as it enables detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. It also allows for an inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within

its real-life context (Yin 1984). This was my intention in this study. The case study design helped to understand the causes of spousal abuse in Zongo. Zongo communities in Ghana have several features that distinguish them from other communities. The community is largely dominated by Muslims, with Hausa being a commonly spoken language. However, it is also multiethnic and multicultural, with most of the tribes coming from other West African countries, such as Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mali, while some significant numbers come from the northern part of Ghana. Other features worth noting are that the community is deprived and violence prone.

There are also appreciable rate

of crime, illiteracy, unemployment, poverty, and substance abuse, among others.

1.19 Sample and sampling procedure

The sample in a research study is a subset of the population (Bhattacharjee, 2012). Creswell (2009) also defines it as a section (quota) selected from an entire targeted population to represent the entire population. Boateng (2014) defined sampling as the process of selecting from a group or population to become the foundation for studying in order to obtain data to address a research problem. Zikmund (2003) states that purposive sampling has to do with the appropriate characteristics of the individual.

This study utilized a purposive sampling procedure and a snowball sampling technique. Welman and Kruger (1999) observed that purposive sampling is a non-probability type of sampling that is useful for identifying primary participants. This is because the nature of a study determines both the research methods and the types of participants to be used (Hycner, 1999). Again, purposive sampling is utilized where detailed and in-depth analysis is considered more

significant and there is less concern about statistical accuracies, such as in research that adopts an interpretive and constructionist paradigm (Durrheim, Painter, & Blanche, 2006). Additionally, I used snowball sampling, which entailed asking participants to recommend other participants relevant to the study (Babbie, 1995; Crabtree & Miller, 1992).

The sample size for this study comprised (15) participants, ((10) females, and five (5) males) aged between 30 and 60 years. The participants were subjectively chosen through personal verbal invitations delivered via telephone calls using four key criteria. The four (4) key selection criteria were: 1) willingness, 2) availability, 3) time, and 4) readiness to share their experiences and knowledge of IPV in the Zongos. The inclusion criteria were also based on self-election and the mental capacity of the respondents to provide informed consent. All consenting participants were invited to avail themselves of the telephone interview at their scheduled convenience. The participants who were excluded from the study were unwilling or unable to provide informed consent. Therefore, they were excluded from the study but referred to others by the researcher. Some of the participants used for this study aside from victims of IPV, including Islamic clerics (Imams), to obtain their perspectives on Islam and IPV, some cultural leaders (the Sarkin Zongo/Chief of Zongo), and other opinion leaders. Others were the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service and some NGOs within the communities, whose purpose was aligned with the focus of this study.

Table 1: Respondents/participants of the study

Participants	No. of Respondents
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Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU)	1
Islamic Clerics (Imams)	2 (one female, one male)
Cultural leaders (A spokesman to the Paramount Chief of Kumasi Zongo and chief from one of the ethnic groups in Kumasi)	2
NGOs within the communities whose purpose is in line with my research area	1
Opinion Leaders	2
Female victims of IPV	6

1.20 Reflexivity: Insider Reflection

I was born in Kumasi, and I lived most of my life in two of the Zongo communities, *Aboabo* and *Sabon Zongo*, until 2013, when I decided to stay in Accra after completing my bachelor's degree. Therefore, I am familiar with the cultural norms and ways of life of the Zongos. My familiarity with the context makes me an insider, which poses a challenge regarding how to

distance myself from the research and analyze the research findings without my value judgments.

In addition, my gender as a male makes me an outsider to the experiences of women and also a person of privilege as per the social patriarchal norms in the Zongos. I understood how my unequal power relations with the female respondents may have influenced the nature of their responses as well as their ability to express their views freely. This is in light of what Hsiung (2020) said in relation to the multidimensional power relationship between insider researchers and their participants, particularly those who wield power, which tends to influence or change the focus of research (Hsiung, 2020). Acknowledging these issues, I took steps to minimize the influence of my background on how I interpreted and analyzed the issues presented by male and female research participants. Some of the steps I have taken to minimize such influences include the research instruments I adopted for this study.

1.21 Ethical considerations

Ethics is defined as a set of moral principles that aims to prevent researchers from harming their research (Liamputtong, 2011). Researchers researching sensitive topics need to be aware of their ethical responsibilities (Dickson-Swift, 2005, cited in Liamputtong, 2011). In conducting research on vulnerable people, we need to be more ethically responsible for their lives and well-being and see that we do not make them more vulnerable. Sensitive researchers must be more cautious about the confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity of their participants (Liamputtong 2011).

In light of this, the safety and security of my respondents were considered during the data-gathering process, which will guide the data presentation and analysis part of this thesis. I ensured that the information they provided me, which they deemed personal, remained

confidential and anonymous. I assured them that all information would be used for the purpose of the study only and would not be accessed by a third-party organization other than my faculty or institution. Therefore, before arranging an interview, I present them with a consent form, which provides information about the purpose of the research, its procedures, potential risks, and their rights to withdraw consent at any point in the research process. Although the consent form was written in English, I read it in the local Hausa language to those who could not read or understand English. This was necessary to ensure that the research participants were adequately informed about the issues under study and willing to consent to the interviews and recording.

Therefore, embarking on a sensitive research topic such as this requires the researcher to observe certain codes of ethics that would build trust and ensure the respondents' anonymity, confidentiality, and security. Some of the ethical issues that must be addressed by researchers involved in sensitive research include informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, and safety issues (risk and harm). Informed consent has been defined as 'the provision of information to participants about the purpose of the research, its procedures, potential risks, benefits, and alternatives so that the individual understands this information and can make a voluntary decision whether to enroll and continue to participate (Emanuel et al., 2000:2703) (Liamputtong, 2011). Before embarking on any interview, I shall first seek the consent of my respondent by explaining to him/her what the research was about and how the information gathered would be used while ensuring their safety and security. Virginia Dickson-Swift contends that "researchers seeking to gain informed consent from participants need to ensure that the participants fully understand what it means for them to participate in the study and that they have really consented to do so" (Virginia Dickson-Swift, 2005:23).

Confidentiality and privacy reflect various strategies that a sensitive researcher applies to conceal the true identity of their participants. Through this ethic, the researcher is bound to protect the identity of his respondents even when he gathers information that is crime-related or violates laws or social norms. Based on this ethic, I gathered information from my respondents without any demand for their official or common names, but pseudonyms. Even when they provided their names, I replaced them with pseudonyms in accordance with the ethics of confidentiality. Finally, a sensitive researcher is required by its code of ethics to ensure that his research data collection does not pose any harm to his or her respondents physically, emotionally, or socially. According to Melrose (2002), researchers have a duty to ensure that no harm comes to their subjects, regardless of their age, as a result of their agreement to participate in research. If we cannot guarantee that such participation may improve their lives, we must at least ensure that their scrutiny does not leave them worse off (Melrose, 2002, p.343, Liamputtong, 2011). With my research focused on spousal abuse, there was a need to devise a way to collect data from victims of domestic abuse without putting them in any sort of danger or letting their abusive partners be aware of it. Therefore, I made my interview schedules very flexible to carry out the interviews with my respondents at their preferred and appropriate times. I also encouraged my respondents to not keep the consent letters they signed in places where their partners would have seen them.

