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MAKING A DIFFERENCE: A STUDY OF THE 'SOCIAL MARKETING' CAMPAIGN IN AWARENESS CREATION OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN GHANA

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I hereby declare that this thesis has not and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

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SUMMARY

Within feminist scholarship advertising – representing women as wives, mothers and sexual objects – has long been regarded as patriarchal, blocking women's liberation (Talbot 2000) and thus an impossible practice for progressive activism. More recently, however, approaches acknowledge advertising as a 'tool' deployed for a range of 'political' ends, encouraging changes in values, understandings and behaviors. Such advertising is often referred to as 'social marketing'. This thesis focuses on one such campaign in Ghana between 2007 and 2009 attempting to raise awareness about gender violence.

This campaign is considered in the context of the position of women in post-colonial Ghana and tracked across the different processes of a 'circuit of culture' (including production, representation, consumption) through which meanings are made (du Gay et al 1997). The thesis explores the campaign's inception, production, mobilization within educational and 'consciousness-raising' endeavors, the form and textual construction of the ads (largely posters), women's (and some men's) understanding of the posters and gender violence. Methodologically, the project involved interviewing twelve individuals in key organizations working with the public, victims, and on the campaign. It also involved collecting a sample of ten ad posters and conducting eight 'focus group' discussions with women and some men.

Findings suggest that the campaign did lead to increased awareness of gender violence across gender, generations and literacy levels. Nevertheless, audiences/consumers interpreted the campaign posters in very distinctive ways, depending on the resonance with their own lives. Further, constraints on reporting abuse still held, not least on account of the embarrassment and shame of admission.

Overall the thesis contributes to scholarship on social marketing but more particularly to debates about improving women's position in Ghana.

Acknowledgements

List of abbreviations

ADF V1 - The Sixth African Development Forum

ADS – Advertising

CHRAJ – Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice

DOVVSU – Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service

FGM – Female Genital Mutilation

FIDA - International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA)

GLC – Ghana Lands Commission

GLSS – Ghana Living Standards Survey

IRIN AFRICA – An independent non-profit media organisation

INTERNATIONAL NEEDS - An autonomous chartered affiliate of a global not-for-profit organization called International Needs Network

MICS – Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

NCWD – National Council on Women and Development

NDVP – National Domestic Violence Policy

NETRIGHT – Network for women's rights in Ghana

NGO – Non Governmental Organisation

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund

UNIFEM – United Nations Development Fund for Women

WAJU – Women and Juvenile Unit (a precursor for DOVVSU)

WILDAF - Women in Law and Development in Africa

WISE - Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment

WHO – World Health Organisation

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Introduction

In this doctoral thesis, I address the issue of gender violence as a subject that has been of concern to me for quite a while. I visited a friend's office in Ghana sometime in 2007, and to my disappointment, the usual warmth with which she always welcomed me was lost. As I drew closer to her desk, the bruises she had on her neck and face were glaring. Quite surprised and not so sure about what the answer could be, I enquired about what had happened to her and listened in awe as she narrated a squabble that ensued between her husband and her the night before. Clearly, what had begun earlier as a minor misunderstanding between them, and which had led to various arbitration efforts by some family members in the past, had taken a turn for the worse and needed immediate attention. For the very first time, the issue of gender violence became a matter of personal concern to me. Why did it happen? What do people do when it happens? How can it be prevented? These and many other questions raced through my mind as I sat in the office. The one thing that we both knew for sure, was the fact that she needed help.

It was in seeking information about how to contact the Women and Juvenile Unit of the Ghana Police Service, in order to help my friend that my attention was drawn to the "anti-violence against women" campaign that was going on in the country. This campaign, which I will refer to as a 'social marketing' campaign (see chapter 1 below), aimed to educate the public, in the aftermath of the murder of dozens of women in Accra in 1998 by their partners, and sometimes by strangers. With advertisements at its core, but also involving public talks, seminars, and training programmes for various community leaders, the campaign aimed at creating awareness about domestic violence and encouraged victims of abuse to report to the police to prevent a worsening situation.

The campaign seemed significant not only because it was the first ever attempt at a public awareness exercise about such a sensitive subject, but also because personally, it provided the way forward to save a close friend from further abuse. Within the year that the campaign had run, the issue of violence (largely but not exclusively exercised by men on women) which had hitherto been regarded as a private matter and a man's right, was brought into public visibility. In this way a widespread social and cultural norm was opened up for public discussion and critical questioning.

Although the campaign which initially 'hit' the public has somewhat dwindled due to less visibility in subsequent years, discussions on the subject still continue in many circles because of the pervasiveness of gender violence in the country.

My next close encounter with the subject was in 2008, when I had the opportunity to discuss it in an academic setting during one of my gender studies classes taken as part of my MA programme at the School of Communication studies at the University of Ghana, Legon. I recall listening with rapt attention as my professor opened up the discussion on patriarchal relations in different societies and the various ways through which women, as a dominated group, were oppressed by men who played different roles in their lives. It was intriguing to know how various institutions, such as the media, played a role in sustaining dominant ideologies of women's subservience, thus igniting my passion to know more. With these additional insights gained from the class, the anti- violence against women campaign took on a further significance for me as I also considered it within the context of earlier and ongoing feminist criticisms of commercial advertising that pertained within scholarly circles.

Notable among these was the focus on advertising as deploying gender stereotypes and often representing life as though there had been no social change in women's and men's experiences. Advertising was also strongly associated with the reproduction of capitalist as well as patriarchal relations, and whatever the subtleties of analysis, it was regarded as an impossible tool for 'progressive' activism. (see Friedan 1963; Goffman, 1979; Ferguson, 1983; Woodruff & Todd, 1992; Nobushima 1998; Lindner 2004; Addy; 2005; Qualter 1991; Talbot, 2000; Addy, 2006; Tsegah, 2009; Odih 2010; Russell 2011). However, more recent feminist accounts have been more sympathetic to some gendered representations and focused on reception, arguing that advertising can be enabling, rather constraining, empowering rather than oppressive, with consumers active rather than passive (Watkins and Emerson, 2000). They see advertising as integral to everyday life so that it becomes a resource for talking and thinking about daily life (I elaborate this discussion in chapter 1).

As a separate development there has been a rise in social marketing which involves the deployment of marketing tools not to promote products for commercial ends but to promote or 'sell' new ideas, attitudes and behaviours, in order to bring about particular

social and cultural changes (Kotler & Zaltman, 1971; Andreasen, 1995; Kotler, Roberto & Lee, 2002; Kotler and Lee, 2007; Glassman et al 2010). Thus it becomes possible to think about advertising offering a means for thinking and talking about problematic aspects of everyday life, including women's lives, and being part of progressive change rather than blocking change.

As far as my friend's situation was concerned, I soon learnt that her case was by no means unusual: 'violence against women knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth. It is perhaps the most shameful human rights' violation and perhaps the most pervasive' (Kofi Annan, 1999). This statement, by the then UN Secretary-General, captures the global nature of gender violence and its implications for victims. The situation in Ghana is no different. In 1999, a national study conducted by the Gender Studies and Human Rights documentation Centre revealed that Ghanaian women across ages and class, experienced violence in a wide range of settings and relationships, from domestic and romantic relationships to schools and workplaces (Appiah & Cusack in Amoakohene 2004 p. 2373).

In light of this background, and amidst the changes that have taken place in some women's position in the country, I turn now to explore how the various ways in which the society is structured (in relation to its cultural, social, educational, religious, and economic structures, political participation and human rights) contribute to the perpetration and normalisation of violence against its women. Focusing on these broad inter-related areas, I highlight the developments that have taken place in women's lives in the country since its colonial era, but raise the issue that these notwithstanding, their risk of being abused is still high.

Ghana, the former colony of the Gold Coast is on the West African Coast. With an area of 238,537 square kilometres or roughly 92,000 square miles, its 2010 population and housing census recorded 24,658,823 people, a 30.4% increase on the number of people recorded in 2000. Women make up 51% of the population and play a central role in production, both in rural areas (peasant/ subsistence farming and small-scale trading and craft production in the informal sector, as well as in jobs such as teachers, civil servants and the health sector), and in the urban areas, occupying a broad range of jobs in the formal sector, as well as a welter of niches in the informal sector.

After serious economic problems during the 1970s and early 80s, Ghana embarked on a series of structural adjustment/ economic reform programmes, and returned to democratic rule in 1992[1]. It has a thriving parliament which runs a pluralistic judicial system based on the British system or Common Law as well as the Ghanaian parliamentary system, and traditional law (Manuh, 2009 p. 39). The country's main natural resources are Gold, Cocoa, Bauxite, and Manganese with agriculture being the main basis of its economy. Ghana is characterised by 'a large number of ethnic groups [the largest being the Akans in the centre and south], giving rise to a mosaic of sub-cultures in the country. Although there are aspects of cultural practices that might be broadly similar (Ardayfio, 2005 p. 2; Gyekye, 1997; Nukunya, 1969), there are differences as well (Archampong, 2010 p.4).

As a result, gender roles are complex, but in most cases involving male domination. Meischer (2007) for example, highlights the multidimensional nature of masculinity among the Akans in Ghana. He observes that:

> In the Akan areas of southern Ghana, there were multiple and at times conflicting notions of masculinity during the colonial era… such as adult masculinity defined by marriage, senior masculinity[2], and "big-man" status – men with disposable wealth who exhibited values such as generosity and commitment to sharing one's riches. Additionally, fatherhood is important in reaching both adult masculinity and senior masculinity[3] (p. 255).

Thus among this ethnic group, wealth, generosity, authority and wisdom are critical in defining masculinity. In Northern Ghana on the other hand, status is usually 'determined by sex and age thereby creating hierarchies headed by senior males' (Awumbilla 1994 p. 61). But as Ampofo & Boateng, 2008 suggest:

> The term masculinity signifies a collective gender identity and not a natural attribute. It is socially constructed, fluid, resulting in diverse forms across different times and contexts, and mediated by socio-economic position, race, ethnicity, religion, age geographic location and other local factors (p. 52).

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[1] See Ninsin, K.A and Drah, F.K (1991); Aryeetey, E., Harrigan, J. & Nissank, M. (2000) for Ghana's political and economic history

[2] Senior masculinity implies less someone's age than the qualities embodied in the social position of an [opanyin] elder.

[3] Generally, the Akans but also other ethnic groups ridicule married men who do not father children for being impotent

Thus it is more appropriate to refer to masculinities[4] rather than a single masculinity since at any given moment masculinity is shaped by different interactions and performances (Connell in Ampofo et al, 2009 p.59). Correspondingly, there are also different femininities. In their discussion, Ampofo & Okyerefo note that in precolonial times, women had available to them diverse gender scripts that were complementary to men's, playing important social roles such as mothers, sisters, wives, queens, chiefs and priestesses[5] (2014 p. 165). There was also a 'marked jural equality, and a lack of basic sex discrimination in the roots of the kinship terminology for example among the Akans. Thus generally, there was a gender balance (if not equality) and both sexes shared social commitments and responsibilities, as women's roles had a broad social value (ibid).

Ampofo & Okyerefo (2014) state that with colonialism (and other factors which I discuss in chapter 1), this gender balance was distorted. Colonial rule removed traditional structures that allowed women some autonomy such as independent access to resources and economic ventures as well as the mutual interdependence of the sexes based on an efficient division of labour. Women's traditional roles lost their social value and new forms of subordination emerged based on differential access to resources in the modern economy (p.165). The role of being providers of the home was given to men (in line with British Christian and capitalist values of the early 20th century) who assumed extensive control over their families particularly because they were "the main controllers of money" (Oppong, 1981, in Ampofo et al 2009 p. 65). Hence, even though Ghana today is characterised by strong, determined and hardworking women, one equally finds that the roles assigned to the majority are no longer complementary to that of men.

Since colonial times therefore, Ghana has remained a "patriarchal" society. Men in the country are socialised to be providers, thereby growing up with a sense of "entitlement to love, service and unrestrained sexual access" in theory, in return for this 'provision' (Cusack, 2009, p.15). 'The father [for example] wields, or is expected to wield, ultimate authority over the household, which includes his wife (or wives), children, and other relations or tenants' (Ampofo et al, 2009 p. 64). The mother (who is usually taught patriarchal values early in life) on the other hand is groomed to be subservient, obedient and accept the male as superior to her (Cusack, 2009 p.16).

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[4] See Ampofo & Prah, forthcoming; Connell, 1998; Morell, 1998a, Ratele, 2002
[5] See also Aidoo, 1985

It is therefore common in Ghana to hear proverbs such as 'if a woman buys a gun, it rests on a man's chest', 'a woman's place is the kitchen' or 'a woman's dignity is her ability to give birth'. As connoted in the last saying, a woman's ultimate prestige in most ethnic groups is generally not tied to her personal achievement but to her ability to procreate. Awumbilla argues that:

> The woman's image and status in the society is viewed within her maternal role. Her prestige, security and harmony of her family relationships are dependent on the number of children she bears and rears (1994 p. 61).

It is thus through the family, as a primary socialising institution, the use of language, customs and mores, that the differentiated roles on gender lines are reinforced (Kambarami, cited in Bashiru, 2012; Ampofo, 2001). Women especially are socialised to acknowledge the superiority of men, no matter how well qualified or competent they are. Because various norms and practices are based on male values and attitudes, women are marked as passive, submissive, and inevitable victims while men are positioned as perpetrators, dominant and in control of women (Schefer et al. 2007 p. 2). Cusack thus notes that these 'understandings of masculinities and femininities act as scripts for violence' (2009:16) since they fortify the inferior status of women and the superiority of men.

Research show that gender violence is common in the country, and the risk to young girls is higher than that to boys. Furthermore, a study of the lived experiences of more than 2,000 women from different regions of Ghana indicated that a third had experienced physical violence and a fifth had been forced to have sex against their will (Appiah and Cusack cited in Amoakohene 2004). Cusack further adds that there have been reports of acid throwing, wives and lovers being burnt, female genital mutilation, early and forced marriages, … and degrading cultural practices. Additionally, as many as 75% of the overall population experienced violence as a child (2009 in Morris 2012 p. 7). Cusack thus concludes, that the physical, emotional and psychological acts of abuse against women in the country is a norm, not caused by 'deviants acting out some pathology' (ibid) but by men who usually have very close relationships with the victims.

The Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service also attests to the pervasiveness of gender violence in Ghana. In 2010, the unit recorded 986

defilement cases, and an increase to 1,176 in 2011 (cited in WILDAF, 2013 retrieved online). In 2012 and 2013, reported cases of defilement rose to 1,114 and 1227 respectively, that of rape were 292 and 315, and total assault cases, 4571 and 4661 (DOVVSU annual reports, 2011, 2012, and 2013). Even though Ghana's child protection law, the Children's Act (1998), prohibits child marriage, data from 2011 shows that 6% of girls nationwide were married before the age of 15. Further, between 2002 and 2012, 7% of adolescent females (aged 15-19) were married (UNICEF, 2013 retrieved online). Whilst it may not always be the case, these younger girls (mostly from Northern Ghana)[6] are more at risk of gender violence since they are unlikely to be able to resist the cultural understandings of femininity as a 'domestic bound destiny' where they are inferior to men (Amu 2005 p.38).

Apart from the cultural understandings of masculinity and femininity which emphasise the subordination of women, sometimes leading to their abuse, they also shape the institution of marriage in traditional Ghana. Considered an important requirement for every woman, traditional marriages in the country are usually performed under customary law and may be monogamous or polygamous (Oduyoye, 2009, p. 146). Generally speaking, women in the coastal areas such as Ga and Fanti, and to a lesser extent Akan women have some degree of independence in marriage, since tradition does not require them to live in the same house with their husbands (Greenstreet, 1972 p. 351). This however varies with other ethnic groups where it is mandatory for husbands and wives to live together. Thus 'the position of women [in marriage] varies from locality to locality, even though by-and-large, the authority of the husband over his wife or wives and children is complete' (ibid).

As discussed above, per the gender roles in Ghana, the ideal roles of a Ghanaian wife among most ethnic groups are those where she is expected to care for the home and children and to attend to the wishes of her husband. Suffice to say it here however, that these roles do not mean that all married Ghanaian women are in a form of 'bondage'. In some cases where women find the need to seek divorce as a result of their husband's unacceptable behaviour for example, they often get the support of family members (men as well as women) whether in the form of accessing help, or even providing temporary

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[6] Inhabitants of Northern Ghana are mostly Muslims thus their practices are mainly Islam based and so does not extend to all parts of the country.

shelter whilst the issue is being resolved. On the other hand, there are others who for various reasons feel they have to conform to the prescribed roles required of them, and so are inclined to maintain their relationships no matter how challenging it is, sometimes, for fear of being considered as 'unusual' and ridiculed by society for their inability to maintain one (Morris 2012 p. 14). This situation, unfortunately leads to some enduring undue marital violence, a subject I turn to in chapter six.

Conversely, husbands within these marriages are seen as providers and caretakers of the women, thereby wielding economic and decision-making power in the household. In his assessment of women especially in the Northern parts of Ghana - where the culture particularly restricts women's active participation in decision making[7], Bashiru notes:

> Men are the custodians of the tradition (and) women have to seek permission to leave the house, and also obtain such permissions to take decisions on [every aspect of their lives] including anything related to their sexuality and marriage (2012, p. 12).

Once the husband pays the bride price in the form of cattle to the parents of his 'wife to be', he expects her upon marriage, to do his bidding: she is wholly subservient to him. This sometimes results in marital rape, unwanted pregnancy and various other harsh treatments of women. Bashiru therefore concludes that in such situations, the rights of women are trampled upon and their agency denied (ibid). Ampofo & Boateng (2007) also argue that this introduced colonial structure, and the Victorian notion that the male was a breadwinner and overall head of household has created a situation where today men feel compelled to 'provide' for their families and experience their masculinity as threatened if they are unable to fulfil this role (p. 59). How men behave in their families is also strongly influenced by expectations about what it means to be a man by fellow men, the community and the society at large. Thus when they fail to conform to the norms or behaviours prescribed for men, they are ridiculed (p.55).

Sometimes, in the event of financial difficulties (or any situation that threatens their power), 'their masculinity is called into question and violence often becomes a way of regaining a sense of control in the household and more so of the reclamation of the man himself' (Morris 2012 p.14). Interestingly, Ampofo and Boateng summarise this situation

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[7] He writes about the Wa Municipality and Wala culture in relation to gender inequality

by stating that 'clearly, although women frequently end up as victims of violence, men are themselves under a great deal of pressure to fit the hegemonic norm of what it means to be a 'man' and frustrations around this are linked to both stress and gender based violence' (2007 p.60). Probably with the hope of addressing this issue, studies from the 1980's[8] have called for the feminisation of family responsibility, considering various instances where women demonstrate a considerable resilience and imagination in their informal employment as a means of coping with poverty (Brydon & Chant p. 1989 178). With reference to Ghanaian women, Fapohunda, 1983; Ware, 1983 in Brydon & Chant note that:

> Women do not expect nor want to be dependent upon men and spend a great deal of time in economic activity (p.178). Women play a far greater role than men in household management, childcare and domestic labour (Afonja1981; Westwood, 1984) and they use their available time and labour to the full to earn what is usually a meagre income, but one which helps to maintain their families or just above subsistence level. (ibid).

Hence if this quality of women would be harnessed, in marriages, rather than focus on men alone as breadwinners, the pressure on the latter would hopefully ease to a large extent and consequently reduce the violence they tend to perpetrate.

In addition to the violence experienced by women in Ghana as a result of changes in gender roles during colonialism, socialisation and the practice of some traditional customs religion also serves as another script for violence. In pre-colonial Ghana, each ethnic group had its own beliefs generally involving the worship of deities associated with origins, the human life cycle, crops and harvests and adversity. Ampofo et al., 2009 note that in Ghanaian traditional religion (still being practiced by among some ethnic groups), 'some women [and men] can be found in the service of the deity …' (p. 60). Clarke (1982) also documents that in the eighth century, the first contact between Islam and West Africa was made (p. 8). Due to the economic approach taken by this religion,

> Indigenous traders became Moslems in order to partake in the moral community of other traders (Cohen 1971 in Esminger, 1997 p. 153)

Hiskett (1984) later added that 'this is not to suggest that such conversions were insincere' (p. 82f)[9]. Islam offered many institutional advantages for trade, and individuals found it

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[8] See Rocksloh-Papendieck, 1988; Chant, 2010; 2011
[9] See also Trimingham, J.S (1962) for a history of Islam in West Africa

in their interest to convert, and particularly in their economic interest to do so (Esminger, 1997 p. 153). It was voluntary at its onset however with the Jihads of the 19th Century and the involvement of more commoners and subsistence commodities, it became consistent with the economic perspective that more large-scale conversions of the populace should take place (ibid). Ghana today records a Muslim population of 18% (GLSS4)[10] with a majority of them living in the North of the country.

Also in the 19th century, European missionaries from a range of denominations introduced Christianity[11], with its own patriarchal values and, less obviously, idealising the European family with its male head and female 'helpmeet'. These values were often discordant with those of their intended flock (Ampofo & Okyerefo, 2014 p. 168). Ideologies of hierarchy, male supremacy, dominance and inequality permeated Christian religious doctrines (Cusack, 2009 p. 22) and women were taught patience, tolerance and forgiveness (ibid) which often ensured their conformity to the roles assigned them.

Since independence, however, a myriad of Independent and Charismatic/Pentecostal churches have emerged incorporating various cultural practices such as clapping, and dancing into it. Thus, the practices of Christianity has been transformed over time, and as Ampofo & Okyerefo note, Christianity could now be read as an African religion, rather than merely a European import (ibid). With 65% of Ghanaians Christians (GLSS4) (Morris, 2012 p. 12), Wilson argues that the church plays a very important role in Ghana generally (2006 p.1). For example, since the structural adjustment years of the 1980's, the Ghanaian state has struggled to meet the needs of its citizens and seems unable to provide a way out of material poverty and social exclusion (Ampofo & Okyerefo 2014 p.164).

Within this context, the churches are potent in the sense that in addition to the evangelisation and proselytization, they also feed the hungry, heal the sick, and provide education, in some cases building universities. Ampofo & Okyerefo (ibid) thus argue that perhaps, the failure of African states to meet the needs of their citizens … have created the space for alternative (popular) discourses to emerge in societies where popular culture is powerful in shaping attitudes and opinions. To this extent, the role of the church is very

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[10] GLSS is a series conducted by the Ghana Statistical Service for the efficient production and management of quality official statistics based on international standards, for evidence-based decision-making, in support of national development

[11] This study focuses more on the Christian religion since a majority of the respondents share this faith.

significant. In spite of the transformation in Christianity in Ghana today, research shows that the notion of male supremacy and female subordination still persists[12]. As Ampofo & Okyerefo (op cit) suggest, when men of God turn to the Bible for inspiration, they may also draw on colonial and precolonial patriarchal legacies to shape their messages and produce ways of seeing the world. They construct men and masculinity as powerful and superior, albeit 'respectful' and 'responsible', with a contradictory positioning of femininity as subordinate, yet also having a degree of agency and choice (p. 176).

Wives are admonished to submit to their husbands, and the latter encouraged to love their wives. This form of gendered knowledge unfortunately thrives among congregations since unlike other forms of popular knowledge, men of God are seldom interrogated by their followers (Ampofo & Okyerefo, 2014 p. 176) Consequently, in cases of violence for example, 'the dominant approach to counselling women is simply to avoid it' (Oduyoye, 2009 p. 150). Oduyoye however adds that much of the basis for certain practices performed in the name of religion is derived from popular beliefs and taboos combined with a literal interpretation of biblical scripture (ibid). Thus even though he attests to religion contributing to the perpetration of violence against women, he signals the possible misuse and misinterpretation of the Bible, Qur'an and Sunna (ibid) by religious leaders as a contributory factor.

In line with his argument, other studies (Ardayfio 2005; Bashiru 2012) have confirmed that some women often fall prey to violence as a result of their belief that the endurance of violence is a fulfilment of their cultural and religious beliefs (I return to this discussion in chapter 3). Such 'misconceptions' have often been linked to the limited literacy of some women which may result in their inability to discern between different forms of information they receive. As argued by the World Health Organisation, lower educational attainment of women increases their acceptance of violence and helps to maintain unequal gender norms (WHO 2010:22). Having explored the history, role of religion and its tendency to perpetrate violence against women, I now turn to further explore the subject of women's education in Ghana and its link to gender violence.

Ghana's Education Act of 1961, introduced into practice free and compulsory primary education announced at Independence in 1957 (GES, 2004). Yet partly as a result of the

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[12] See Cusack 2009 for a comprehensive discussion of religion in Ghana.

persistence of gender roles discussed above, earlier reports on literacy rates in the country hold that girls were given less encouragement to attend school than boys especially among the lower income groups (Greenstreet, 1972 p. 352) resulting in their low level of education at the primary and secondary levels. The figures for university students also showed that the proportion of women (who attended) compared to men was also much lower than it was at the secondary school level… (ibid). Tanye documents the progression of this trend by noting that in 1998, 'male literacy rate in Ghana was 71% while that of females was 46%' (2008 p.167).

Data from the 2000 population census also shows that out of the 45.7% illiterate adult population in Ghana, the level of women is higher than men (54.3% and 37.1% respectively, Amu 2005:18; Prah, 2002). In explaining this low level of female educational attainments, Prah (2002) notes that even now, when some families are faced with economic difficulties, they are more inclined to withdraw girls [from schools] because their domestic and other services are required… and in the face of limited funds, it would be a waste of the family resources to educate the girl (in Ampofo and Boateng, 2007 p. 56). More recently, the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS 2011)[13] report also highlighted the lack of funds as one of the constraints in girls' access to education.

Whatever the factors may be, it is evident that the limited education of women (and its lack in some cases) leads to an increase in the risk of violence they face. Various studies worldwide have found that women who have lower levels of education (primary or none) have a 2-5 fold increased risk of intimate partner violence compared to more highly educated women (Ackerson et al, 2008; Tang & Lai, 2008). It also accounts for women's inability to realize their 'civil, political, economic, social and cultural development' (Tanye, p. 167) and in other cases, lead to the naturalisation of violence by some women. For example, the MICS report revealed that 60 percent of Ghanaian women suffered violence in relationships for particular reasons such as:

> If she goes out without telling him; if she neglects the children; if she argues with him; if she refuses sex with him; if she burns the food; if she insults him; if she refuses to give him food; if she has another partner; if she steals; or if she gossips (2011, no page number).

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[13] MICS conducted under the Demographic and Health Survey program (DHS) which has earned a worldwide reputation for collecting and disseminating accurate, nationally representative data on fertility, family planning, maternal and child health, gender, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and nutrition.

Considering the discussion above, one can understand how the low literacy levels of some women in Ghana affect their personal values, and play a key role in the violence they face. As Jewkes concludes, 'violence against women [and the violation of their rights] will be low, if the woman is educated' (2002 p. 1424). Current studies in Ghana indicate an improvement in the rate of female education as a result of efforts made by governments and various bodies towards equal educational opportunities for boys and girls. As noted by Tsegah, in attesting to the efforts being made to bridge the gap between male and female education:

> The Gender Parity Index (GPI)[14] has increased since 2009/2010 at all levels of basic education and senior high school. Early childhood GPI stands at 0.98, with primary GPI increasing from 0.96 in 2009/2010 to 0.97 in 2010 – 2011. Junior high school stands at 0.93 (2011 p. 28).

UNICEF[15] further confirms the improvement in literacy rates at the higher levels, stating that between 2008 – 2012, 'the national literacy rate for young women aged 15-24 was 83.2%, only slightly lower than that for males of the same age group (88.3%)' (2013 no page number). A report by the U.S State Department also holds that girls who attended primary schools during the 2010/2011 school year constituted 48.6% of all students, and at the Junior High School level, the proportion was 46.5%. These findings thus show that the levels of girls in education have increased in Ghana and hopefully this will translate into helping to lessen of the violence its women face.

On the socio-economic status of women, Ampofo & Boateng (2007) document the financial autonomy and economic might of Ghanaian women[16] in precolonial times. They point to the fact that:

> women were expected to be 'diligent and enterprising thus leading to instances where upon attaining puberty, Asante girls for example were given resources or later cash, to serve as seed capital for their own economic enterprise… (p.59)

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[14] The parity ratios are indices and they compare the situation of boys and girls in ratio forms. The parity is 1 to indicate a balance. Since this is not quite difficult to achieve, the swings in the ratios show the levels of participation among girls. So if the ratio is 0:98 it means that of every 100 boys there are 98 girls which makes it good.

[15] United Nations Children's Fund

[16] See Aidoo, 1985; Clark, 1994; Manuh, 1998; Robertson, 1976 for a discussion of women's autonomy.

Additionally, among the coastal Ga and Fanti traders, women had financial autonomy and clout when it came to household decision making (Hagan, 1983, Robertson, 1986 ibid). With respect to work therefore, they were considered co-labourers and not expected to be economically dependent on men. With colonialism however, men were more frequently allotted tasks that involved leaving home, and the emphasis in their training is on public accomplishments whilst [women's] tasks are home directed (Ampofo and Boateng 2007 p. 56). Consequently, this division of labour also translated into a division of wealth and as Owusu Ansah (1994 no page number) describes,

> Many of the financial benefits that women accrued went into the upkeep of the household, while those of the men were reinvested in an enterprise that was often perceived as belonging to his extended family (no page number).

Generally, men controlled the income, even though in some instances women engaged in considerable work on the farms (ADF VI 2008[17]) and at home. The issue here was that because "work" was usually defined as paid labour done outside the home, the contribution of many women was excluded (Norton in Amu 2005 p. 40). Consequently, the traditional division of labour and wealth, further perpetuated women's subordinate positions to men in the country. As Amu argues:

> These kinds of ideologies about women tended to marginalize them and belittle women's work in the home and outside the home and therefore women's contribution to the economic wellbeing of the home and society (2005, p. 8).

Since independence however, women's occupations in the Ghanaian economy expanded. In 1988, for example, the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) showed that 91% of Ghanaian women were self-employed and were responsible for 85% of the food distribution business in the country. They brought goods from the rural areas to trade in urban markets whilst others specialised in buying agricultural produce at discounted prices from rural farms and sold to retailers in the city (Owusu-Ansah, 1994). Thus it could be argued that some women became more financially independent and autonomous,

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[17] Action on gender equality, women's empowerment and ending violence against women in Africa. A Progress Report on The Sixth African Development Forum (ADF VI) held at the United Nations Conference Centre - Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 19-21 November 2008

as they could now own 'separate purses'[18]. Additionally, others were engaged in secretarial and clerical work, or medical, legal and academic fields relying on family members, nursery schools or untrained nurse-maids to care for their children (Greenstreet, 1972 p. 353). Ama Ata Aidoo in Oppong et al., 1975 thus notes that:

> In the Ghanaian society, women themselves believe that only two types of their species suffer – the sterile - that is those incapable of producing children- and the foolish. And by the foolish they refer to the type of woman who depends solely on her husband for subsistence… (p.71)

Despite this seeming improvement, studies (see GLSS, 1988, Amu 2005) however reveal that although women account for about 50% of the labour force and are found in almost all sectors of the economy, they constitute less than 4% of the professional/technical and administrative staff of the labour force. On the contrary, they predominate in farming and other informal sector activities such as wholesale and retail trade, and Amu (2005) attributes this to their low levels of education and their generally low self-esteem, as a result of the way some are socialized in Ghanaian societies (Archampong 2010 p.5).

Furthermore, Awumbilla et. al. (2004), used data from the Ghana Lands Commission (GLC)[19] on the registration of family and stool lands in some suburbs of the Greater Accra Region to determine land ownership by sex, noting that while demographic factors such as population increases resulted in a reduction in both male and female access to land, women were more adversely affected, as men were given priority in situations where land (as a source of income) was in relatively short supply (in ADFV1 2008 p.15). Duncan further document the discrimination against women in the control and distribution of income and access to other resources of production (2004 p.109). Such findings thus confirm that even though there has been some improvement in the socio-economic status of women in the country, conformity with certain norms and practices in Ghana continue to perpetuate particular masculine [and feminine] tendencies among both sexes (Ampofo& Boateng, 2007 p.56).

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[18] See Okali, C. 2011for discussion on achieving change for women's empowerment.
[19] The Ghana Lands Commission is established by Article 258 of the 1992 Constitution and the Lands Commission Act, 2008 (Act 767) of Ghana as a body corporate with perpetual succession, and a common seal with functions including the management of public lands and any other lands vested in the President by the Constitution or by any other law, and any lands vested in the Commission.

Osei (2012) thus argues that

> Whether Ghanaians, and in particular Ghanaian men, accept it or not, the reality is that women in Ghana represent far less of the formal sector workforce than men. They make up the majority of the poor, the unemployed and the informal sector workforce because they do not always have access to the resources and education that would improve their skills and capabilities (no page number).

This unfortunately leads to their increased levels of poverty, dependence on men, and the high risk of violence they tend to face. In violent situations, women with low economic standing find themselves in the trap of economic dependence on their husbands and feel as though they cannot leave an abusive relationship' (Morris 2012 p. 9). Macmillan and Gartner, also add that such 'lack of resources can lead to stress, frustration and conflict that can degenerate into violence between a husband and wife' (1999 p. 949). Hence they conclude that 'a wealthy woman, or a woman who has a regular paid income is less dependent on her husband and arguably, there will be less likelihood of violence against her (ibid).

The above discussion has explored how the development of Ghana's cultural, social, religious, educational and economic structures from its pre-colonial era have contributed to the violence faced by its women. I next discuss its women in politics particularly highlighting the role of gender activists in the fight for human rights and the need to end violence against women.

Women's participation in the politics of Ghana dates back to its pre-independence era when Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, the leader of the Convention People's Party (CPP) and Ghana's first president, relied heavily on women to mobilise support in the urban and rural areas during the struggle for independence and the establishment of the new state (Azikiwe, 2010). Acknowledging the positive contribution of women to the success of his party, Dr Nkrumah formed a Women's Section of the CPP in 1951, and selected propaganda secretaries among them to travel around the country conducting political education meetings and recruiting people into the party (Azikiwe, 2010). The active participation and outstanding contribution of women at the time, was captured by Arhin (1991) who argued that 'together with workers, young men educated in primary schools and the unemployed, women became some of Nkrumah's ablest, most devoted and most

fearless supporters'. Years later, James (cited in Azikiwe, 2010) added that 'in the struggle for independence, one market woman ... was worth any dozen Achimota [college] graduates ....'. In 1957, Ghana became the first country in Sub-Saharan Africa to be granted political independence and, given women's active participation in the independent struggle, some were given leading roles as organisers, journalists and politicians in the government of the day. In 1960, the various women's organisations in the country were consolidated into the National Council of Ghana Women, bestowed with the task given to it by Dr. Nkrumah, 'to continue the struggle for African emancipation'.

Thus women in colonial times (especially those in the struggle for independence) were entrusted with responsibilities. Additionally, in the Southern parts of Ghana, older women in royal families play an important role in the governance of their communities. In the Akan matrilineal system, some select women, by virtue of their lineage, are placed in leadership positions with the sole aim of assisting the Chiefs to manage the affairs of the towns (Interview with activists, October 2014). It is also interesting to note, that it is the Queen Mother of a village that nominates a chief to rule over any given community and they are therefore considered very powerful in that respect. Thus in another unique situation, some women in Ghana have wielded and continue to wield authority over men.

After the overthrow of Nkrumah in 1966 however, the country's politics were characterised by sharp divisions and instability: there were nine different political regimes, four of them military between 1966 and 1992. This impacted on women's organisations even though others such as the Ghana Assembly of Women (1969), and the National Council on Women and Development (1975) were formed by different governments in power with diverse objectives to suit their various agenda. Compared to the earlier active participation of women in politics, the many changeovers in government resulted in different policies at different times and have contributed to lowering women's participation in National level decision making. Consequently, the few women on boards, in top management positions, supervisory and personnel management have resulted in their reduced ability to make or influence decisions overall (Ardayfio Schandorf, 1990).