1.22 Methods/Research Instruments

1.22.1 Interviews

This study used an in-depth interview technique to collect primary data and emphasize interviewees' perspectives. The semi-structured interview format was also used because it allows for an open discussion facilitated by the use of open-ended questions that allow

respondents to provide answers in their own words. This approach also enabled me to ask follow-up questions or request further explanation of some of their statements. The interview questions were categorized according to the research questions to ensure that each participant responded to questions related to their personal experiences and thus felt comfortable answering. Finally, this method is flexible and responds to the direction in which the interviewees take the interview while adjusting the emphases in the research as a result of significant issues emerging in the course of interviews (Bryman, 2016). In order to ensure a comprehensive representation of information, a combination of interview data and data obtained from other respondents (non-victims) and other information sources within the Zongo communities were utilized. This was done to enhance the understanding derived only from the interviews. These sources encompassed Islamic clerics or Imams, who provided their opinions on the subject matter based on Islamic teachings. Moreover, viewpoints were sought from cultural leaders, such as the paramount Chief of Zongo and other ethnic chiefs, as well as opinion leaders. Moreover, information were sought from the office of the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service, as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) operating within the communities were.

1.22.2 Online data collection method

This study adopted an online or telephone interview because of the travel restrictions in and out of Norway due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic compelled researchers to explore other methods, such as online data-gathering methods. This data collection method was later proven to be more convenient, safer, and ensured confidentiality. Additionally, phone interviews are the most reliable and advantageous because they are cost-effective compared to face-to-face or participant observation (Bryman, 2016).

Initially, I wanted to use audio-visual online communication platforms such as Zoom, Skype, or WhatsApp video calls. However, further ethical and moral considerations of research involving vulnerable respondents revealed that such video interviews tend to put my targeted respondents in an uncomfortable and compromising position, thereby increasing their vulnerability (Liamputtong, 2011). In interviewing women who have been victims of domestic abuse, Langford (2000) points out the need for telephone interviews for women who are interested in participating but afraid of leaving their homes to attend an interview (Langford 2000; cited in Liamputtong, 2011). Phone interviews ensure safety because they can be conducted in the comfort of the respondents' homes without compromising their security and comfort. Furthermore, phone calls do not rely on the Internet, making them a preferred option. Poor Internet connectivity in most parts of Ghana may pose a great challenge to me if I intend to rely solely on online communication platforms (WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype, etc.).

Finally, access to smartphones is a luxury for most people in Zongo communities because of their poor economic status. A significant number of my targeted respondents fell within the 35–50 age bracket. Women within this age bracket in Zongo are mostly informally educated, unemployed, and thus unable to afford smartphones. However, they also had access to cheaper phones for normal phone calls. This made it easier for me to overcome Internet connectivity challenges when conducting phone interviews. Nonetheless, I left the option of having an online interview session available when the respondent preferred it to a phone interview. Phone conversations were recorded with the respondents' consent and permission. They were assured that the audio files would be used for research purposes only and that their names, contacts, and residential addresses would not be featured in the final report or write-up.

Audio data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Other literature and research materials related to the topic were also analyzed to complement the audio data. However, I faced

challenges with the participation of respondents. Some respondents were reluctant to participate because they felt uncomfortable to discuss their personal matters over the phone. Some also raised the concern that they needed to see me in person so as to know and familiarize themselves with me (the researcher) in case of ‘anything.’ I innovated with a new strategy that included expanding and extending my research setting to other Zongo communities in the Ashanti Region (Kumasi is the capital city of the Ashanti Region) to maximize the validity of this study.

1.22.3 Archival research

This instrument was used to conduct a thorough review of documents relevant to the focus of this study. Archival research entails a variety of tasks requiring the examination and evaluation of texts or documents relating to a phenomenon and may include digital or electronic documents and databases (Mohr and Ventresca, 2002). Initially, archival research was used to analyze historical records or texts; however, it is now an instrument of qualitative research techniques. The primary motivation for adopting this instrument was to perform triangulation using data from archival documents to support or confirm information from the interviews.

1.23 Data storage and security

The following steps were taken to ensure the data collected for the study was properly stored and protected to ensure credibility.

- i) Since all respondents were uncomfortable with video recordings of interviews or discussions, the audio recordings were stored on an external hard drive that was both secured and encrypted. Also, I anonymized personal data through the use of codes.
- ii) The informed consent forms were also locked in a cabinet.

- iii) Planning to destroy immediately after the research study is submitted and approved.
- iv) Finally, the university's *Nettskjema* platform was also at my disposal for storing data collected from written interviews.

1.24 Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic, which restricted travel in and out of Norway, posed a great challenge to this study. The pandemic compelled researchers to explore other methods, such as online data-gathering methods. This data collection method was later proven to be more convenient, safer, and more effective in ensuring confidentiality. Initially, I wanted to use audio-visual online communication platforms such as Zoom, Skype, or WhatsApp video calls. However, further ethical and moral considerations of research involving vulnerable respondents revealed that such video interviews tend to put my targeted respondents in an uncomfortable and compromising position, thereby increasing their vulnerability. In addition, poor Internet connectivity in most parts of Ghana may pose a great challenge to me if I rely solely on online communication platforms (WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype, etc.).

In interviewing women who have been victims of domestic abuse, there was a need to use a medium they were comfortable with to obtain data. In addition, telephone interviews are recommended for women who are interested in participating but afraid of leaving their homes to attend an interview. Therefore, I opted to conduct phone interviews. Phone interviews ensure safety because they can be conducted in the comfort of respondents' homes without compromising their security or comfort. Furthermore, phone calls do not rely on the Internet, making them a preferred option. Additionally, phone interviews were the most reliable and advantageous because they were more cost-effective than face-to-face or participant observation. Access to smartphones is a luxury for most people in Zongo communities because

of their poor economic situation. A significant number of my targeted respondents fall within the 35–50 age bracket. Women within this age bracket in Zongo are mostly informally educated, unemployed, and thus unable to afford smartphones. However, they also had access to cheaper phones for normal phone calls. This made it easier for me to overcome the Internet connectivity challenge when conducting phone interviews. Nonetheless, I left the option of having an online interview session available when a respondent preferred it to a phone interview. Phone conversations were recorded with the respondents' consent and permission. They were assured that the audio files would be used for research purposes only and that their names, contacts, and residential addresses would not be featured in the final report or the write-up.

Furthermore, I faced challenges regarding respondents' participation. Some respondents were reluctant to participate because they claimed they did not want to discuss personal matters on the phone. Some also raised concerns about anonymity, saying that they needed to see me in person so as to know and familiarize themselves with me (the researcher) in case of "anything." I had to innovate with a new strategy that included expanding/extending my research setting to other Zongo communities within the Ashanti Region (Kumasi is the capital city of the Ashanti Region) in order to maximize the validity of this study. Again, another challenge I faced was my familiarity with the context of the study, which made me an insider and thus posed a challenge regarding how to distance myself from the research and analyze the research findings without my value judgments.

Additionally, my gender as a male makes me an outsider to the experiences of women and also a person of privilege as per the social patriarchal norms in the Zongos. I did not want my unequal power relations with the female respondents to have any influence on the nature of their responses as well as their ability to express their views freely. This is because the

multidimensional power relationship between insider researchers and their participants, particularly those who wield power, tends to influence or change the focus of a study. Acknowledging these challenges, I took steps to minimize the influence of my background on how I interpreted and analyzed the issues presented by the male and female research participants. Thus, I was conscious of that while preparing for my semi-structured interview and I also asked questions relevant to my study, followed up, or demanded clarification from respondents on issues in order to capture the information from the viewpoints.

Data analysis – Results, findings, and discussions

1.25 Introduction

This section presents the results, findings, and discussion of the data collected. The analysis is thematic and mostly focuses on several established topics. The study questions and objectives served as references when selecting the themes. However, only a few other emergent themes were included in this investigation. This study sampled fifteen (15) females and males aged between 30 and 60 years old. The participants were subjectively chosen through personal verbal invitations delivered via telephone calls using four key criteria. The four (4) key selection criteria were: 1) willingness, 2) availability, 3) time, and 4) readiness to share their experiences and knowledge of IPV in the Zongos. Thus, the inclusion criteria were also based on self-election and the mental capacity of the respondents to provide informed consent. At the

end of this holistic process of analyzing and discussing both primary and secondary data, many patterns emerged and produced the findings presented in the following sections.

1.26 Data analysis procedure

Most of the gathered data were qualitative. After gathering the data, I transcribed every interview and then double-checked the transcripts to ensure that the information was accurate and taken directly from the respondents. This was accomplished by ensuring that the responders had the opportunity to verify the accuracy of the transcription before the analysis process started. To simplify the analysis, the raw data were also methodically arranged. A thematic analysis was employed. Pre-established themes were created based on the research objectives and questions. However, the integration of other themes that emerged during the data-collection process was flexible. Using pre-established codes or themes, the interview transcripts and notes from the archive research were organized into meaningful units, and those with a similar focus were combined to make sense.

1.27 Islam and spousal abuse

“Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance - [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them. But if they obey you [once more], seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand (Qur'an, Surat An-Nisa, 4:34).

This is the verse that some Muslim men misinterpret and use to justify violence against their spouses. Islamic Scholars have written exegeses of this verse with the support of several Hadiths to clarify and debunk the assertions of domestic violence or spousal abuse that some

people perceive in the verse. Scholars, depending on the situation, permit striking one's spouse, but not in a harsh way, and it must neither be on the face nor leave marks on their bodies. A Muslim feminist writer has argued that "Indeed, Muslim scholars and leaders have long been doing what I call 'the 4:34 dance' they reject outright violence against women but accept a level of aggression that fits contemporary definitions of domestic violence" (Nomani, 2006).

On the contrary, the religion of Islam has made its stand on spousal abuse very clear. Islam does not condone any kind of abuse whatsoever even against animals, plants, and nature in general. Regarding spousal relationships, the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) (SAWS) says "the best of you are those who are best to their women"². This hadith teaches Muslims that no man should abuse his wife and vice versa. There is a part of the verse that states "And if you sense ill-conduct from your women, advise them 'first', 'if they persist, ' do not share their beds, but if they persist, ' then discipline them 'gently' But if they change their ways, do not be unjust to them. Surely Allah is Most High, All-Great."³

Similarly, a female Muslim cleric states that this verse does not justify abuse of any kind. Allah showed the various steps that men should employ to tackle the ill conduct of their spouses, and beating is the last option. Our great scholars teach us that when it becomes necessary, beating must be done in such a way that it leaves no permanent marks on her body, must not cause bone breakage or fracture, and must not target the face. In fact, if a man has enough reason to abuse his wife physically, emotionally, and psychologically, then such a reason should be enough for him to divorce her. It is better than having to go through physical and psychological trauma.

² Hadith No: 1162 Sunan Al-Tirmidhi 5/17/2022

³ Quran 4:34 Suratul Nisa

Moreover, on the issue pertaining to physical abuse, our Prophet (SAWS) in a hadith, a man came to Him and asked “O Messenger of Allah, what is the right of the wife of one of us over him? He replied: That you should give her food when you eat and clothe her when you clothe yourself or earn money, do not strike her on the face, does not revile (or call her ugly), and do not forsake expect inside the house”.⁴

This hadith clearly tells us that our wives are not our slaves or servants; rather, they trust that their parents put them in our care. If someone trusts you well enough to put something as valuable as their daughter in your care, the best you can do is treat her with respect, dignity, and protection, just like you would any other valuable item in your care.

1.27.1 Rights of a husband over his wife and the rights of a wife over her husband (*huququl zawj alaa zawja wa huququl zawja alaa zawj*)

According to the Imam of the congregational mosque, both the husband and the wife in Islam have rights known as *huququl zawj alaa zawja wa huququl zawja alaa zawj*.

Husband:

- 1) Right to absolute obedience from his wife.
- 2) Right to inform or seek his permission before undertaking any action or leaving the house, visiting family and friends, attending events, starting a business or traveling, etc.
- 3) Right over her body (for sexual purposes whenever necessary)
- 4) Right over a portion of her property in case she dies.

Wife:

- 1) Right to be taken care of by her husband, this includes providing her basic needs (food, clothing shelter, healthcare, protection, and security).

⁴ Hadith: Reported by Abu Dawood, Ibn Majah and Ahmad

- 2) Right over his body (sexual purposes)
- 3) Right to be treated with respect and dignity.
- 4) Right over a portion of his property after his death.

After all of these above-listed rights, any other thing beyond these is considered peripheral and it remains a decision or an agreement between the couple.

1.28 Causes of IPVs in the Zongos; account from DOVVSU

Several forms of abuse have been periodically reported to the DOVVSU office. Some of these abuses include physical, psychological, economic, and sexual. However, the main causes of spousal abuse in the Zongo can be attributed to several factors, such as the following:

1. ***Drug and alcohol abuse:*** Most often, when men take illicit drugs or alcohol, they misbehave toward their wives. Sometimes, when they take drugs, they become violent and abusive and are easily angered by simple things.
2. ***Family interference or abuse from the man's family members.*** This problem arises when the man in this case, the husband, ceases or reduces the extent to which he takes care of the needs of his extended family members (parents and siblings) after marriage. Therefore, those families develop jealousy and enmity towards the woman (the wife), which often leads to a toxic relationship between the wife and her in-laws.
3. ***Infertility problems on the side of the women.*** This occurs when the wife has not been able to give birth for years after marriage. The wife is always accused of being infertile or barren, while the problem could be with the man, but no one points fingers at him.
4. ***Inability to cook:*** Some men say that their wives are not good cooks, which provokes them into becoming abusive towards them.