Even though part of the requirements of the Beijing Platform for Action and the African Charter on Human and People's rights enjoined African leaders to fully include women in local, national and international decision-making processes, Ghana still lags behind in

demonstrating a commitment to representing women on these platforms. Yobo (2012) states that:

> Affirmative action, in the form of quota systems, is said to have led to an increase in women's participation in politics in many African countries. Rwanda remains in a class of her own with 56.3% of her Members of Parliament being women; South Africa has 44.5%, Mozambique 39.2%; Uganda; 34.9%, Burkina Faso; 15.3% and Niger 13.3%. Sadly, Ghana has only 8.3%... At the local government level in Ghana the figures are no better. The 2010 Local Government elections managed to get only 10% of women either as elected or appointed Assembly Persons (no page number).

Recent data (2008) gathered by the Division for the Advancement of Women in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) provides a summary of the overall presence of African women at the highest levels of national politics. These include: 1 head of State and 5 Presiding officers in national assemblies and senate (Gambia, Lesotho, South Africa, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe). In Ghana, recent successes in women's political participation have included the appointment of Justice Georgina Wood as Chief Justice, Nana Konadu Agyeman Rawlings as the first elected Vice Chairperson of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and Samia Nkrumah's victory as leader of the Convention People's Party (CPP). For the first time, women have held positions of Speaker of Parliament, Inspector General of Police and Attorney General.

In light of the above discussion, the question that has often been asked with reference to the limited participation of women in authority in Ghana, is whether it can translate into benefits in the lives of everyday women. Angela Dwamena Aboagye, a gender activist responds to this question by stating that:

> It is important to view [these] as a step in the journey of a thousand miles. Political appointments alone will not end the challenges facing Ghanaian women. We thought the establishment of the [Women and Children's Affairs] ministry in 2001 was a victory but as it turned out the marginalization [of women] remained entrenched. While gender parity is better in Ghana than in much of sub-Saharan Africa, women still lag behind (IRIN Africa[20] , no page number).

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[20] In an interview on women and power in Ghana by IRIN Africa, an independent non-profit media organisation aimed at highlighting neglected crises and analysing humanitarian action

Considering the various challenges women face as highlighted above, it is worth noting the efforts made by various governments and gender activists in terms of legislation to ensure greater opportunities and equality for women. In 1975, the government of Ghana set up the National Council on Women and Development (NCWD) to advise it on all issues affecting women. Since its establishment, the council has assisted many women's groups mostly in collaboration with governmental, non-governmental and international agencies to help raise the status of women in the country. In 1982, the 31st December Women's Movement was formed by the government in power, with the objective of fighting the cause of women and liberating them from poverty, ignorance and social inertia by engaging them in productive ventures.

This organisation was led by the then first lady, who with the support of the government, embarked on various development projects for women and also actively promoted and assisted women's groups at the grass roots level, built Day Care Centers to ease the burden of women and also catered for the needs of children. It also engaged in raising women's political awareness and sensitised them about their status and place in society (UNICEF, 1990). Even though the 31st December Women's Movement succeeded in ensuring the passing of legislation to correct various injustices suffered by women in the country, its operations were criticised by many[21].

Ghana's return to democratic rule in 1992, also marked a unique turn towards advancing the cause of its women. The 1992 Constitution lists provisions of law that ensure the protection of the human rights of its citizens, with some highlighting important issues in relation to women's human rights and the need to protect individuals from unlawful conduct based on gender (Musinguzi, 2011 p.17). As Musinguzi cites:

> Article 12(1) (2), persons naturalized under Ghanaian law as proscribed by the Executive, Legislature Judiciary and all other organs of government and agencies, "whatever [his/her] race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, religion, creed or gender shall be entitled to fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual contained in this Chapter but subject to respect for the rights and freedoms of others and for the public interest." Article 15(1) (2) detail that the dignity of all Ghanaians are to be "inviolable," as well as ensure that no person is "arrested,

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[21] See Tsikata's discussion of the 31st December Women's movement in Feminist Africa 4 (2005) for its role in women's development

> restricted or detained, be subjected to – (a) torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of punishment; (b) any other condition that detracts or is likely to detract from [his/her] dignity and worth as a human being." Article 17(1) further emphasises this by stating that "[a]ll persons shall be equal before the law."

First, the various constitutional provisions highlighted above, show that all Ghanaian citizens are assured maximum protection of their human rights under the law, foregrounding the equality of men and women alike before the law. These sections are particularly relevant to the issue of gender violence since various studies attribute its cause to the unequal positions of men and women in the country. Furthermore, the 1992 constitution categorically prohibits negative cultural practices highlighting both the physical and mental effects they have on their victims:

> Additionally, The Cultural Rights and Practices, section - Article 26(2) ensures that "[a]ll customary practices, which dehumanize or are injurious to the physical and mental well-being of a person, are prohibited" (ibid).

Whilst other sections such as Article 16(1)(2) guarantees protection from any form of slavery and "forced labour.", article 22(1) guarantees the property rights of spouses, and 29 ensures the protection of women's human rights, guaranteeing victims of sexual violence access to adequate and affordable mental health care (Musinguzi 2011 p.18). Thus on the whole, even though Ghana's parliament has been flagged for not enacting any real law that will enforce the principles enshrined in the constitution, its provisions adequately spells out the unacceptability of any form of violence against its citizens, notably, its women.

More recently, the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, and the Women and Juvenile Units of the Ghana police service have been established to champion the peculiar needs of women and children in the country (Ofori, 1993). This has also been a part of the various governments' strategy to raise the profile of women in the economy and all aspects of their national lives. Successive governments under the 4th Republic also amended various aspects of the 1992 constitution to repeal all laws which interfered with the attainment of full and equitable treatment of women. During this era, a Women's Development Fund was instituted to offer microcredit facilities to women to help them

engage in productive ventures. Above all, Parliament passed legislation that amended the 1960 criminal code to provide protection for women and children.

Other International agencies like World Vision International also actively promoted development projects such as providing safe drinking water for women especially in the rural areas, where they often walked for several miles to fetch water for their households. Women's World Banking, Citi Savings and Loans, and the Rural Finance Scheme among others were established to facilitate easy access for women to gain credit or financial resources to enable them to establish various income generating activities, provide equipment and establish revolving funds among other things. According to the African Development Forum report, unfortunately, some of these agencies were not effective in executing their responsibilities because they lacked a specific plan of action, technical staff and the necessary infrastructure to develop small scale industries (ADF VI, 2008).

A lot more progress has also been made in advancing women's equality rights generally in Ghana through the activities mostly, of women rights organisations. These have subsequently led to the passing of additional laws and policies aimed at promoting women's rights (Archampong 2010 p 4).

Notably, the 1990's marked a new era of democratisation which enabled gender activists in Ghana to assert their autonomy from the state and donor agencies and focus mainly on social and political transformation to ensure gender equality, especially in relation to women in the country (Opoku Mensah, 2001). Following the landmark study by Appiah and Cusack (1999), gender violence was established as new category in need of intervention (Hodzic, 2009 p. 336), prompting gender equality activists and women's groups to come together and mount pressure on government to institute legislation against gender-based violence such as murder, rape, wife battering, and sexual harassment (Coker-Appiah and Cusack 1999 cited in Amoakohene 2004). Among the activists at this time were NETRIGHT[22], ABANTU for Development[23], The Ark Foundation[24] and other

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[22] Acronym for the Network for women's rights in Ghana. This network of civil society organisations and individuals have a clear interest in working together to bring a gender perspective into national processes and advocate for policy change to strengthen women's human rights.
[23] ABANTU is an NGO in Ghana, aimed at helping to increase women's participation in decision-making and influence on policy, especially related to climate change, women's influence and peace building. It linked research and activism by initiating the formation of the Coalition on the Women's Manifesto.
[24] See chapter 3 for nature and activities of The Ark Foundation.

women's groups including professional, religious, workplace ladies clubs, voluntary and non-governmental organisations. Together, they provided mutual support, a common voice, a focal point and organised 'a massive manifestation by marching to the Castle (the seat of government) to lodge their complaints and demand justice' (Tsikata in Mama, 2005 p.2). These demonstrations and stakeholder discussions held on the subject, led to the drafting and launch of the Women's Manifesto in September 2004[25], which set out critical issues of concern to women in Ghana and [made] demands for addressing them of government and other political parties (Ampofo et al. 2008 p.7).

The agitations of these civil society organisations also resulted in the draft of the Domestic Violence bill (DV Bill) which sought to criminalize violent acts and punish offenders. This draft was presented to the public and 'galvanized activists, academics and civil society at large to unite around the issue and form political solidarity' (Hodzic, 2009 p. 333).

Unlike their counterparts in pre-colonial days who worked closely with governments in power to maintain their positions, this group of activists set out to 'battle' against the government to demand the protection of women's rights. The stage was therefore set for heightened activist advocacy for the passage of the bill, and in the election year of 2004, the Domestic Violence Bill was the most controversial topic of public debate in Ghana and a site of intense campaigns and struggles between the government and NGO's (Hodzic, 2009 p. 332). As Tsikata described:

> This influenced the new government to show sensitivity to women's issues. The new President talked about women in his inaugural speech. This was new – before then, politicians were silent on gender issues, and now there was talk about empowering women, and which strategies to pursue. The President also announced the formation of a Ministry for Women. That was a mixed blessing to us (2005 p.3).

Amina Mama, an international gender activist, reiterates this new level of confidence and achievement by the movement, stating, 'we knew we could never go back to the old days. By this time, we were out of the bottle already' (2005, p.3). With the assurance given by

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[25] See Mama, A (2005) Feminist Africa 4 for a discussion of the Ghanaian Women's Manifesto Movement.

government to make gender issues a priority, gender activists in Ghana were poised to achieve their objectives. In 2005, the new government in power began redeeming its promise by expanding the scope of the Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU) within the Ghana Police Commission. Renaming it the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU), its mandate was broadened to include the handling of all domestic violence issues against women and children. With 40 branches spread around the country and trained staff to handle such cases confidentially, DOVVSU was set to deal with the protection, investigation and provision of counselling services for victims.

In order to show their commitment to the advancement of this cause, some gender activists, non-governmental organisations and professional bodies, such as the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), WILDAF[26], the Ark Foundation and the Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment (WISE) set up to provide the necessary advocacy, gender sensitisation of police and other officials, counselling of victims, and training of judges, and paralegals needed for the fight against violence.

Similar to many activists who often situate their arguments in appeals to international law, (resulting in what Merry calls the 'localization' of international rights framework cited in Hodzic 2009 p. 335), Ghanaian gender activists re-echoed the tenets highlighted in various international laws and called for adherence to such. They pointed out that since Ghana had signed and ratified UN treaties such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW), and the Beijing Declaration, the country was expected to implement them as a 'fulfilment of her international obligations as a signatory to several international conventions and declarations' (ibid).

After years of petitions, discussions and demonstrations, Ghana's Parliament took legal proceedings to prosecute men who abused women (Hodzic, 2010; Graphic Online 2007) by passing the Domestic Violence bill into law in 2007. This act was hailed as a landmark in the promotion of human rights in Ghana because it aimed at protecting all, especially

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[26] Women in Law and Development in Africa- a multinational African NGO that has been at the forefront of using "women's rights as human rights" to educate women throughout the continent about their legal rights, lobby for national legislative reforms, extend the scope of state accountability, and mobilize international support.

women and children, against domestic violence, punish offenders of such crimes and order them to obey the protection orders granted in favour of the victims (DV ACT, 2010). Additionally, victims were assured of being granted protection orders to shield them from the harmful actions and behaviour of offenders, most of whom were close relations. As described by Stafford,

> The DV bill instituted a set of mechanisms for addressing violence, distinguishing it from the existing blunt, limited instrument of the criminal code. The new legislation introduced a range of dispute resolutions such as mediation, arbitration and counselling and also instituted protection orders (2008 p. 65).

Hodzic (2010) further adds that 'The Domestic Violence bill (as it was commonly known) was an attempt to re-articulate the relationship between the state and the domestic setting since neither of the pre-existing laws nor the ways in which they were enforced protected women from the ubiquitous form of violence – the intimate / private kind'. It defined the domestic relationship broadly, as a family or family-like relationship, or any relationship in a domestic situation that exists or has existed between people. In sum, the law clearly specified a broad range of factors that constituted gender violence, the contexts within which it happened and the sanctions to be meted out to offenders. By the passage of this law, gender activists in Ghana registered a huge success in the history of the country with regards women's rights and confirmed the United Nations assertion that:

> Violence against women was drawn out of the private domain into public attention and the arena of State accountability largely because of the grass-roots work of women's organizations and movements around the world. This work drew attention to the fact that violence against women is not the result of random, individual acts of misconduct, but rather is deeply rooted in structural relationships of inequality between women and men' (2006 no page number).

Asked whether the passage of the bill was sufficient to curb domestic violence, Hajia Mahama (the then Minister of Women and Children's Affairs) replied that,

> There is a lot more to be done after the bill has received Presidential assent ... For victims to take advantage of the Bill, there is the need for sensitisation programmes to be embarked upon so that their rights would not be trampled upon (Adu-Gyamerah, 2007 no page number).

The subsequent roll out of the "anti-violence against women" 'social marketing' campaign was therefore significant in the sense that it formed part of the heightened activists' movement in Ghana towards raising the consciousness of the public with regards to the issue of gender violence, laws passed with respect to it, and ways in which women could stand for their rights (a subject I return to in detail in chapter 3 below).

Following on from the above, this thesis, sets out to explore the contribution of the campaign towards addressing the issue of gender violence in Ghana. Its research questions revolve around why and how this campaign developed, what forms it took and how it was understood by activists themselves and those to whom it was addressed. I aim to explore and highlight the ways in which the campaign may have made a difference to how both women and men thought about, and acted, in relation to gender violence.

Using the Ark foundation (a non-governmental organisation in Ghana) and DOVVSU as focal points, this study looks at the role of non-governmental and other related organisations in gender development and the development of the social marketing campaign more specifically. It considers how these organisations developed this campaign and the poster-ads, in particular. In the light of their understanding of the design and purposes of their campaign, it then examines a sample of the poster-ads in terms of representations of gender and violence before exploring the responses of women and men (across generations and socio-cultural and behavioural positions) to the campaign more widely and, specifically, to the sample ads. Finally the study reflects on the campaign as a whole by engaging with the views and evaluation of it by officials from both organisations, and participants who were also addressed by the campaign.

As will be seen in the literature reviewed, although there has been abundant academic research on gender violence in Ghana since activists brought the issue to the forefront, very little attention has been paid to communication media even though such media, including advertising, may serve as an 'educational' or 'politicising' tool. In particular, there is no study engaging in textual analyses of advertisements mobilised in such campaigns, or of audiences' reception in the Ghanaian (or indeed other) literature on gender violence in Ghana. Thus, the originality of this thesis lies in its multi-dimensional exploration and evaluation of a particular communication strategy adopted by a non-governmental organisation and the police in Ghana, in their fight against gender violence.

The key methods I adopt, in pursuing this project, are interviews, textual analysis and focus group discussions. I also engage in one-to-one interviews with officials from the Ark foundation, and some police form DOVVSU in Accra to obtain information about the gender violence campaign and their work with victims. I also gather a sample of poster-ads, analysing their textual - visual and verbal - forms in relation to gender and violence. Finally, I undertake focus group discussions with a cross section of Ghanaians – men as well as women – to ascertain their views about gender violence and their responses and understanding in relation to the sample ads I show them.

By the end of this study, I hope to better understand and present how the issue of gender violence especially in relation to women and also show that in addition to legislation criminalising gender violence in the country, sensitisation and education on the subject is key; not only in equipping victims and potential victims with the knowledge needed to assert their rights when confronted with abusive situations, but in changing cultural values, understandings and practices more widely. Although the passage of the Domestic Violence Act in Ghana is significant, laws in themselves cannot change culture or social practices, hence the need for education and communication. I hope, too, that the thesis contributes to the legitimacy of advertising and 'social marketing' as a useful 'political' tool in promoting and encouraging cultural and social change.

Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1, situates the study academically and theoretically. It engages with scholarship in relation to gender violence, media, advertising, culture and social change, internationally and within the Ghanaian context. First, it addresses frameworks within which gender violence has been conceptualised, emphasising gaps in research particularly in the context of Ghana. Secondly, I discuss the term 'social marketing' as it is understood internationally, and a more specific literature which explores the role of media and campaigns on gender violence aimed at social change. Useful as this literature is, it also has limitations.

Finally, I take up feminist and cultural studies approaches to researching and theorising media. I then specifically discuss what Paul du Gay and Stuart Hall (1997) refer to and theorise as the 'circuit of culture' (Du Gay et. al., 1997). Their formulation allows for the

distinctiveness of particular 'moments' in the production and consumption of culture, and the possibility of tensions and differences between them. Whilst also drawing on feminist scholarship and understandings of gender, the 'circuit of culture' is the overall model I adopt, engaging with the moments of cultural 'production', 'representation' and 'consumption' in the 'social marketing' campaign. On the whole, this chapter highlights the lapses in available literature on gender violence and media studies, and foregrounds the 'circuit of culture' as a model that allows for a broader exploration of the media.

Chapter 2 discusses and highlights the methodological implications of the feminist cultural studies approach which I adopt and outlines the research design of the thesis. Following the precepts of the 'circuit of culture,' I discuss the decision to engage in primary research on the three 'moments'. But I also situate the study within debates on media/culture and feminist ethnography. The chapter first discusses the choices I made at the planning stage of the study, and my reflection on ethical considerations. The second part explores the activities I engaged in during fieldwork, including collecting media artefacts and other materials, engaging in interviews and focus groups. But here it also opens up the ways that the project was adapted according to circumstances and the challenges and problems faced in doing the research. I then discuss decisions about how to analyse both the sample of advertisements and interviews and focus groups material. The chapter thus shows how triangulation affords researchers the opportunity to balance the lapses in a particular research approach with the benefits of others to arrive at appropriate findings.

Chapter 3 is the first of three chapters based on fieldwork and addresses the first 'moment' in the 'circuit of culture' = the 'cultural production' (Du Gay et al., 1997) of the campaign against gender violence. It provides a background to the campaign, situating it within the longer period of women's changing position and, more specifically, the developments of social marketing and commodity advertising addressed to women in Ghana. But the main part of the chapter particularly draws on my interviews with feminist activists and others working on the campaign (from Ark and the police unit DOVVSU), to explore their views on this campaign, how it was envisaged and the ways it was put into practice and developed over time. In particular it engages with how those producing and working on the campaign saw the ads, how and why they took the form they did, and

how they were used in the field. It also addresses the challenges and difficulties the organisations faced in their work with victims and others.

Chapter 4 introduces the campaign materials before focusing more particularly on the sample of poster advertisements collected, considering their generic form and how they changed over time, as well as their location. Bearing in mind the views of the 'producers' the chapter then engages in textual analysis of the representations, the visual and verbal elements of the posters (the second 'moment' in the 'circuit of culture'). As will be seen, representations are sometimes graphic in their depiction of violence or the anticipation/aftermath of violence. But the posters shift from a 'comic' or 'cartoon style' to one that is photographic. One of the key arguments of this chapter is that although the narratives deployed provide audiences with different ways in which to appreciate the pervasiveness of gender violence, the visuals used predominantly relied on patriarchal divisions which ultimately do not show the changing position of women.

Chapter 5 is one of two chapters drawing on discussions from the focus groups and individual interviews I held with my research participants between October and November 2013. Addressing the third moment of 'consumption' in the circuit, this chapter examines the ways in which participants made sense of the gender violence advertisements, talking about their daily lives and their often gendered responses to the gendered representations. Overall, the discussions revealed the polysemic nature of meanings and confirmed that depending on individual needs, backgrounds and unique contexts on the whole, audiences understood and interpreted advertisements differently.

Finally In chapter 6, I then explore aspects of participants' awareness of the campaign, investigating how it might have alerted them to the potential danger of violence against them, and whether the campaign played a 'consciousness raising' role or 'denaturalised' their views about gender violence. I also assess whether they felt it had led to a wider debate and political or personal actions and cultural change. This chapter also reveals that whilst the campaign seemed to raise women's consciousness and sense of themselves, different people respond differently to the call to report abuse due to peculiar constraints.

In the section that follows, which I name 'Endnote', I discuss the state of gender violence in Ghana, as at 2013, when I finished collecting my data. I also discuss the Ark and

DOVVSU'S reflections on the campaign as a whole, opening up their reflections on the outcomes of the campaign. Finally, I also explore what their outlook on the future is. I then conclude the thesis by discussing the research findings and the approaches I adopted, highlighting the implications of this study for both further research and action on the part of NGOs and the state in relation to gender violence.

Chapter 1

Establishing the field

Introduction

In this chapter, I engage with literature from three different subject areas relevant to this study, developing my approach by working across and synthesising aspects from each of them. This includes, firstly, gender studies scholarship engaging with the issue of gender violence globally but most especially in Africa. I then focus on the specific research conducted in Ghana to reflect on how such studies think about violence. Secondly, I examine the conceptualisation of the term 'social marketing' in the context of the discipline of marketing, together with its rise as 'an innovative and effective consumer-oriented approach to promote behaviour change and improved quality of life for individuals, groups, and society (Kotler & Lee, 2008; Kotler & Zaltman, 1971 in Luca & Suggs, 2010 p. 122). Here I scrutinise selective campaigns from across the world, explicitly labelled 'social marketing' and addressing gender violence.

Thirdly, I address literature from the field of media and cultural studies. This involves engaging with feminist and other scholarship on advertising and representation, and the idea of a 'text'. I also address the issue of the reception of media, its embedded relation to everyday life experiences; and to the idea of 'cultural production'. Whilst acknowledging scholars such as Silverstone 1994, Bird 2003, and Moores 1993, who have written extensively on the 'media and everyday life', I engage with Stuart Hall's conceptualisation of media texts in terms of 'Encoding and decoding' and the later elaboration of this model as the 'circuit of culture' (du Gay and Hall et al 1997). This review allows me to think across the three aspects of study, and on the uneven 'determinations' between them. (As raised in the Introduction, and below in Chapter 3, the 'circuit of culture' also suggests different methodological approaches for each of the three 'moments' I research.

As will be seen from the discussions below, although a vast body of literature exists on gender violence in Ghana, none of them looks at advertisements related to the subject from a feminist perspective.

Defining and understanding gender violence

Various definitions of gender violence have emerged in different regions, and from diverse perspectives and disciplines. However, there is increasing international consensus that the abuse of women and girls, regardless of where it occurs, should be considered as 'gender-based violence' in so far as it largely stems from women's subordinate status. As cited in Fried, the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993, provided a consensus definition of violence against women as:

> Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (2003, p.96).

The Declaration stressed that violence against women stemmed from gender inequality including institutionalised unequal power between women and men and could take a variety of forms – physical, psychological, or economic – thus including acts of violence or the threat of such acts. The Declaration also insisted that its manifestation in both public and private life were public issues requiring government action. Earlier definitions (Ganley, 1981; Sonkin, Martin, & Walker, 1985) elaborated the types of possible violent acts: the use of physical force such as pushing, grabbing, slapping, biting, punching, and assault with a weapon. Sexual abuse was also defined as forcing people, through the use of verbal or physical threats or intimidation, to participate in sexual activities against their will; whilst psychological violence was defined as consisting of verbal and nonverbal behaviours to isolate, humiliate, demean, or control an intimate partner.

The United Nation's definition of violence against women resonated with these early findings, but Carden (1994) identified 'property violence' as the fourth commonly found and describes this type as any act of violence including:

> Breaking some symbolically meaningful or favoured possessions, punching holes in walls, breaking down doors, or throwing things.

For the purposes of this study and chapter, however, I adopt the scope of the United Nations' definition of gender violence and consider the types of violence outlined by Ganley, (1981), Sonkin et al., (1985) and Carden (1994). I will thus focus mainly on violence perpetrated by men against girls and women and particularly on violence within

heterosexual or opposite-sex couples since 'violence between same-sex couples has its own complexities and attributes worthy of further study' (McCue, 2008).

The 1980s models for understanding intimate partner abuse and sexual abuse of girls include the "family violence" framework, which was developed primarily within the fields of sociology and psychology (Denzin, 1984, Strauss et al, 1986). In this conceptualisation, male violence against women was viewed as a natural consequence of biological differences between women and men. "Family violence" therefore referred to all forms of abuse within the family regardless of the age or sex of the victim or the perpetrator. The limitations of this conceptualisation were firstly, that although women were frequently victimised by a spouse, parent, or other family member (Sen, 1998:14), "family violence" did not encompass the many types of violence to which women were exposed outside the home, such as sexual assault and harassment in the workplace.

Secondly, and not surprisingly, feminist researchers also found the term "family violence" problematic because it failed to highlight that violence in the family is mostly perpetrated by men against women and children (Ellsberg et al, 2005). A further framework, developed in the field of sociology, understood domestic violence in terms of social deprivation; it was a 'stress reaction' to problems in families, relationships, or circumstances. Thus poverty, unemployment, isolation, homelessness, loss of (male) social status and the arising tensions were highlighted as causal factors in domestic abuse. Criticism of this theory by feminists argued that it completely failed to explain the gendered realities of domestic violence. According to Teboho Maitse), such an approach:

> Projected blame onto an abstract, albeit genuine, reality, rather than placing responsibility with the perpetrator … Using poverty to explain men's violence towards women risks excusing the violence, and does not force men to take responsibility for their actions (1998, p. 56).

She further adds:

> Women are not exempt from poverty – in fact, they are the poorest of all people in this country [South Africa]; yet they do not rape or commonly commit violent acts against people (ibid).

Sen supported this criticism:

> Women across income categories, in all countries, are subjected to male violence. The dominant risk is not poverty; it is being female (1998, p. 14).

In relation to women in Africa, concerns about gender-based violence arose in the post-colonial environment (Bennet, 2001). Discussion of the issue, following research findings from different countries on the continent, suggested its occurrence was widespread. Feminists, approaching this subject from a human rights perspective, conceptualised it in terms of the historical, social and cultural, political, and economic conditions that fostered it, seemingly giving rise to women not only tolerating it but also empowering men to perpetrate abuses against women (Ibeanu 2001; Mama 1997; Odendaal 1993).

Mama (1997) for example, traced such violence to the continent's long, and ugly history in which the colonisers sexually and physically attacked indigenous women. She asserts that under European colonialism, gender based violence was both overtly and covertly a weapon of settler administration. Or as Scully (1995:336) describes, during the colonial period and throughout the apartheid era in South Africa, '…rape was used as a weapon to ensure control, obedience and interracial conformity'. However, for Mama (1997) (cited in Adomako et al 2004, p. 692) 'colonialism was a violent and gendered process but one that exploited pre-existing social divisions within African culture' (ibid).

Similarly Bennet (2001) suggests that pre-existing social divisions within African society disadvantaged women, and colonialism only exploited that situation further. In her view therefore, violence in Africa is a way of life for many women, irrespective of class and ethnic background and could be attributed to the cultural understandings of men's rights to control women which were developed and strengthened during the colonial period. Such views have led feminist scholars to critique the prevailing institution of marriage and the family system in Africa. According to Radford and Stanko (1996, p.78):

> The family, and the institution of heterosexuality which underpins it, is a central institution in a patriarchal society, one in which the private struggles around patriarchal power relations are enacted, and hence one in which violence frequently features as a form of control of the powerless by the powerful.

A further feature of the marriage and family system in some African regions is the young age of women on marriage and a culture in which men take several wives. UNICEF (2001) highlights the high prevalence of child marriages in Central and West Africa.

According to their report on violence against women, 40% of girls in Central Africa and 49% in West Africa were married when under 19, compared to 27% in East Africa and 20% in North and Southern Africa. It further adds that many of these young brides are second or third wives in polygamous households forced to enter '… marriage or a quasi-married union by the time they reach the age of 18'. Such findings are an issue of concern and critique for feminists. As Thandabantu Nhalpo (1991) cited in Green (1999, p. 21) firmly states, traditional marriages in Africa are,

> An institution that allows men the means by which to achieve the overriding goals of the wider group – control over women's procreative and productive capabilities.

Writing from a human rights perspective, Fried summarises that activists and researchers now agree that gender-based violence stems from an interaction of individual, interpersonal, institutional, and structural factors (Fried, 2003, p. 96).

As indicated in the introduction, a growing body of scholarly research on Ghana has attested to this assertion by documenting and considering the magnitude and patterns of gender-based violence in the country. Such studies either address the incidence of gender violence in the country and the various factors leading to such abuse or highlight the effect of gender violence on victims and the society at large, and look at how regulatory bodies address the issue of gender violence. Ardayfio states that:

> In 1997 violence against women was identified as a priority area for research in Ghana because despite the fact that there had been many anecdotal and somewhat pathetic stories of Ghanaian women being violated in various forms, there was lack of evidence to substantiate these allegations (2005, p. 2) .

Studies conducted in the late 1990s, therefore, largely aimed to provide nationwide empirical data to serve as convincing grounds for policy makers and also to enforce already existing laws aimed at curbing violent acts perpetuated against women. A notable study here is the *Nkyinkyim Project* (1998), a country-wide study which revealed that one in three Ghanaian women had experienced physical violence at the hands of a past or current partner. It further found that three in ten Ghanaian women admitted to having been forced to have sex by their male partners and 27% of Ghanaian women had experienced psychological abuse, including threats, insults, and destruction of property (Cusack, Prah, Appiah, Coker & Gadzekpo 1999).

In a related study by Ardayfio, she indicated that violence is a reality for a substantial number of women and that their perpetrators are mostly their lovers, spouses, family members, and ex-spouses. Her study also showed that generally most women do not report their experiences of violence until the situation becomes critical. Even those who do, are not likely to report to state agencies, but rather turn to families and friends as important means of support (2005 p. 8). Cantalupo et al's (2006) findings from their ethnographic study also vividly confirmed women's suffering from physical violence at their partner's hands. They suggested that domestic violence is a pervasive problem, which the Ghanaian government had only begun to acknowledge and address. These researchers, therefore concluded that in spite of the country's creation of the specialised Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU) within the police force, there was still a long way to go to fully address domestic abuse. The challenges include:

> Deficiencies in the Criminal Code; under or discriminatory enforcement of existing laws; the influence of traditional attitudes about domestic violence on state officials such as police, judges and other government employees; and insufficient resources in the primary agencies charged with responding to domestic violence (1998, p. 536).

In another study by Obeng (2008) also on domestic violence against women and children, findings showed 66.7% of his respondents confirmed that despite the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill, violence was still on the increase. His study showed that on the average, the incidence of domestic violence was at 54.5%. The literature on the incidence of gender violence in Ghana thus establishes that it is prevalent and mostly suffered by women at the hands of men who they know.

In his contribution to wider family violence, Obeng (2008) also added miscommunication between couples, abuse of privileges as a mother, and wife, or father and husband; ignorance of the rights of women and children, and also of laws against gender violence. Additionally poverty, negative cultural practices (FGM & early marriages), illiteracy, and inhumanity (physical abuse, rape, forced prostitution) were some of the factors he identified as accounting for domestic violence in the country.

His findings highlighted the extent to which both individual and structural dynamics were contributing factors.

In a similar vein, Parkes and Heslop (2011), from their research (undertaken as part of the 'Stop Violence against Girls in Schools' project in Ghana, Kenya and Mozambique) highlighted that:

> Many of the challenges that girls faced stemmed from deep-rooted power inequalities at all levels which, by reinforcing patterns of gendered discrimination rendered them vulnerable to various forms of violence and abuse, deny their rights and thus significantly limit their horizons (2011, p. 9).

They went on to argue that:

> Until gender-based violence and discrimination against girls is fully acknowledged and addressed as one of the root causes of the violations of girls' most fundamental rights, not only will it be impossible to reach globally agreed education targets, but it will also remain impossible for girls to develop to their full potential (ibid).

In another study, based on interviews and addressing the challenges undermining domestic violence victims' access to justice in the Mampong municipality of Ghana, Adu Gyamfi (2014) noted revelations of 'infidelity, polygamous relationships, quarrels over maintenance, substance abuse including alcohol and limited economic opportunities as a result of unemployment' (p. 75), as major causes of domestic violence in the area. He further cited his respondents' belief that:

> Domestic violence is a private family issue, which prevented them from reporting their abuses to the justice system. Thus creating huge pressure on victims to settle domestic violence matters privately (ibid).

In effect, such views contribute to the perpetration of violence by preventing public discussion and the possibility of fully addressing the issue. From the studies cited above, which attempt to document and understand the causes of gender violence in Ghana, it is evident that adherence to patriarchal cultural norms are a major cause. On the one hand men continue to engage in diverse practices which maintain their superior and dominant position; on the other hand women tend to accept, or at least not resist these. This dynamic also means that acts of abuse committed in private are not publicly acknowledged, with damaging consequences for women, sometimes even death.

Another body of literature addresses these personal and social consequences. Yorke's 2007 ethnographic study, looking at the psycho-social effects of violence on women,

identifies stress, dissatisfaction, and, trauma, but also notes that violence continues because existing support systems are not known to most victims. Obeng (2008) points to how victims of abuse become timid and insecure, sometimes ending up with broken homes and, if divorce ensues, their children often end up as truants. Additionally, an increase in child abuse and deviant behaviours among children in the community because of lack of parental care in the event of violence resulting in divorce, and the high prevalence of single or unmarried people (frowned upon in the Ghanaian context, see Chapter 1), were cited in the study as types of effects that gender violence could inflict on people.

In another ethnographic study, Essel (2013) notes that victims of abuse often find it difficult to mingle with relatives, friends and the public at large for fear they will learn of their predicament, and this isolation can be devastating, leading to a range of issues, including depression, fear, low self-esteem and other emotional or psychological problems. But more than that, as Essel captures:

> Domestic violence has an impact on women's earnings and their ability to remain in employment. Their contributions towards building the economy of the nation are cut off … whilst … children who witness domestic violence are at increased risk of anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and poor school performance among other problems. School-related violence limits the educational opportunities and achievements of girls … and teenage pregnancy and under-performance at school means reaching 'Education for All'[27] targets will be difficult (no page number).

Moreover such a situation also impacts on the entire country:

> Violence against women and girls adversely affects a country's human, social and economic development. It has enormous direct and indirect costs for survivors, employers and the public sector in terms of health, police, legal and related expenditures as well as lost wages and productivity (ibid).

Ardayfio (2005) highlights a further health and social consequence: the limiting of women's ability to protect themselves from HIV in the event of forced sex or rape, and

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[27] The Education for All (EFA) Dakar Principles (see Tsegah 2011) were instituted in response to internationally agreed development goals on the improvement of basic education. Efforts made to achieve these goals include the provision of infrastructure, promoting gender equity, provision of Capitation Grants for primary schools, provision of free textbooks, provision of free school uniforms for children from poor households, and initiating Best Teacher award schemes for teachers in pre-tertiary institutions.

also the fact that abused women and women living with HIV or AIDS are often stigmatised within their communities. Whilst they become the centre of attention the perpetrators of abuse and those infecting them, are scarcely held responsible.

Even more significant perhaps, Adu Gyamfi reports, in one of the most recent studies, that 'the up to date trends and latest reported cases of death resulting from spousal attacks are alarming, and are of great concern to the International Federation of Women Lawyers (2014 p.76). In this context, other research has also assessed relevant regulations and institutions. Archampong (2010) for example, sought to analyse the current state of Ghana's law on marital rape and its impact on women's equality rights. Her findings revealed that much more needed to be done. She demonstrated that even though marital rape is now legally an offence under Ghanaian law, it was not fully criminalised since the burden rests on the woman. She notes:

> A wife consents to sex in marriage and bears the burden of proving that she has revoked her consent. This makes the issue of consent significant in marital rape cases in Ghana, and for this reason strategies adopted for advancing the law on marital rape must ensure that a wife can refuse sex and have her decision respected (p. 11).

The question her study poses, however, is whether a change in this law will ensure the full realisation of the rights of married women in Ghana. In another study, Morris (2012), examining the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act in Ghana, concluded that 'socio-culturally informed gendered attitudes and norms heavily impact the implementation of and enforcement of legal frameworks within communities' (p. v). Thus, in spite of the successes hoped for with the passage of the Act, such factors hindered the Act's potential to tackle violence.

Beyond the legal issues, Agbitor (2012) examined the practices of the Accra Regional DOVVSU in addressing domestic violence cases and the extent to which the Unit met the needs of its clients (mostly victims of domestic violence). He found that the quality of service delivery of the Unit was deficient. He noted a number of factors:

> The use of untailored procedures in handling reported cases; multiple interviews that add to trauma of clients; breach of confidentiality of clients information; interviewing child victims of violence in the presence of parents; negligible extent of meeting psychosocial needs of victims; poor skills and training

> programmes and problems with funding, logistics/ infrastructure, lack of legislative instrument on the DV Act, unmet needs of clients, cultural and religious beliefs, system delays, limited human resource and ignorance of the domestic violence law (p. xiii).

In acknowledgement of the challenges facing this important institution, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection held a national stakeholders' dialogue in Accra aimed at improving prosecution rates and adjudication of cases related to Sexual And Gender-Based Violence (SGBV); statistics revealed the following:

> Out of about 3,000 cases of gender-based violence (GBV) sent to courts in 2013, only 7.4 per cent of the cases were convicted. According to the Domestic Violence and Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service (GPS), as of December 2013, 66 per cent of the cases were still pending in courts (no page number).

Lastly, Wilson more specifically highlighted the progression of violence through her discussion of the 'cycle of violence' (2006, p. 39). She discusses the tension building phase (where the victim often cannot understand what is wrong in a relationship), the explosion phase (where the violent partner attacks the victim in different ways) and the honeymoon phase (where the abuser attempts to placate the victim by offering gifts and also promising not to repeat the incident). She however notes that the cycle is difficult to break once it begins and notably, as it progresses, the honeymoon phase shortens and the offender shows less remorse. She further adds that not all relationships go through the three stages, since some for example just move from tension to explosion and back. In conclusion, she cautions that in such situations, outside intervention is needed to help address the situation (p. 40).

The literature reviewed above thus shows that even though laws and institutions have been established to curb the occurrence of gender violence, there are serious issues about their effectivity, and violence is still prevalent to a large extent. It is worth noting here, however, that this challenge in Ghana is not markedly different from that pertaining in African countries more widely. In spite of activist efforts, delays in implementing various acts and treaties have checked progress in fostering change on this front across the continent (Usdin et al, 2000). This situation is compounded by delays in the funding necessary to turn policy into action.

In other words, there is a large gap between governments' rhetorical commitment to ending violence against women and their efforts to turn rhetoric into financial and human resources (UNIFEM, 2002)[28].

As women's groups and networks have gained experience, they have observed that even though efforts and proposals to eradicate violence against women are 'well-known, they are still hampered by a lack of political will, as well as by social institutions and attitudes that continue to sustain gender inequality, discrimination, and violence' (Fried, 2003, p. 106). To make further progress, activists have realised that involving 'unconventional' allies, such as men, youths, community and religious leaders, will strengthen their efforts to change the deeply held attitudes that lie at the root of gender-based violence. As Pickup observes:

> If women are to live free from violence, men must change too. Where women continue to be victims of violent conflict due to men's desire to hold onto power in the household, the community, or the State, they cannot be said to be fully 'empowered', regardless of whether they attain any other development goal – for example, financial independence (2001, p. 201).

The media have also been identified by some scholars as a vehicle through which 'common sense' attitudes and beliefs which ignore or condone violence can be challenged. According to Pickup:

> Because mass media communications reach and influence large numbers of people, they also have the potential to play a positive role in the struggle against violence against women. Communications technologies present new opportunities for the exploitation and abuse of women on an international scale, but also present unprecedented opportunities for individuals and organizations to present a different version of gender relations and violence against women (2001, p. 241).

The UNIFEM survey of the state of gender violence in a range of countries also supports this view by proposing that in planning anti-violence initiatives, adequate attention should be paid to fine-tuning efforts to raise awareness and sensitivity to violence against women. It holds that:

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[28] A report by the United Nation's Development Fund For Women.

> Too often, "awareness raising" reaches a general audience, and its message is not adequately focused on particular groups. More sustained and strategic work with mainstream and alternative media can provide a significant boost to these endeavours (2002, p. 107).

Consequently, women's organisations and related institutions globally have begun to use media campaigns as well as media projects to inform women of their rights, in order to challenge cultural assumptions about gender roles, and to educate the general public about the issue of gender-based violence. Bearing in mind this field of study in relation to gender violence, especially as it is perpetrated by men against women, I particularly note that scholars open up the possibility of media as a tool in combating violence (though interestingly the role of media in reproducing patriarchal ideologies that might directly or indirectly contribute to such practices is not raised).

Quite strikingly however, although the literature reviewed in Ghana indicates extensive work done on the incidence, causes, effects and institutions relating to gender violence, no in-depth study has been conducted on advertisements or campaigns related to the subject. At best, when discussing countries that have used advertising campaigns and community projects among others to create awareness on gender violence, some studies (Bott et al., 2005; Parkes & Heslop 2011) have mentioned Ghana as an example. This observation thus highlights the need for such a study to be conducted in the country – one of the things this thesis aims to do. But next I want to take up the issue of media in a slightly different way engaging with the field of what has become known as 'social marketing' but which might also (for example, in the US and UK contexts) be referred to as 'public information'. I will then address the issue of feminist and cultural studies' approaches to media representations in the third section of this chapter.

Social Marketing

Social marketing has been defined as 'the application of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution and evaluation of programmes designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audience in order to improve their personal welfare and that of their society' (Andreasen, 1995, in French, Blair-Stevens, McVey& Merritt, 2010, p. 34). Kotler et al also define it as:

> The use of marketing principles and techniques to influence a
> target audience to voluntarily accept, reject, modify, or abandon
> a behaviour for the benefit of individuals, groups or society as a
> whole (2002, p. 5).

Finally, Kotler and Lee also refer to social marketing as:

> A process that applies marketing principles and techniques to
> create, communicate and deliver value in order to influence target
> audience behaviours that benefit society as well as the target
> audience (2007, in French et al., 2010, p. 34).

Social marketing campaigns are therefore intended to produce benefits for large groups or society as a whole via changing attitudes and behaviour of individuals and or organisations, including governments (Collins, 2011, p. 21). Derived from the field of marketing, this mode of advertising became increasingly common from the 1980s (Collins, 2011 p. 22), with its early focus being on the benefits of medical treatments and public health (ibid).

Subsequently however, scholars (see Andreasen, 1995; Donovan and Hadley 2003; French, Blair-Stevens, McVey, & Merritt, 2010; Hastings, 2007; and Kotler and Lee 2007) developed this field, extending its use to include influencing people to change or improve their behaviour in order to gain better health, prevent injuries, or protect the environment (Kotler & Lee, 2002 cited in Hussain & Mustapha, 2011). Coffman has established how, through the use of advertising among other social marketing tools, campaigns can change individual behaviour and actions, as well as public views for example in relation to drug and alcohol use (2002).

Notably, given the high prevalence of domestic violence, its effects, and the low level of police reporting, efforts have been made globally to increase reporting and help change behaviours by victims (Cismaru and Lavack, 2010 p. 99). Thus, through the use of social marketing components such as mass-media campaigns, educational kits, support groups and helplines, the unacceptability of gender violence has been communicated across countries (ibid). Whilst acknowledging the literature available on social marketing, and their usefulness to this study, they also have their limitations. As will be seen below, most researchers evaluating social marketing campaigns predominantly focus on the outcome of a campaign by the extent to which their target audience respond to the campaign's messages, and further 'present their results in numbers,' Hussain & Ali (2011, no page

number). Using a combination of media theories, Slater (1999) (referring to Agenda Setting - Shaw and McCombs, 1977;   The theory of Reasoned action - Ajzen and Fishbein, 1980, and the Multistep flow process - Tichenor, Donohue and Olien, 1980), presents the 'Stages of change model' as a way to understand the consumer behaviour change process. For him and others, the individual will go through five (5) distinct stages – pre contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance – before the complete adaptation of a behaviour (Hussain & Ali, p. 8). For Slater, therefore, messages in a social marketing campaign should be carefully designed for each to ensure the desired outcome across the stages. Thus, his model shows that:

> Moving from pre contemplation to contemplation goes through a variety of theories: it is about spreading attention, making awareness of the campaign, and creating problem recognition within the audience, where the media sends the message which leads to a result… raise the level of awareness about the possible behaviour change (1999, p. 339).

As he notes, studies indicate that through 'sending the appropriate messages, so the consumer acquires the skill through watching others in person or through mediated channels, result in substantial changes not just in knowledge and attitudes but also in behaviour' (p. 342). Although Slater (1999) suggests the effectiveness of campaigns, he and other scholars on social marketing do not conceptualise and explore media, including ads, as 'a form of representation encoding a particular meaning' (Curtin and Gaither, 2009 p. 100) which its audiences may not always decode in a uniform way, or as expected by producers. Thus, rather than seeing the discursive nature of the media, proponents of social marketing uphold the notion of a clear message and its unidirectional effect in changing people's attitudes. This also imply that the message is the sole determinant of such individual changes.

They tend to ignore the fact that identities are in flux and fragmented, that is, identities comprise a multitude of socially constructed meanings and practices, such as class, ethnicity, nationality, and gender (Curtin & Gaither, 2009 p. 101), and as a result, people do go through the linear behaviour change process as presented. As Woodward (1997b) puts it 'often, identity is most clearly defined by difference, that is by what it is not' (p.2). In relation to these limitations of social marketing, Hussain & Ali, writing from a marketing perspective, conclude that 'this would not give the possibility to present a broad analysis' (2011, no page number) of any campaign.

I turn now to engage with literature on social marketing which, undertaken by independent researchers from the fields of marketing and health in western developed countries (with the exception of one undertaken by UNIFEM and a campaign from South Africa), evaluate campaigns on gender violence.

In a review and analysis of multicomponent social marketing campaigns targeting victims of domestic violence, Cismaru and Lavack, (2010) explored multicomponent and social marketing campaigns targeting victims of domestic violence from five English-speaking countries: the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. Using the Integrated Model for Social Marketers as a guide, the researchers examined the degree to which the campaigns conformed to the model. The Cismaru et al. (2008) IMSM model:

> describes important variables to consider when developing a campaign, including the stage of change, the characteristics of people found in each stage of change, the importance of particular variables within each stage of change, and the expected response to different situations, as well as the social marketing campaign objectives that are appropriate to each particular stage (p. 100).

As noted by the researchers, the campaigns encompassed a wide variety of different elements, most prominently mass persuasion components including print materials such as posters, brochures, handouts, and self-help handbooks; public service announcements for print, radio, and TV; educational films, and websites. Others also incorporated support groups, phone helplines, and give-away or for-sale items such as T-shirts (p. 124). They also note that whilst the aims of some campaigns were to convey the message that domestic violence is socially unacceptable and a crime, other initiatives were much more practical in terms of explaining what individuals can do to stop domestic violence in their families and encourage violence-free relationships (ibid).

The outcomes of the campaigns were analysed according to the various stages of change which their audiences may have gone through (as spelt out by Slater (1999) above) stages. After 'the review of 20 antidomestic violence initiatives originating from both the public and private sector, as well as from activist organizations and community groups' (p.123), the researchers concluded that the social marketing initiatives across the countries varied in the number of stages of change they engaged in – ranging from addressing just one stage of behaviour change to addressing multiple stages. Similarly, whilst some initiatives

focused only on increasing the target population's perception of perceived severity and vulnerability with regard to domestic violence, others addressed all variables that are significant influencers of behaviour change (i.e., severity, vulnerability, response efficacy, self-efficacy, and costs).

Subsequently, they offered social marketers advice on what strategies to adopt at every stage to ensure the effectiveness of the campaign and this included '… providing statistics showing how many people have successfully stopped violence and/or by providing success stories' (p.124). As noted above, whilst approaches such as these may lead to people changing opinions and behaviours, classifying the process of change into stages presupposes a rigid process not allowing for the complexity and differences. Also, their suggestion about the provision of statistics on the number of people who respond to campaigns at each stage would neither explain how people processed the information given them nor provide details about particular constraints to change according to social identity.

Donovan & Vlais (2005), writing from the perspective of public health, describe the 'Australia Says No' social marketing campaign which attempted to address the power imbalance inherent in men's violence against women. The campaign, which ran in Australia between 2004 and 2005, aimed at creating general awareness about violence by encouraging men and women to collectively organise against unjust policies and systems at institutional and societal levels. The campaign highlighted the benefits of victims calling the national helpline or speaking to a friend or the police instead of suffering in silence (www.australiasaysno.gov.au). Social marketing tools used in this campaign included television commercials, booklets, posters, radio, magazine ads and the training of Lifeline telephone counsellors to respond to calls made to the national hotline number. Additionally, a curriculum resource for schools to educate young Australians about healthy relationships and how to avoid abuse was also developed.

Even though this study detailed the ad visuals used in the campaign, Donovan & Vlais (2005) are silent on the production processes involved, and also indicate that there was no information about how victims might have responded to the content of the campaign. In another study by the same researchers on a ten week 'Safe at home' social marketing campaign, efforts put in place by the Tasmanian government in 2004 to increase awareness about a new family violence law were explored.

They noted that the behavioural objective of the campaign was to encourage victims to report incidents of family violence to the police and to seek help both for themselves and their children. To achieve these, paid television, radio and print commercials, in addition to unpaid media advocacy strategies were used to communicate with the target group. Findings from this study indicated that the objectives of the campaign (www.safeathome.tas.gov.au) were achieved. What this therefore implied is that all the campaign's target audiences responded in a similar way, without any differences emerging at all in how different people understood and interpreted the ads, which seems unlikely.

In another comprehensive study, Usdin et al (2000) discuss a case in which the Soul City Institute for Health and Development Communication, in partnership with the National Network on Violence against Women in South Africa combined social marketing tools (media, lobbying, and engaging in social mobilisation, i.e. rallying people around to join in demonstrations, protests etc, to address gender based violence in South Africa. They analysed the communication campaign embarked on by activists in the country with the aim to speed up the implementation of a Domestic Violence Act passed by the South African government in 1998.

The evaluation noted that the gender activists used prime time television and radio dramas featuring domestic violence, posters, and the establishment of a 24-hour toll-free line to provide on-line counselling services and referrals for victims of abuse. They also mobilised interested groups and the people among the general public who were willing to join in and subsequently held campaign launches and marches and meetings with various government officials whilst waiting for the passage of the Act, demanding them to waste no more time. The activists also organised provincial parliamentary hearings for community members to directly question politicians about the plans they had to curb violence, and also gave out resource packs on gender violence to journalists to promote awareness of the details of the Act.

Usdin et al (2000) extol the successful use of these strategies by the activists to raise awareness among the general public, civil society, and relevant stakeholders to collectively organise against violence and help attain social change. The researchers further argue that as an outcome of this campaign, the government was pushed to announce December 15, 1999 as the implementation date for the domestic violence act.

(www.soulcity.org.za /downloads/RHM%20Article.pdf). They conclude that through the use of social marketing strategies, the society was mobilised to support the attempts to minimise gender based violence. However, the article does not address how those who became aware of the campaign, victims and others, understood and responded to the material or the appeal of certain kinds of communication.

Similarly, a UNIFEM (2004) report, discusses the organisation's partnership with Saatchi & Saatchi Australia, in creating a social marketing campaign with its key communication objective to increase awareness of violence against women in the home as a significant problem in the country. The campaign, which began on November 25th, 2004 (White Ribbon Day) offered the statistic '23% of Australian women suffer abuse during a relationship' (no page number) to create awareness among the adult Australian community of how men treated women in the home. A resource kit (downloadable on the White Ribbon Day website) was developed and given out during the campaign, in addition to a 60 second television commercial, print and poster advertisements.

What was perhaps distinctive, however, was the address to men to promote the unacceptability of violence against women. Another notable issue is the fact that this study was evaluated by a producer's perspective or by those with a vested interest in it, thus raising the issue of objectivity. Nevertheless, the study holds that through the use of these materials, together with the active involvement of men, awareness levels on gender violence in Australia were raised. Again, a detailed analysis of the communication materials and how audiences/consumers understood and responded to them is not elaborated.

Overall, the examination of these studies showed that whilst some of them analysed selected campaigns from a producer's perspective and were evaluated statistically, usually on the basis of the number of victims reporting abuse to the police, they predominantly left out how different audiences/consumers understood and responded differently to the issues being raised in the communication materials. Largely, they focused on how well social marketing tools were deployed to get audiences to respond to campaign messages without indicating how the audience's responses might vary according to their economic, social, gender and generational differences. In my study on the anti-gender violence campaign in Ghana, whilst I build on the producer's perspectives offered by these studies, and acknowledge the importance of men's involvement in social

change around abuse, I do also engage in an analysis of the communication materials, in particular, poster advertisements, also investigating how *different* audiences/consumers understand the issues they raise and respond to them.

With this in mind, I move on to discuss how to conceptualise and analyse media – and, in particular, advertising – drawing on feminist cultural studies approaches and outlining the 'circuit of culture' as a productive theoretical frame for my study.

Feminist media and cultural studies approaches and the 'circuit of culture'

1970s feminism perceived media as mechanisms of social control and 'the main instruments in conveying stereotypical, patriarchal and hegemonic values about women and femininity' (Van Zoonen, 1994 p. 41). Media production was therefore conceived by feminists at the time as the creation by a patriarchal society to transmit dominant values, (Tuchman 1978 cited in Van Zoonen 1994) whilst suppressing and distorting women's experiences. These accounts, however, initially adopted a transmission model of communication (sender-message-receiver) as if a message is simple and its 'essence' received. The term 'stereotype' and 'images of women' were common, (suggesting a clear separation between 'reality' and 'media'. In other words, images were 'unreal').

During the same era, feminists broke away from the transmission model (Hall's encoding/decoding model 1970/73 and 1994) and adopted the semiotic and other textual approaches influenced by Roland Barthes with his idea of 'message' being made up of signs i.e. a combination of the signified only communicated through the signifier (see The rhetoric of the image' and his book *Mythologies*, where he conceptualises the 'work of representation' as Hall (1997) later terms it). Still adopted by media scholars today, most feminist studies of media were textual during the 1970s-80s and also adopted the 'linguistic' approach to analysing the media (see Williamson 1978, Macdonald 1995, Winship 1980). Also in this era, such studies were combined with Marxism – the concept of ideology/ dominant ideologies and the commodification of women in representation (especially in ads).

The upshot was that much media, including advertising, was seen as reinforcing women's inequality and more generally, reproducing dominant (patriarchal) ideologies of capitalist society. This made it difficult to see advertising as a tool for progressive change, whether

in relation to women or other social groups and other issues. As Qualter, for example, captured:

> Overall, advertising is a reluctant and largely ineffective initiator of social change beyond the trivia of fashion … it is an overwhelmingly conservative social force, powerful in defining and preserving the status quo (1991 p. 155).

He further lambasts the genre for its 'lack of reflection on the underlying character or motivation of a consumer society, or of social attitudes that sustain it' and finally claims that on the whole, 'almost all the images in advertising contribute to the preservation of the existing order' (ibid). Generally, his critique presented advertising as 'conservative, limited and rarely innovative' (Qualter 1991, p.154). In Ghana it is notably that some studies (see Addy 2006, Tsegah 2009) also attest to the 'unrealistic' images in ads, with findings confirming women's depiction in subordinate roles (for example, housewives, secretaries), whereas men are often portrayed in roles of authority (for example, household breadwinners, professionally employed). Also, narratives about women were found to be set in the domestic sphere, whereas work-place and other public settings are more likely characterised as male spaces.

The findings also demonstrate that advertising on television typically targeted women only in relation to purchasing household products and appliances (such as detergent, refrigerators) that reinforced their homemaker status (Watkins and Emerson 2000, P. 40). Such a conceptualisation of the media and its producers as blocking change, thereby led to feminists calling for the need for more 'realistic' images of women, and also for the media to be 'instrumental in creating feminist utopias' (ibid).

The call for 'realistic' portrayals however proves problematic considering that stereotyped images are rooted to some extent in social relations. Additionally, the determination of whose 'reality' was to be represented, was itself an issue of contestation. As Brunsdon (1988, p.149) argues:

> For feminists to call for more realistic images is to engage in the struggle to define what is meant by "realistic" rather than to offer easily available "alternative" images… Arguing for more realistic images is always an argument for the representation of "your" version of reality.

Furthermore, the critique of textual analysis combined with the concept of 'ideology' was that it implied a 'passive' reader/viewer, 'duped' by ideology and without the ability and choice to interpret media texts. This also led to the notion of feminists as occupying an 'enlightened' position from where they could see through 'and reject the sexist patriarchal, capitalist representation of things' (Van Zoonen, 1994, p. 42) as portrayed in the media. As suggested by Ferguson (1983), it is this privileged all-knowing position of feminists versus their view of audiences as fallen into the media's creation of a 'cult of femininity and heterosexual romance' that set the agenda for the female world, and led to a deep gap between their audiences and them.

Van Zoonen later attested to this, noting that such discrimination was 'at odds with the feminist mission to acknowledge and gain respect for women's experiences and viewpoints' (1994, p. 42) and therefore joined the call for a different approach to address the challenges raised by feminist activists of the 1970s.

This turn around was supported by scholars such as Gledhill (1988), who argued that the 'reality media offer is a product of ongoing negotiations at the level of media institutions, texts and audiences', thus highlighting the importance of abandoning the conceptualisation of media as having a unidirectional effect on its audiences to seeing it as a site of struggle over meanings, as conceptualised by proponents of cultural studies. Building on developments from the Birmingham research centre (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies) school, Lury (1996) for example, also added to this argument by stating that:

> Consumer goods (media inclusive) are therefore (to varying degrees) polysemic - open to multiple readings and meanings. People will use consumer goods in different ways and they will have different meanings for different people (cited in Longhurst et. al, 2008, p. 177).

Similarly, Abercrombie and Longhurst cited in Longhurst et al., (2008 p. 182) added that:

> We live in an increasingly performative society, where individuals will draw on consumer goods and mass media resources (such as television and music) in their social performances and interactions.

These researchers further stated that:

> Consumption therefore needs to be understood not as the end-point of the process of production, but rather as part of an ongoing cycle of processes of production and consumption, as consumer objects live out a life of their own, and are constantly invested with meaning and (re) interpreted by others (2008, p. 197).

'Audience' studies developed in the aftermath of Hall's encoding/decoding (Morley 1980; Radway 1984 *Reading the Romance*, though not about media was also a key influence in focusing on the romance market, the romance texts and the consumers/readers of romance). From the 1980s an understanding of the 'active' audience', able to 'decode' and take up communications in a variety of ways was developed. 'Audience' research studies took up the idea of reader or viewer as active, not a dupe, simply accepting a 'message'.

Watkins and Emerson (2000 p. 156) note that:

> Various researchers have sought to more effectively understand the complex process of media reception, and the notion of the active female receiver of media came into view. Rather than assuming that women internalize images of gender inequality and objectification, this theoretical break compelled media analysts to contemplate the creative ways women engage images of gender subordination.

'Audience' studies and participation in advertisements has also generated some debate, with researchers exploring how active or passive audiences are in the creation or changing of meanings in advertisements (Nightingale and Ross, 2003; Leiss et al., 2005). Researchers such as Danesi have further argued that audiences' acceptance or rejection of advertisements could be linked to representations portrayed in the advertisements. In other words, viewers of an advertisement may or may not decide to go with a proposed behaviour or action depending on how they resonate with particular visual representations (2002, p.198).

Similar studies highlighting perspectives on media reception have also unearthed the ways in which the media is appropriated as a site of meaning construction, actively engaging and, occasionally, contesting images and themes of gender domination (Watkins and Emerson, 2000). From the late 1980s, there was another shift and/or parallel development (James Carey's (1989) *Communication as Culture* book is one significant

publication) from 'audience' to 'culture'. This adopts a more anthropological approach where 'media' is regarded as something that cannot be easily separated from everyday life; it is integral to everyday life, one resource and aspect people draw on and relate to in their daily lives. Put differently, people live in a 'media world'. Methodologically then, rather than focusing on texts which audiences listen to, read, watch etc., researchers influenced by this approach, began to pay more attention to the practices of media consumption - studying people's lives to see what they 'do' with media in everyday life (Radway moves in this direction; see also Moores 1993; Silverstone 1994; Bird 2003).

Their studies therefore countered the voices of expertise as configured through textual analyses with those of audiences and readers themselves (Grimshaw, Hobson & Willis 1980 p.76). This shift into cultural studies therefore offered a space for feminist research focussing on 'the complexities of women's positioning in culture' and focused on 'questions of structure and agency, rather than the power of the text' (Thornham 2000, p. 8). These ideas are further explained by Ramazanoğlu and Holland (2002, pp. 65-66) in their foregrounding of the characteristics of feminist standpoint theory which:

> 1) focuses on '[exploring] relations between knowledge and power'; 2) attempts to make visible the power relations between women by making the researcher visible – '[deconstructing] the 'knowing feminist''; 3) is '[grounded] in women's experience, including emotions and embodiment'; 4) [emphasises] an awareness and wish to take into account the 'diversity in women's experiences and the interconnecting power relations between women'; as well as 5) [recognises] that the knowledge produced is 'always partial'.

As Naples (2003, p.19) notes, researchers (see Nancy Hartstock's (1983) "feminist historical materialist" perspective, Donna Haraway's (1988) analysis of "situated knowledges,") from whose work the feminist standpoint emerged therefore emphasise the value of women's experiences in producing knowledge and point to how, 'as an oppressed class', women have a greater ability to identify their experiences of oppression (Millen 1997) and narrate them better. Campbell and Wasco (2000, p.776) further highlight the significance of women's experiences of everyday life as the subject for research:

> The turn to ethnographic methodologies foreground that feminist cultural studies legitimates women's lived experiences as sources of knowledge. It renders the ordinary and extraordinary events of women's lives worthy of study since they inform our

> understanding of the social world … it is neither based on 'traditional' topics nor the gender of the researcher but on the 'nature of knowledge' (epistemology) and the process by which research is created (methodology).

As discussed by Ollivier and Tremblay (cited in Sirois 2012 p. 51), another epistemology underlying feminist cultural studies, is feminist postmodernism, which propounds the non-existence of a universal and absolute set of criteria that enables one to distinguish truth from false knowledge. For researchers who identify with this epistemology therefore, truth in science is questionable since it is a combination of various interpretations that make up scientific knowledge. Campbell and Wasco capture this by stating that:

> Because they reject fundamental assumptions and values of science, feminist postmodernists question whether there can ever be a feminist science, and instead view the world as endless stories or texts, many of which serve to sustain the status quo of power and oppression (2000, p. 782).

The researchers further explain, that because feminist postmodernists 'recognise the role of language in structuring our understandings of social realities' (Campbell and Wasco 2000: 782), they criticise approaches that see women as a 'unified category'. As Walby summarises, feminist postmodernism emerged:

> To accommodate the issue of difference, since women's lives are "divided by phenomena such as ethnicity, "race", class, sexual orientation, generation, and physical capacity (2001, p. 487).

Agreeing with this view and the role of language in structuring our understanding of social realities, I situate my study within the feminist cultural studies approach, also paying attention to feminist standpoint theory, grounding my analysis of gender constructions and relations (Ramazanoğlu and Holland 2002) in the context of women's lives (Naples 2003). In line with the ethnographic turn, some studies in Ghana have explored audience perceptions in relation to advertisements and the next section explores these.

In a study by Darke (2011) to ascertain the influence of political advertising on voter decisions, she found that even though her respondents obtained most of their political information from the media, campaign information from the advertisements did not significantly influence their voting decisions. On the contrary, the opinions of their

friends and relatives appeared to have a stronger influence than the advertisements. Additionally, her study also revealed that respondents frowned on negative political advertising which mostly demeaned opposition parties. Darke's (2011) findings here, therefore, confirm the active role of audiences in the reception of media communication, especially noting that they do not accept information without first making their own assessment.

In 2008, Larweh examined the role played by television advertising in influencing consumer preferences between Amstel malt and Malta Guinness, two leading food drinks in Ghana's food and beverage industry. His findings revealed that television advertising played a minimal role in determining repeat purchase of the products since consumers were of the view that taste and quality of the products affected their preference for both brands, and not what they saw in the advertisements. The researcher therefore concludes by admonishing manufacturers to focus more on improving the quality of their products if consumers are to remain loyal to them. This study therefore further confirmed the active nature of consumers in their reception of information given through advertising.

In another study conducted by Amoako on ethics in advertising and its challenges in Ghana he shares his own and some consumers' views on the negative influence some advertisements have on children. Raising the fact that some children may not have developed adequate filters and may therefore be unable to identify right from wrong, he argues that advertisers should

> Consider the level of complexity, cultural sensitivities and sensibilities, knowledge and maturity of the people their message is directed at and should not influence their evaluation of the product value or performance by using advertising in a way that children could not discriminate between the actual and the imaginary features of the products (2008 p.64).

In 2004, Eshun also conducted a study among female University students in Ghana, to determine the role advertising played in the brand preferences of clothes produced by two leading companies in Ghana – GTP and ATL. Using the survey method, her study was also to measure consumer preferences in the absence of television advertising. Her findings indicated that television advertising hardly influenced consumer choices and purchases since respondents valued quality and recommendations from friends above the information they obtained from the advertisements. Eshun (2004) thus recommends the

need for manufacturers to undertake periodic research in order to gauge consumer needs and address them rather than assume that advertising can do everything.

Despite the similarities in the findings of the studies cited here, Hudson (2005) examined whether her respondents would seek advertising information from the Daily Graphic newspaper in their search for any information. Her findings showed that a majority of readers in the TEMA Municipality of Ghana, read the newspaper as their primary and credible source of information and also relied on the advertisements provided in the newspaper for adequate information. Similarly, Anane (1994) also revealed her respondents' confirmation of the role played by advertising in providing first aid information to audiences, and their consequent advocacy for the continuation of drug advertisements in the media.

In her study of audience perception of the advertising of non-prescription drugs on television, the doctors and pharmacists interviewed held the view that even though the advertisements were ideal, the information provided on the drugs was limited and as such, producers should endeavour to provide more comprehensive details on the subject. She, however, concludes by recommending that producers periodically review their television advertising and not over exaggerate the potency of medicines in order to minimise their misinterpretation by consumers.

A review of these studies above therefore indicates the varied nature of audiences' responses to advertising in Ghana, suffice to say that none explored advertisements regarding gender violence or in the context of women's everyday lives. I move now to consider the possibilities opened up by adopting the latter approach, named the 'circuit of culture'[29].

Circuit of Culture

In a critique of Hall's encoding/decoding, semiotic and other textual approaches, Johnson (1986) argued that such approaches 'neglected lived experience in favour of social structure and modes of production' (Curtin and Gaither, 2009 p.97). As Champ writes:

> Johnson (1986) took up these ideas further, imagining a more
> heuristic construct. Rather than being a theoretical representation

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[29] See figure 1 below for a graphic representation of this model.

> of a reality, this 'circuit of culture' was intended 'to serve as a symbolic device—a pedagogic model—meant to help us understand the often complex, integrated nature of cultural meaning … (Champ 2008 p. 86).

Johnson (1986) therefore encouraged researchers to imagine culture in terms of distinct processes, or moments and to think of the inseparability, the connectedness, of these cultural moments. Each moment depends upon the others and is indispensable to the whole (ibid). Subsequently, however, the criticisms of cultural studies scholars included their placing of too much emphasis on audience negotiation and opposition, to the point of sometimes ignoring the power to control meaning inherent in the encoding of cultural texts (see Clarke, 1991; Ferguson & Golding, 1997). As Champ notes, in response to these criticisms, a group of cultural scholars (du Gay, 1997; du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay, & Negus, 1997; Hall, 1997; Mackay, 1997; Thompson, 1997; Woodward, 1997) associated with the Open University in the United Kingdom set out to further refine and expand Johnson's (1986) idea.

Reformulating the encoding/decoding model, and drawing on Marx's theorising of the 'moments' of the capitalist process as discussed in the *Grundrisse,* the scholars paid attention to, and allowed the conceptualisation of meaning as an interaction/determination/overlap between five (5) different moments (production, representation, consumption, identity and regulation) also known as the circuit of culture. The circuit thus holds that in "Production" - the 'design, manufacture, and distribution of a particular cultural object is both material and cultural' (Taylor et al., p. 617). Production therefore takes place in relation to social and logistical constraints that may influence the way meanings are eventually encoded (Curtin & Gaither, 2005, p. 100).

In his discussion of the various moments in the circuit, Mackay (in a similar explanation to Hall's 'act of decoding'), also explains "Consumption," as the moment, or cultural process, in which we 'appropriate and make sense of various cultural forms in our routines in everyday settings' (1997, p. 1). Contributing to the explanation of the 'circuit of culture', Champ further describes "Regulation" and "Representation". He holds that regulation is the:

> Attempt to codify, or control, in some way, practices related to the other processes of the circuit of culture; it is often the goal of those with the power to do so to fix meanings in ways they deem

> desirable …"regulation" is rather loosely used, representing everything from quite formal, institutionally based regulation, to local norms and other limiting cultural values). "Representation" is meant to stand for the process within which a particular language or other forms of symbolic systems are used to present potential meanings. A representation, often in the form of text, serves as a "shared cultural 'space'" (Hall, 1997, p. 10) from which participants in a culture may draw meanings (2008 pp. 86 - 87).

Finally he conceptualises "Identity" (or perhaps more properly, "identities") as stories, "social profiles" (du Gay et al., 1997, p. 10), or "types" (p. 15) that circulate throughout cultures in the processes of production, consumption, regulation, and representation (ibid). According to Du Gay et al., therefore, the cultural study of media or any object as such requires an exploration of all these moments:

> How it is represented, what social identities are associated with it, how it is produced and consumed, and what mechanisms regulate its distribution and use (1997 p. 3).

In their discussion of the various elements in the circuit (i.e. representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation), the authors further explain that researchers are at liberty to start their exploration of a phenomenon from any point that they choose, but must ensure that 'they go the whole way round' in order to gain a 'complete picture' (p. 4) of whatever they are studying. For Du Gay et al., (1997), this aspect of the circuit is important, considering the fact that 'in the real world they continually overlap and intertwine in complex and contingent ways' (ibid) and the researcher stands to obtain a full view of the subject under study if he or she completes the circuit'.

The points at which these moments overlap are known as articulations; and at these points, meanings are contested and re-negotiated (cited in Curtin and Gaither, 2009 p. 98). As summarised by Kramer (2002) this shift in thought signified:

> A move from the study of semiotics to the study of discourse, from the "how" of representation to the problematic of its "effect," from the "poetics" to the "politics" of culture. … this model counters the post-structuralist turn by putting history and politics—and, particularly, the question of "power"— back into Cultural Studies (cited in Curtin and Gaither, 2009 p.97).

Ultimately, the 'circuit of culture' therefore reintroduced 'production' which had hitherto tended to be somewhat marginalised – at least by media and cultural studies – or considered in terms of political economy.

Conclusion

Having considered the various approaches through which the study of media has been conceptualised, I also adopt the 'circuit of culture' as a model to guide my analysis of the anti - violence campaign. Thus, I explore it from the point of view of producers of the advertisements, exploring how these views influenced particular representations that they deployed in the ads. I then explore how consumers understood these visuals, interpreted and reacted to them.