5. ***Mental ailments:*** Some people suffer from various kinds of mental ailments unbeknownst to their families and wives.
6. ***Sisters-in-laws' interference:*** Usually, the problem arises from the sisters-in-law do not want their brothers to get married sooner, especially if they have been financially supporting them. For them, their brothers' wives are their rivals, and they do whatever they can to make life in their matrimonial homes unbearable.
7. ***Nagging from both couples often escalates into violence.*** Both men and women nags; therefore, if not checked, it results in serious marital problems.
8. ***Culture and tradition:*** In some of the cases that are reported to us, you can clearly see that the man is at fault and that it would have taken an admission and apology from the man to resolve the matter, but often they show arrogance and a superiority complex because their cultures and traditions see it as a sign of weakness for a man to apologize or bow down to his wife.
9. ***Power and Control:*** The need for either spouse to control the other often results in abuse and violence if the other refuses to submit to such control.
10. ***Early or child marriages among some of the Muslim tribes:*** This also contribute to violence against women. Some of these girls are married to men far older than them or even old enough to be their fathers; therefore, the men treat them with less respect than they should.

1.29 How DOVVSU resolves or treats IPV cases

After investigation, their first line of action is to find ways to resolve problems, often through out-of-court settlements if the criminal offenses are minor. DOVVSU also often gives advice

and counseling and sometimes involves opinion leaders, Muslim clerics, and respectable members of the community to settle cases and make peace between feuding couples. However, in an extreme case, DOVVSU resorts to court for adjudication for the following reasons:

- a) Because domestic violence involves couples and, in some cases, children, we are very careful in approaching these matters. We always want to go for options that save marriages and keep families together rather than those that break them.
- b) Additionally, when cases are reported by one's partner, the other partner is invited to hear from their sides of the story as part of DOVVSU's investigation strategy.
- c) However, in cases involving economic or financial irresponsibility, DOVVSU requires the men to commit some amount of money as a monthly stipend (child support) depending on the man's income level. They also ensure that the amount is enough to cater to the basic needs of women and their children, and this is binding on men. Any forfeiture can lead to legal prosecution.

Finally, DOVVSU believes that Islam and tradition are precursors to the IPVS in Zongos. This is because some men often say that "it's only when we beat our wives that they get back to their senses." However, most men feel disappointed and angered when their wives report to the police. They often prefer to report to Mallams (Imams) than to the police. The DOVVSU officer said that "some of the men often say that it is against Islamic laws for the woman to report violent cases involving her husband to non-Islamic institutions or individuals. DOVVSU officer's response to this is that "in Ghana, the domestic violence law covers everyone, including Muslims".

1.30 Conversation with an IPV victim

According to one of my respondents who was also an IPV victim, marriage is worship, built on trust, care, and mercy for one another, as well as protecting each other's dignity and being responsible for one another. Marriage to her is about having to live together while compromising on some of your values and principles, just to have a peaceful and successful life for your family and be able to raise your children with good morals. All these can only be achieved in an environment devoid of insult, beating, embarrassment, or any other form of abuse in marriage.

When asked what are the rules and responsibilities surrounding marriage, she says ideally, the wife is the caretaker of the home and the husband is a provider: "Our Prophet (Peace be onto Him) encouraged men to marry only when they are capable of taking such responsibilities; therefore, if you see a woman disrespecting or having problems with her husband, then it is mostly because he cannot provide for her or take care of her and the entire household." She says that she believes in the Islamic laws on marriage and thinks they are perfect, but it is Muslims who are not perfect, therefore, "I don't want anything changed about the Islamic laws on marriage and spousal relationship."

What was the cause of your abuse?

The genesis of my marital abuse was that I did not seek my husband's permission before leaving the house.

Women are advised to show obedience and respect for their husbands; they need to seek consent before leaving the home. However, she does so without informing her husband, probably thinking that he will not be offended when he finds out, and when he eventually finds

out, he reacted harshly and violently. However, she added “I believe that if he trusted and respected me as his wife, he would have thought twice before behaving in that way”.

Have you reported your case to anyone?

No, because I do not like to share my personal and family matters with a third party. I thought I could resolve it myself. I made sure I served him, accordingly, thinking that it would mend the wounds, but it did not; it even emboldened him to treat me more badly.

Are there any causes of IPV you are aware of?

Another cause of marital problems is the high expectations. When you marry a man based on high expectations or perceptions and later find out that he is not what you perceive, there is little to no happiness in the marriage. Some of the men also deceive women into marriage by pretending to be rich; when she finds out his true economic status after marriage, then they will start having problems.

In addition, a woman shouldering or trying to take the place of the man by being the provider of the family while that is not her main responsibility. This would lead to her disrespecting her husband and, thus, problems. A family is usually divided when there is a marriage problem. Most often, the husband’s family supports him regardless, and you find that the wife’s family also supports the husband. When this happens, you find yourself fighting a lonely battle. Therefore, most women remain in abusive marriages regardless of the pain and anguish that they experience without informing anyone about it.

My problems with my husband were escalated by his mother. Whenever we had any problems, she supported him, even going so far as to ask me to leave the house if I am not happy with

marriage. She accompanies this with verbal abuse and ethnocentric comments by saying that they are Hausas (one of the most populous ethnic groups in West Africa and a widely spoken language in the Zongo), so her son could insult and abuse me in any way he wanted. This continued until one day. I reacted and retaliated to one of the insults he said to me, so he reported me to his mother, who came and insulted my entire family and forced me out of the house. Finally, some women want freedom and liberty to do whatever they want in their marital homes, even without their husbands' permission. This also sets the stage for violence and abuse.

She then cited the example of a man who married a politician. After marriage, he wanted her to stop politics because he was not comfortable with the way she intermingled with other men, but she refused, and that started a problem which later turned into violent altercations between them.

When asked about the roles of Imams and Chiefs in resolving or advising married couples.

Imams always preach and deliver sermons about the significance of marriage, but you do not hear them preaching about marriage-related abuse or offering advice or guidance toward avoiding it and resolving such matters when they occur. Islam does not encourage abuse of any kind. Islam does not encourage selfish behavior or ethnicity; it is self-invented behavior. Islam states that when someone does anything to you, you must retaliate in exact measures or forgive the person. However, most Muslims do the opposite.

Imams and chiefs need to create awareness and educate us about this important topic. However, because some people do not regard these opinion leaders, they also want to stay away from such issues. They are only regarded during marriages, but after marriage, no one pays heed to

them. Finally, most Muslims do not obey the commands of Allah in the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet (Peace be onto Him), this explains why we struggle in our Zongos.

Her perception of marriage in the Zongo

The attitudes and characteristics of the people in Zongo do not conform to the teachings of Islam. She cites an example where some Zongo youth are contracted by their non-Muslim neighbors to carry out heinous acts (fighting, beating, or causing commotion) on their behalf. The impression that this causes in the minds of non-Muslims is that Islam teaches violence, which is why they could rely on the Zongos for such violent acts. These despicable acts do not reflect Islamic teachings but are motivated by the individual's upbringing and, to some extent, culture.

1.31 Way forward

Married couples should treat each other with respect and dignity. They should try to resolve the matter between themselves, without involving third parties. This is the way to peace and an everlasting marriage.

1.31.1 Role of Imams and Chiefs in preventing and resolving IPV

These are important leaders of our communities, and they should support the police in creating awareness and educating society, especially the youth, on domestic violence laws, advise them on the right way to approach marital issues, and also change the archaic tradition that suppresses women and causes them havoc. Our Islamic leaders should allow Muslim women to compete with men in the areas of education, trade, and professions. This will help empower them and reduce discrimination. Furthermore, chiefs must act hand-in-hand with the imams to educate and enlighten the public about the dangers of domestic violence to the physical and mental health of victims and children. They could also work with experts and NGOs that deal

with such matters to help create awareness and suggest preventable measures for these problems. Moreover, imams should focus on topics related to the challenges faced by IPV victims in our Zongos, including marriage-related problems. Their Friday sermons must be directed at teaching ways to live peacefully and harmoniously with their spouses and neighbors.