Significantly, this approach offers me the opportunity to look at each these moments autonomously in their complexities, and to consider their overlaps and articulations. In doing this I adopt a feminist approach which includes women themselves telling their stories as well as sharing their views on the anti-gender violence campaign. But alerted to Pickup's view about the need for men to change and be involved, I also enable them, too, to express their views.

In the next chapter, I look at the methodological implications of my chosen theories and the methods I deploy in carrying out the research.
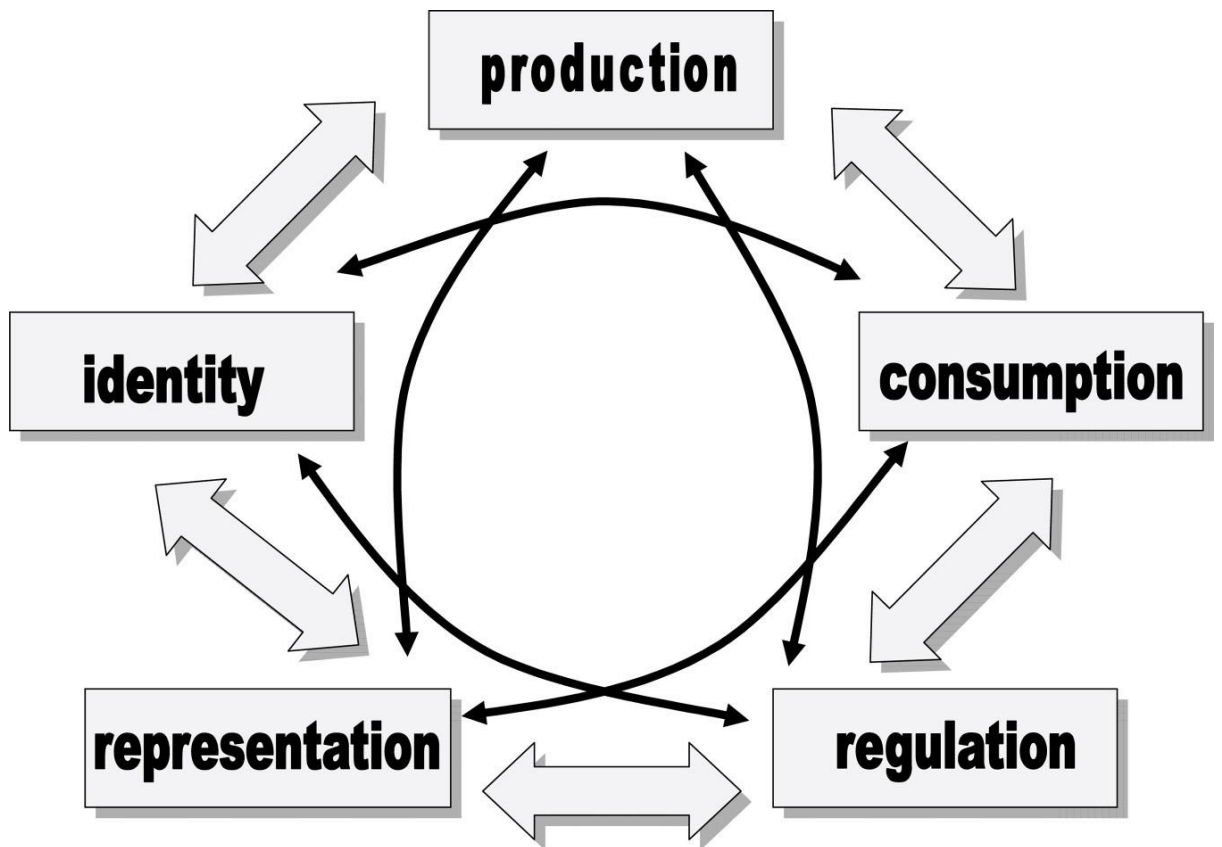
The circuit of culture (from du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay, & Negus, 1997).

Chapter 2

Research design and methodology

Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology I adopted in carrying out the project in the light of my adoption of a feminist cultural studies approach involving consideration of the 'circuit of culture'. I discuss the initial design of the project and the range of methods I planned to deploy in acquiring research data. I also discuss how the project developed in the field and the hurdles I faced. In this context I reflect on my own position as an 'insider' researcher, interacting with those taking part in the project and observing the educational materials used in the campaign. Finally, I discuss the approaches I adopted for presenting and analysing the different strands of my data in my write up of the thesis.

Feminist methodology

According to Silverman (2005: 99) methodology is 'the choices we make about cases to study, methods of data gathering, forms of data analysis, etc., in planning and executing a research study'. But one's choices of which methods to use and how, reflect an 'overall research strategy' (Mason 1996: 19). As noted in chapter 1, feminist research aims to acknowledge and gain respect for women's experiences and viewpoints' (Van Zoonen, 1994, p. 42) and takes into account the various dynamics that women as individuals are made of (Walby, 2001). Thus in respect to feminist methodology, Peplau and Conrad state that:

> A supposedly feminine communal style of research that emphasizes co-operation of the researcher and subjects, an appreciation of natural contexts, and the use of qualitative data contrasts with a supposedly masculine agentic orientation that places primacy on distance of the researcher from the subjects and the environment … and the use of quantitative data (1989 cited in Riger 1992, p.733).

However, in a critique of this approach, Walby raises the issue of "authoritative knowledge" being perceived to be obtained on the basis of who produced it (the oppressed), and not on evaluation of the sound scientific foundation of the process leading to it (2001, p. 426). Even though she recognises the legitimacy of feminist research, she also holds that "rigorous methodology" is needed more than a "specialist epistemology

in order to defend [women's studies'] place in the academy" (2001, pp. 503-504). Furthermore, critics such as Schroder (1994) also raise the issue of the displacement of media texts from studies of media consumption. As he notes: 'The development towards ethnography and the everyday is now threatening to write the media, as a focus of research, out of existence' (Schroder 1994 p. 338) He therefore calls for a reconsideration of textual specificity within studies of reception to be able to understand the complexities of interaction and engagement by specific media consumers (ibid).

Similarly, Van Zoonen suggests that with the ethnographic turn, questions of agency, pleasure and consumption are now ascendant in feminist studies of audiences and readers rather than those of textual and ideological determinism (1994, p.107) In addition to this Thornham also notes that the turn 'avoids […] the ideological effectivity of the text' (2000, p.105) For these researchers therefore, studies of specific encounters between media texts and 'receivers' are still valuable … (Schroder, 1994 p.344) and need to be incorporated into research.

With such views, scholars have turned to what has become known as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) - a methodology which examines discourses in order to uncover '[naturalised] unequal power arrangements and ideologies' (Speer, 2007, p. 15). This approach focuses on language and texts (and text production) as forms that 'mediate ideology' (Fernández Martínez 2007: 125, see also Georgakopoulou and Goutsos 2004), and aims to study discourse not only in the format of texts, but also the 'social processes and structures which give rise to the production of a text' (Wodak, 2001 p. 3).

Thus critical analysts acknowledge the link between 'scholarship and society' and 'conduct research in solidarity and cooperation with dominated groups' (van Dijk 2001pp. 352-353). As Wodak also explains, the major ideas in this methodology are 'critical', 'ideology' and 'power', all of which are intertwined, as the approach aims at unveiling ideologies which create and sustain unequal power relations (2001, p. 10). Scholars such as (Blommaert and Bulcaen 2000, Keller 2001) have subsequently used CDA in their projects as it enables 'an explicit focus on the power relations and ideology behind not only a text itself, but also the social context framing the text' (Keller 2001).

In further advancing this methodology, the notion of the 'circuit of culture' (Du Gay et al., 1997) as fully addressed in chapter 1 above) advocate for the use of a variety of methodologies in researching the different moments of the circuit. If interviewing is one

relevant method for exploring 'production' and 'consumption' other approaches are required when engaging with 'representation'. If feminists have engaged in ethnographic studies of women's experiences to research aspects of their lives, they have also engaged in 'content analysis' as a method appropriate to the study of representation. 'Content analysis', however, can refer to several different approaches (I will return to this below) available for researchers to choose from in order to achieve their aims.

For feminists therefore, the use of qualitative interviews as part of the research methods deployed in investigating human experience is key because, it offers women the opportunity to articulate their experiences in their own words, producing new knowledge for the researcher. As held by Scott with reference to the use of the qualitative interview approach, its use 'is in line with feminist emphasis on experiences and subjectivity, on close personal interaction, and on reciprocity of researcher and the researched' (1985 in Kvale, 2006 p. 481) . In their contribution to this subject, researchers (see Deacon et. al., 2007, Kvale 2006, Lee, 1993. Jensen and Jankowski, 1991) also suggest that the in-depth interview is an effective method for investigating the private and public life of the researched, as well as for addressing sensitive research issues. To advance this point further, Skeggs adds that the prolonged period of time over which an ethnography may be conducted is key since it enables access to women's 'authentic' voices (1994, p. 87).

Thus on the whole, feminist methodology suggests a direct interaction with a researcher's respondents in a way that affords access to detailed and first-hand information. Suffice to say, however that although anthropologists emphasise a longer and more immersive field work, using ethnography as their tool, the use of the term by scholars within the field of media and cultural studies' usually refers to interviews (Drotner, 1994). Thus, they rarely undertake participant observation or live alongside their 'subjects'. However, through the use of interviews (together with other methods), they explore how audiences make sense of texts (Hollows 2000: 104); they also use the same to ascertain the 'contexts of media reception' (Bakardjieva 2005 p. 77) and how forms of media are consumed within the practices of everyday life (see, for example, Currie 1997, 1999; Seiter et al. 1996, 1989).

Further criticisms of ethnographic methodologies have also been advanced. Studies such as Clifford (1986 p. 22) and Schostak (2006 p. 68) raise the issue of power relations in qualitative studies, and approach this from two points: the first being between the researcher and researched and secondly, the researchers sole authority over data from

transcription through to analysis and writing a report. Such critics have therefore been quite straightforward about the dangers inherent in such power practices. They suggest that researchers often assume the roles of the all-knowing scholar who is coming to acquire more knowledge from their 'subjects'. Notably however, as far as feminist approaches are concerned, these power relations are the ones feminism tries to be alert to and think about ways to temper, by giving the researched more input into the writing as well as the research data. In defence of these criticisms, Kim also (2012 p.138) argues that:

> A researcher's position is not fixed and durable but dynamic throughout the research process, proceeding according to various negotiations and reconstructions of the relationship between the researcher and the researched.

Millen also cautions that researchers adopting this approach must reflect upon the power relations between themselves and the researched, and how their own social group status influences the collection and interpretation of their data. (1997 p. 74). Ward (1999 no page number) also highlights the opportunity respondents have to talk back or ask questions during interviews and further emphasises, that respondents may even take a '[leading] role in establishing the reality, status and principles of their group'. Thus the power relations between researcher and researched, can shift towards the researched, in this way tempering the authority of the researcher: after all, respondents often know more about the topic under discussion than the researcher (I will pick up on this when I discuss interviews with those working at The Ark and the police service). Having foregrounded some feminist methodologies above, I move on to discuss how they influenced this study.

Design and methods (Preparatory stage)

With my aim of researching ads on gender violence and attempts to curb the practice in the context of social change in the country, it soon became clear that the single case study approach was an appropriate method. This was especially so given my early familiarity with the particular 'social marketing' campaign organized by activists. This decision thus allowed a more focused and manageable research project, since as Van Dijk notes (2001p. 99), 'a complete analysis of all texts associated with a particular change process or discursive struggle may be impossible because of the sheer size of such corpus'.

Whilst I could have also considered other NGOs working with women, such as (WISE, International Needs [30], or WILDAF) I selected the Ark Foundation Ghana (usually referred to as The Ark www.arkfoundationghana.org) as my starting point and main organization.

As captured in its mission statement, The Ark is a non-governmental women's human rights organization committed to create empowering spaces for individuals to rise above gender inequality, violence and oppression (Flicker et al., 2005 p. 2). As a member of the coalition in the fight for the passage of the DV Bill, (see introduction) it is committed to increasing awareness of the Ghanaian public, decision makers, and the government about the human rights of women and children. To achieve these objectives The Ark runs two broad programmes, the first being the Capacity Building and Advocacy (CABA) programme which focuses on training, research and advocacy, and the second being the Anti-Violence Programme, comprising of a Crises Response Centre, Shelter and Counselling Centre, and the Community Awareness Project. Hence it deals with the issue of abuse in a variety of ways, including the provision of counselling services for victims, training workers involved with various aspects of gender, and providing public education through seminars, durbars and street and open market talks.

Particularly however, my reason for choosing this organization, was that they were the originators and producers of the anti-gender violence campaign which included the use of 'advertisements'. Like other social marketing campaigns discussed above, this campaign aimed at changing human behaviour in respect of gender violence and I believed its evaluation would afford access to rich data around the issue in Ghana. The Ark was thus my main source of information.

In addition, once in the field it was evident that interviews with those at DOVVSU, who worked closely with The Ark and with victims of abuse would also be productive. As I mentioned in the introduction, the establishment of this unit was a landmark victory in Ghana in terms of addressing the issue of gender violence, since it was an 'indication of the state's commitment to alleviate the plight of those at the receiving end of GBV' (Wilson, 2005 p.1). Thus, as the ultimate point of call for all victims in search of various

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[30] A non-governmental organisation with the aim of improving deprived communities through development and human rights initiatives, the latter being very similar to the work of 'Ark'.

forms of justice, I believed I could obtain insightful information on gender violence as well as learn about the efforts being made by the government and police from them.

After settling on the two key organisations, my next challenge was to identify respondents across gender, generation and social class who were willing to share their ideas and experiences on gender violence, and who had also seen or remembered any of the advertisements used in the anti-gender violence campaign. My intention with this selection criteria was to attain diverse findings on the subject and also to avoid the homogenisation of my research participants.

 In effect, I wanted to understand how violent experiences in people's lives varied with respect to these backgrounds, and how their circumstances either encouraged or restrained them from reporting abuse after their exposure to the campaign. Interacting with different participants was also important for me, given the variations in individual experiences of violence and the nature of this sensitive topic, which posed the uncertainty about people's readiness to talk, particularly to strangers. I believed that hearing the views of a wide array of people would bring about the varied responses and the detail I expected. I therefore decided to adopt the purposive and snowball sampling methods to select people who fitted my criteria for selection (gender, generation, social class, and various socio-economic backgrounds) and who were also willing to engage in the study. Subsequently, I also settled on focus group discussions and in-depth interviews as my methods of primary data collection in seeking answers to the research questions outlined in this thesis.

Interviewing key personnel in both organizations was essential since they not only worked with victims but were also the producers of the 'advertising' campaign (see Chapter 3 below). Thus I stood to gain rich first-hand information on both fronts by talking to them. I also planned on adding to the information I obtained from them by engaging in one-to-one interviews with 'victims' (and will discuss this below) Furthermore, I settled on focus group interviews as a means to explore issues with a selection of participants who the campaign was addressed to. In this way I could directly explain my topic to them and also ask broad questions, hoping that in return, I would also learn about their responses to the campaign, their experiences, wider knowledge and understandings of gender violence.

Additionally, following the admonition by Du Gay et al., (1997) to consider differentiated moments of 'production', 'text' and 'consumer/audience' in any study (see Chapter 1

above), I decided to collect and analyse a sample of poster advertisements used in the anti-gender violence campaign (see chapter 4 below). These were to be used firstly as a prompt in interviews: a means to ascertain what activists and the police unit hoped to achieve with this campaign and what they thought about wider representations of women in advertising. In the case of the focus group participants, considering the length of time that had elapsed since the launch of the campaign, the ads were to serve as a 'trigger' for their thoughts and reflections as well as a way of opening up the discussion about gender violence.

In addition they would offer a further discourse about gender violence that I could analyse. Although produced by The Ark and DOVVSU, they were also independent of them insofar as representations have a social and cultural life of their own. Thus, I also planned on exploring how various narratives were used to communicate the pervasiveness of gender violence in the society. To add to all the above, I was also bent on consulting any available literature I could find on the campaign and gender violence, to support all the other pieces of information I would get.

Finally, as highlighted by Ramazanoğlu and Holland (2002, pp. 65-66), (discussed above Chapter 1) a major distinguishing feature of the feminist approach to studying is its attempt to make the researcher visible, thus '[deconstructing] the 'knowing feminist'. Acknowledging this, I decided to fall on my own experience gained through conversations with, and observations of friends and some family members in Ghana, where I was born and bred as another means for acquiring data to aid with this study. This was necessary because it would enable me understand my respondents' views on violence when they cited examples based on their diverse ethnic backgrounds for example. Having made these decisions I then proceeded to address possible ethical issues.

With reference to feminist research, Naples (2003 p.3) states that 'our epistemological assumptions influence how we define our roles as researchers, what we consider ethical research practices, and how we interpret and implement informed consent or ensure the confidentiality of our research subjects'. Thus considering my adoption of ethnography as an approach, and the sensitive nature of my topic I tried to ensure that this research was conducted in an ethical manner. First, I had to seek approval from the Arts Cluster-based Research Ethics Committee (Arts C-REC) of the University of Sussex by describing the research I was about to undertake including all the processes involved and

how I would handle them. I needed to design a Participant Information Sheet and a letter of consent detailing what the research entailed to give to research participants who would be required to read and sign, before participating in the study. The Information Sheet formally invited people to participate in the study. It also explained the purpose of the study, why they were invited the procedure it will take, and the freedom they had in deciding whether or not to leave the discussion at any time.

The consent form on the other hand included information about the use of data, including where and under which conditions the data would be kept, provided details about anonymity to avoid identification (I used pseudonyms for all participants in the write up, with the exception of interviewees from the Ark who did not mind their names being used) and further asked for their consent to record any interview or focus group discussion in which they participated (See Appendix F for copies). In addition, I designed letters with similar details and consent forms to give to gatekeepers seeking permission to use their organisations or facilities and to assure them that information obtained was purely for academic purposes.

As advised by (Wengraf 2006 p. 5), an interview guide should also be 'fully planned and prepared', even though participants' 'responses can't be predicted in advance'. In this regard, I also designed interview guides to be used with the different groups trying to ensure a logic to the questioning and that no question would offend anyone. Each interview guide was composed of around six sections and a total of 50 questions. These questions were to ensure that I covered every area although I did not plan to ask participants every question. I needed to be able to easily adapt my style of questioning to the circumstances that actually prevailed on specific days.

For the activist organisation and DOVVSU, the sections in the guide were organised to move from general questions about their organisation, programmes and programme components to specific questions about the campaign, advertisements used and how women were represented. It also solicited their views about factors that led to the campaign and what they felt were some of its impacts and outcomes (see Appendix G for all interview guides).

This style of questioning I planned to adopt was conversational so that participants did not feel 'attacked' right from the start. For the focus group participants, questions ranged from their knowledge about gender violence prior to the campaign, how they first heard

of the campaign what they remembered about it, to the probable experiences they might have had and how the campaign contributed to any action they might have taken. In the one-to-one interview with 'victims', I sought to investigate their experiences and opinions on abuse, what they felt were the possible causes and effects, who they discussed it with and what actions they had taken in the past. The last of my efforts to ensure good ethical practice was the effort I hoped to invest in order to avoid the possibility of my seeming 'all- knowing' in the course of the research. I aimed to hold fast to the fact that one of my aims was to document the lived experiences of some Ghanaian women concerning gender violence and their understanding and views about it, without imposing my own views.

Like all decisions about methods the approaches I adopted above offered advantages and limitations. Critics have pointed to the case study's inability to provide enough information to present a broad picture of the phenomena under study (Cresswell, 2007), thereby not allowing generalisations. Suffice to say, that the aim of my study is not to generalise on the basis of my findings but rather to explore one specific project in depth and to raise issues on gender violence and campaigning against it partly by means of 'advertising', in such a way that others might take up pertinent ideas and develop them in further research. This would be the case for most qualitative research, including ethnography which, as feminist standpoint and postmodern theorists would agree, is not concerned with representativeness.

Also bearing in mind Drotner's (1994) concern that using interviews as a method perse does not conform to its definitions in ethnography, this study hinges on Gray's 'ethnographic intention' in its efforts to obtain a sense of how audiences understand and interpret media texts (1992 p. 32). I do not attempt to produce a complete account of how Ghanaians engage with media, but accept that research produce 'situated knowledge' (Haraway, 1988) which is not only determined by available data, but by the selection of one's research methods, location and the questions asked. Through the range of selected methods, I hoped that I would gain richer data and open up possible disparities across the different sources and respondent discourses (Gray 2003 p. 72).

The combination of textual analysis of poster-ads, interviews with activists and the police (also producers of the ads) plus focus group discussions would also provide data countering the views of critics such as Schroder (1994 as cited above) who point to the displacement of media texts from media consumption studies, rightly locating media in

the context of people's everyday lives. Incorporating such media texts allowed me also to compare participants' views with those of the campaign's producers.

In the field

I first visited the Ark Foundation in May 2012 after I returned to Ghana from Sussex University with the task of developing a research plan for my thesis. I happened to discuss my interest in studying gender violence in the country with a colleague, who offered to introduce me to the The Ark. Consequently, an appointment was scheduled for me to meet the programme's director – Mr. Berko to discuss their work and to explore the possibility of using their organization as the spring board for my thesis. Our meeting went well and I subsequently began accessing their library and building acquaintance with a number of their staff in order to develop trust.

 I formally began fieldwork in October 2013 after writing a formal letter to the Executive Director of 'The Ark' seeking permission to use the organization as part of my study, hold interviews with their staff, and use the materials they produced for my research. This was given and within the period from October 2013 and December 2014, I held a series of in depth interviews with four key people in the organisation: the programmes director, his assistant, and the librarian who also detailed and provided access to documents held by the organization (see appendix H for names) In the interviews, based at their office in Accra, I explored issues relating to the nature, background, aims and objectives of the organization, before focusing on their work on gender violence in general and, more specifically, their activities on the anti-violence project.

Early on, the interviews revealed that the organisation doubled as the originator and producer of the 'advertisements' used in the campaign. I therefore solicited their views on advertising in general, on the debates in relation to women and representation, and on their selection and the constraints on particular visual and verbal form and content deployed. Finally, the interviews enquired about the challenges they faced during the roll out of the campaign and explored with them the progress they believed they had made so far.

Over the period, I also had the opportunity to sit in one of their training sessions on gender violence for a group of young employed women. Whilst a part of the training focused on

how to protect themselves from various abusive experiences, the second part involved talks by women from different parts of industry to open up various strategies for job creation for them. I was also able to scrutinise various handbooks and training manuals that were compiled by independent researchers for the Ark. These were also beneficial because some of the information they contained were used to design and implement some of their training and outreach programmes in schools and churches. These handbooks thus gave further insights into aspects of the campaign and gender violence on the whole.

Through my confirmation from the Ark about their collaboration with DOVVSU on various fronts in the fight against violence, and also acknowledging the extensive work done by this Unit on the subject since their establishment, I included it in my study. My initial visit was to the DOVVSU branch of the Community 18 Police Station in Sakumono (a suburb in Accra where I live) requesting to interview some of their officials. Referred to the Regional headquarters of the Ghana Police service to obtain permission, I solicited the help of a family friend in the service and managed to meet the relevant officials at the headquarters to explain my research and what I would like them to help with. This was followed by a formal permission letter detailing the aim of my research, explaining how I would benefit from their contribution, and thereby requesting to be granted audience by officials from the Unit.

Subsequently, I was granted the permission to proceed with the interviews and within some periods between November 2013 and December 2014, I interacted with two senior officials of the DOVVSU headquarters, the Officer–In-Charge of the secretariat, and another four at the Sakumono branch where I originally visited. Once I gained access to the DOVVSU secretariat, meeting with all these police officials to assist me was less of a challenge, with all the interviews taking place in their respective offices. Though I had initial concerns about interviewing police officials (see below), most of my interviewees were willing to share their views and experiences. Interestingly they acknowledged my status as a researcher who had appreciated this issue as one worth further study, and so cooperated on all the occasions I was there to give me the needed help. As one police officer said in response to my thanking her for granting me audience: "I should rather thank you. We feel very happy when we see women like you doing something for yourselves and for other women as well" (Interview, November, 2013).

Through these interviews I gained insight into the state of gender violence in Ghana, the most prevalent types, the available sanctions, as well as the services in place to encourage the report of abuse, protect complainants and the care available for victims. As with the Ark, the officials revealed that they deployed advertising in their awareness creation strategies and that their materials were also generated in house. I subsequently sought their views about how they designed and used advertisements, and the extent to which this has been successful. Thus whilst the Ark provided an in-depth explanation of the campaign and the various strategies they used in communicating with the public, the interviews with DOVVSU enabled me acquire detailed and direct knowledge of the official structures put in place by the government and the police for the prevention of abuse and support for victims.

I had initially hoped to visit The Ark's shelter for abused women and interview some of its members, but it was clear as I spoke to senior officers in the organisation that for ethical reasons, and because the shelter was a secret hideout for some, this was not possible. Fortunately, the officials I met at DOVVSU, granted me permission to speak with some victims of abuse who had either come to report their cases, or to follow up on previous ones and were willing to talk (see discussion of these interviews below).

With regards to the larger body of participants involved in my study, suffice to say here that I was particularly interested in hearing from women who are the campaign's predominant target, but also wanted to talk with men on the subject in order to ascertain what differences might emerge in their views. Thus through contacts with people I knew and their recommendation of others who fitted the criteria I needed, I selected 22 young adults between 18 and 25 years and another 20 above 25 years of age. With this purposive and snowball sampling, my intention was to select participants across different generations to ascertain the extent to which their stages and experiences in life affected their perspectives on gender violence. Thus married men and women, as well as the divorced, and the unmarried were included.

 In addition, I aimed to hear from people across social classes, mainly: 'upper', 'middle' and 'poor', also in the hope to acquire a wide spectrum of ideas. Acknowledging the fluid

and complex nature of social class in many societies[31] including Ghana, I describe women as upper class in this thesis based on the fact that they come from 'well to do' families, are highly educated and also have jobs of their own which does not require them to be dependent on men. The middle class are those with some level of education but possess less wealth than the upper class. Finally my classification of the poor in the study include people with no education at all or at best primary education. They either are unemployed or in the case of others earn meagre salaries through petty trading and very low paying jobs. The participants in this study therefore included the unemployed as well as others from other diverse fields such as teaching, sales, secretarial, and business or industrial services.

Generally, the participants were mostly Christians with very few Muslims, and hailed from four (4) ethnic backgrounds – Akan, Ewe, Dagomba, and Ga. Although they all lived in the city of Accra at the time of the interviews, some had a rural upbringing, others an urban upbringing. As will be seen in my discussion with these participants, the perspectives they shared were largely influenced by their backgrounds, enabling me to have different people reflecting on different socio-cultural contexts. In all, a total of 42 participants (twenty three (23) women and nineteen (19) men) were involved in my four (4) focus group discussions, even though I initially aimed for six (6)[32]. Out of the four (4) groups, two (2) were all females whilst the other two were mixed to enable me observe some differences in relation to age as well as gender.

Our discussions were held during the day time at a social space on the premises of Central University College (where I lecture). Usually on the day prior to the scheduled interviews with my focus groups, I called or texted to remind them and confirm details of where and when we were meeting. I always ensured that a selection of poster ads were up on the walls, before our meetings, and also ensured that my recorder worked well before participants arrived. On the actual discussion days, I began our sessions by thanking them for their time and agreeing to be part of the study. I then gave an overview of the project and reiterated the fact that whatever they said was purely going to be used for academic purposes and that they would be anonymised. I also read out the information on the

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[31] See White,1992, 2012; Lewis, 2011; Feldman, 2009 for an in depth discussion on social classes.
[32] This was because not all participants who agreed to take part in the sessions attended on the agreed days (as cautioned by Bryman and Bell 2011).

consent form and information sheet to the whole group (as a reminder of what they had read and signed already) but also gave out copies to those who did not have some prior to the session to read through and sign if they agreed (Seidman, 1998). Whilst at it, I further pointed out that they were not obliged to answer all questions and could be excused from the discussion at any point if they so wished. I also informed them that the information they gave were going to be recorded in order to help my analysis, and further assured them that the recordings would not be available to any other researchers. Usually during this period, some participants in turn asked about the implications of signing or not doing so, and others sometimes also asked for more clarification of aspects of the information on these forms.

After making sure that everyone was comfortable enough to partake in the exercise, I then proceeded with our discussion which usually lasted between an hour and half and two hours per session. On the whole, I considered this time frame adequate enough to enable participants' debate, contradict, and/or affirm their views about gender differences in Ghana, violence against women in particular, the advertising posters and above all, the impact of the campaign on them. As Bryman and Bell (2011 p. 20) advice:

> The moderator's role is to ask a small number of general questions which would lead to a horizontal discussion … he or she should also allow the participants to discuss freely but have the power to steer the discussion back to the main focus if it goes out of track.

With this in mind, I went through the questions I had on my interview guide, pausing to allow discussion as seemed appropriate. The audio recorded interviews were then transcribed later for analysis. Also because I did not have any assistance with conducting the focus group discussions, I delayed note taking of striking points in the discussion till right after the session when everybody had left, to ensure I recollected them whilst still fresh in my mind.

In addition to the focus groups, as indicated above, via DOVVSU I gained permission to speak to six (6) female victims at the Sakumono police station. My interaction with them took the form of an 'interview', with the exception of two (2) occasions, where the officer in charge allowed me to sit in her follow up discussions with clients, allowing me to ask

questions every now and again. With the exception of these two victims who often interspersed their responses to my questions with the Ewe language (one of the local dialects in Ghana which I do not speak) communication was not a problem. In these situations however, the police officer around understood the language and so either interpreted for me or prompted the interviewees to repeat themselves in English.

The interviews with this group lasted between 45 minutes and 1 hour 30 minutes. Questions ranged from the duration of the period they had suffered abuse, the types of abuse suffered, causes of violence, efforts put in place to stop the violence, and how they got to know of DOVVSU. The private nature of these individual interviews with the victims (especially those held without the police being present) created a space for them to open up and give more about their daily lives and ordeals than was possible in the focus groups. I heard directly from women about harrowing experiences which police officials had earlier cited as 'examples'.

For my individual interviews with The Ark and DOVVSU, I usually held them in their offices and allowed them to read the consent form and information sheet on their own and ask me questions if they had any. In most of these sessions, I was accompanied by my niece who was home on vacation from the University to assist me during the process. During the period I discussed my questions with the respondents, she took notes of key points that they raised and kept an eye on the recorder to ensure it was working properly. Admittedly, she also served as good company especially when I had to meet officials for the first time, occasions I found rather daunting. In these interviews, I realised it was particularly important to listen very carefully to their narratives and to be sensitive in asking follow up questions or clarifications of issues.

It was also important to answer the questions that these interviewees might ask whether about my research or violence in general. The interviews with them also lasted between an hour and two. Throughout my field work, trying to help the group feel comfortable - build up a rapport, facilitated the discussions. This process would not have been possible if I had relied on a questionnaire, for example. For the officials, rapport building in the process of interviewing, also opened up the opportunity for me to contact them later for further explanations, or clarifications. In return, the interview method also allowed participants to meet me face-to-face and ask me all the questions they needed to in order

to be sure about the credibility of this person they were offering personal, sensitive information to. Thus whilst some key informants required that I show them letters from my institution they also asked me personal questions. They spent quite some time also trying to find out about me: why I was interested in the subject, how long it was taking me to do it, what were the challenges I encountered in the process. In the end, such exchanges of information enabled participants to put a face to the researcher asking the questions, helping build some trust to the point where they felt free to share some otherwise difficult experiences.

Also, from my previous knowledge about incidents of violence in the Ghanaian society, hearing the experiences of some of my research participants (especially victims of abuse) did not always come as a surprise (though heart wrenching) and thereby enabled me refrain from showing signs of shock or 'disgust' which had the tendency to repulse them or further upset them. Knowing about abuse in Ghana therefore helped me go through the interview sessions with the utmost calmness that I could gather. I could say in the end that being able to manage this situation, resulted in lessening the guilt or shame often felt by victims in narrating their stories, thus enabling me to engage with them better and obtain detail information from them. I was able to ask relevant questions and the answers I got to these, further helped me understand the victims and their experiences in a much clearer way.

My familiarity with the Ghanaian context also helped me link participants' contributions to their cultural background and this helped in understanding some of their attitudes and mind-sets. For example, when Habib, kept referring to the North, as a place where traditional practices are highly entrenched, I was able to appreciate his narratives because of my knowledge of the area through close friends and relations who come there. Finally, I would say that the interview approach was the best way of engaging in long discussions with the view to obtain a detailed account and also clarify all unclear issues. With respect to the gender activists and officials of DOVVSU as well, the interview approach was the only way I could learn about the campaign and the 'social processes and structures which gave rise to the production of [the] text' (Wodak, 2001 p. 3), that is, the conditions which gave rise to this campaign and the form it took.

I turn now to the process of finding materials used in the campaign, but return later in the chapter to my experiences of doing the various interviews and focus groups.

Campaign materials

In the absence of other documentary sources and having ascertained that both The Ark and DOVVSU developed their own advertising material in support of the anti-gender violence campaign, the poster advertisements I collected were from these two organisations. The Ark's library also served as a reliable source of information on various literature about gender violence in Ghana and activities engaged in over the years by organisations to address it.

I began collecting copies of poster advertisements and public information materials pertaining to gender violence from the first day that I visited both organisations. I then made a point of picking up copies of new fliers, posters and brochures whenever I visited both offices. My intention was to collect a wide variety of advertising material that had been used throughout the period of the campaign, but this proved impossible because of the challenges both organisations faced with storing earlier materials. To get round this, my contacts suggested visiting the archives of Ghana Television (GTV), the public service broadcaster in Ghana, for possible copies of public information commercials.

Unfortunately, the only available material on the subject was a DVD recording of a documentary that had been aired on gender violence in Ghana during the period of the campaign. I obtained a copy of this, and its viewing was 'factually' and 'representationally' useful since it gave further explanations about violence in Ghana and how DOVVSU as well as other agencies were helping to address it. It showed snippets of violent scenes as acted by a drama group as a way of re-presenting the issue to the public. In all, adding the information I gathered from here to that obtained through the interviews gave me a wider perspective from which to analyse the subject.

Even though officials from DOVVSU mentioned their deployment of billboards in the campaign, these were no longer available. However they added, that in most cases, it was the executions used in their posters or fliers, which were adapted to suit outdoor specifications and so were not likely to be so different from the posters I already had. Radio jingles were also mentioned as part of their strategy, but they were quick to add

that because airtime proved quite expensive for them, they tended to resort to going on radio programmes which targeted women especially, to talk about gender violence. It seemed clear that for research purposes, (although it would not do justice to the campaign as a whole) the corpus of poster advertisements I was able to collect, and which was itself also limited, would have to be my main source. In all, I collected twenty two (22), which appeared between 1998 when the campaign was launched and 2014, the end date for my fieldwork. On the whole these ads portrayed violent incidents involving the young as well as old, men and women, and scenes from everyday life. (See Chapter 4 for the analysis of ten (10) of these ads, and Appendix B for the other 12 not used in the focus groups plus details).

Interview and focus group dynamics

In carrying out the interviews and focus groups I was aware that the techniques needed in leading a focus group were different from those needed in a one-to-one interview with a woman who has been abused. Three other related key issues concerning the interview situation also emerged: the power dynamics, the engendering of emotion and the importance of developing trust. I discuss some of these issues here, but will expand further in chapters 5 and 6.

Possibly as a result of the perceived 'private' nature of gender violence in Ghana, or people's discomfort in sharing personal circumstances with 'unknown' others, most participants in the focus groups were uncomfortable to share that they had personally gone through violent experiences. In most cases, group members often alluded to hearsay, commonly referring to 'someone I know who …' or 'a friend of mine who …' Particularly in groups with younger participants, I observed that giggles and 'questioning looks' as some respondents were sharing their experiences, often led the latter to pause or suddenly go quiet unless I consciously prompted them. Sometimes too one member of the group aware of another's experience would virtually force them to share it even when the latter obviously did not want to do so.

At various points therefore, I had to rephrase my questions to ask 'what if you were personally found in this situation…' or 'how different would you have done …' in order to encourage some level of self-reflexivity. At other times when I engaged participants in off the record conversations after the group sessions what they then said was more

insightful. The private nature of this approach therefore provided me with the opportunity to better understand the socio–cultural lives of participants outside the artificial group setting, and better connect their responses to their lived experiences or various examples they cited during the discussion. In the course of the study therefore, I had to re-strategize by spending a little more time with participants who I observed had issues to share, and in most cases I happened to be right. In the composition of other groups, I tried to even out the ages of participants in such a way that prevented too much familiarity among people of the same age.

This reduced the 'embarrassment' that some faced and could not talk as a result of that, and also allowed the adults to chip in some advice when some views were not all that right. Unlike the main focus group discussions, however, my individual interviewees were more forthright in voicing their experiences of violence, and did not seem to mind sharing their personal details with me once a rapport had been established through my introduction as a researcher with purely academic intentions. Perhaps because I was also a woman these interviewees felt secure enough to make critical comments about male violence.

As I indicated earlier in this chapter, power relations have been an issue of concern for feminist researchers engaging in ethnography. They have tried to foreground the fact that researchers should be self-reflective about the power relations between researchers and researched. The first concern I encountered in the field related to the police. From my childhood days in Ghana, the police were those whom our parents suggested could easily be requested to arrest us when we refused to eat, played outside for too long or generally misbehaved. The upshot was that for a long time, I endeavoured to avoid them lest anything untoward happened!

With such a perception of the police and also mindful of their media representation as authority figures dealing with crime, having to interview them was not an experience I looked forward to. It was thus with a combination of nervousness and anxiety that I entered the offices of the Ghana Police Headquarters in Accra. I must say however that after introducing myself as a researcher and giving an overview of my study, the reception was cordial, and the officers in charge at the DOVVSU office offered me the assistance I needed. Nevertheless traces of my viewing them as authority figures and experts in their

field were manifest during the interviews. There was a degree of awkwardness when I requested recording the interviews – the officers were quite uncomfortable about this, and for the moment I became a bit anxious. I therefore had to explain to them my need to record the interview for later transcription and also for the purposes of analysis which could take place over a relatively long period. Thus relying on my memory over the period was unlikely to give me factual details. After this explanation and a bit of pleading, I was then allowed to record.

In addition, in most cases, they were more in charge of the discussion as a result of their familiarity with the various activities they had embarked on over the years. This also gave them a sort of power over the subject, often resulting in long and detailed explanations to questions I posed. To go round this, I had to intervene with questions from my interview guides to stay on track and avoid them redirecting the focus of my research. Additionally, in spite of the 'expert voice' with which they spoke, the interview materials I obtained through these discussion, plus the materials I collected from them provided me the opportunity to 'weigh up' and critically assess the claims they made (Lupton 1999) and representations they used during the analysis stage of my research.

In the case of the focus groups, I was more aware that although they volunteered to take part, I was orchestrating the composition of the groups and of the discussions. Two of my discussions took place in a lecture-style room where I posed more directed questions and sought answers from respondents, rather than wait to hear their contributions. Further in instances when some of my young participants made contributions which I felt were misguided or had possible negative implications, I did not let them pass but shared my knowledge or experiences on the issue to suggest another way of thinking about the issue (see Chapter 5 below).

Thus I sometimes intervened, as a 'teacher' might, in relation to what they said – an example being when a young man (Razak) voiced the view that girls of today are the cause of their own rape experiences because they dressed to provoke men. Even though in writing about ethnographic methods, Miller (2000) stress objectivity on the part of the researcher in the course of interviewing, I felt some assumptions about gender violence, especially as held by male youth could not pass 'uncorrected'.

But at the same time, notwithstanding many placing me in a position of power (evident in their respectful address) most participants, including those I interviewed on a one-to-one basis, were forthcoming: their unique experiences of violence either as victims, witnesses or through hearsay gave them the authority to speak and share their information and ideas. The interviews with 'victims' and the focus group discussions were also often marked by an emotional dynamic.

Whilst studies such as Clifford (1986 p. 13) claim that ethnographers with an insider status should keep their own experiences at an 'objective distance' during a project, feminists, however, have argued for the conducting of research in 'solidarity and cooperation' with ones participants (van Dijk 2001pp. 352-353) to produce 'socially relevant knowledge [meaning] and research findings [that are] better, more adequate, than those produced by the 'malestream' or other feminist researchers' (Abbott and Wallace 1997 p. 292) Certainly in my field work, Clifford's assertion of maintaining 'objective distance' was not possible at times.

When respondents were sharing their bitter experiences in a conversational way, the expectation was that I would appreciate their plight or at least show some sympathy. For example, in narrating incidents leading up to her divorce, Anita asked my opinion about the fact that at some point her husband decided not to give her money, even though she was not working. When she felt my response had delayed, she began getting emotional and asked whether I did not feel that was abusive enough or whether I felt he was right in doing so. When I did acknowledge the unfairness, citing a further example of a friend of mine who had also left her abusive husband for a similar reason, she was convinced that I understood and was able to continue her narration.

Similarly, in discussions about authorities, like the police, respondents were quite measured in their judgement until I cited my own examples of the delays and inconveniences I witnessed victims experiencing on the numerous occasions when I went to the police station to hold interviews. Then the tone of comments shifted and their anger and upset became evident through their exclamatory statements, such as 'The Police' ei madam, the police…' Thus a more 'intimate' exchange with participants rather than maintaining an objective distance, produced a different quality of response, one that more clearly revealed their feelings.

This intimacy was also possible because I shared a number of demographic characteristics such as nationality, gender and age with most of my participants and could have passed as a subject of the research myself (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). It also further helped with my understanding of most of their narratives since we virtually communicated on equal grounds. But to enable such responses involved building up, in the short time available, a level of trust so that participants felt 'safe' in what they could say. These more personal contributions from me helped develop that trust.

It was also striking that there was sometimes a rising emotional tension between male and female participants in group discussions. As I will discuss further in Chapter 5, it was quite common for male participants justifying their defence of violence quite strongly (through raising their voices, standing up etc) and for women in the group, who were not going to be bullied into silence, responding in a similar tone. These were situations I had to manage with some sensitivity: not being too judgemental in relation to the men but also ensuring that everyone felt that they had had a fair chance of being heard. Again it was during such heightened moments that I felt I observed people's 'real' attitudes, somewhat different sometimes from an earlier contribution they had made.

This was the case with Eddie, for example, who maintained a calm anti-gender violence stance. But as others' arguments were voiced he became more agitated, defending the view that women of today had become less submissive and therefore often called various acts of violence upon themselves. Under such circumstances, I learnt to pay more attention to the demeanour of participants since this revealed what their words did not. Given the emotional tension in mixed groups these were perhaps more interesting but also more challenging to moderate compared to the all-female groups. In the latter there was more similarity in views, even if the personal experiences were different, and a collective agreement that gender violence was a crime which should end.

If I had to deal with the participants' emotions in the discussions, I was at the same time also managing my own emotions not only in the interview situation, but once I got home. Dealing with the grim pictures painted by my 'victim participants' in particular was sometimes hard. Even though I had heard stories about abuse from various sources, coming this close was uncomfortable. In times when some discussions appeared to be overwhelming, I resorted to talk things over at home with my husband or siblings in the

bid to deal with the hard truth, that so often, those who were closest were the abusers and the 'enemies'.

Data analysis

After gathering data during fieldwork, my first step was to transcribe the interviews, and focus group discussions. I then categorised the data according to the representations used and analysed them using the main themes that emerged (Krippendorff, 2003). In addition I also considered the 'rhetorical means' employed by participants (Jäger 2001 p. 55), 'ideological statements' and other 'striking issues' (Jäger 2001 p. 56) noting how this reflected their different backgrounds. Thus throughout the analytic process, I paid attention to patterns of language use, as they interacted with each other and articulated views on gender violence, advertising and the Ghanaian society more widely. As far as the interviews with officers at DOVVSU and The Ark were concerned, I paid less attention to rhetoric and language use in the transcriptions, and rather focused on how they talked about their work in relation to gender violence, and the subsequent production of advertisements on the subject.

Largely bearing in mind what the producers and participants in my focus group discussions had to say, I proceeded to analyse the 22 poster ads I had collected. The themes I obtained from the views shared by participants or the aspects of the ads they considered more significant served as a guide in the selection and analysis of particular ads. Subsequently using Hall's idea of encoding and decoding texts, and being alert to the work of signification, the various visual / textual representations of abuse and the relation between words and images were accessed. Given these poster-ads were produced in order to 'make something happen' I also paid attention to the address to the audience/consumer to act, borrowing an approach from Pateman (1980) which suggested that advertising language is performative. I therefore analysed the ways by which the ads, (through captions and image), acted as 'directives' for doing something when abuse occurs.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have highlighted the position of feminist research in studies of media consumption and the fact that feminist studies were key to the development of ethnographically intentioned work (Gray 1992 p. 32). I also highlighted feminists' advocacy for researchers to work reflexively and critically in the field. Following from

this, I reflected on issues of methodology and research design I adopted in this study by outlining my combination of the case study approach with textual analysis and interviews (as proposed by feminist scholars and in response to Schroder's caution above) in order to ensure more valid results as well as open up possible disparities in respondents' discourses (Gray 2003, p. 72).

I then explored the details of my fieldwork, engaging with some of the successes and challenges I encountered. As will be seen in the chapters that follow, the methodology and methods I adopt and explain here, helped me incorporate audiences into my entire research process and further understand the 'behaviours, values, beliefs and practices' (Cohen and Court, 2003 p. 286), that they brought to bear in the interpretation and understanding of the anti – violence campaign. Significantly, through the strategy I adopted above, an argument in this thesis about the ideological effect of the media is developed, pointing to the fact that audiences indeed bring to bear different factors in their consumption of texts and are not always gripped by a pervasive ideology.

In the next four chapters I explore these dynamics further by foregrounding the production and analysis of the ads, and the themes raised through the interviews with 'consumers', returning as appropriate to certain aspects I have raised here.

Chapter 3

A multi-organisational approach to curb violence

Introduction

As noted in chapter 1, women's organizations and related institutions globally have deployed social marketing campaigns among other activities, to inform women of their rights and also educate a general public about the issue of gender-based violence. This chapter consequently engages with the various approaches adopted by The Ark Foundation and DOVVSU, towards addressing this issue in the country. Through a series of interviews with officials from both organisations[33], this chapter first explores their accounts on violence, based on their experiences in dealing with victims and perpetrators. This then leads to the discussion of how the "Anti-Violence campaign" came to be developed, the form it took and the methods adopted to move the issue of gender violence from the private sphere into the public domain. I also explore how awareness was raised about its prevalence and the need for people to act towards its cessation.

Patriarchy on the ground: Working with victims

Those working for The Ark and DOVVSU echo the views of feminist theorists (see above Chapter 1) who regard patriarchy – whereby 'men are the dominant sex, and are regarded as superior to women' (Longhurst et al., 2008: 81) – as a major contributory factor to the perpetration of gender violence in the country. Indeed they confirm Harcourt's view that 'the widespread violence against women, whether physical, sexual or psychological has its roots in patriarchy' (2009 p. 95). As articulated by Mr. Berko, from the Ark Foundation:

> Abuse is an ingrained behaviour in people. You see, violence is learnt, and so it takes a long time for people to unlearn these habits. The root cause of this thing is patriarchy. We live in a patriarchal society which has it that a man is always right, so our men have come to learn that under no circumstance should a woman challenge their authority. These days too, there has been a lot of education and advancement of women, and with that, men feel challenged, so there is that natural (sic) friction. The way out

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[33] See appendix for details of interviewees

for some men therefore is to abuse their women into submission.
(Interview 1, October 2013).

His comment is interesting in two aspects. He emphasises that 'violence is learnt' and needs to be 'unlearnt' but also that even though with women's advancement, patriarchal relations have shifted, women still suffer abuse on account of men feeling challenged. Additionally, when responding to my question about the gender of victims of abuse, Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Lawrencia, an official at DOVVSU, highlights the differences, (also rooted in patriarchy), in how women and men handle abuse against them:

> DSP Lawrencia: Mostly female, mostly female. 85%. The males find it difficult coming, so generally their numbers are not significant. Even for those who come they begin by asking general questions or usually say they are making enquiries on behalf of their friends. Unlike the women, who come pouring their hearts out, the men often disguise themselves. It is only after being very nice to them, and conversing with them for a long while that they begin to open up and tell us a little of what is bothering them. (Interview 2, November 2013)

> Marian: But one would think that with your outfit's commitment to helping both male and female victims, men would equally find it easy to come?

> Well, we have male victims who report, except that they often pull out early because they are shy. When they come and they see such huge numbers of women, they feel awkward [pauses] like they've gone to a maternity ward {laughs} and so do not always pursue their cases. As we ask them further details of their cases, some would even brace themselves up and quickly say, 'No she didn't beat me; she didn't do that' etc. They refuse to talk about these things and so they suffer a lot. If they come and you are very nice to them you realize that after a while they open up and they tell you lots of things.

> DSP Lawrencia: Listen, emotional issues don't have anything to do with gender. If you suffer emotionally whether you are a man or a woman, the value is the same (making reference to an advertising slogan previously used by the Bank of Ghana in their redenomination excercise). The men only hide their feelings because they tend to feel that it is a shame for people to think that 'my wife beat me' [smiles]. You see, it is the socialisation. Our society and culture has it that the man should be strong. The man should never cry. If you are a man you should never show signs of weakness. Crying or running to tell somebody about your problem, belongs to a woman's world. So for me, it is the society

that has made men so, and this is fuelled by their ego, making it easy for them to be abusive and difficult for them to accept defeat (Interview 2, November 2013).

In another discussion with Mr Berko and I, Mr. Asare (also from The Ark) highlighted the fact that they have a relatively small number of men coming to them, compared to that of female victims in response to their communication messages on gender violence. Thus confirming the notion that women were better at acknowledging their suffering at the hands of men:

> Mr. Asare: We have a greater number of our responses coming from women. During the Intimate Partner Violence campaign[34], for instance, lots of women commented, liked and shared our posts on Facebook, Twitter, and other social media that we used. We also had a number of women re-tweeting our tweets. It therefore proved the fact that we kind of attracted the attention of more women than men (Interview 1, October 2013).

> Marian: Can I then say that the women responded more to your campaign?

> Mr. Asare: I would say yes, because our communication messages are originally sent out to reach everybody. However the women happen to be more touched than the men and so participate in the conversation more often.

> Mr Berko: It is because they suffer the most.

> Mr.Asare: Yeah, and these messages seem as if we are talking on their behalf (Interview 1, October 2013).

Interestingly, our discussions further revealed that women could equally be abusers and perpetrators of violence. Ursula alluded to this as she reflected on her daily encounters in the office:

> Some of the women too are terrible. Their mouths are more than swords[35]. If you are not careful you will tend to always blame the men, but some women can be very abusive. At times you wonder whether they will go back and sleep with the same men they do certain to. But anyway, that is not for us to talk about. Ours is to talk about their empowerment. After all, the men have no right to beat the women.

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[34] This was another campaign instituted by The Ark to continue its education on gender violence in Ghana
[35] In metaphorically using the sword, Ursula refers to the great extent to which some women go in verbally abusing their partners.

Thus, in the last part of the statement above, Ursula acknowledged that violence really goes both ways, the difference being that male perpetrators tend to be more common. The interviews with officials from both organisation also revealed their attribution of violence to low levels of literacy, especially among women. As noted by Vida, [also from DOVVSU]:

> Women in Ghana need a lot more education to enable them to rise above abuse. … Some of them know about what constitutes domestic violence and so on... but others do not know about it at all. They do not even understand that whatever they are going through is abuse and needs to be reported (Interview 2, November 2013).

This view is taken further by Amoakohene who argues that the lack of knowledge about violence and existing laws contributes immensely to the pervasiveness of gender violence in the country (cited in Bashiru 2012, p. 97). There is thus a lack of understanding for some women not only that what they are enduring is abuse, but also that, various acts of abuse do constitute criminal offences and that there are avenues of support available to them.. This situation is compounded, the anti-abuse workers suggest, by the interpretation of laws being left to law enforcers who themselves may have entrenched patriarchal views; thus making it difficult for these organizations and other agencies to do their jobs. As the ADF VI report points out:

> The protection of the girl-child against discrimination, ill health, malnutrition, violence, FGM, forced marriage, trafficking and exploitation has been partly constrained by lack of knowledge by those who can offer such protection (ADF V1, 2008: p.30).

Further, gender violence also stems from the economic dependency of women on men, a dynamic embedded in the society's way of life. There has been a discrepancy traditionally between unpaid work (domestic, reproductive, care and support) performed by some women in Ghana, and the relatively higher earnings of their male counterparts who engage in paid work. Even in situations where women do engage in paid work, this inequality continues. According to Phyllis (an official from DOVVSU), recollecting interviews with clients, women often believe that 'as for a woman, even if your money is plenty you still need a little bit from your husband to support you'.

Phyllis is, however, quick to add that:

> I believe that women should live above this sort of mentality. I am a salaried worker. If my counterpart, who is a male, is using this same salary to take care of me, his wife, and children, then I should also be able to feel very competent to take care of my husband and children. But we live in a situation where a woman feels that 'so long as I am a woman, my husband should take care of me'.

In the view of these workers, the dependency of women on men, especially in circumstances where the latter do not have enough funds to support the whole family, often results in violence. In addition, women's, dependency on their partners or husbands also means that victims may be unable to leave abusive relationships for fear of their inability to look after themselves and their children. Ursula [from DOVVSU] explains that:

> Women sometimes withdraw their cases from us because of their state of unemployment and home safety, reasons for which they rely solely on their partners. Most of them are married 'to their husband's homes'. For some, their former houses no longer keep a place for them the moment they marry, because they may have been sharing rooms with several other people. Coupled with the fact that they don't earn a living on their own, there is usually no place to return to in situations of abuse (Interview 2, November 2013).

This argument was further advanced from a man's point of view, when I asked her what she believed the causes of gender violence in the country were:

> Show of force, or controlling behaviour of men in relationships. The men feel they should be in control of everything and will do this at all cost. They want women to bow to them. The complaint they often bring is that 'when I talk you talk back, you don't respect me anymore and you are disgracing me in public'. Usually, abuse is what follows next. Sometimes, too, money is the problem. There was a case where the woman was becoming more industrious than the man and he felt she was becoming too powerful. He just took all her things and burnt them as a way of retaining his power by making her economically dependent on him. They feel that as 'bosses', they should use any means possible to keep women under control (Interview 2, November 2013).

To add to this point, Mr. Berko also cited how people sometimes revere the (economic) power of men to the point of holding them blameless in abuse cases and placing blame firmly on the victim:

> There are so many instances of unequal power display in many aspects of society due to women's reliance on men. With the issue of rape for instance, most people happen to feel and think that it is always the victim's fault. They either blame it on the victim's consumption of alcohol, or their way of dressing. In fact, they blame it on any other thing apart from the perpetrators themselves, because most of the time, it is these same perpetrators who the victims rely on for their survival (Interview 1, October 2013).

For victims of abuse who come from very poor backgrounds, their economic situation is even worse. As Vida narrates:

> After people report rape cases for example, the victims are required to go for a medical report to back their case during the trial and probably also receive medical treatment. All these cost money and even in situations where people are covered by the National Health Insurance Scheme, they sometimes have to pay for medication because the scheme does not cover all… More often than not, the poor victims get stuck along the way because they simply cannot afford it. To avoid all this trouble, some may simply go to a pharmacy shop, buy some medicine to use, and move on, and sometimes a young victim may get her mother to further placate her by buying her an egg[36] and saying to her "it will be okay". They go away suffering silently.

Thus the state of poverty in which many women find themselves, not only contributes to the abuse they encounter, but also affects the sort of care and support they receive afterwards. This however was not to suggest that the 'well to do' were exempt from abuse. As Vida recounts:

> Even though some people suffer abuse due to their poor state those 'high up there' also equally suffer. They sometimes wish to come out of their situations, but think about their status. They would rather keep the title "Mrs" than have any other. I stayed here quite late one day and a lady came in. When she came she asked whether I was alone. After a brief interaction with her I learnt that she was a judge. A big person. All she wanted was for someone to listen to her and console her. She said she couldn't

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36 Eggs in traditional Ghana are believed to be food for one's spirit, thus on special occasions such as birthdays or an anniversary, people are given eggs to eat for their inner spirit to be happy. Similarly, a person may be given an egg to eat to console his or her sorrowful spirit.

> leave because people will not even believe them. She was suffering emotionally.
>
> She wasn't being beaten but was suffering deep down, psychologically. Some people replay the abusive words spoken to them and they live it. They look in their mirrors and start accepting the fact that they are useless, good for nothing stinking objects. They don't want to look good anymore. With the physical abuse you can cover it up at times, but with the emotional ones, hmmm, people's tolerance levels are so different and it therefore affects them in different ways.

My interviewees from the Ark and DOVVSU also described that gender violence had become naturalised and thus trivialised by many in the society, so giving rise to the suffering of a large number of women. In their view, the ideology of masculine dominance was perpetuated through the silencing of women but also their 'acceptance' of abuse as 'natural' and a given in daily life. In tracing the history of the setting up of DOVVSU, Lawrencia pointed to the fact that:

> Before DOVVSU was set up, disputes among couples were trivialised and seen as family issues which were not to be discussed openly. There was no unit in the police service that handled issues of men and women, marriage, relationships, disputes among couples, and things like that because of the view that these were private issues better dealt with at home. As a result, even when the unit was set up, people who came initially to report had to brave their shyness so much because they felt they were opening up domestic issues (Interview 2, November 2013).

At another point in the interview, explaining why the perpetrators behave as they do, she commented:

> When we invite perpetrators, most of them respond with anger because in their view 'I am disciplining you small (in a minor way) and you have brought me to the police. You will come and meet me in the house'. Sometimes by the time the women go back home, their belongings have already been thrown out (Interview 2, November 2013).

She further explained that the reason for such anger is that for these men, 'disciplining women' is considered their prerogative and in fact, a normal way of life. For them to be taken up on it, therefore, is a challenge to their authority, which cannot be accepted. Similarly, she noted that for many women too, in rural areas especially, it was normal for their husbands to beat them or to be physically abusive towards them: women accept these cultural values and do not usually have access to any information on how to assert their.

In recounting an incident which occurred during one of his campaign activities, Mr Berko also confirmed the acceptance of violence by some women. He recounted how, during a feedback session on what his audience thought about violence, a woman argued that she felt that some women really deserved the abuse they encountered. For her, if women did not respect their partners as heads of the relationship, whatever form of discipline meted out to them, was in order. It was these examples which convinced the anti-abuse workers that for many women, abuse was ingrained, often to the point where they sometimes even expected it.

They also pointed out that gender inequality also contributed to the continuity of other problematic cultural practices such as Female Genital Mutilation, widowhood rights, and forced marriages, which are still regarded as normative in some communities, in spite of their effects on women and girls. Without 'blaming' women, their inability to resist undergoing such rites or speak against them is thus regarded by the workers as further contributing to the perpetration of violence in Ghana.

But according to Mr. Berko, another factor naturalising violence in Ghana relates to religion. He referred to the citing of biblical quotes and, teachings that admonished women to be submissive in relationships which were often taken out of context and used to justify abuse. His view was corroborated in The Ark's manual for Christian churches which stated that:

> Biblical calls for wives to consider their husbands as 'heads of the house' and 'submit completely to them just as the church submits itself to Christ' (Ephesians 5: 22); were examples of quotes often taken out of context and used by people (often perpetrators) to cover up abuse (Wilson 2006: 2).

As discussed further in the manual, some victim's responses to these calls often meant they refrained from reporting the abuse they experienced because it meant disobedience to the principles espoused in their faith. The manual also raised the issue that, even though religious institutions were sometimes the first point of call for victims when they decided to report their abusers, some church leaders were not firm enough with perpetrators, often because of such biblical admonitions. This resulted in the situation whereby 'several victims/survivors reported to other agencies for help because of their dissatisfaction with responses received when they approached their respective churches' (Wilson 2006 p.2).

Ursula also cited religion and the inequality it espouses as a contributory factor, not only to the perpetration of gender violence but to women's suffering in silence:

> Sometimes, religion also acts as a road block for some people. Some women are brainwashed into thinking that religion endorses the male power over them and as such they have to cower to everything that the men do and not react. As a result they go through so many terrible things without telling anyone (Interview 2, November 2013).

I return to this subject of religion and gender violence in chapter 6, where participants in focus group discussion also raise the issue of Islam, and how some of its norms and values contribute to the perpetration of gender violence. In my discussion with DOVVSU, the muting of some women in relation to the practices of law enforcement agencies in the administration of justice, also came up. This issue emerged as Phyllis discussed the challenges faced by DOVVSU in achieving its aims to 'prevent violence, apprehend and prosecute perpetrators'. She asked rhetorically 'what do we do'?

> Even though we receive a lot of complaints, sometimes the facilities to handle them are not available. The lack of personnel to be present especially in the remote villages, and even sometimes the transportation to such places is always a problem (Interview 2, November 2013).

She followed up this comment by highlighting the frustrations victims encounter with the legal system:

> At times, we go and arrest them. But it takes so long for cases to be called… Victims get confused as nobody tells them what is going on. They go to court every day, and nobody is calling their cases because the state has to provide lawyers who are often very few and unavailable. Victims have to pay a filing fee at the court before their cases are heard and these people just can't afford it. For those who are able to pay too, cases that are finally called usually go on forever. Most victims therefore abandon their cases (Interview 2, November 2013).

Thus a combination of women's poverty and the inadequacies of the courts and the police as enforcers of the law, often leads to a block in prosecuting perpetrators who sometimes escaped any punishment only to return home either to be more abusive or to neglect the woman completely if the latter depended on them. Whichever way it happened, the victims suffered twice.

As she sadly commented, and with some frustration, later on in the interview:

> If we look at the bigger picture, it is scary… it is. It makes you feel that you are working but there is something that is pulling you back. It also makes us feel that the other organisations around us which are supposed to help us are not making it easy for us to reach that equitable, free reporting and timely response goals that we have set for ourselves (Interview 2, November 2013).

In summary, what emerges from the views expressed by those working for The Ark and DOVVSU is that the socialisation of women to be dependent on men, the continuing reinforcement of certain cultural practices, coupled with a religious endorsement of masculine authority, contribute to the abuse of women in Ghana. Furthermore, these practices act to naturalise violence against women, muting women in the process. More generally, unequal power relations seem to be 'common sense'. In addition, the plight of women is further worsened by the limited infrastructure available to support them and the inadequacies of the police and legal system.

The need for education

Thus, from their experiences with victims and perpetrators (and through a high level of consultation as part of the preparation leading up to the passage of the Domestic Violence Bill), Ghana's activists believed a programme to educate the public about the issue of gender violence and the various tenets of the DV bill was needed in order to better protect women from abuse. According to Mr. Berko:

> Our initial focus was to sensitise women on issues relating to gender-based violence, and to show them what to do when facing abuse.

Phyllis foregrounded her unit's strategic plan for fighting abuse.

> We have the medium-to-long term, and the long term plan. For us, because we work under a bigger umbrella which is the police, our agenda, just like theirs [The Ark], is to work to prevent crime or make sure that crime trends are reduced. We work in line with that agenda. In the long term however, we wish that women would become more assertive. They should be able to say no and have alternatives. Women should be able to know what is good for them and take it. Women should not rely solely on men. We are not saying that women should disrespect their husbands. No that is not how God made us? I, however, think that women have taken

> the backbench for too long. We have allowed the status quo to inhibit us. For women, I think we need more girl talk, to be able to say I am so powerful and can do anything a man can do. Generally, some women are doing very well, but we need to pull along the other women at the grass roots.

She subsequently explained how in the realisation that abused victims had additional support needs apart from seeking justice, the name of the police unit WAJU (women and juvenile unit) was changed to DOVVSU (Domestic violence and victim support unit). She indicated, for example, that whilst some needed accommodation, or medical assistance, others needed psychological counselling. For these reasons the organisation re- strategized from just apprehending and meting out punishment to perpetrators of abuse, to that of providing support or guidance to the abused. They subsequently collaborated with other organisations with the ultimate aim of empowering women. Vida [from DOVVSU] notes:

> Now we have FIDA, WILDAF, and WISE (who provide us with counselling services) as partners that we closely work with. We are also working with 'International Needs - MARIE STOPES', who assist abused women that are referred to them with birth control alternatives or any other related thing that they might need. We also have clinical psychologists in our unit even though there are only two in the whole of Ghana. It is therefore only in Accra that our clients have access to them. They have, however, been of immense help to us (Interview 2, November 2013).

According to Mr. Berko, this collaboration was necessary,

> Because of the need for the expertise and assistance of all institutions to help with educating the entire population, rid society of attitudes and practices which nurture and tolerate discrimination and violence against women and children (Interview 1, October 2013).

The mass education campaign to bring about much-needed change in relation to gender violence in Ghana has developed on two broad levels: the first through addressing those in authority and the second focusing on the general public. Various towns in Ghana are each ruled by their own chiefs, sub chiefs and queen mothers who are installed to sustain and preserve cultural practices and traditions handed down to them by their forefathers. As such they are very influential and accorded the respect that comes with their office. Subsequently, the Ark and DOVVSU acknowledge the authority of these leaders, and consider them important partners in bringing about cultural changes needed to curb

violence. These organisations therefore work closely with the chiefs, sub chiefs and queen mothers on the issue of gender violence, trying to make them aware of the problematic consequences of particular cultural practices which affect the lives of women and children. The aim of this education is to encourage such leaders to make cultural interventions in their localities to promote and enact cultural and social transformation.

The Ark and DOVVSU have adopted several lines of action, firstly communicating how certain cultural practices lead to and endorse various acts of gender violence which have devastating impact on women, and secondly, helping them to appreciate that as regional leaders it is their duty to work with others to change the situation. According to Ursula (from DOVVSU):

> First and foremost, we hold a lot of training workshops for community leaders such as chiefs, queen mothers, pastors, teachers, police etc. We know that the queen mothers, pastors and opinion leaders settle so many violence related issues out of court, sometimes because of their geographical locations, difficulty in finding transportation, and the cost involved among others. We, therefore, hold these workshops to educate them on the negative impact of gender violence. We always ensure that through such education, the queen mothers, for instance, appreciate the fact that the impact of violence on the victim is so much, it is devastating and is also long term, so that they, in turn, see it as their duty to abolish negative cultural practices. We therefore train them on how to go about these issues when reported to them and also encourage them to work closely with our regional offices (Interview 2, November 2013).

Lawrencia corroborated this process:

> We have also organised a lot of community mobilisation projects … where we have educated chiefs and queen mothers on the negative consequences of abuse. We then appeal to them to imagine being in the shoes of the victims and subsequently do their part in helping them. Usually with their consent, we begin our educational exercise for the people gathered there (Interview 2, November 2013).

Mr. Berko, from The Ark, also highlighted how the activist organisations depended on these traditional leaders as 'gatekeepers' to gaining access to community members and thus the former's education on gender violence was important:

> What we normally do before entering any community is to see their chiefs or queen mothers and brief them on our mission for coming to them. Once we convince them about the aim of the programme to their people, they grant us access. Between November and December 2011, for instance, we did 25 Community Durbars in the East Akim Municipality, over a period of two weeks. These activities were part of our community awareness project which aimed at educating the rural folk, especially women and girls on domestic violence (Interview 1, October 2013).

However, this was not to say that the gender activists always had an easy time convincing traditional rulers who often held strong opinions which they had lived by all their lives. As DSP Lawrencia notes:

> Sometimes, after the education, some chiefs, counsellors, pastors and others do understand and sympathise with the issue. For those who do, they often collaborate with us during our activities. Others also sometimes may ask in relation to rape for instance that "is it not just sex, after all don't we all do it"? The challenge we often face in such circumstances is how well to convince them to disabuse their minds of such thinking. How we sometimes go about it is by citing more examples of the harrowing effects of such acts with the hope of helping them understand the fact that it is not just sex, but so much more (Interview 2, November 2013).

In addition, as enforcers of the law on gender violence, the activists agreed that the police needed 'education on responding skills, referrals and everything in relation to dealing with survivors of abuse' (Mr. Berko). In the activist's view this is critical, in the sense that if victims are unable to report their problems in a supportive environment, the possibility of recoiling into their shells becomes very high, defeating the mission of breaking the silence. Ursula from DOVVSU indicated their commitment to this view:

> At the onset of the unit's operations, the police were educated and sensitised on the nature of gender violence and the important role they played in ensuring its eradication. They were also encouraged that even if they did not have a DOVVSU branch within their unit, they should refer relevant cases to a unit closest to them for the necessary assistance to be given to victims. DOVVSU is working towards attaining a situation whereby domestic violence can be freely reported, victims can actually feel that they are heard equitably, and try as much as possible to give a timely response to victims. We also aim at timely intervention

and victims reporting in a conducive environment. Therefore educating our own people is key (Interview 2, November 2013).

In discussing the organisations they collaborated with, Ursula once again acknowledged the training given to the police:

> Before 2005, UNICEF and UNFPA[37] worked in collaboration with us by way of providing us with training and also computers to help us keep our data. We have also had the Ark Foundation, who assist us with capacity training to equip the police with the necessary information needed in doing their work. They also provide us with resource persons for our Capacity Building Training Workshops. So far, we have had very good collaboration with our partners in terms of capacity training, logistics and support for our victims.

In turn, The Ark also alluded to the importance of educating the police when they recounted what they saw as some of their successes in earlier community projects involving other key figures. As Mr. Berko put it:

> We have been able to bring together chiefs, elders, opinion leaders, teachers, and women's associations (eg, seamstresses and hairdressers associations) representatives from DOVVSU (the police) and Social Welfare Department to participate in our workshops and durbars and educate them on gender violence (Interview 1, October 2013).

Activists thus realise that for social and political transformation to be achieved, education must also be provided to people in authority without whose cooperation, the wider objectives of change cannot be realised.

In the second strand of education, the organisations have focused on enabling people to identify what counts as abuse and to become aware of the cultural and social practices that support patriarchy and the perpetuation of abuse. This educational strand also stresses the need for people (but women especially) to know their rights in order to speak up on abuse and know where to seek help. With respect to achieving the above, Ursula states:

> In fact, we do go on a lot of training sessions and outreach in schools, churches, and communities as our way of educating the

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[37] United Nations Population Fund

public on gender violence. Sometimes, too, the request to organise these programmes comes from the leaders of these institutions, usually after some incidence may have occurred. When we go to such places, we start by giving the people examples of abusive cases that we have dealt with in the past for them to know how abuse occurs. We inform them about when it was reported, who brought the case up, where it was reported, and the protection that the complainants received. This last part is very important because of the fear women have about being targeted by some perpetrators (Interview 2, November 2013).

One point of interest here is that the 'teaching' starts by giving specific examples of abusive cases. Phyllis further added that:

We have also done a lot of community mobilisation[38] projects. For instance, we visited Ampene in the Central region and Adjeikrom in the western region, where, through the efforts of their chiefs and queen mothers, we were able to provide adequate education to the people there. We have also done some work with refugee camps under our community outreach programmes, where the camp managers and volunteers do their own advanced mobilisation and get the people ready for us before we go.