Concerning adjudication, chiefs should also apply fairness and justice in resolving these matters. They must ensure that the rights and liberties of women are protected and that their pleas must be adhered to. Chiefs should also involve Muslim clerics during case hearings and resolution, not only on marital issues but also on issues that bother the lives of Muslims and Zongo people. Finally, since unity is an indispensable ingredient in any given community, the respondents appealed for unity among imams by avoiding sectarianism and letting Islam be their unifying factor.

Summary and conclusions

This chapter provides an overview of the study's results as well as reflections on them. It also discusses the gap in the literature noted at the start of the study and the insights from the solutions to the research questions and objectives. The chapter concludes with suggestions for potential areas of further study.

1.32 Summary of the identified gap in the literature

An intensive literature search and inquiry revealed a gap in the literature, both during the planning phase and at the start of this investigation. The literature searches also revealed that there was literature on the presence of structures of domination and subordination in religious narratives on marriage as an institution, such as the link between religious affiliation and variation in intimate partner abuse (Takyi & Lamptey, 2020). However, there is no literature

on socio-religious narratives and words of consolation such as “*Awure Ibaada Ney* (Marriage is an act of worship) and ‘*Awure Ba soyyaya bane hankuri ney*, meaning ‘marriage is not always about love but patience’. This gap served as the impetus for this study, which sought to determine gendered impressions of violence among married Muslim couples in Kumasi-Zongo. Using this study, I conducted a literature review, archival research, and telephone interviews.

The above situation was confirmed by a query from the respondents during a telephone interview and an archival investigation. The information acquired on Islam and IPV may contribute to some explanations for this issue. Zongo respondents attested to this veracity. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by providing information on these normalized features of marital relations in connection with IPV among Ghana's Zongos, which not only confirms the gap's presence but also provides an explanation for why this was the case.

1.33 Summary of the research questions and objectives

This study focused on several questions regarding the normalized characteristics and gendered perceptions of IPV in marital relationships among married Muslim couples in the Zongos, Kumasi. These questions remained pertinent throughout the study. Through these inquiries, it was learned why IPV is common in most Muslim households, particularly in Zongos. The causes and why the victims, who are almost always women, continue to be in such unions, as well as why some justify the domestic violence that has been directed at them.

There was awareness of a potential connection between Islam and IPV throughout the early stages of data gathering. Following the first telephone interviews, this aspect was continued by asking various Muslim clerics and imams follow-up questions to gain their opinions on how Islam contributed to Zongos' adoption of IPV. Through interviews, literature studies, and

archival research, it became clear that there was a glaring misunderstanding of specific Qur'anic verses on the place of men in Muslim marriages. In light of this, the respondents urged chiefs and imams to take the required actions to teach the next generation about marriage before they enter into it. They urged the imams to include marriage and domestic violence in their sermons and teachings rather than devoting most of their time to other topics. They contend that while these other issues are significant, marriage and family ties serve as the cornerstone of society and thus deserve the attention they demand.

1.34 Summary of the verse in surah Nisaa Qur'an 4:34

According to one of the Imams we interviewed, men and women are created differently. Thus, they have natural and biological features that distinguish them. A man is naturally stronger, physically enduring, and aggressive, which is why he is given the responsibility of providing care for and protecting a woman. A woman, however, also has the natural ability to conceive, give birth, breastfeed, and raise children, among other things.

Thus, when the verse says that men are in charge of women, it means that they are responsible for their comfort, well-being, protection, and security. Therefore, to me, men are rather subservient to women, not vice versa. Regarding beating one's wife, which the verse states, it is agreed by all scholars that beating could be done only symbolically, like hitting her with a soft pillow or scarf. This will not even hurt a child, much less an adult. This was done to let a reasonable woman realize that what she did was wrong so that she would change her ways. Beating is the last resort after considering the other two resolution processes: advising them and forsaking them in bed.

1.35 Summary of the Causes of IPV in Zongo

1.35.1 Lack of privacy and family interference

The notion is that a woman is not getting married to her husband alone but to his entire family. Therefore, some family often expects "their wife" to serve and be dutiful to them in addition to her matrimonial duties. This is attributable to most tribes within Zongo. Moreover, when the man is protective of his wife and provides for her needs, the family assumes that she is overpowering or controlling him.

1.35.2 The relationship between the women with their mothers-in-law

This could translate to better treatment or maltreatment depending on how the man (Husband) exhibits/shares his responsibilities with these 2 important women in his life (His mother and his wife).

1.35.3 Feminism

The rise of Western feminist thinking among educated Muslim women and its application in marriage is also a recipe for abuse.

1.35.4 Stepping out without husband's consent

Some women feel that informing their husbands or seeking permission or consent before going anywhere is denigrating.

1.35.5 Women allow people (their family and friends) into their marital home without the consent of the husband.

This includes inviting and entertaining unwelcome people to their homes. This becomes more serious if the invitee is a male and non-blood relative of hers (a non-Mahram). This may become an issue when the husband knows about it, probably through his neighbor. This usually leads to mistrust among couples and marital problems.

1.35.6 Unromantic partners

The inability of some men to be romantic and use certain consoling words for their wives when they cannot meet certain responsibilities causes marital problems, leading to abuse or violence.

1.35.7 Influence of bases in marriage

In the Zongos, most men prefer to sit at “bases” (a sitting spot for young men, particularly bachelors) even after marriage. Usually, some men discuss their marriage problems at these bases and take advice from friends who are either unmarried or divorced. They have negative influences, which aggravate the problems in their marriages.

1.35.8 Poverty

This is the leading cause of spousal abuse and is related to the man’s inability to cater to his family, leading to disrespect and other psychological and emotional problems between both couples.

1.35.9 Communication

This has much to do with the way the couple communicates with each other. On the side of the women, it has to do with the way they make a request or demand, the timing, and how they react when such demands are not met. On the side of the men, it has to do with the way they also behave toward their spouses when such demands are made, especially when they are hard on cash.

1.35.10 Lack of fear of Allah

Lately, marriages are not contracted for the sake of Allah but for riches or worldly gains. That is why the Quran says that “whoever turns away from My reminder will certainly have a miserable life, then We will raise them blind on the Day of Judgment.”⁵ This explains why

⁵ Quran 20:124

marriages have been marred with problems in recent times because the situation is completely different from that in the past when marriages were done for Allah's sake.

1.35.11 Deception prior to marriage and high expectations

Most young men today live fake lives. They portray themselves as someone they are not regarding money. They also tell many lies and make many promises to women to convince them to marry. Thus, many expectations are created for women, and when things appear opposite after marriage, problems are set in. Moreover, there is hypocrisy, imposition, untruthfulness, big promises, high hopes, and false impressions that either of the couples may have created to lure the other into marriage. This is a common practice among most youth in Zongo. Marriage ties will cause serious problems when one partner realizes the reality of the situation and thus feels deceived.

1.35.12 Lineage marriage

This is when a woman is given to a man because of his family lineage without any recourse to his character, piety, employment status, economic viability, or mental or physical maturity to live with or care for a woman.

1.35.13 Old age marriage

This is when a man is given a woman to marry by virtue of the fact that he has been a bachelor for a long time and he is aging. This is also performed without recourse to the factors mentioned above.

1.35.14 Polygamy

This is when some men go into polygamy without having the means to even cater to one woman and his children yet decide to add another wife. One of the respondents, the chief, shared a

scenario in which a woman heeded the advice of an imam and decided to give her zakat⁶ to her poor husband so as to use it to support his trade or business, but the man chose to use the zakat funds to marry a new wife. “With this example, would there ever be peace in his home?” he asked rhetorically.

1.35.15 Peers or friends influence the side of women.

This is when a woman is influenced by her friends, especially those married to rich men, and thus tries to pressure their husbands to treat them in the same way as the rich men treat their wives. This sets the stage for marital problems.

1.35.16 Forced marriages.

This is usually done against women. This is when parents force their daughters to marry a man they do not love while rejecting the one they love. The anger with which she enters marriage translates into the way she treats her husband. These treatments could vary from disobedience, disrespect, insults, denying sex, etc., all of which accumulate into violence in the long run.

Some parents see their daughters as an investment and therefore seek to reap its benefits through marriage. They often prefer rich suitors for their daughters. This greed on the part of some parents often lands their daughters in abusive marriages, because some of these rich men often feel that the women were sold to them and thus treats them without care knowing that their parents could not do anything about it. The Prophet Mohammed (SAWS) says that “If someone whose religion and morals are pleasing to you comes to you, then marry him or marry him to your daughters. If you do not do so, there will be strife/trials on earth and great

⁶ Zakat is one of the pillars of Islam which requires a Muslim to donate 2.5% of his/her wealth to the poor annually after meeting a certain financial threshold.

corruption.”⁷ Moreover, in the same vein, The Prophet (SAW) said “whoever marries his daughter off to an immoral man or a habitual sinner, it is as if he has severed his kinship ties.”⁸

In conclusion, marriages contracted for reasons other than Allah's sake are bound to fail or face many problems. This is what most marriages in Zongos suffer from. Marriage has become a form of competition in the community. It is now about who organized the best, biggest, or most flamboyant marriage ceremony. This forces the youth to spend their entire savings; some even take out loans to organize a marriage ceremony that only lasts for a day or two. After these marriages, problems will start building up because the young couple will be cash-strapped, indebted, and frustrated. This escalates into a toxic relationship that can turn out to be violent for the couple.

1.36 Summary of the types or forms of abuse.

It has already been established that there are four prevalent forms of abuse: physical, psychological, economic, and sexual. Some of these other abuses do not allow women to work and earn a living, even after attaining academic and professional qualifications. In some instances, the men are not even financially viable to provide for all the needs of their wives. However, they use misunderstood Islamic doctrines that state that women should not compete with men or engage in any economic activities as a basis to prevent women from working to support the family. Furthermore, polygamy also plays a role, especially when the husband sets the stage for the women to compete for love, care, and attention. This happens when he shows more love and spends more time with one of the wives than with the others. These “cause mental and psychological problems among some of the women,” according to one victim. Therefore, most men do not follow the rules of polygamy before engaging in it. Moreover,

⁷ Hadith narrated by narrated by Al-Tirmidhi

⁸ Another version of the Hadith narrated by Al-Tirmidhi.

stinginess on the part of some men in instances when the woman needs financial assistance to pay for medical expenses or to go to the hospital for check-ups is another serious form of abuse. Some men resort to sex-enhancing drugs and aphrodisiacs, and, as such, want to engage in long and consistent sexual intercourse with their spouses. This often results in health problems for women. The reverse is sex denial. All these factors lead to mental health issues. Finally, irresponsibility and threats of divorce also constituted some of the most prevalent forms and types of abuse in the study area.

1.37 Summary of the role of mediators in IPV prevention and resolution

Parents are encouraged to eschew giving their daughter's hand in marriage to men whose family background, character, and Islamic practices (faith/*emaan*) are not known or confirmed to be weak. They should not marry off their daughters because of money, favors, prestige, or privileges. Doing this makes the woman's family powerless and unable to do much in case their daughter is abused by such men after marriage. Parents must ensure that they thoroughly investigate the background of prospective suitors before agreeing to give their daughters away for marriage. This was the norm in times past; however, in current times, investigations are not being done thoroughly, mainly because of the number of unmarried women in our society. Consequently, when young women introduce a man to their family, the family just takes quick steps to marry her off especially if the young man has money or is a *Borga*⁹. Most of these marriages tend to have problems within a very short period after marriage. This is a preventable phenomenon but requires both parties to execute. Thus, parents and families should lower the demand for prospective marriage suitors. Bride prices, dowries, and *leefe*¹⁰ must be reduced significantly to make marriages affordable. This will encourage the youth to marry by "cutting

⁹ *Borga* or *Burger* is a term used to describe a Ghanaian living abroad, this word originated from the word *Hamburger* which was used to refer to Ghanaian residents in Hamburg, Germany in the 1980s and 90s.

¹⁰ *Leefe* is a gift that includes assorted pieces of cloth, dresses, jewelry, and shoes that a Suitor presents to a bride prior to their marriage. This is also known in Islamic terms as *Mahr*.

their coat according to their size” thereby helping curb the problem of abuse, illicit sexual practices, and unwanted pregnancy.

Parents and families must also ensure that they focus on advising their wards before marriage. They must desist from taking sides when problems ensue but rather seek the best amicable solutions. The chiefs must act hand-in-hand with the Imams to educate and enlighten the public about the dangers of domestic violence to the physical and mental health of the victims and children. They could also work with experts and NGOs that deal with such matters to help create awareness and suggest preventable measures for these problems. The chiefs must also be fair and just in their dealings with IPV cases.

1.38 Summary of the challenges to the prevention or resolution of IPV in the Zongos

There is apparent apathy towards responsible leadership in Zongo communities. Some opinion leaders, chiefs, and imams have lost respect because of the bad examples that some of them have set. Moreover, some of them do not approach cases with justice and often rule in favor of those who are more generous to them. This has soiled their reputation and led to people, especially women, losing confidence and discouraging them from reporting abuse cases to such leaders. Again, most often, when they complain, it is usually about secondary matters, while the problems confronting their society, such as IPV, are left unaddressed.

Additionally, the "Zongo lifestyle" phenomenon is generally considered an obstacle to the prevention or resolution of IPV in Zongos. The ‘Zongo lifestyle’ phenomenon is the belief by the people of Zongo that they are either above the law or that the law does not apply to them. Instead of the law, they prefer to work with the customs and traditions of society. An average Zongo person perceives themselves as brave because they believe that they are raised to be brave. Thus, their aggressive or violent nature is a defense mechanism. However, this has

affected some Zongo men, including their spouses, in the way they relate to others. Ideally, a man must show love, care, and protection to his wife, and only show bravery and aggression when the security of his family is threatened.