The adoption of this strategy to reach people was further emphasised by The Ark, as Mr. Berko stated:

As a women's rights' organisation we have a special focus to ensure that women know about their rights, and acts of abuse that affect them. Through our campaign, we educate survivors of abuse on where to go in times of difficulty. We organise street durbars, market campaigns and community sensitisation activities to educate the general public about their rights to enable them to stand up for themselves. Similarly, with young women we do things on leadership, personal empowerment and skills to equip them on negotiating for their own safety. (Interview 1, October 2013).

Here it is made clear how the educational campaign has both the narrower focus of addressing the specific issue of abuse but also adopts the wider brief of trying to facilitate a 'personal empowerment' Mr Berko also explains how at these community events The Ark provides on the spot services for those who have been abused and tries to make those who become 'the first points of call', aware of the importance of not hiding abuse but reporting it 'as soon as possible'. He outlines that:

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[38] See appendix A for the map of Ghana detailing towns where some education has taken place.

> Our campaigns usually go with training and integrated support services so we try to always do as much as we can to give all the information that the public needs. During our durbars, we also go along with some social workers to provide on the spot counselling for victims, and do referrals where necessary. As part of our activities, we train some of the community folk to become "police" men and women in the community to act as the first points of call in case an incident occurred. These people are sensitised, among other things, not to hide abuse but report it as soon as possible for the right action to be taken (Interview 1, October 2013).

It is evident that the activists hold that education is important for all Ghanaians, whatever their position: for those who know about the existence of various acts of violence but accept it as a way of life, for others who do not realise that their circumstances could be classified as abuse and for those who are in positions of influence, whether male or female. Education is seen to play a key role in 'consciousness raising' or reorienting the thinking of leaders no less than the general public about the issue of gender violence.

The anti - violence campaign and 'advertising': Highlighting and redefining gender violence

In 1999, exactly a year after the killing of a large number of women in Ghana (see Introduction to thesis) and the setting up of the Women and Juvenile Unit (WAJU), The Ark foundation launched its anti-violence campaign in the East Akim Municipality, a rural area in Ghana, as part of its Community Awareness Programme (CAP). Selected as one of Ghana's highly populated rural areas with a total of about seven thousand, three hundred and ten people, meant the exposure of the campaign to a relatively large audience with the hope of beginning a 'new' conversation among Ghanaians. Launching the campaign during a period when activists efforts were at its peak, gave it the much needed significance. Having started According to Berko, The Ark's aims with this particular campaign was to,

> Bring about the dismantling of systems, practices and attitudes that dehumanise women and children through *active engagement with individuals, civil society and state institutions*. Additionally, we seek to support women and children survivors of gender-based violence and abuse through the provision of *integrated* services (Interview 1, October 2013, my emphases).

To achieve these aims, Mr. Berko attested to the benefit of bringing different skill sets and knowledge together to offer a holistic approach in the fight against gender violence in Ghana. To this end, he continued to explain that some chiefs, opinion leaders, women's groups, representatives from DOVVSU and the social welfare department were trained to understand issues pertaining to gender violence and how to deal with it effectively. Between 2007 and 2009, (when funding was secured) The Ark embarked on an intensive campaign and records a total of twenty-five (25) awareness campaigns held in designated districts in and outside Accra. (Annual report, 2007/2008).In explaining the various activities that constituted the campaign, a key issue that emerged was the activists' conviction in the ability of advertising to communicate effectively. Notably, Mr. Berko:

> We use a lot of advertising materials in our communication to get the attention of people, so that they can identify with what we are saying and doing. In terms of delivery during our open market campaigns, for example, the adverts help us break down messages to the barest minimum so that everybody can understand them (Interview 1, October 2013).

Similarly, DSP Lawrencia attested to their reliance on advertising in answer to my question on their communication strategies:

> Adverts? As for advertisements we do them a lot. We use a lot of posters and flyers when we go out on our outreach programmes and leave some everywhere we go, so that people can carry the message along with them not only in their minds, but physically as well. (Interview 2, November 2013).

For these activists, therefore, the significance of advertising lay in its ability to make ideas simple and tangible for everybody and thus gained their attention. In the form of a leaflet the ideas could also be carried away with them. Vida stresses the impact of the visual element of the advertisements which, representing abusive scenarios in daily life give the latter a seriousness perhaps not previously considered. Such representations could empower:

> Communication through advertisements is key for us because when our target see the pictures and understand the gravity of the issue, they are sometimes the first to run to the courts to report violence whenever it occurs (Interview 2, November 2013).

She illustrated this point through the example of female porters[39] implying that hitherto, this group of girls, mostly rural and illiterate migrants to the urban centres, silently endured abuse in the course of doing their jobs and often did not know where to go to report it or how to approach the issue.

However, by showing them the posters and talking through how abuse occurs and how they could protect and defend themselves, they were able to understand their own experiences much better and increasingly took the initiative to report them. In her view, this was one of the factors accounting for DOVVSU recording a rise in the number of cases reported by members of this group. For the activists, the representation of violence in advertising posters was a means of making the issue relevant to their largely illiterate target audiences. They were convinced that the advertising images were meaningful to women because they were already familiar with such scenarios in their daily lives. As part of their programme of educating women about their rights and how to act in the case of abuse, advertising was a useful medium they could mobilise, to stimulate conversations and discussions and the broader campaign of fostering change.

Given the views of some scholars, including feminists (see chapter 1 above), the commitment expressed by these workers to advertising for progressive ends and to change society is interesting. It is also pertinent that the organizations involved considered it important to rely on their own 'knowledges' and experiences about the issue of gender violence and about particular instances of violence, and to produce their own advertising materials, rather than work in partnership with 'experts' in the field, ie. Advertising agencies[40]. They believed they could better create an awareness campaign tuning into their knowledge about the abuse women experienced. The importance of this was emphasised by Mr. Berko:

> Mr Berko: Basically, our emphasis is on the messages we give, so in production, we focus on using visuals of women who have been abused or have gone through terrible times in order to communicate the reality of abuse.

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[39] They are usually young girls who travel from mostly deprived communities to the cities, often to do menial to earn a living. They often lodge with family who may have settled in the cities earlier or pay to sleep in front of peoples stores in the open markets.

[40] As the interviewees explained later, they also couldn't afford the services of the advertising agencies, unless the latter did it pro-bono.

Marian: Wow. So even with the development of creatives and strategies, you often do not rely on any communication experts?

Mr Berko: Mostly not. Everything is done right from here. (Interview 1, October 2013).

From this explanation, it is evident that a level of 'realism' in the story being told was critical to how they believed their advertisements should be constructed and in how they would 'work'. For them, this was an appropriate means through which they could convince women, especially, to realise that their often devastating experiences were not 'natural' or 'normal', but criminal and to be considered as such and reported. A further level of 'realism' involved victims themselves talking and engaging women emotionally. Vida describes how:

Sometimes, when we have victims who are ready to talk, we take them along with us on our trips for people to see that we are not fabricating stories [in our posters and flyers]. When they hear the victims talk, they are touched often to the point of tears.

For both the DOVVSU and Ark, using such victims as models was key to them especially because they often did not have the funds to pay for professional models which the ad agencies sometimes proposed. Whilst highlighting the 'realism' of their advertising materials, these producers of the advertisements were mindful of ethical considerations as well, evident, for example in Mr Asare's assertion that they would not use 'skimpy women' as models in their advertisements. The DOVVSU also emphasised seeking people's consent before using their pictures in educational programmes and, considering the intimate nature of gender violence, were careful in their choice of imagery not to offend the sensibilities of their clients or detract attention from any core messages.

Likewise they were cautious in the language used in advertisements, keeping to simple constructions in order to facilitate easy understanding for a relatively large, uneducated population. Additionally, both language and visuals were pre-tested among members of the unit before being sent out for printing. As DSP Lawrencia stressed, this was a key part of the process:

We write the copy to be attached to the drawn pictures (and sometimes photographs) and pass them round the office for people to give their impressions or views. Once we collate

people's views about the visuals and language used, we effect the necessary changes and send them out for printing. (Interview 2, November 2013).

Mr Asare also echoed this view in another interview as he explained their use of photos in the production of their poster advertising:

> We use our computers, internet sources and the like, to get pictures to be used, and once we pass them round for people's comments or criticisms, we develop them into a poster and take them out for printing.

Thus interviewees from both organisations revealed how through the pretesting of both text and visuals, they gauged how audiences might react to their advertising, and also the flexibility they had in adjusting the advertisements based on the feedback they gained. Despite the commitment of The Ark and DOVVSU to the fight against gender violence, both organisations acknowledged financial constraints as the major setback to their work. In highlighting this major challenge, Phyllis said: 'to be honest, advertisements and its cost has been a big challenge'. She states that because government support for their unit, in terms of funding was insufficient, they relied on a lot of sponsorship which was often difficult to access. She further noted:

> Phyllis: We think that if we could do more of the radio and television adverts it would have been good. We have talked about this, but the problem is the funds to support us. Some media houses decided to run some of the adverts for us. They only did it for a short while. When you don't see it and call to find out, they will say "oh give us some time, you will see it" and that may be the end.
>
> Marian: So from what you are saying, the main problem inhibiting advertising is that of finance.
>
> Phyllis: Exactly.

Later in the interview, she also stressed how financial constraints affected their ability to go into the rural areas:

> We do not believe in centralising our activities only in the cities. We want to go down, because that is where the problem is… that is where the problem is. In Accra, even if you do not go to

> DOVVSU, you can still have a neighbour to talk to about your problems and they will help you with suggestions. But in the villages, they don't even know that what they are going through is abuse. So they often remain in this situation till something disastrous happens. The children who are also watching, learn bad things, and the cycle continues. We think that expanding the DOVVSUs will help us a lot but it all boils down to money.

Similarly Mr Berko lamented the fact that they could not embark on activities as often as they wished because of irregular donor support. For example, he notes that after the launch of the campaign in 1999, nothing substantial was done in terms of communication until 2007 when they received donor support. Additionally, he reiterated how this challenge slowed down their ability to constantly refresh their campaign since they could pay for 'models' to be used in their advertisements to attain the necessary impact.

Conclusion

Through their discussion of the patriarchal constraints leading to women's abusive experiences, this chapter has explored how interviewees from The Ark and DOVVSU established gender violence as a multifaceted issue but one in which cultural values were important. It has also showed how these respective organizations worked on the basis that, the curbing of violent behaviours first requires an educational programme to change people's attitudes. Further discussing the broader anti - violence campaign, this chapter has also offered an account of the production and use of poster ads in particular as an educational kit to re-orient what people knew and how they thought about gender violence. In relation to this, one of the interesting issues highlighted is the significance attached to 'realism' in the advertisements produced.

It emerged that The Ark and DOVVSU saw this as a way of engaging the public emotionally, in a way that would move them to act on the information passed to them through the campaign, in the event of anyone experiencing it. More generally it is clear from the interviews that they hoped long term to change the wider society's patriarchal attitudes and practices which subordinate women and endorse violence, especially against women and children.

In the next chapter therefore, I analyse some specific posters and returning to ideas raised here, explore how these ads might organise and construct particular meanings of gender violence.

Chapter 4

Breaking the silence – An analysis of the poster advertisements

Introduction

In this chapter I examine how posters in the anti-violence campaign construct and critique gender violence. I explore how visual and linguistic codes and conventions are combined to encode meanings of gender violence in particular ways, such that viewers are likely to recognize and, depending on circumstances, identify with the scenarios represented. Furthermore, I analyse the linguistic address to viewers which aims to spur them on to break the silence on abuse and, more generally to exhort action to end violence against women and/or punish perpetrators. The chapter draws attention to the ways in which the posters pick up on some cultural dimensions to Ghanaian marriages and family lives.

In light of the activists' assertion that some victims are not aware of their abusive state to even consider seeking help, the chapter also looks at their use of the poster medium as a channel for circulating the campaign's messages. Through these discussions, I ascertain how people's consciousness (whether of those who are victims, perpetrators or wider public) was raised to the fact of abuse and its effects. On the whole, the chapter explores how the issue of gender violence was moved from the private into the public sphere, thus making it a legitimate object of discussion. Before engaging in a detailed analysis of the posters however, I first offer an account of the broader campaign materials deployed.

Using the media; the appeal of poster advertisements

In her comment on the extensive amount of work done by activists and non-governmental organisations towards fighting gender violence, Fried notes that 'although violence against women is no longer a taboo subject, the challenge now is [how] to make it socially unacceptable (2003 p. 90). In an acknowledgement this assertion and in a reflection on how the Ark reached the entire public with its messages about the unacceptability of violence, Mr. Berko stated that 'a lot of work needs to be done' (Interview 1, October 2013), and this includes the ideological work of media by way of reorienting people to think and act differently in their daily lives. Thus for the purposes of public education, both the Ark and DOVVSU deployed a wide array of media to communicate with the public in a way that would leave a lasting impression on their minds. Some of these

included poster advertisements, bill boards, brochures, fliers, radio and television interviews. Other forms were engagements with the youth through social media in the effort to better reach them where they predominated. According to Mr. Berko:

> Well we agree that the media is a very important tool in disseminating information, so we use it a lot and do not necessarily settle on any particular one over the other. We use different media at different times, depending on the focus that we have. With the youth programmes, we use a lot of the social media, because they are mostly on these sites. For instance, with our programme on 'Intimate Partner Violence', we realised that it will go down well with the youth, because they were the ones often involved in these dating relationships. For a huge part of the campaign therefore, we dwelt a lot on using social media (Interview 1, October 2013).

He described further:

> We have a Facebook page, a twitter account, and a You Tube link. We subsequently put up the messages developed on these sites and, as expected, we get quite a number of following. We also send posts and pictures of some of our activities and the people involved, and we have people liking us and following our pages and our interactions.

Thus through these efforts, awareness was created among the youth by getting them involved in the campaign's activities towards fighting violence. Further considering the society's relatively low levels of education (as discussed in the introduction to the study above) people's rural urban migration in search of better lives, and the high prevalence of gender violence in the rural areas where traditional customs are practised the most, the ARK and DOVVSU deployed particular media in ways that took account of mobility and illiteracy. As Ursula explained:

> We participate in radio and television interviews and sometimes have specific slots on some stations where we solely educate the public. We used to have a programme on Asempa Fm (a local radio station) every Tuesday, where we created a lot of awareness about gender violence. We had a jingle composed in different languages for us for free and we only had to pay copyright charges. Some radio stations also aired these jingles for free for a specified period and this helped us in many ways because since we could reach our illiterate brothers and sisters as well (Interview 2, November 2013).

From the above, Ursula revealed the benefits radio afforded them as a result of its flexibility in language use. She explained later on that since advertising material – jingles in different languages – could be easily and cheaply, produced and broadcast, radio was particularly important to them.   Both organisations further highlighted how advertisements, in the form of billboards, posters, fliers, and other print materials were also key to them. Alert to people's different situations and mobility, Vida for example attested to the benefit of billboards during the entire campaign:

> The billboards that you have seen were donated by a philanthropist and he identified some areas that he wanted them to be placed. If you observe closely you will see that it also has the logo of the Ghana AIDS commission on it. He wanted to look at domestic violence in the HIV context. Through these efforts we have been quite successful in terms of letting people know what to do in situations of abuse. Being able to show our visuals in very large sizes as you see with billboards, and placing them at vantage areas helped us make our information so visible for people everywhere to see.

The latter part of Vida's statement resonates with Hutchinson's view that the 'large sizes' of posters enabled them to be read clearly at a distance (cited in Sontag, 1970) and as Bernstein puts it, they 'shout louder' (1997: 118; see also Timmers 1998). Further as a 'broadcast medium' billboards were particularly advantageous to the organisations because they reached a wide range of people and the executions were also usually simple for them to undertake (Bernstein, 1997). Similar to Vida's assertion, Mr. Berko emphasised the 'easy understanding' that posters and similar materials also allow. This emerged through his discussion on the various workshops they held for other non-governmental organisations with similar objectives as theirs.

> We use materials such as posters, fliers and brochures at our 'Project Inception Workshops', where we share ideas about ways in which violence manifests itself and how we can work together to ensure the success of our programmes. These *facilitate easy understanding* and help our participants appreciate the extent to which violence in Ghana needs to be addressed (my emphasis).

In the case of DOVVSU, DSP Lawrencia also revealed their heavy use of posters and fliers:

> We paste some in and around our DOVVSU offices, hospitals, schools, churches, bus stops and vantage areas. We also leave some of our posters and leaflets everywhere we go for onward distribution. Currently, the UNFPA [41] is assisting us with the printing of some concepts that we've developed. They printed about a 1000 of our earlier posters and about 500 of our fliers which have all been used up as we speak (Interview 2, November 2013).

In another interview, Phyllis further attested to how the posters were important in helping them 'tell stories' about gender violence during their outreach programmes. She explained how some of the narratives in the posters were hinged on real pictures and experiences of the abused, as a way of offering a comprehensive education on the subject. Thus with the aid of these posters, they were able to talk to various groups about who the victims were, who reported their cases, the form of help or justice that was provided for them and finally how the whole case ended.

> When we go on our educational trips, we narrate various examples of cases that come to us to the people so that they understand that reporting is possible, and that people who do, often get help. We show them pictures of abused women and tell them that 'these people were once like you. You could be in this situation if you are not careful. You have to speak freely about domestic violence (Interview 1, October 2013).

Considering the arduous task that the activists faced in terms of fighting a practise that had more or less become part of the society, the statements above conveyed the extent to which they believed in the potency of the posters among others, in assisting them to visually portray the reality of violence in a way that they hoped would push people to act. Through their use of various forms – from a comic style to close up photography – the officials from both organisations shared how they created what might be called an identity for gender violence through these posters. Mr. Asare says:

> We sometimes use cartoons to communicate abusive scenarios and show that violence against women is real within the society. (Interview 2, November 2013).

> Marian: Why so, if I may ask?

> Mr Asare: Well, let's just say that we find it easier and more convenient using our own knowledge and experience from the

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[41] United Nations Population Fund

terrain to develop concepts and messages that will help people understand the violence within our system. Also, depending of the availability of funding, getting models to use in our adverts could be a problem. The cartoons are sometimes the quickest and most attractive ways through which we can reflect the abusive situations we want to (Interview 1, October 2013).

The activists however acknowledged that over time, they have attached a lot of importance to the use of 'real' characters in their poster advertisements. Officials from DOVVSU for example cited their use of photographs of victims who came to report abuse as a way of having real evidence to narrate the incidents behind that particular abuse. They noted that since reporting abusive incidents had gradually picked up, such photographs were readily available making it easy to inculcate in the production of the advertisements. According to Vida:

> Some people think that domestic violence does not exist. Others have heard about it but don't believe it. It is therefore important for us to let them know that violence is real, and any form of abuse is unacceptable and need to be reported. Using such real pictures has helped us a lot. On our educational campaigns for example, we show people some of these pictures that we take of our victims to ensure they get the seriousness of what we are talking about. These are some of the pictures that we use {Shows a few}. (Interview 2, November 2013).

The projection of such real life experiences unto screens during educational sessions, helped activists maintain their emotional appeal to target audiences to evoke the desired response in them. Vida also explained later that the easy accessibility of these photos increased the variety of narratives they could produce and share within a very short time. This approach also cut down on delivery time which was often a challenge when third parties used were overburdened with work.

Another significant aspect of the use of photographs such as above to depict realism, was also the fact that the activists could give a first-hand narrative of incidents behind the photograph during their educational talks, and could monitor consumer feedback to know which aspects of gender violence needed more attention and quickly address it (Interview material, November 2013). The strategy therefore ensured that the process of production and consumption were combined for maximum impact of the campaign. Lastly, another form that some posters took, was the drawing of images based on the experiences of

victims in photographs, in order to protect the identity of victims. As DSP Lawrencia indicated (whilst pointing to a poster),

> In designing our advertising concepts, we also sometimes pull from the store of pictures we have and with the help of our artist in house, develop a poster out of that. [showing one] this particular one was developed by one of our officers who is on leave now… she drew it by looking at a picture that we took of one of the victims… there are worst worst cases, but we try to protect our victims so we don't always use them as they are. The police administration were giving us some funds some time back so we use some of these funds to go and print and then we circulate them to all our branches nationwide.

In their deployment of this strategy, however, Ursula was quick to say that:

> We try as much as possible to reflect their [women's] pain, suffering, and the general plight that they and their families go through. Such posters are easy for people to identify with and therefore make it easy for them to understand.

Mr. Berko further expanded on the use of models, comparing them with representations in contemporary commodity advertising:

> We do not necessarily use skimpy women or attractive women in delivering our messages. Our import lies in the stories – stories about the injured, the rejected, the abused, and the sad. It is these stories that really advertise for us (Interview 1, October 2013).

He further adds that

> Because images depicting the brutality and abuse of women are not usually found in commercial advertisements, our use of them helps us present gender violence in such a shocking way to alert abused women especially about the fact that if their experiences remained unreported, it could actually get worse (ibid).

Thus in the view of the Ark and DOVVSU, just as consumer adverts led people on to actual purchases, their representational strategies associated with posters on gender violence aimed at forcing society's attention to this negative practice that exist in marriages and elsewhere, and subsequently spur the abused onto action. As will be seen below, whereas both organisations combine the use of comic illustrations, real photographs and staged photos or the use of models in communicating gender violence,

The Ark uses a lot more comic illustrations as a result of their constraints mentioned above. DOVVSU on the other hand deploys more photographs in their posters apparently because of their easy accessibility. Both organisations however deploy staged photographs at various points. Furthermore, some of their posters did not use visuals at all but rather focused on spelling out what constituted violence in relationships and what people were required to do in the event of abuse.

Notably, these producers' reliance on different approaches in the development of a range of posters to communicate gender violence corroborated the medium's description by Hutchinson as an applied art (cited in Sontag 1970 no page number). He explains that 'posters are an applied art because, typically, they apply what has already been done in the other arts … painting, sculpture, architecture' (Hutchinson cited in Sontag 1970 no page number) and in the case of this campaign – a comic style and close up photography, to achieve the necessary impact that they desire. For him, the attention paid to the creation of relevant visuals in posters (as seen through the activists submissions above) is worthwhile because

> The visual or pictorial element provides the initial attraction--and it must be striking enough to catch the eye of the passer-by and to overcome the counter-attractions of the other posters. Its purpose is to draw attention to whatever an advertiser is trying to promote and to impress some message on the passer-by (Hutchinson cited in Sontag 1970 no page number).

Sontag also supports this view on the importance of visuals in posters, and notes that it 'strengthens the aesthetic thrust of the poster form' and facilitates messages through this medium to be "read" in a flash and to have an "instant impact" (ibid). In order to further distinguish the uniqueness of posters, Sontag draws a distinction between them and public notices for example. She writes that:

> A public notice aims to inform or command. A poster aims to seduce, to exhort, to sell, to educate, to convince, to appeal. Whereas a public notice distributes information to interested or alert citizens, a poster reaches out to grab those who might otherwise pass it by. A public notice posted on a wall is passive, requiring that the spectator present himself before it to read what is written. A poster claims attention--at a distance. It is visually aggressive (Sontag, 1970 no page number).

Through the above description and aims of the poster, its reliance on visual imagery is foregrounded. As Hutchinson later noted, the verbal message usually attached to the poster serves to 'amplify' the image being depicted, thus he stressed the overriding attribute of the visual over text in posters. In the same vein, Sontag also explained 'that posters are aggressive because they usually appear in the context of other posters. The public notice is a freestanding statement, but the form of the poster depends on the fact that many posters exist--competing with (and sometimes reinforcing) each other' (ibid).

Having acknowledged the range of materials used in this campaign to educate the Ghanaian public on the meanings of gender violence, its causes, manifestations, and effects especially on women and children, I subsequently focus mainly on the poster advertisements deployed. My choice here is not only based on its qualities cited here, but also on the opportunity it gives me to analyse a wide range of visuals deployed in the construction of gender violence. In the next section therefore, I look at how particular meanings of gender violence were encoded in the range of selected posters, in ways that viewers were likely to recognise and hopefully take further action.

The posters

As indicated in chapter two, I collected a total of 22 posters from both organisations, that is 11 form The Ark and 11 from DOVVSU. In order to decode these ads, I had to understand the patterns of representations of gender and violent experiences that were depicted in the ads. Thus deploying content analysis, I categorised all the sample that I had into various groups and undertook a close textual reading of all of them. As noted by Botterill, this approach was ideal in the sense that it enabled me categorise dominant themes which appeared throughout the ads (2001 p. 69). My categorisation thus revealed that my sampled ads were predominantly coloured (fig. 1 – 22), and contained 9 posters based on photos (fig. 3,5,6,8,9, 13,15,17, 23), 8 comic style illustrations (fig. 1,2,4, 10,16, 18, 20, 22) and another 5 that used only words and no visuals at all (fig. 7, 12,14, 19, 21).

Additionally 6 posters represented instances of violence between males and females as couples often in a 'home/family' setting (fig. 1,2,3,4,13,16), and 9 posters showed a 'close up' of violence (fig. 4,5,6,8,13,15,16,17,23) Finally, the posters revealed that whilst comic illustrations characterised earlier ads, the more recent ones more or less deploy staged photos, with the aim of representing violence more clearly. From this

process of categorisation, recurrent themes that emerged included violence among couples and in the context of the family, the culture of silencing, violence against children, the consequences of abuse, religious and traditional influences of abuse.

Although I analyse all the ads in order to understand how various representations were used to advance these themes and also show how depictions have changed over time, I needed to sample a few which were varied enough to generate recall, and also resonate with my focus group participants in a way that they could easily identify and reflect on. Thus I included ads which contain striking gendered representations of males and females, ones that portrayed violent depictions involving the young as well as old, and those that reflected the everyday lives of people within which abuse prevailed. I also ensured that I maintained a balance between the comic style illustrations and the photographic posters in order to give a sense of the whole range.

I did not add any 'word only' posters since most of our discussions centred on the information they contained. In all I settled on ten (10) ads which fitted this criteria and using a coding sheet to guide my analysis and ensure consistency, present my findings below. As will be seen in the discussions that follow, I organise these sampled materials thematically, by first drawing our attention to how violence is represented among couples − male perpetrators, female victims. I then explore violent situations in the context of the family and also highlight how it has been communicated in the case of abused and all children for that matter. I then focus on how language was used in these ads to direct viewers or spectators on what to do in abusive situations. In these discussions, I pay attention to particular gestures and postures of characters in the ads (Goffman, 1979) and further foreground how these postures appeal to the public in a way that arguably draws their sympathy towards victims and disdain towards their perpetrators.

I also rely on the knowledge shared by my respondents from The Ark and DOVVSU about violence in Ghana, and also my observation of respondents during our discussion, noting how they reacted to and interpreted the action going on in these ads. Finally guided by Hall's work on signification, encoding and decoding or his assertion that representations are socially constructed through symbolic systems, or discourse (S. Hall, 1997b, p. 3), I analyse the ads in the context of the socio-economic and cultural state of the country. I turn now to discuss the first theme in the analysis: Representing Violence,

perpetrators and victims. The poster below uses a comic/cartoon style of illustration to show a woman being strangled by a well built and much older man (as signified by his broad shoulders, muscular arms and baldness), who also firmly grips her arm in such a way that she is unable to escape. Fierceness and determination is conveyed through the angry, 'mean look' on the man's face as seen in his furrowed brow.

Figure 1 – The Ark

The belt in the abuser's hands encourages the viewer to imagine his next action and subsequently see the abusive act as an ongoing 'live' act, giving the image an immediacy. On the other hand, the woman with her dress ripped on her hip, seemingly fearful and in pain, (mouth wide open, eyes startled, a bloody gash from her forehead), catches the viewer's gaze; as she seems to seek help.

The signification role of the rest of the family here also adds to the devastating nature, fear and pain of abuse. As captured in the National Domestic Violence Policy 'the family

which is often equated with sanctuary is also a place where the worst forms of domestic violence against women and children take place' (2009: 3). The poster draws attention to this fact. As already mentioned, gender violence is represented as an act taking place within families and which is also ' breaking up our families' (Figure 1). Children are witnesses to domestic violence. In this poster they are represented in anguished poses around the couple as their father (one assumes) physically abuses their mother. The young boy, turning his head away from the situation, left hand touching his face, elbow resting in his right hand, and pensively reflects: perhaps on resolving the situation or escaping the violent scene.

A young woman (presumably his sister) sits on a bed crying, holding a partly swollen face and a baby also howls, not being looked after. The spectator's gaze shifts between the couple in the centre, to the various other actors who find what is going on too awful to look at: the whole family is affected by the act of violence. Furthermore, it opens up such violence to scrutiny and counters earlier notions that 'violence in the family is a private matter insulated from public scrutiny (as explained by officials in both organisations in chapter 3) thereby resulting in situations where victims and their children usually faced the additional burden of suffering in silence.

Considering its effect on everyone in the scene, the caption attached - 'Act now to end abuse' calls on 'You, the onlooker to 'act now' to save not only the victim but the family as a whole. Additionally, the caption 'Domestic abuse' in red, in large capital letters at the top of the poster and connoting, perhaps danger and emergency, defines and makes public exactly what is going on in this image. In this scene, violence is constructed as an exercise of male power over women, and gives visibility to one way in which male dominance and anger find expression in women's lives. As will be recalled from the activist interviews cited above (Chapter 3), anger, is common when abusers are summoned to the police station: they angrily register their displeasure that a woman can challenge their authority by reporting them.

The construction of violence in the context of the family seems to confirm the assertion in the National Domestic Violence Policy, that

Domestic violence is best understood as a pattern of coercive behaviour that establishes control over family and other household members. The tactics employed include physical assault, psychological, sexual, economic and emotional abuse (2009:4).

Similarly in figure 2 below, the more photographic but staged photo of a man towering over a woman, with a cane in his hand ready to unleash it on the women highlights another form that violence takes. In this scene, the 'powerlessness' of the woman is depicted through posture – lying on the ground. She attempts to resist but the position of her arm and the fact that she is trapped between his legs and, to some degree, by the length of yellow and black cloth, imply she is not able to. Noticeable in this poster, is the depiction of violence amidst a serene, normal, and calm world, with a hazy background scene of a suburban landscaped housing and a parked car (perhaps suggesting a middle class neighbourhood).

Figure 2 – The Ark

Also quite significant is the use of soft colours with apple green and a pale blue-grey predominating. This rather hazy, soft focus in Figure 2, conveys the fact that abusive experiences may happen to women living in what outwardly appear well off and respectable, middle class neighbourhoods in seemingly attractive and peaceful environments. This narrative is especially important considering the concerns raised by The Ark and DOVVSU in Chapter 3, about victims living abusive lives for so long to the point of seeing it as natural.

This poster therefore draws attention to the *unnaturalness* of abuse. As one may also notice, there is a mismatch between the figures and the background representationally. The couple seem as if they have been artificially imposed on the background further suggesting that the abuse going on is not a natural occurrence within such an environment. Again the 'STOP spousal violence now!' in red defines what is going on and suggests the urgency of the task to prevent men believing they have 'the right' to beat up a wife.

Figure 3 (below), one of the recent ads, is very different from the comic illustrations discussed above.

Figure 3 – DOVVSU

In what I describe as a staged photo, resembling a close-up shot from a film rather than either an illustration or documentary photo, a bare backed man with clenched fist towering over and probably moving towards a woman who lies on a bed is represented. The woman's facial expression – slightly opened mouth as if to tell him to stop, her raised hand to physically block the 'blow' and protect herself, suggest the fear and coming trauma and pain, but also perhaps the need for resistance. . The angle of the image virtually eliminates the gap between his fist and her face, so that the caption. 'Real MEN do not hit WOMEN' fictively intervenes into this soon-to-be-closed space'.

Thus again we are introduced to a 'victim' of abuse, 'lying down', looking in an upward direction at her perpetrator who stands upright. Through such positioning, her abuser is placed in a dominant position and, in the foreground and thus larger, seems stronger, whilst she is represented at the receiving end of the abuse, vulnerable (because prostrate) and thus not in control of the situation in which she finds herself. These postures highlight male strength, and female weakness associated with patriarchal relations. It is also significant to note that whilst the victim's gaze is on her perpetrator as if trying to deal with the ongoing situation, the viewer's gaze shifts between both of them, perhaps in a helpless way since although the viewer can imagine the abuse that will soon happen, they cannot physically do anything to avert the action.

In describing this conjunction of looks in feminist photography, Battersby writes:

> It is only by adopting visual shocks that one woman can enable another to see with a 'doubleness' of vision – irony, parody, anger, satire, humour, mimicry – which is a necessary part of gazing within a culture that adopts the male viewing position as norm . . . female gazers have to be more cross-eyed . . . they have to disturb the directness of the male gaze, by looking in (more than) two directions at once (1994 cited in Winship 2000: p.36).

As Winship further argues, 'these ads encourage a 'cross-eyed' gaze' (p. 36) and it is in deploying such strategies, that the posters arguably 'force' a recognition of gender violence and its effects. How women's clothing is represented in these ads is also pertinent, the torn dress of the victim in figure 1 may suggest the violence of the abuse but also that perhaps it was well worn. The dresses in figures 2 and 3, and the woman's scarf in figure 3, characterize the dressing of poor rural women. The clothing also suggests their home 'boundedness', since working women in Ghana would usually be

depicted in more formal clothing. In this way women's economic dependency on partners and their own 'unemployment' is emphasised, conveying the fact (as explained by DOVVSU in chapter 3) that rural and poor women are more vulnerable to abuse and suffer more abusive bouts than their working contemporaries (although these circumstances do not mean that the latter are exempt from violence).

Another representational aspect evident in the posters, though not in Figure 3, is display and exhibition. As in Figure 4 (below) the whole body of the victim is shown and foregrounded with bruises and blood marks clearly (if minimally and only suggestively) displayed, whilst the perpetrator's anger, in the style of the language of comics or cartoons, is signified by the drops of sweat on his forehead. In this poster as the viewer shifts from gazing at the traces of blood on the victim to the unbuttoned trousers of the perpetrator, they are required to actively make the connection about what went on prior to the moment arrested in this image - a sex act, causing pain and injury. The latter interpretation is further affirmed by the representation of a man behind bars, in the same spatial frame but temporally later than the main incident in the poster.
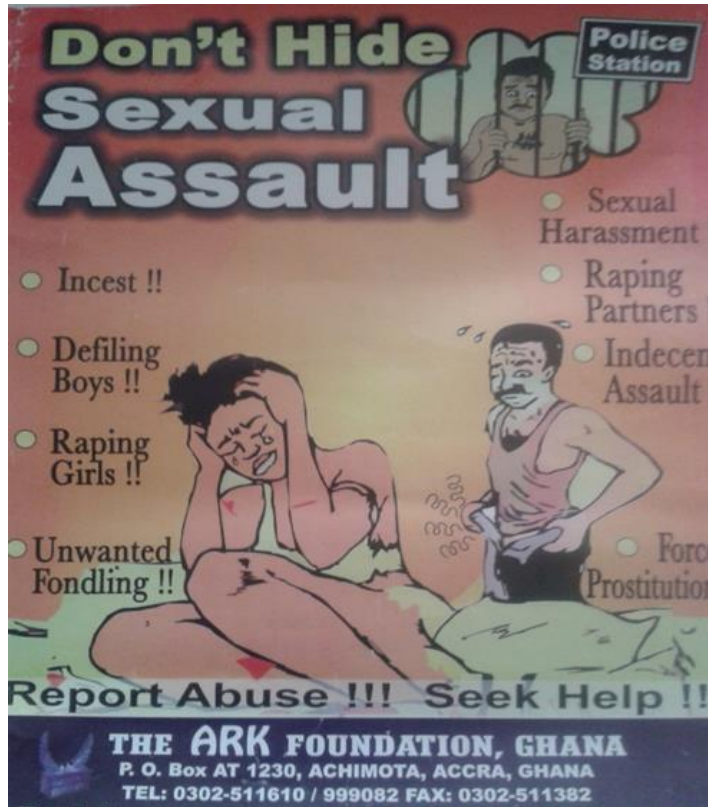

Figure 4 – The Ark

 The viewer is also asked to make a connection, between this kind of sex act (but it could also be one of the many listed on the poster) and jail: this is a crime and perpetrators will be punished. Again the viewer's is a cross-eyed gaze in so far as it switches between looking at the victim and the unrepentant gaze of the perpetrator who sees only her back view. If his gaze 'normalises' the act, the female spectator sees the woman differently: as deeply upset and hurting (head in hands, big tears). Additionally, and unlike in Figure 3, the foregrounding of the woman and backgrounding of the perpetrator perhaps symbolically 'diminishes' him. Such a close view of the victim, is also strategically placed to work perhaps at an emotional level and in the light of the copy ('Don't hide sexual assault') perhaps also suggests bringing it out in the open.