1.39 Recommendations for further research

In addition to the research goals and objectives, this study sheds light on potential areas for future research. There was some bias in the selection of the respondents because the nature of marital violence examined in this study was primarily related to a religious ideology and mostly associated with Zongo communities, which are predominantly Muslim. Muslim household heads and their opinions on IPV were the main focus. Therefore, research on the involvement of other faiths may yield significant results in future comparative studies.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Interview schedule (victims)

1. What was the cause of your abuse?
2. Have you reported your case to anyone?
3. Are there any causes of IPV you are aware of?
4. What role do Imams and Chiefs play in resolving or advising married couples?
5. What is your perception of marriage in the Zongo?
6. What should be the way forward?

Appendix 2: Interview schedule (mediators)

1. What are the gendered impressions of violence among married Muslim couples in Kumasi-Zongo?
2. How do the gendered impressions of violence reflect Quran-based normative guidance on marital relations?
3. How do socio-cultural avenues modeled along Quran-based normative guidance for addressing IPV mediate issues of IPV in Kumasi-Zongo?
4. What are the consequences for the marital satisfaction of Muslim women in Kumasi-Zongo?

Appendix 3 – Informed Consent Form

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project [Islam and Gender Violence: Exploring Spousal Abuse in Kumasi Zongo] and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in online meeting or interview
- to participate in a written interview – if applicable
- for my personal data to be processed outside the EU – if applicable
- for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I can be recognized –
if applicable
- for my personal data to be stored after the end of the project for follow-up studies –
if applicable

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project,

approx. [insert date]

(Signed by participant, date)



Are you interested in taking part in the research project: Islam and Gender Violence: Exploring Spousal abuse in Kumasi Zongo’?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to *explore the causes and prevalence of spousal abuse and intimate partner violence in marital homes*. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

My research aims to explore spousal abuse among married couples in the Zongo Community. Among other objectives, I aim to discover and understand the roles that families, culture, religion, politics and economic situations of the community plays in fomenting such acts and to propose solutions at the end of the research. I also intend to add to scholarship by filling the research gap specific to my research topic.

The research project is a master’s thesis for my graduate program in Peace and conflict Transformation at the Center for Peace Studies, UiT.

Who is responsible for the research project?

The Arctic University of Norway (UiT) Center for Peace Studies is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

Sample are selected among individuals who fall in any of these the categories

1. Married men and women most especially divorced women and victims of such abuses
2. Islamic Clerics (Imams): to obtain Islam stands on the matter.
3. Cultural leaders (the Sarkin Zongo/Chief of Zongo) and other opinion leaders.
4. The Ghana Police office for Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU).

Therefore, individuals under any of these categories would be selected randomly to participate in the interview.

What does participation involve for you?

The method for collecting data would be online interview shall be organized online through direct phone calls and also, on other communication platforms such as WhatsApp, Zoom and Skype Cal

- *« If you chose to take part in the project, this will involve having a short conversation where you will be answering questions relevant to the research while sharing your personal experience on issues regarding intimate partner violence. The conversation shall be recorded and stored for transcription and analysis.*

- *Islamic clerics and local headsmen would also be asked to share their experience on this issue and how they handle cases of spousal abuse. They will be asked to share religious, historic, social and traditional aspects and causes of such abuses.*
- *The Ghana Police office for Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) would be asked about reported cases of domestic violence within the Zongo communities, the kinds (shapes and forms) of those violence and the prosecutorial/resolutionary measures taken on such cases.*

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw. All information shall be made confidential and will not be shared with any 3rd party and shall be used for the research purpose only.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

We will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. We will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

- *Your data would be transcribed solely by me. However, it shall be assessed and analysed with the assistance of my research supervisor who doubles as a lecturer and the head of academic affairs at the Center for Peace Studies at UiT.*
- *The faculty of Social Science at the university ensures that students have access to a secured and safe data storage and research analysis tools. I shall also ensure that no third party gets access to storing them in my cloud storage account which can neither be accessed nor hacked by a third party.*

Describe whether participants will be recognizable in publications or not, and to what extent. If applicable, indicate what type of personal information will be published (e.g. name, age, occupation etc.).

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end by 15th May, 2022. After the successful end of this project, all data collected (audio/video recording, phone conversation shall be anonymized or completely deleted permanently from the storage device and also from the cloud account.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you
- request that your personal data is deleted
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with [insert name of institution responsible for the project], NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

- *The Center for Peace Studies (CPS), UiT* via:
 - *Supervisor: Dr. Mohammed Salehin* : mohammad.salehin@uit.no or by Telephone : +4777646812
 - *Student Advisor: Anne Marit Bachmann*: anne.m.bachmann@uit.no or by Telephone: +4777644568
- Our Data Protection Officer: Joakim Bakkevold: personvernombud@uit.no or by Telephone : 776 46 322 and 976 915 78
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personvertjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 53 21 15 00.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader
(Mohammed Salehin)

Student (Maruf Mohammed)

I have received and understood information about the project ***Islam and Gender Violence: Exploring Spousal abuse in Kumasi Zongo*** and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

- to participate in an *online interview*
- to participate in a *face-to-face interview or via phone call*
- for my personal data to be processed outside the EU*
- for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I can be recognised (describe in more detail)–*
- for my personal data to be stored after the end of the project for (insert purpose of storage e.g. follow-up studies)*

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. 15th May, 2022

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix 4 – Interview Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESEARCH THESIS ON ISLAM AND GENDER VIOLENCE

Exploring Spousal/Intimate partner violence in Kumasi Zongo.

Primary Respondents

Introduction

We start the interview by introducing the research project to the respondent by giving him/her what the research is about and what the interview intends to uncover i.e. Spousal or intimate partner abuse and how Islam and Zongo culture either encourage or discourage that violence.

IMPORTANT: The primary respondent **MUST** be a victim of such violence not an eye witness.

Also, the person may briefly introduce him/herself and assure the person that his personal details will not be shared to anyone and a pseudonym will be used in place of his/her real name.

Islamic Marriage and roles of Spouses.

- I. What is your opinion or understanding of marriage?
- II. What are your roles as a wife/husband?
- III. Who defined your role as a husband/wife, Islam or Culture (Ethnicity, Society or family)?
- IV. Do you think your role should be redefined? And how would you want it to be (Ideally)?

Narratives of spousal abuse among Muslim couples and Community Norms and Values Underlying spousal rights

- I. What do you understand by domestic or intimate partner violence?
- II. Have you been a victim or a perpetrator such violence, in any form or shape?
- III. How did it occur and in what context did it occur?
- IV. Did you report the incident to anybody: if Yes, who did report it to? If No, why did you choose not to?
- V. How was the incident handled by the person you reported to? VI. Were you satisfied with the way he/she handled the matter?
- VII. How do you think the matter should have been handled?

Causes of spousal abuse/violence and the roles of Islam and Culture.

- I. From your own experience, what do you think are the causes of spousal violence/abuses?
- II. What role does your culture and community play in encouraging such violence?
- III. What are the roles of families/kinsmen in fomenting or restraining such violent acts?
- IV. Do you think Islam has anything to do with it, How?

The roles of community leaders in restraining violence acts

- I. What are roles of community leaders Chiefs and Imams play in restraining or handling such violence?
- II. Have you reported your case to any of these leaders?
- III. How diligent and resolute are those leaders in handling issues of that nature?