 Across these posters, screaming for help (figure 1), lying on a mat or bed helplessly (figures 2 and 3) and sitting on a bed crying (figure 4) the subjugated status of women and their helplessness in abusive situations is signified but *works* towards violence as having a devastating effect on them, thereby evoking some compassion on victims. Thus, one wonders the extent to which the 'realism' of these close up photos gives the posters greater emotional power (a question I explore in chapters 5 & 6). In contrast to commercial advertisements, the spectator's positioning is different. Contrary to Berger's suggestion that in advertisements 'Men act and women appear. Men look at women, women watch themselves being looked at' (Berger 1972 p.47), here the men do 'act' (out their abuse) and women do 'appear', but the female spectator is encouraged to see herself in this latter image, to feel her pain and to know this is wrong and a crime.

This is not an 'image' for the male gaze. The abused women in the posters and spectators alike are encouraged to take action, which in itself is to refuse the male definition of what has taken place. Notably therefore, the posters suggest violence occurring within heterosexual relationships, often signified through the representation of couples (Figure 1 – 4) in family lives (Goffman, 1987). At the same time such representations also highlight and implicitly criticize violence as a negative occurrence in some marriages (The exception is figure 10 (below), which metaphorically deploys a tree to signify the deep rootedness of violence in various aspects of the Ghanaian culture). A further point to make about the posters above is that whilst legal marriage is linguistically coded in a caption such as 'Stop Spousal Violence: You may not love your wife, but you have no right to beat her' (Figure 2), more often this is not directly spelt out in others (Figures 1,3

and 4). This therefore opens up an understanding of abuse as occurring in other contexts outside marriage (an example of which may include long term relationships where men and women have lived together for a long time, probably have children but without going through any proper form of marriage), but not of violence between same-sex couples or of women abusing men. There is also suggestion of violence against children (Figures 7&8). In some posters the consequences of abuse are more graphically represented, emphasising the trauma experienced by victims. As in the photographic sequence in figure 5 below, a cropped close up shot shows a victim with a bandaged head, swollen and virtually closed eyes as a result of the abuse she encountered. As the viewer looks on, verbally, the poster makes a direct address: 'If this is you, report'.

Figure 5

The viewer is asked to think about themselves in relation to the image. This carefully thought out orchestration of visual and verbal signs in the posters confirms Barthes' assertion (albeit he is writing about product advertising):

> In advertising, the signification of the image is undoubtedly intentional; the signifieds of the advertising message are formed by certain attributes of the product and these signifieds of the advertising message have to be transmitted as clearly as possible. If the image contains signs, we can be sure that in advertising

these signs are full, formed with a view to the optimum reading: the advertising image is frank, or at least emphatic (1984b p. 105)

Similarly in figure 6 below[42], viewers see a close up photograph of two women who suffered burns as a result of acid poured on them by their husbands (interview with DOVVSU, October 2013). Showing the burns on the women's shoulders (the first image) and on the breasts (the second image), further conveys the hard reality of abuse some women suffer. Moreover, that the faces are disguised and the women anonymised in this police poster makes it clear these are 'real' rather than 'model' victims. The same perhaps also applies to Figure 5.
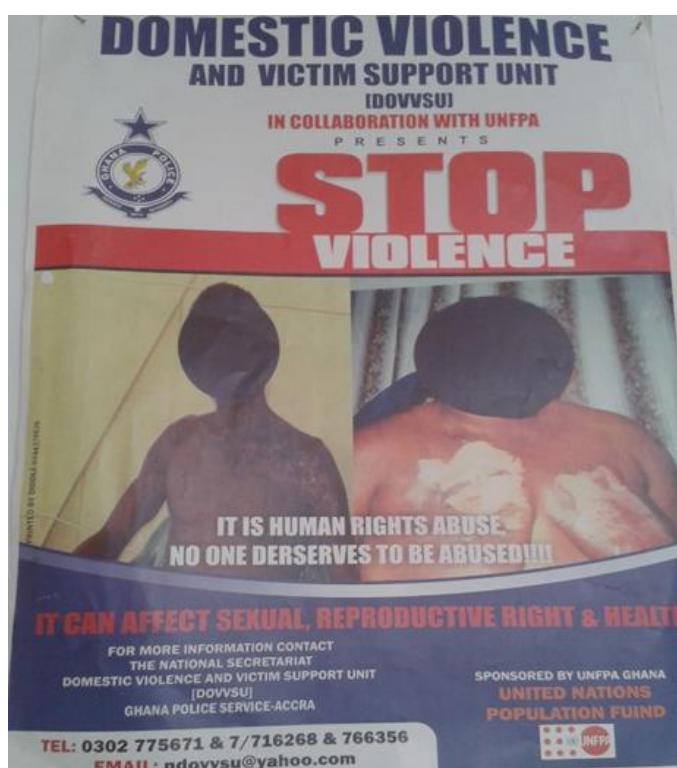

Figure 6

Such use of realism – simple, straightforward, if not crude – could enhance audience understanding. These constructions of abuse against women challenge the representations of sensual enjoyment, romantic nights, love, and happiness which often characterize the representation of relationships in commercial product advertisements. For this reason these posters are particularly 'shocking'.

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[42] As stated by officials of DOVVSU, the faces of the women in this poster advertisements are covered for ethical reasons ie. to protect their identity.

Other violent acts perpetrated against children – defilement, sodomy, incest leading to teenage pregnancies – arguably also quite shocking to know of are further foregrounded in Figures 7 and 8 below. In these posters, the spectator is called upon to reflect on similar situations they may have witnessed or experienced in their own families and with their own children: to recognize it as abuse, to speak publicly about it and thus to 'protect our children!!!')

Figure 7 and Figure 8

Additionally, figure 7 highlights a related point that if any age group can suffer abuse, so are the perpetrators of violence drawn from all sections of society, including those in positions of authority. In its multiple headlines this poster signals different forms of abuse but also that women and men, teachers, custom inspectors and pastors, are abusers. That those involved in educational and religious institutions are involved is particularly significant, given their 'leadership' and 'educational' roles in society. Also, across the posters, by combining visuals of adults (Figures 1 to 6) and children (Figures 7), gender violence is constructed as cutting across people of all ages, being no respecter of age (though some age groups have been found to be more at risk of certain types of abuse than others (NDVP 2009:3)[43].

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[43] National Domestic Violence Policy Document.

As suggested by the activists in the previous chapter, gender violence in Ghana is embedded in the religious and cultural practices adhered to by many. Findings from various studies (Ardayfio 2005; Bashiru 2012) show that gender violence is prevalent because some women consider its endurance as a fulfilment of their cultural and religious beliefs. Furthermore, although those in authority could be their abusers, it was the same cultural and religious institutions that victims went to for arbitration when violent issues emerged, at least until the campaign against gender violence offered other sources of support. Nevertheless, The Ark, knowing that 65% of Ghanaians are Christians (GLSS4), and acknowledging the 'vital role the church plays in the life of such a large group of people' believed it had the 'potential to play the role of a service provider as well as a referral destination for spiritual counselling' (Wilson 2006: 1).

Just one of the posters references the church and suggests its potential role in effective arbitration of violent situations. Figure 9 represents a smartly dressed couple (probably married), in an interaction with a priest (wearing a cassock). Behind them is a church, bearing a large cross on its apex. The scene is tranquil and calm, and thus is a very different from the others representing scenes of violence.
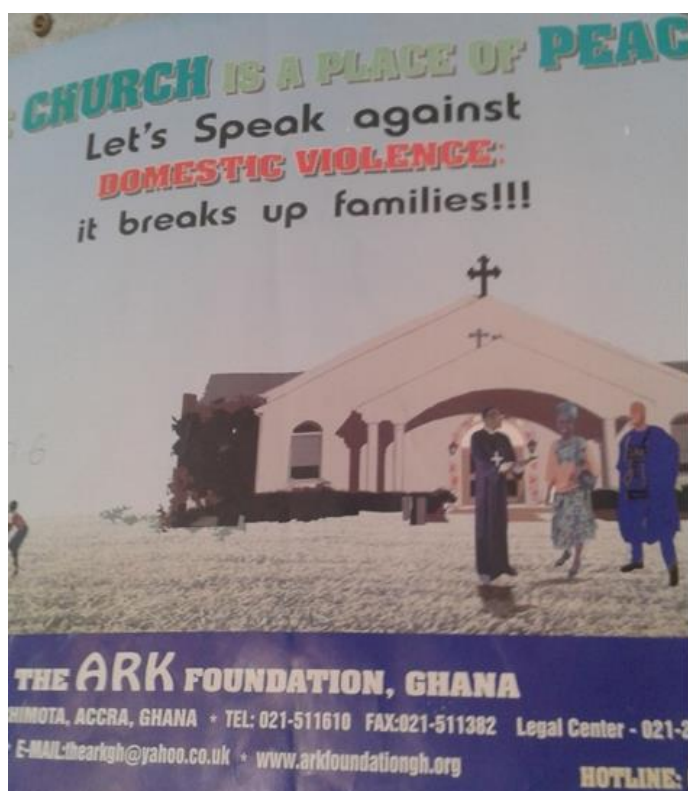

Figure 9

Through a darker shade of green (the colour green signifying freshness thus contrasting with the red of domestic violence), larger capitals and a serif type face, the accompanying caption emphasises, 'Church' and 'Peace'. Followed by the phrase 'let's Speak against Domestic violence: it breaks up families', the combination of image and words signifies a connection between families and churches and includes the viewer as part of the church – 'let's (ie. Let us) speak…' It suggests the need for the church to confront and criticise abuse in order for the sanctity of the family to be preserved and points to the institution's ability to intervene and bring 'peace' to families.

The language affirms the sense of calm – 'Let's Speak against Domestic violence' – rather than the imperative, 'Speak against Domestic violence' which is evident in the posters discussed above. It evokes the language of a priest and the Christian service - 'Let us praise God…' Yet 'us' may also include the community of Christians, laity and priests. Thus the church is a place to go to for help, but in invoking that the church must speak out against violence, the issue of whether this also means that the church should speak out about the violence those working for it perpetrate (as shown in the newspaper headlines), is not overtly raised.

Certainly it can be read as encouraging victims of abuse who are silent because of the fear of acting contrary to religious teachings, to know that it is legitimate and right to speak up against abuse, so rethinking the tenets and values of their religion.

One further poster extends knowledge of violence. Figure 10 below depicts the image of a tree with thick roots, each listing a harmful and institutionalised cultural tradition practised in the country – Trokosi[44], sexual exploitation, rites pertaining to the death of a husband, forced marriages, and abuse.

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[44] The name of the traditional ritual slavery of young girls among some ethnic groups, usually with the objective of atoning for the sins of their family members.
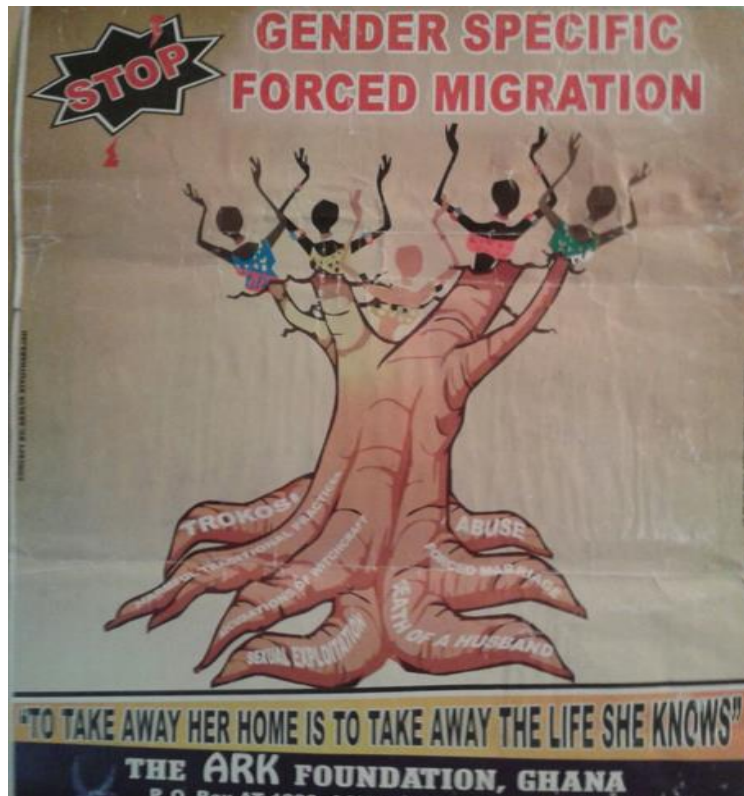
Figure 10

Its personified branches show a number of women with arms up in the air reaching up towards the caption 'STOP GENDER SPECIFIC FORCED MIGRATION[45]'. Through the imagery of a tree getting its source of livelihood from its roots, violence against women is depicted as emanating from these cultural and institutionalised practices. This imagery is striking when looked at in relation to the notion that 'domestic violence in Ghana is rooted in a history of social, cultural and legal traditions that permitted men's abuse of women and children in family relationships' (NDVP 2009: 3).

The size of the roots of this symbolic tree signify 'the rootedness' and long duration of gender violence and its causes. Perhaps too, what appears to be the tree's stunted growth (women with arms a loft) is also invoking the long term stiltedness of women's and children's lives. This organic, natural imagery echoes the assertion made by DSP Lawrencia in the previous chapter that because gender violence has been culturally condoned for a very long time, it has been normalized to the point where it is not even

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[45] This refers to the practice whereby young girls, particularly from poor backgrounds are taken across surrounding borders of Ghana by agents into different countries, with the promise of giving them a better life. More often than not, the girls end up being sold into various forms of slavery, sometimes engaging in menial jobs and childhood prostitution among others.

recognized. The poster renders this 'naturalisation' transparent, also implying that without uprooting the tree, destroying those roots, such abuse will continue. Even though I have already discussed aspects of the verbal language deployed in the posters, I turn again to explore further how language not only contributes to the meaning of visual elements but also to calls for action, drawing on a linguistic framework offered by Pateman in his article 'The pragmatics of advertising' (1980).

Language and action

Relevant to this first aspect of language, Barthes notes that 'the linguistic message' pins down or anchors meaning:

> All images are polysemous; they imply, underlying their signifiers, a 'floating chain' of signifieds, the reader able to choose some and ignore others… Hence in every society, techniques are developed, intended to fix the floating chain of signifieds in such a way as to counter the terror of uncertain signs; the linguistic message is one of these techniques (1984b 38 -9).

He further adds that 'the text is indeed the creator's (and hence society's) right of inspection over the image … and clearly has a function of elucidation …' (ibid).

To this Hutchinson adds that language in posters help to 'amplify the pictorial theme' and facilitate a clearer understanding (cited in Sontag 1970 no page numbers) of the narratives depicted. Thus, the strategic use of captions in the posters anchors the visual signifiers. As Barthes puts it:

> [The caption] helps me to choose *the correct level of perception*, permits me to focus not simply my gaze but also my understanding' (1984b 38 -9, author's italics).

Further, the placement of captions above and below the visual representations in all the posters facilitates a preferred reading (Hall 1997), but they also tend to offer a narrative resolution through the call to action. They first provide information about particular aspects of domestic violence, showing images of abuse in action, and finally end with instructions on what to do to curtail the situation. In figure 5, for example, the caption '1 in 3 women suffer physical violence' pins down the meaning of the abuse as depicted through the photograph of the victim. The imperative that follows, 'If this is you, report. Don't delay' addresses the viewer/ victim, urging them to report before matters get worse. Thus Barthes states that 'anchorage is a control, bearing a responsibility – in the face of

the projective power of pictures – for the use of the message' (ibid). In Pateman's essay, 'The pragmatics of advertising' (1980), he discusses language as 'performing speech acts according to rules' (p. 604). He cites Searle's classification of speech acts into 'Representatives', 'Directives', 'Commissives', 'Expressives' and 'Declaratives' (p.605), each of which is spelt out:

> ([) *Representatives,* or acts which commit the speaker to something's being the case as do 'assertions'; (2) *Directives,* by which the speaker attempts to get the hearer to do something - as with 'orders'; (3) *Commissives,* which commit the speaker to a future course of action - for example, 'promises'; (4) *Expressives,* which express a psychological state of the speaker for instance, 'wishes'; and (5) *Declaratives.* successful performance of which brings the world into conformity with the 'propositional content' …Declaratives include such things as 'verdicts', christenings, marriage vows, the naming of ships, and umpires' decisions… (p.605).

Pateman also notes that according to Searle, these acts are 'characteristically performed by uttering expressions in accordance with sets of constitutive rules ... Rules that create new kinds of activity, without which that activity could not exist' (Pateman 1980: p.605). Following Searle, Pateman further talks about the 'illocutionary force of language' (the force behind a language's ability 'to perform different speech acts') as being determined through 'word order, stress, intonation contour, punctuation, the mood of the verb, and the so- called performative verbs' (1980: 606). Building on this idea of an 'illocutionary force' I also highlight how font colour, size and capitalization gives force to the 'directives' which attempt to encourage people to act or perform.

Throughout the posters, the use of the bold red colour forces the reader's attention to the seriousness of the issue being discussed. Indeed, the colour red, which (especially in Ghana) signifies warning, danger, something to be alert about, blood, is constantly used throughout the posters to connote violence and harm[46]. Through such use, viewers are presented with the unacceptability of violence and the fact that it should not be condoned.

Quite significantly, the colour red in the posters therefore becomes the 'basis for the connection' (Williamson 1978: 20) between the viewer and acts of violence.

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[46] For viewers especially with a Ghanaian traditional background, the use of red in the posters is very symbolic, considering the connotation of 'seriousness' it conveys among most ethnic groups.

Hence, the moment he / she thinks about violence, the colour red is consequently called up to signify a stop to such acts. Its use highlights the criminal nature of violence and 'forcefully' draws audience's attention to its negativity. In addition, the use of this colour further accentuates the force of the message, and arguably equates violence with danger. Through this kind of signification, the urgency for people to act immediately is emphasised. There is therefore an equation and synergy between the colour red, gender violence and the call to act: virtually all the posters signify something alarming that needs attention.

Also the capitalization of 'DOMESTIC VIOLENCE' in Figure 1, and that of the tag line 'ACT NOW TO END ABUSE' (figure 2) further convey the necessity for society to take immediate steps towards finding lasting solutions. The use of the phrase 'STOP SPOUSAL VIOLENCE NOW' (figure 2) also in red, with large capitals for 'STOP' and upper case for the first letter of each word (figure 4), plus the foregrounding of the word 'Assault' (Figure 4) gives force to the messages. Thus on the whole, 'stress, and intonation contour' can be thought about in the use of colour used in typefaces, their size and whether lower or upper case is used.

The use of these features accentuate the 'directive ('Do this!'), challenging women (victims) and the reader to fight against abuse. Indeed the forceful, active and upbeat language suggests urgency but also explicitly offers the reporting of abuse as a first step in the fight. But it might also be suggested that the 'directives' and the ways those are enhanced typographically not only incite an urgency to act, but also carry an authority almost 'threatening' perpetrators if they do not refrain from abusing while 'forcing' victims to report immediately.

Also significantly, the phrases used in the posters are kept to a minimum: 'STOP spousal violence now' (Figure 2), 'Real MEN do not Hit WOMEN' (Figure 3), 'Don't Hide Sexual ASSAULT' (Figure 4), and 'The CHURCH is a place of PEACE' (Figure 9). These short, tight phrases, aim for a simple, easy to grasp communication, tending to imply a problem but also suggesting action or 'new' acts, that when adhered to, should eventually lead to the curbing of abuse. For example, through what Searle calls a 'representative – an act committing the speaker to something being the case' (p. 605) – the caption at the bottom of figure 10 [To take away her home, is to take away the life

she knows], asserts the effect that forced migration has on its victims. In this way the reader is informed about the state victims are plunged into, and encouraged to think about the plight of all such victims. Similarly, an example of the use of 'commissives – which commit the speaker to a future course of action' (p.605), is seen in the caption in Figure 7, 'Child sexual abuse is real – Let's protect our children'. The latter first makes an assertion (in the way of a 'representative') before offering a 'commissive' – an action to be undertaken from now on. It also extends an invitation to the reader, 'Let *us'* protect '*our* children'.

Also in in figure 4, the introductory caption 'Don't Hide Sexual Assault', can be seen as a 'directive' ('the speaker attempts to get the hearer to do something' p. 605). It also anchors the image and makes sense perhaps of why the female figure and her 'assaulted' body is foregrounded. The 'directive' is reaffirmed by the phrases at the foot of the poster: 'Report Abuse!!! Seek Help!! Furthermore, with the 'fear' associated with the police / DOVVSU (and the gender activists to an extent) as authority figures with the mandate to punish offender, the 'threat' behind the words perhaps gains greater force and it is not surprising that some posters use the ultimate threat (Figure 3 the abuser/ the rapist behind bars). It might be said then that the use of this linguistic and typographical strategy meant that words such as STOP, REPORT, and ACT NOW took on an additional more 'forceful' meaning than as used in everyday life.

Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the visual regimes operating to render violence visible and meaningful to the public in an attempt to raise consciousness. If in earlier discussions, the interviewees from the Ark and DOVVSU highlighted the 'knowledge of violence' (as in what it is, its impact on women, its redefinition from normalising within a patriarchal society, making it public, highlighting it as a criminal act, and the need for society to take action) in what they were trying to do, and also stressed the importance and use of posters as a 'stand-alone' tool in their 'educational'/'awareness' sessions in the community, then reflecting on the discussion so far, it is clear that gender violence has been represented, made visible and knowable.

Through various constructions of masculinity and femininity in the poster advertisements, the nature of gender violence is exposed for all to see as an ongoing cultural practice

perpetrated by men against women and families as a whole, and also having serious effects on its victims. Violence is further represented as criminal in nature, warranting report and punishment. Also in the poster advertisements (an exception being poster 4) the patriarchal relations of domination and subordination in the country is conveyed through physical features and postures such as physically well-built men in upright positions, being in control, whilst women are prostrate, helpless and the recipients of the pain.

Whilst acknowledging the ultimate aim of the organisations' to 'mould' women into independent abuse free people through these poster advertisements, I argue nevertheless, that their use of a polarized vision of masculinity and femininity, continues the perpetuation of stereotyped images. Even though in the interviews, officials from both organisations emphasized working with both male and female victims of abuse (in spite of the former reporting the least) the latter were largely depicted in abusive situations, whilst depictions of male victims was totally non-existent. Significantly, this situation echoes those associated with patriarchal views of male power and at the same time leads to the neglect of boys and men who experience abusive episodes, and the possibility of them ever finding help.

Nevertheless, through body and facial disfigurement and expressions (especially on women), the severity of violence in the country, is also made visible in the posters. The views of both organisations about the roots of violence in culture is also revealed, and finally, the church – where some forms of violence can be traced is represented as a place of peace, where violence should be spoken about and where the abused can go for counselling and reconciliation. Finally, also very significant to note in this chapter, is the organisations' use of different styles (comic/cartoon, photo-realism/documentary etc) to appeal to the emotions of the public. So too is their relentless use of 'imperatives' or 'directive' mode of communication to incite people to act.

The use of these strategies is noteworthy considering the organisations' acknowledgement of the fact that violence has more or less become naturalized in the Ghanaian society and therefore the imperative to raise people's consciousness about the need to put an end to violence in a patriarchal context where male domination is the norm. Williamson however cautions that:

> A sign replaces something for someone. It can only mean if it has someone to mean to. Therefore all signs depend for their signifying process on the existence of specific, concrete receivers, people for whom and in whose systems of belief, they have a meaning (1978: 40)

In the following chapter therefore, I engage with the next stage of the circuit of culture (consumption) by talking to consumers/audiences of these poster advertisements to ascertain how they interpreted them, and whether the narratives deployed by the organisations made any meaning to them in their daily lives.

Chapter 5

Different ways of seeing – Audience response to the poster advertisements

The previous chapter showed how producers attempted to encode advertisements in the anti-violence campaign with particular meanings and associations that it believed its target audience could easily understand and identify with. This included the use of striking visuals and captions to suggest the criminality of gender violence and the need for victims and witnesses to report the act. As suggested by the circuit of culture, however:

> Meanings are not just 'sent' by producers and 'received' passively by consumers. Rather meanings are actively made in consumption through the use to which people put these products in their everyday lives' (Du Gay et.al, 1997 p.5).

In this chapter, I first examine the processes through which participants across generations and social status heard about gender violence, exploring the sources they drew on, including the educational campaign to understand gender violence and inform their views. The second section then examines more specifically how they understood and interpreted the campaign poster ads in ways meaningful to their own particular experiences. In doing this, I draw attention to how the ads resonated with individuals depending on their specific circumstances.

The third part of this chapter considers, in more depth, factors such as social upbringing, cultural background, generational and gender differences contributing to individual understandings of these poster ads. This discussion highlights that people's consumption practices of ads are highly differentiated. In the fourth section, I raise the perception that the representations in the poster ads are 'embarrassing' and offend, especially, the sensibilities of men. I thus explore how some viewers considered the advertisements as controversial, particularly because of the public circulation of images of gender violence via outdoor media.

Knowledge about gender violence

From the interviews with participants, it was evident that their sources of knowledge about gender violence varied, depending on generational differences and social status. For most upper and middle class adults, knowledge about gender violence was mainly

through school, friends and the media. This emerged when Priscilla, Betty and Linda expressed their uncertainties about the ability of youth today to defend themselves on occasions when they were abused. As they observed,

> Priscilla (uc/a)[47] : I think towards the end of last year, almost all sexual abuse cases in the news had to do with children who were either 2 years, 6 years, 4years and so on.
>
> Linda (uc/a): I remember when I was in class 4, some people came to our school to talk about gender violence and it was there that I learnt that if you sat in a taxi, you should always sit behind the driver so that if he tries to run off with you, you could easily strangle him with your bag or something. Through the use of posters, they explained a lot of things about gender violence to us. I think this form of education should still go on for the young ones to learn from it.
>
> Betty (uc/a): I think that education on protection against sexual violence in Ghana hasn't gone far. Unlike the past where we had this kind of education, I can't say the younger ones are getting the same. Sex education is no longer taught in schools so most kids just don't know what to do. Things just happen. People may be taken to the hospital; abusers arrested and so on. But how do we ensure that others also don't suffer?

Through the conversation cited above, Linda and Betty highlighted how poster ads on gender violence were used by 'some people' (representatives from the ARK) in their educational talks during her school days, in sex education classes as part of the curriculum. Linda's recollection of 'things' on the subject, [such as how to react when being kidnapped] from the age of about 10, confirmed Slater's argument that producer's use of simple and clear visuals in more overtly social marketing campaigns stood the chance of making people remember them quickly even after a long period (1999 cited in Hussain & Ali 2011 p. 12).

This was later explained by Linda, who referred to details in the 'news' alluding to the campaign's attempts to provide information about the degree of child abuse in the country. On the other hand, for Sophia (m/c), her first exposure to the subject of gender

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[47] The first letters in the brackets describe the social status of the respondents. UC describes the upper class, MC stands for middle class, and P represents the relatively poor. In referring to one's generation, A is for adults and Y stands for the young. Finally with reference to participants' upbringing, U represents urban, and R represents rural.

violence was when she lived on a compound house[48] where her neighbour used to scream from her room as she endured physical abuse from her husband. She narrated how she had to join with a few of her other neighbours to seek police intervention for the woman. This was partly the outcome of having seen advertisements on the subject that had been running for some time. In a similar way, Auntie Ama (uc/a) told me how she sought detailed information from the newspapers about the activities and location of DOVVSU, after suffering yet further abuse from her husband. Advised by her sister and her friend to report abuse, she recounts:

> I went to look through my old newspapers where I had first read about gender violence and the work being done by the police to help victims. I took their address, and that was when the whole battle began.

For Auntie Vera (mc/a), a teacher and also a victim who had come to report abuse on the day of the interviewing, even though she had heard about DOVVSU in the newspapers a while ago, she hoped that her family could advise and help her husband to refrain from abusing her. However, when this did not materialise, she decided to report him to the police. Thus, these adult participants revealed that they knew about and had first or second hand experience of gender violence and that the media information and ads had served as a catalyst for them to report abuse.

Contributions from young urban participants ranged from hearsay to witnessing various acts of abuse in their vicinities, whilst a few shared their personal experiences. This emerged through the following exchange when I sought participants' understanding of the different kinds of abuse:

> Marian: Could someone read out the captions on any poster to us?
> Nathan (u/y): Don't hide sexual assault, Incest, defiling boys, raping girls, unwanted fondling, sexual harassment, raping partners, indecent assault, forced prostitution [amidst giggling by young participants].
> Marian: Thank you. What do you understand by incest?
> Ankrah (u/y): Having sex with a close family member.
> Marian: Thanks, how about defilement?

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[48] A compound house refers to a communal housing system in Ghana, where a number of different families share the same compound, and sometimes other facilities like kitchens, bathrooms and toilets.

Nathan: Having sex with someone who is under age.

Marian: Thank you. How about rape?

Tina (mc/r) [newly married]: Having sex with someone against their wish.

Marian: Good. How about fondling?

Eddie (u/y): [Laughing] touching someone's breast, rubbing your hands on her body, and those things…

As Chris (u/y) also suggests:

There is this man in my neighbourhood called Efo. We saw him one day beating his wife and son as if he was in a physical combat. We went to separate them and asked what the problem was. He said the boy had stolen his DVD player. He is a drunkard and does this beating very often.

Kofi (u/y): My experience was with an older woman when I was very young (later in the interview, he narrated how a neighbour in whose house he waited after school till his grandmother returned from the market, sexually abused him).

The information offered above shows that the younger generation also knew about gender violence. For most participants in this group, the campaign posters (see chapter 4, sample ads 7 & 8) mounted at vantage points such as bus-stops on their way to school, provided them with information on what to do when they encountered any form of abuse. For others, visits by experts to talk to them in their schools, were great sources of their information on the subject:

Kofi (u/y): Well, it helped me understand that we need to report violence no matter how bad it may seem.

Emma (u/a): I also think it is important because it encourages people to know their rights and stand up for it.

Doreen (mc/a): I think that the pictures convey the messages to both sexes. For men, they are being reminded that these behaviours are unacceptable. For the women too, especially the married ones, they are being shown to find help for themselves if they happen to be in such situations.

Eddie (u/y): I learnt from the adverts that fondling and marital rape are all offences and this has also made a big difference in what I was thinking about at first and now.

> Mike (r/y): I also did not know that fondling was an abuse. I think more and more of these pictures and messages should be given to people. It will help a lot.

However, according to Freda (u/y), sex education in schools was no longer effective because most people her age and even those younger, already knew about sexual activities and would only make a mockery of what their teachers said. As she put it:

> I think we are going too far with this sex education thing. Even the very young children of today know so much more than we did when we were their age. If the teacher mentions 'vagina' or 'penis' in the classroom today, everybody will just start screaming and giggling [whole group laughs] and nothing would be done.

Contrary to some adults' uncertainty about whether the young were informed about sex, Freda's comments show that, indeed, they did, including having knowledge about gender violence and that this was provided by schools and sometimes even informally before their formal education. For Freda (u/y), the media campaign was significant in providing information on what to do if she or others experienced abuse.

For Sylvia, (a poor woman who had come from the village to live in the city), her knowledge about gender violence was through her chancing upon an 'open market' educational talk. After learning that victims could get help to overcome situations like hers, she discussed this with her neighbour on where to go for such help. I became interested in Sylvia's story through the way in which the police responded to her greetings on one of my visits.

> Sylvia: Good afternoon madam, I have come with an issue.
>
> Police: Yes, your stories are many. What has he done again today?

Sylvia went ahead to narrate how her abusive husband had come home drunk the previous night and abused her physically for not leaving any food for him. Her question to him was whether he had left any money for food to be prepared and this then started her ordeal. As the police later told me, she had reported her husband to them but always pleaded that nothing serious be done to him. On the day I interviewed her, all she wanted was for the police to issue a warning to the man to give her the peace she needed to go and look for a job and earn some money to take care of herself and her children. The educational

campaign therefore helped her in identifying where she could go for help, even though her circumstances prevented her from taking full advantage of the law.

For Habib [a participant from the rural North], whose teacher used to beat him as a child, his information about gender violence was obtained through radio advertisements when he came to the city in the year 2000, when the anti-gender violence campaign was running. In his village, where the authority of the educated teacher was unquestionable, (and where in this case, his teacher was the abuser himself), Habib recounts how the abuse he endured was seen by the school and other adults as simply a form of discipline helpful in his formation. He started becoming aware that certain acts constituted gender violence through a radio programme he used to listen to and then he began talking to his friends about it. For Habib, the focus group discussion also provided another opportunity for him to clarify issues on gender violence as was evident in his question:

> Habib (r/mc/a): So ma sexual assault is not just about sleeping with somebody against their wish?

For participants in this category, it emerged that their cultural socialisation contributed immensely to the violence they suffered:

> Matthew (u/mc/a): I think some people have actually been socialised into accepting abusive lives. That is what they know, what they think about and so on. So madam for them, a lot has to be done to dissociate themselves from this lifestyle.

As the gender activists interviewed alluded, a combination of the variety of media seemed to have reached a wide variety of audiences. From the above, it was evident that through a combination of radio, television, newspapers, posters and word-of-mouth, adults and younger people across generations and classes acquired knowledge about gender violence and sometimes went on to use this information to locate The Ark and DOVVSU offices.

The anti-gender violence campaign

Focusing more specifically on the selected posters, participants' understanding and responses to these similarly varied across class and generation. For Sandra, one of the young participants, for instance, the poster ads were particularly meaningful because she felt they educated her about what to do after an abusive situation. Reflecting on a particular poster she echoes the phrase, 'Don't hide sexual assault, Report abuse' continuing:

'it educates us on what to do when we find ourselves in this kind of trouble'.

She then describes how issues around gender violence were difficult to discuss with some parents or older family members.

> Some parents will support you but others will not. There are family members who will blame you for what has happened and will cast a lot of insinuations at you, so really, it depends. My mum for instance is a choleric. If you come and tell her you have been raped, the way she will insult you [pauses], in fact if you are not careful she will sack you from the house. Even though she cares, she can also be something else.

Thus knowing about other sources where one could go for help was the best thing she claimed to have learnt. Similarly, Albert suggests of the campaign:

> Well, I think it pushes home the point about the various forms of abuse that exist and the fact that people should speak up and not cover up for anybody.

Both Sandra and Albert (u/y) highlight the issue of cultural silence on abuse, identifying it as a contributory factor in the perpetration of violence. For them, therefore, the poster ads act educationally to communicate how to break this silence and be more outspoken in order that gender violence might begin to be curtailed.

Sophia and Samuel also expressed similar views when discussing the poster which depicted a man in the process of caning his wife (see chapter 5, sample ad 2).