Conclusion

- I. What are the best possible ways to combat such violence/abuses within the Zongo community?
- II. What roles should Imams, chiefs and other opinion leaders play in such efforts?
- III. What is your advice to women/men in abusive marriages?
- IV. IV. Any additional comment?

THANK YOU!

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESEARCH THESIS ON ISLAM AND GENDER VIOLENCE

Exploring Spousal/Intimate partner violence in Kumasi Zongo.

Secondary Respondents: NGOs

Introduction

We start the interview by introducing the research project to the respondent by giving him/her what the research is about and what the interview intends to uncover i.e. Spousal or intimate partner abuse and how Islam and Zongo culture either encourage or discourage that violence.

IMPORTANT: The secondary respondent **MUST** have some experience or played a role in handling matters relating to spousal abuse in any form or shape.

Also, the person may briefly introduce him/herself and assure the person that his personal details will not be shared to anyone and a pseudonym will be used in place of his/her real name.

Islamic Marriage in the Zongo.

- I. What are your takes on how Islamic marriages are organized in the Zongo recently?
- II. Does your organization involve in marital related issues?

Causes of spousal abuse/violence and the interventions of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

- I. Based on your experience and knowledge, what are the causes of spousal abuse in the Zongo?
- II. What kinds of abuses are most prevalent and why?
- III. Does the Zongo culture or lifestyle influences such abuses in any way?
- IV. How do you intervene to resolve such cases?
- V. How successful are your interventions, that is, does it lead to lasting peace?
- VI. How do you handle repeated cases of abuses from particular couple?
- VII. Have you recommended divorce in any of such cases?
- VIII. What are some of the challenges you faced?
- IX. What do you think Imams, Chiefs, NGOs and other opinion leaders in the Zongo should do to curb or to reduce the frequency of abuses in marital homes? X.
Any advice or additional comment.

THANK YOU!

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESEARCH THESIS ON ISLAM AND GENDER VIOLENCE

Exploring Spousal/Intimate partner violence in Kumasi Zongo.

Secondary Respondents: Chiefs

Introduction

We start the interview by introducing the research project to the respondent by giving him/her what the research is about and what the interview intends to uncover i.e. Spousal or intimate partner abuse and how Islam and Zongo culture either encourage or discourage that violence.

IMPORTANT: The secondary respondent **MUST** have some experience or played a role in handling matters relating to spousal abuse in any form or shape.

Also, the person may briefly introduce him/herself and assure the person that his personal details will not be shared to anyone and a pseudonym will be used in place of his/her real name.

Islamic Marriage and roles of Zongo culture.

- I. How is marriage contracted in the Zongo?
- II. How does Zongo culture influences individual ethnic cultures on marriage? The Chief can use his ethnicity as an example?
- III. What are the benefits or difficulties of inter-ethnic marriages in the Zongo?

Causes of spousal abuse/violence and the roles of Islam.

- I. What are the causes of spousal abuse within the Zongo community?
- II. How does the Zongo culture or lifestyle influences such violence among married couple?
- III. What other factors would you associate such violence to?

Narratives of spousal abuses and the intervention of chiefs and/or opinion leaders.

- I. How frequent are cases of spousal abuse reported to your palace?
- II. What kinds of abuses are most prevalent and why?
- III. How do you intervene to resolve such cases?
- IV. How successful are your interventions, that is, does it lead to lasting peace? V. How do you handle repeated cases of abuse from particular couple?
- VI. Have you recommended divorce in any of such cases?
- VII. What are some of the challenges you faced?
- VIII. What role do you think Chiefs and other opinion leaders could play in ensuring and restoring peace in marital homes?
- IX. Any advice or additional comment.

THANK YOU!!!

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESEARCH THESIS ON ISLAM AND GENDER VIOLENCE

Exploring Spousal/Intimate partner violence in Kumasi Zongo.

Secondary Respondents: Imams

Introduction

We start the interview by introducing the research project to the respondent by giving him/her what the research is about and what the interview intends to uncover i.e. Spousal or intimate partner abuse and how Islam and Zongo culture either encourage or discourage that violence.

IMPORTANT: The secondary respondent **MUST** have some experience or played a role in handling matters relating to spousal abuse in any form or shape.

Also, the person may briefly introduce him/herself and assure the person that his personal details will not be shared to anyone and a pseudonym will be used in place of his/her real name.

Islamic Marriage and roles of Spouses.

- I. What does Islam say about marriage (general definition)?
- II. What are the individual roles of married couple as far as Islam is concerned? III. How can these roles be applied within the Zongo context?

Causes of spousal abuse/violence and the roles of Islam.

- I. What does Islam say about spousal abuse?
- II. From your own experience and opinion, what do you think are the causes of such abuses within the Zongo?
- III. Why is such violence prevalent in a predominantly Muslim community such as Zongo?
- IV. How do you interpret these Quranic verses, Surat An-Nisa, 4:32 and 34 in connection to spousal abuse?
- V. How do these verses embolden men to be abusive towards their wives? VI. How would you disassociate Islam from these violence?
- VII. What are the Islam and cultural interplay within the Zongo in relation to the topic?

The roles of Imams and Islamic clerics in resolving and restraining spousal abuse.

- I. Have you handled a matters related to spousal before?
- II. Can you share one of the case to us and how you handled it?
- III. How do you handle repeated cases of abuses from particular couple?
- IV. Have you recommended divorce in any of such cases? V. What are some of the challenges you faced?
- VI. What role do you think Imams, Ulamaa and Zongo leaders could play in ensuring and restoring peace in marital homes?
- VII. Any advice or additional comments?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR RESEARCH THESIS ON ISLAM AND GENDER VIOLENCE

Exploring Spousal/Intimate partner violence in Kumasi Zongo.

Secondary Respondents: The Ghana Police Department for Domestic Violence and victim Support Unit (DOVVSU).

Introduction

We start the interview by introducing the research project to the respondent by giving him/her what the research is about and what the interview intends to uncover i.e. Spousal or intimate partner abuse and how Islam and Zongo culture either encourage or discourage that violence.

IMPORTANT: The secondary respondent **MUST** have some experience or played a role in handling matters relating to spousal abuse in any form or shape.

Also, the person may briefly introduce him/herself and assure the person that his personal details will not be shared to anyone and a pseudonym will be used in place of his/her real name.

Cases of Spousal Abuse and Prosecution.

- I. What are the causes of Intimate partner violence (Spousal abuse) in the Zongo?
- II. How frequent are cases of intimate partner violence (spousal abuse) reported to your station?
- III. What kinds of abuses are most frequent and why?
- IV. How do you prosecute such cases?
- V. Which of these factors influence such abuses in the Zongo; Zongo-culture, lifestyle or Islam and why?
- VI. How do you handle repeated cases of abuses from particular couple?
- VII. What measure does the Ghana Police and DOVVSU takes to deter abusive partners from abuse?
- VIII. What are some of the challenges you face?
- IX. What role do you think Imams, Chiefs and other opinion leaders in the Zongo could play in ensuring and restoring peace in marital homes? X. Any advice or additional comment.

THANK YOU!