> Sophia (u/mc/a): Some men marry people and they treat them anyhow because they think that now you are completely for them. The advert, however, reminds such people that even if they no longer loved their wives, they still had no right to beat them up.

> Samuel (u/a): Yes, for some people, they think beating their wives is normal, so if they see these adverts, it may affect them and they may change.

The point they allude to is the male domination of women in Ghanaian society and the belief in the potency of ads to change the attitudes of male abusers, such that violence against wives is not regarded as 'normal'. Additionally, they suggest that the ads might also be a source of knowledge for such victims. In her contribution to the discussion of these ads, Betty raised a further issue:

> Sometimes, even if girls talk, they talk to the wrong people. Some will tell their peers who may not give them the correct advice. For me, the adverts are good, because they inform people about what to do when in trouble.

Finally on the informational value of adverts, Freda (u/y) also had this to say:

> For all the young ones who don't get their parents to discuss sexual issues and the topic of abuse with them, advertisements such as these are important ways through which they can learn.

These last two participants, expressed their belief in the ads' ability to educate people but also in the source of the information. The constant repetition of the activist organisation's name on the poster apparently assured these participants about the authenticity of the source of information which, in their view, was of higher value than what friends could offer. These views confirmed Pateman's assertion that:

> A hearer works out the force of an utterance not just from what is said or how it is said, (i.e., by using their knowledge of semantics, syntax and phonology), but also and importantly from who says it … So, the hearer makes use of pragmatic knowledge; that is, knowledge about the relations which standardly exist between "signs and their users", utterances and their utterers (cited in Moeran 2010 p. 122).

For Pateman therefore, one's knowledge about the source of the copy contributed to the importance attached to the information being given. This resonated with Freda (u/y) and Betty's (uc/a) conviction in the posters potential ability to effectively educate people. For them, their previous knowledge about the work of DOVVSU and the ARK as experts on gender violence, assured them further about the potency of the information that was given through the posters. Thus, even though the 'speakers' of these ad communications were not clearly visible, the stamp of DOVVSU and other partners on the posters drew audiences' attention to them and reinforced the authority of their message. Additionally, it also suggested that the activists relied on other institutions such as the police to enhance the authority of the message for viewers. The participants regarded the posters and their educational communications as taking on an educational responsibility in relation to children which perhaps should have been performed by parents but which was often ignored because of social and cultural norms.

Solutions to life's experiences

Another notable revelation from discussion across the focus groups was their view of the poster ads as a practical way through which they could find solutions to their everyday challenges. For some of them, the posters were more easily understood because they could easily relate to the narratives as a result of their own personal experiences. For example, Linda (uc/a) recollects how in secondary school, the boys in her class often made fun of the girls for whatever reason they could find, making life very uncomfortable for them. However, she commented that after their class was given a talk on gender violence and shown ads on the subject by members of an 'outside organisation[49]', she learnt that:

> If we didn't like what someone was doing to us we could report it, and after that any little thing that someone did to my friends and I, we'd run to tell. It gave me some comfort back then and toughened me. I also think that it empowered girls and made us believe that we could report abusers.

Linda was thus able to relate to and understand the communications in the posters and take up their advised action when defending herself and others against abuse. Her use of words such as 'toughened' and 'empowered' suggest the ad's ability to help her address such challenges. Similarly, in discussing a poster with the theme 'Violence is breaking up our families', Sophia shares how her knowledge of this message helped her neighbours and her take steps to reconcile a couple whose family was threatened as a result of violence. She recounts the numerous occasions when neighbours had to intervene in the couple's disputes, sometimes calling the police, with the hope of keeping the family together. For Sophia (u/m/a), recounting this experience was her way of sharing with the group how the information she had acquired from the ads had guided her actions in daily life.

She concluded, however, that this couple finally went through a divorce, but only because '… they just couldn't live together'. Sophia's last comment suggested her acceptance that she had performed her duty, as suggested in the ads but the couple not being able to live together was to be attributed to factors beyond those implied in the ads. She argued that

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[49] Linda did not remember the name of the group that came to deliver the talk although some other participants were able to recollect that the people belonged to the police or that they were from an NGO – The Ark

the ad communications were still potent and probably would work for a different couple under different circumstances.

Another example of an ad's ability to help solve issues, as perceived by participants, was seen in a statement made by Eddie (u/y) in the context of a wider discussion that we had engaged in about gender violence:

> At first, my impression was that women of today talked too much. You say one and they say five. And really it is very annoying. The poster which said 'you may not like your wife but you have no right to beat her' really touched me. Also, the communication indicating that as married people, no one necessarily had to dominate the other, also set me thinking.

Even though Eddie did not say he was abusive himself, his use of language such as 'really touched me' and 'set me thinking' suggested that up until his exposure to the ads, he perhaps held the view that it was okay to beat a woman especially if she was loud mouthed. Once he got the importance of the message, he began to modify his own thinking about gender violence: a wife, however 'annoying' did not deserve to be beaten.

Eddie, and others like him, appreciated the ads for the practical solutions offered, reflecting on these 'solutions' in the light of their own experiences. In these cases, the ads were regarded positively but this did not apply to all. As seen in the following section other participants, drawing on their own experiences as a measuring rod, did not think that the ads were that potent. I argue here, that people are influenced by their identification with the narratives deployed in advertisements as a result of their own attitudes and socio-cultural differences among others. Thus meaning is enhanced or blocked through the similarities or differences between themselves and the narratives they encounter within the advertisements.

Questioning the ads

Whilst participants like Sandra, Albert, Eddie and Sophia acknowledged the significance of narratives in the ads in educating the public on various aspects of gender violence, Kate [a middle class older participant] expressed a different view about the traction of the advertisements, judging them in relation to the unending examples of abuse cases still being reported in the country:

> Kate: When I see it [implying one of the ads], I consider it as just another story.
> Marian: Why?
> Kate: Because violence happens in most homes so often, and people are just not stopping.

For Kate therefore, the pervasive nature of violence in Ghana suggested that the advertising messages did not yield the desired impact on viewers. Others, like Matthew (u/a), shared a similar view:

> Matthew: So these adverts [pauses], they set me wondering whether really people are   seeing them at all.

Not "seeing", for Matthew (u/ mc/ a] was actually his way of questioning the impact of the media in encouraging people to change their views and act differently in everyday life. In his contribution to the discussion, Frankie, another older participant, also expressed mixed feelings. For him, even though ads were a good mode of communication in Ghana for the literate, they were not an effective means of reaching rural people:

> Frankie (r/a): … most of them can't read or write. So I think communication should be more of a one-on-one thing. Advertisers should go to the rural folk individually and talk to them, their parents, and their teachers instead of using the media.

For Frankie therefore, it was imperative for producers of the campaign to devise other means of reaching this group. His views, however, raised a heated debate among participants, some of whom felt that even for those who were illiterate, posters, for example, would be able to communicate to them[50]. Through this debate however, a further issue raised in relation to the apparent ineffectiveness of ads was put across:

> Joe (r/a): … if people are brought up to think that abuse is OK, no amount of advertising will change them. Some people are just sick. They find joy in doing mean things, and it is difficult to change them.

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[50] At the end of the discussion I explained to the group that the poster ads were part of a wider educational campaign which involved that kind of work.

For Joe therefore, people's upbringing had a lot to do with the way they responded to ads. As he explained later on, it was the individual's mind-set towards violence, a result of their socialisation or personal circumstances, which shaped their behaviour, and ads were unlikely to change that. His argument about people's 'personal circumstances' influencing their response to ads resonated with Sylvia (r/p/a) who said that:

> It is good for adverts to show people what to do. But me [pauses] if I decide to leave the man now, I don't have anywhere to go. I came to the city alone, and he is the one taking care of me.

Although the information in the advertisements was clear to Sylvia, her dependency on her partner constrained her freedom to act. Similarly, Vera, (mc/a) another victim and a teacher by profession, did not really see adverts providing solutions. As will be seen in the next chapter, it took her a very long time between first seeing them and actually deciding to go to DOVVSU and report it.

Socio-cultural differences: rural and urban

It was significant in the focus group discussions that whether participants were brought up in the city or in a rural area[51] contributed to their understanding of the communications. This was exemplified in the exchange below when Habib, [a native from the Northern part of Ghana where adherence to traditional practices is very strong] argued in defence of the poster depicting a man about to use a cane on his wife:

> Habib: Ma, you see, men have so many ways of putting their women on the right track. Perhaps this may be his way of putting the woman on the right track.

Habib sees caning as an appropriate means to discipline women or shape their behaviour. In a similar way, when Emmanuel criticised the practice of sticking ground ginger in a child's anus as punishment for wrongdoing, George quickly rebutted:

> George (r/y): But madam, in our culture, we see this as medicinal. I remember that whenever I had it done to me they would usually asked me to do this [gets up and bends down] so that it goes to my stomach well and clean there.

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[51] Even though I did not particularly select any respondent according to their rural or urban upbringing, their varied views on the different aspects of gender violence led me to trace their answers to these backgrounds.

> Habib (r/a): Ma, there is this saying from where I come from that if you beat someone it does not mean you dislike that person or something. You may beat a person because you like them and want them to behave in the right way. I remember when we were in school my teacher used to beat me when I did not do my work but after school he would offer to give me a ride home if I were going his way. So you see what I am saying.
>
> Marian: I see. So what Habib is telling us is that in his traditional area people are not punished out of hatred but as a form of correction?
>
> Eddie (u/y): Yes. I know of some people who actually decide to scald their children's fingers as punishment for them stealing things from their parents.
>
> Prince (u/a): Madam, I think that there are other forms of punishment such as letting a child sit in a resting corner, hiding corner or preventing them from doing something that they really enjoy. These can be used to correct them.
>
> Habib (mc/r): But that is too easy to be used as a form of punishment. [All others laugh]

For Habib, therefore, nothing was going to change his mind from seeing what was going on in the posters as a means of disciplining children or women to classifying such actions as abuse. For him, the images were meaningful because he could associate the actions represented with events in his own upbringing right from childhood. But, because in his traditional area men had the right to 'discipline' women, the issue could not be contested, thus not even the captions attached to the pictures urging 'stop abuse', or the arguments other participants made, could make a difference to his view. Similarly, George's cultural background could be seen to influence his reading of the ads. His view of some acts described by participants as 'medicinal' whilst others saw them as 'abusive', also indicates how background experience is brought to the fore in trying to make sense of the ad communications.

In the terms suggested by Bourdieu, these participants are bringing to bear his or her 'cultural capital' [that is the norms of conduct learnt through family upbringing and educational training] when trying to understand the issues represented in the posters. According to Bourdieu:

> We bring our cultural capital to bear on objects in terms of their appropriateness for us as certain sorts of people [cited in Du Gay et al 1997: 97].

This idea is more apparent when we compare Habib and George's arguments with the different arguments of others, such as Freda and Emma who grew up in the city.

> Freda: I think that some of these things are the fault of some parents. They don't let their children have fun, go out, make up and things like that. In school I remember that there were some people who were not allowed by their parents to go out when they were at home. These children were the ones who came to school with extra clothes in their bags. From school, they would go out and they do all sorts of bad things. Therefore I don't think that being hard on children is the best.

> Emma (u/a): I think that forms of punishment have varied by generation. In the past, rules were laid out and people had to follow them. Today, the youth are allowed to dream, explore and do other things. When the youth are restricted today, I think it does not allow them to dream and be open. Violence will therefore not work today even if it may have worked in the past.

> Habib (r/a): So ma, from what they are saying, punishment should be abolished. Is that what they are saying?

> Freda (u/y): We are saying that if a child does something wrong you can sit her down and talk to her. But you can't decide not to give them food, give them money for school etc.

> Habib (r/a): How about stubborn kids?

> Freda (u/y): Stubborn kids? Why would you want to beat them? How about if in the process of beating she runs away and meets a man who comforts her and gives her things? Don't you think the man can even rape her? [Boy in the background – quick one, quick one – all laugh]

Freda's arguments here suggest how her cultural capital influences the way in which she understands the narratives in the advertisements. Whilst Freda's more 'liberal' upbringing in the city enables her to appreciate the 'vice' being criticised in the advertisements and is all for change, Habib still sees it not as a crime but an act with the objective to correct people. His conviction of this fact as a result of his rural upbringing, results in his bewilderment at the argument his colleagues make and pushes him to question rather aggressively, whether the others really want 'punishment to be abolished'.

 The participants responses above further exemplify and confirm Bourdieu's assertion that:

> Different social classes can be seen to have a different habitus and
> hence to operate each with a distinct taste structure and 'lifestyle'
> [cited in Du Gay et al 1997: 97].

The close link between the influence of geographical location and cultural background to how media texts might be consumed are further developed by Frankie who shared information about his culture in which any discussion around sex, for example, was considered a taboo:

> Frankie: … in our culture for instance they say so many things about sex that it even makes you afraid of talking about it. They say that it is a taboo and that if you talk about it certain things may happen to you.
>
> Matthew: Yes, even from our own cultural upbringing, we often do not find it appropriate to discuss sexual issues with grown-ups. Most families shy away from sex. I mean it looks weird to sit your 16 or even 18 year old son down to discuss sexual issues with them. Even the son himself, because of his socialisation will also find it difficult to ask his parents about sexual issues.

For Frankie [who remained quite reserved during most parts of the discussion] and Matthew, the ads explicitness about the various sexual activities considered violent, and the discussion of the subject among all of the group was quite challenging for them to deal with. Frankie's behaviour, combined with Habib's determination to convince the group about the benefits of discipline, showed the extent to which cultural values could be paramount for those who grew up in traditional rural contexts where certain values seemed more entrenched[52]. Particularly striking was the fact that these practices were still cherished by these participants even though they were currently living in the city. Having discussed how people's social differences with respect to their geographical location, and social and cultural upbringing influenced their consumption of advertisements, and how different sorts of people used these advertisements differently to suit their own purposes,

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[52] This revelation was quite notable considering the fact that both participants making this argument were male. As will be seen in the next chapter however, this situation was virtually the same for Tina, who found the issue of marital rape difficult to handle because of the traditional beliefs she held about how marriages should be.

I turn now to discuss other differences in how the ads were understood, that is how a participant's gender might situate them differently.

Gender differences, gender identities

Another issue that emerged from participants' accounts of their understanding of the ads was how identity informed their identification with aspects of the ads and their relation to the representations of gender violence. In brief women and men consumed these ads differently. Smiling, if also questioning, Eddie, for example, defended a poster depicting a man beating his wife:

> Eddie: Madam what if the man is straightening the woman? Pertaining to the beatings eh, the ladies, they should learn to shut up [people laugh]. They can be so annoying that if you are not careful, [pauses] ...Women of today talk too much. You say one, they say five. And really it is annoying.

Probably, the smile with which Eddie started his pronouncement, and the pauses he took during his submission, suggested his acknowledgement of the fact that the beliefs he was going to share would raise some controversy. He tries hard to prove that such violence usually happens as men's way of reacting to women's provocation. However, the laughter from participants that follows suggests their disagreement with the legitimacy of this claim. Eddie's attempt at defending violence highlights the more general point that personal beliefs and attitudes influenced how a participant understood the ads. Habib also echoes Eddie's view:

> Mike (r/y): At times we don't take into consideration what the women did to receive this treatment. Definitely, the man wouldn't have done this to her if she didn't do anything.

George also attempts, in effect, to defend the rapist depicted in a poster when he comments:

> George (r/y): Madam, although sexual violence is not allowed, the ladies too, they should dress well.
>
> Female participants' response: No, no, no, no, no …
>
> George (r/y): Wait, wait, wait and let me finish what I am saying. Sometimes, how they dress is too much. The guys too are attracted by what they see, so at least the girls should try and cover some parts of their bodies well.

Linda (uc/a): If you see something and it will worry you, why don't you just take your eyes off it and be free. I think what these men are saying is so out of context and off the hook… I just think men do what they do because women are considered the weaker sex often with no strong voice to talk for us. Men just want to be powerful, that's all.

David (r/a): [in an attempt to let the group understand male differences] I think our level of comportment differs a lot. Some people will see something and be attracted, but others will not. So I think it will do the ladies who are vulnerable a lot of good, if they can dress decently to avoid all these.

Judith (uc/a) [shaking her head in disagreement] my view about men is that they just like to take advantage of women and children, often the most vulnerable and the least protected in society. The adverts should show that women can also fight back.

This discussion points to how some men relate to the ad narratives by considering the temporal moment before the act [of violence] by justifying the probable reason leading to abuse. For them therefore, the onus is on women and girls to prevent violent acts from taking place. Much older than Eddie, David's caution suggests that age could also be a critical factor in how ads are consumed and understood. Unlike the approach of his younger group members, David's response was quite subtle and more compassionate even though he did not openly reject the abusive act.

In contrast, Judith and Linda are very firm in their disagreement with George's view; they are also clear about women's status as 'weak', 'most vulnerable', 'with no strong voice to talk for us', and acknowledge women, including themselves, as a subjugated group in the society. They appear to identify with the plight of the victims in the ads. This affirms, perhaps, the argument made by During [1993: 7] that 'groups with least power practically develop their own readings of, and uses for, cultural products … in resistance, or to articulate their own identity'. Notably however, the conviction with which both women in this exchange rebutted the statements made by their male colleagues, is significant as a clear sign of a shift in women's position in Ghana: from 'domesticated' and 'silenced' to 'public' and assertive. This disparity between men's and women's views throws up the controversial nature of this campaign against gender violence.

Rising controversy

In assuming particular 'knowledges' about how women should dress and behave, and for which they should be punished if they went astray, Habib and Eddie were convinced that gender violence could be pardoned under certain circumstances. These circumstances included women being loud-mouthed, which was often translated as being over confident and challenging male superiority. As captured by Eddie, '… women of today talk too much. You say one, they say five. And really it is annoying'. With this mind-set, the redefining of 'discipline' or 'straightening' of women, as violent acts perpetrated by men, was therefore difficult for them to accept.

It exposed men as perpetrators of a crime liable for punishment, and patriarchy as an institution to be challenged. Conventional modes of femininity and masculinity in the country were disrupted and the men in the discussions expressed their discomfort with this. Additionally, the campaign's call on women to reject the idea of male dominance and abuse as a naturalised way of life, and embark on the fight for their autonomy, further aggravated issues and was considered by such men as courting controversy. As captured by Joe (r/a) in his criticism of the images:

> Joe (r/a): I think the pictures are biased towards women. All the sufferers are women, whilst all the bad people are men. If any child sees this over and over again, she may be afraid of men or even say that all men are bad. So I think the pictures should be balanced.

> Habib (mc/r): I also agree with him that men have been portrayed negatively. All the posters show men molesting women and this is not good.

Habib and Joe among others acknowledge the perpetration of violence against women by men as acceptable under certain circumstances, equating abuse with discipline, but its exposure in the media 'as bad' was 'not good' since it would result in children saying that 'all men are bad'. Such exposure and re-evaluation in a more public space was embarrassing for them. As Eddie expressed in his reflection on domestic violence:

> Eddie: I think that it is real, but people don't talk about it very often. You see with the incest for example, it is disgraceful. For example if we hear that John Mahama [Ghana's President] has

> slept with his daughter, it will be a bit disgraceful. [Participants in the background question in surprise – A bit? A bit?]

Going on to raise the issue of adultery, he comments:

> Look at Mr. Dyke, for instance, whose wife has just revealed that none of their three kids are for him? It is a big issue. Everyone is talking about it. It is so bad.

The intensity (as conveyed in his voice and action) with which Eddie describes how embarrassing and inappropriate it was to reveal problems related to various forms of sexual intimacy in the public domain was remarkable. His citing of the 'president' in his example signified the superiority he attached to all men and how demeaning he felt it was to even think that they could be involved in such acts, let alone advertise them. At the time of the interviews, a famous person in the country was engaged in an embarrassing and humiliating media scandal which, in comparison, accentuated the point he wanted to make.

This issue was also alluded to earlier in the discussion when Matthew (u/a) described the 'weird' nature of discussing sexual issues among grown-ups and youths. For both men, therefore, even though the ads represented a pertinent issue, they believed that boundaries were unnecessarily being crossed and, in a way, that made uncomfortable reading for many [men]. In their view, the predominant use of outdoor media to circulate such material aggravated already simmering tensions. As Frankie commented later in the same interview:

> We usually do not see these kinds of messages on our billboards, television etc., so immediately you see it, you are forced to pay attention to it.

Frankie's assertion here about the media exposure of gender violence confirms the impact of the media in pushing home certain ideas, and also in contributing towards making the images shown on gender violence gain their controversial status. For the male participants, another contributory factor to their unease and what they see as the controversial aspects of the campaign, is that the ads suggest that men were more likely to perpetrate violence against women [and men] than women against men. The feelings this invoked further intensified the discomfort of male viewers who wanted to deny this 'imbalance'.

> George: I want to say something about the campaigns. I feel that the campaigns are always one-sided. They always talk about women being beaten. I think they should add men in there.
>
> Habib: But is it really common?
>
> Emma: Well, why we don't think it is common is because the campaigns always tell girls to come and report abusive cases. Boys are not often called this way so it makes us think that there is nobody to defend us.

Meijer's argument on billboards (cited in chapter 4) could arguably be applied to the poster advertisements here since through their use, the Ghanaian society was also confronted with its own practices, values and beliefs which lead to the perpetration of patriarchal gender violence. This, however, gives rise to mixed reactions. George's appeal that images of violent women be also represented suggests how uncomfortable this 'realist' strategy was for him, and others like him, to handle. Their attempt to rationalise through apportioning blame was, however, seen by others [especially but not only women] as a way to escape from the embarrassment evoked by these portrayals. Thus others, including Matthew argue:

> Matthew: I think it is important for advertisers to use reality in disseminating their information. Abuse is real. So I think these pictures are ok. If they turned the roles around, the posters will not be believable especially in our part of the world where it is the men who are often the perpetrators. Showing a man crying in an advert will never be accepted.
>
> Doreen (mc/a): It shows people what to do in times of abuse and I think it is very good. Also, for the people who don't get their parents to talk about abuse to them, this is one important way. Adverts help us go round our cultural barriers.

Doreen and Matthew emphasise that the perpetration of violence by men against women in Ghana was a reality which should be accepted as such. For them, copy such as 'Real MEN do not Hit WOMEN' and 'you may not love your wife, but you have no right to beat her' (see chapter 4) aptly capture common situations in Ghana which people needed to be aware of and work to achieve. In their view, reversing the portrayal of the sexes would look very strange and unbelievable and would do very little to effect any change. The discussion above shows how the ads open up private and personal tensions for public

examination, and the differences in people's approach towards dealing with the issues at stake.

The controversy raised through audiences' reading of the advertisements can be said to have resulted from the exposure of the abusive nature of men. The responses to Habib's question about whether it was ever going to be common for men to be depicted as victims of crime, emphasises the fact that until some change in society was realised in relation to male abuse of women, ads would largely continue to represent abuse of women and not vice versa would address this issue and not women's abuse of men.

Conclusion

As indicated in the literature, one argument of a cultural studies approach to media is that meaning making requires an in-depth exploration beyond the views encoded by producers to what people make of and do with the objects they consume. The varied nature of the exchanges in this chapter indicates that through various media channels deployed in the campaign, people became conscious of gender violence. Most importantly, people brought their experiences to bear when engaging with the ads. For the majority, the fact that violence could be reported, in spite of the embarrassment it caused some, was a significant development. The participants' narratives about the various uses to which they put the adverts show the broad scope within which they variously operated and do not always align with the encoded / preferred meanings of producers.

For younger participants, the ads were a source of knowledge, an informational and educational tool on how to deal with gender violence. Through their reflection on various ads, they articulated a belief in advertising's ability to suggest solutions to everyday challenges they faced. The advertising messages also accorded them the opportunity to assess their violent experiences in the light of the knowledge provided by the campaign. It could be argued, therefore, that for the younger generation, these ads served as a platform through which they learnt about what constituted abuse, and what one had to do in the event of abuse. In addition, the ads also helped them to begin to discuss their own sexual experiences and in particular, gender violence. Notably, this was quite similar to some more mature adult experiences. Even for an elite woman like Auntie Amma, who was convinced by her friend and sister to report a case of abuse, she said she had to look

through her newspapers where she had last seen the advertisements to locate the details of the DOVSSU office and what help they could offer her.

Some urban adults believed that the representations deployed in the campaign did pick up on the cultural practices engendering violence. They therefore welcomed the graphic nature of the ads, as a means of breaking the cultural silence and bringing about necessary changes. In contrast, others, especially male participants who had grown up in various traditional contexts, but were living in the city at the time of the focus groups, felt uncomfortable, 'embarrassed' by the representations of men in the ads. For them, violence occurred as a reaction to female provocation of men in different ways. It was therefore one way in which men could stop women from being disrespectful to them.

Whilst some male participants acknowledged that change was needed and certain attitudes should be given up, others still held on to the view that men had the responsibility of 'straightening up' women and children to maintain culture and decorum in society. Indeed most male participants exhibited patriarchal tendencies as they engaged with the advertising materials. In the quest to challenge these notions, however, the assertiveness and 'awareness' of some females [mostly middle and upper class] participants emerged. They confidently articulated that men's violent behaviour was a result of their desire to be more powerful which meant that they jumped at every opportunity to demonstrate this power, often targeting women and children.

Female participants also unanimously agreed that women and children were socially and culturally weaker, thus making them more vulnerable to abuse. However, they believed that changes could be made through education on gender violence in schools from a very early age, and through awareness creation campaigns, such as this advertising and educational campaign. Nevertheless, this was not the case with all women. In my interviews with Sylvia and Vera, for example, who were still living with abusive husbands, this sort of assertiveness was not evident even though they had seen and clearly understood the ads. They both mentioned their husband's usual drunkenness before abusive episodes and hoped that with pieces of advice and warnings from the police, the men would refrain from such acts. For them, the advertisements just reflected their plight and they looked to the police especially to help them out.

I subsequently argue that in deploying this media, the campaign brought a gendered issue perceived to belong to Ghana's private sphere into the public domain, thus disrupting

conventional modes of femininity and masculinity in the country. Through this shift, Ghanaian women were called to reject the idea of male dominance and abuse as a naturalised way of life, and embark on the fight for their autonomy and the same equal rights as their male counterparts.

This 'open' consciousness-raising for women, coupled with the exposure of masculinity in 'criminal' terms and liable to corporal punishment for their offences committed against women, challenged the patriarchal notion of male domination over women in Ghana. This did not particularly sit well with some male viewers (an issue I will come back to). But then the campaign was only the first attempt at drawing attention to this problematic aspect of Ghana's culture, and it had made the issue a topical discussion in the country. Following the diversity of views expressed on the advertisements by the participants, the discussion above confirmed Du Gay's view (following that of cultural theorist de Certeau) that:

> Rather than viewing consumer behaviour as a simple expression of the will of producers, or of already existing and seemingly immutable social divisions, consumption in this perspective can be conceived of as 'production' in its own right.' (1997: 103)

From their utterances, the participants expressed the extent to which they '(re)produced' the posters shown them in ways that were meaningful to them in their everyday lives. Whilst young participants conceived them as an educational kit on the various manifestations of gender violence and how to deal with it, some older participants saw it as practical tool to be deployed in solving daily problems of abuse in some families. Additionally, for some older participants [Betty], who knew the source of the advertisements, the messages deployed in the posters were seen as coming from an authoritative source and therefore had the capability of performing duties otherwise left for parents to do.

In the same discussion, others expressed their disbelief in the effects advertising had, considering the fact that gender violence was still pervasive in Ghana. This led to the highlighting of personal character and the circumstances of people as some factors which inhibited the effectiveness of adverts. The varied responses they gave suggested that they were not passive audiences just waiting for directions from the advertising's product to act, but rather active ones whose agency was not constrained in anyway. As Du Gay et al capture in their discussion of the 'polysemic quality of commodities':

> All consumers are self-conscious cultural experts whose intimate knowledge of consumer culture allows them a greater freedom to use commodities to become what they wish to be … consumers' style identities for themselves through their consumption practices which overturn or transgress established social divisions…
> [1997: 104]

Overall, the discussions revealed that participants occupied different positions in relation to their understandings of advertisements on gender violence depending on age, class, gender and socio-cultural upbringing. This then proved the fact that meanings cannot be fixed. Depending on individual needs, people interpreted advertisements differently. In the next chapter, I take up this subject in a more in depth way by looking at ways in which advertising feeds into participants' awareness of gender violence, exploring how it may have alerted them to its potential danger. I further explore the differences in participants' accounts of their lived experiences of violence, highlighting how class and generation influenced their likelihood to take personal action.

Chapter 6
Awareness of gender violence; making changes?

Drawing further on the focus groups and individual interviews with women, this chapter continues to explore aspects of people's awareness and understanding of the campaign, investigating whether it might have raised consciousness in relation to the issue of violence and its dangers, and whether it led to wider debate and personal actions towards change. The first section explores how the campaign featured in participants' talk about gender violence and in their own daily lives. Through the lenses of the campaign, participants express their views about some causes of gender violence in the country, using personal experiences as examples. In the second section, I further examine participants' views on the effects of gender violence on victims and the society at large. The next section highlights views about the information gained from the campaign which might have led to taking action. It explores the dynamics involved in reporting abuse, revealing that whilst the campaign seemed to raise women's consciousness and sense of themselves, other factors inhibited their desire to report abuse. Finally, I discuss participants' opinions about the campaign, raising their concerns about its effectivity.

Exploring media texts in the everyday

Viewing the abusive scenarios represented in the campaign's posters, participants expressed their opinions about how people's adherence to traditional institutions gave rise to the perpetration of gender violence. Commenting on Ad 2 in the sample, George (r/a) expresses his view about how the system of arranging marriages in his village could be the cause of violence against women. He observes:

> Ma, where I come from, I think what our parents are doing isn't really the right thing. They usually match people by saying to a young man for example, Freda is your wife (pointing to a female participant), or to a young lady, this person is your husband (pointing to a male). If as these children grow, something happens along the line (in relation to sex) these families may just conclude that after all, we have already said you are both husband and wife, and subsequently force them to live together even though really, the situation could have passed as sexual abuse. Often, such marriages are not based on love and minor challenges they encounter in life easily escalates into violence.

In talking about the poster, George (r/a) alluded to the practice of arranged and sometimes forced marriages in some Northern parts of Ghana where he hailed from. Whilst George's comment provides an insight into such marriages he is also well aware that they can lead to the perpetration of violence, especially when couples do not have any affection for each other (which is more often than not).

However, in contrast to George's awareness, enabling him to question this practice, others such as Mama (r/p who grew up in a village and has limited education) view such a cultural practice as normal, and finds it difficult to accept the issue of raping partners as an act of violence. Looking confused and pointing to sample ad 4 … she asks:

> Madam, please I have a question about raping partners. I thought that the moment someone marries you, he has the right to have sex with you at any time?

As the discussion progressed, it emerged that marital rape was particularly difficult for Mama, Tina and others who grew up in the rural area to understand. As part of the advice given during traditional marriage ceremonies in her area, women are cautioned that it is their duty to be sexually responsive to their husbands at all times. Such advice contradicted the notion of marital rape, and for Mama, reporting such an issue as abuse was to contravene her traditional belief. In the effort to help her deal with the idea of marital rape, Phyllis a lecturer by profession explained:

> The fact that men are stronger than women does not mean he, your husband, has dominion over you. It is a relationship and not domination. He has no right to bully you when you are not ready to sleep with him. So if you are not in the mood, your right has to be respected.

Phyllis' assertion here and her contributions later suggested her disagreement with particular traditional dictates which she felt amounted to the abuse of women's rights. The varied contributions of respondents on this subject highlighted that whilst some were receptive to the communications offered in the campaign others, whether related to level of education, generational or regional differences were not.

Another issue that emerged was the need to uphold certain family values and the impact of that. In reflecting on the family scene in sample ad 1, participants attested that as a family-oriented country where the extended family system is recognized, it was very

common to find grandparents, parents, children and grandchildren, or a combination of any of these members, all living within the same compound. Very important to this communal way of living is the need for members to be respectful towards each other and protect the dignity of the family as a whole. A common proverb captures this situation: 'family issues are not like clothing, to be washed and hung outside'.

In the participants' view, however, in as much as this is regarded as a positive trait in the society, the desire to uphold these values could sometimes lead to violence within families and relationships being kept secret; thus further traumatising victims. For some then, this societal expectation resulted in many women suffering in silence for years. As shared by Auntie Amma (uc/a):

> I was married to a very decent man who came from an elite background. His father was a lawyer and his mother was a teacher. My parents were equally of a good social standing and we had a very big wedding. After about eight years of marriage however, he started abusing me. I couldn't tell my parents because I was brought up to understand that it wasn't everything that happened in one's family that could be sent out. I suffered a lot. As it got worse however, I discussed it with a friend who I could trust.

Even though she had ample knowledge about gender violence from her own studies and had seen the media campaign as well, it took quite a long while for her to seek help because of the guilt of exposing her family negatively. This fact, coupled with her status in society and the 'private' nature of gender violence resulted in her suffering abuse for a long time. As Auntie Amma (uc/a) admitted, in the attempt to save her family from disgrace, she endured violence for quite a while:

> At first, I didn't even tell my friend that I was the one suffering because I didn't want to disgrace my family. Whenever I needed help or clarification on any issue, I told her that I was doing so on behalf of a friend. I just felt so bad …

For Auntie Amma (uc/a), the repeated messages conveyed in the campaign's posters, helped her build the confidence to take positive steps towards freeing herself from her violent marriage.

With reference to sample ad 10, which listed adherence to harmful traditional practices as part of the abuse women encountered, Betty (uc/a) developed an argument in support

of the extent to which women endure abuse for the sake of protecting their relationships as tradition demands. She recounted the newspaper story about a famous footballer in Ghana whose wife had come out, saying that their three children were not his, due to his impotence[53]. Apparently the couple had agreed to have babies through other means as a cover up for the 'shame' that would otherwise have come upon their family if the man's situation ever became public. After their separation, however, the footballer accused his wife in a media interview of infidelity to which she responded by revealing his impotence. Betty commented that even though the wife did not have a totally happy marriage because of her husband's sexual incapacity, she was silent through all her years of marriage because she needed to save the face of her family, as custom demanded, only later to be betrayed. She was however quick to add that:

> Keeping family secrets as a cultural value to be upheld does not
> benefit women, but rather helps to maintain the ego of Ghanaian
> men.

Thus the information in poster ad 10 for example contributed to participants' questioning the extent to which some cultural practices (especially in relation to maintaining family secrets) contributed to violence against women in the home. With reference to sample ad 1, the difficulty tradition imposes on people to keep family secrets, especially in cases of abusive situations, is also raised by Kate (mc/a).

> The boy is thinking… maybe he is planning on what to do. But
> he is probably finding it difficult especially because he knows he
> can't report a grown-up, who in this case may also be his father.

Kate (mc/a) further explained that because children are taught that fathers, mothers, uncles, aunts and virtually all adults in the family are to be accorded due respect, abused children are also not able to report their ordeals and therefore suffer unduly for a very long time. Unfortunately, their abusers take advantage of this family value and perpetrate their abusive acts, sometimes instilling fear in the children by suggesting that exposing the secret will lead to a disintegration of the whole family, with untold hardship for everyone. In a reflective mood, Kate narrated the ordeal her daughter is going through at the hands of her abusive father:

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[53] Tradition bans the public knowledge of man's impotency thus in cases of childlessness in marriages for example, it is the women who bear the brunt of society by being described as barren.

> I sometimes came home from work and found them cuddled so closely under sheets on our bed. Their demeanour suggested to me that something had gone on. On the first occasion, I shouted at my daughter to leave the room, and warned her not be seen in that position again. My husband later accused me of conjuring images in my mind and acting on it and this led to intense arguments between us. Over time however, I kept seeing signs but my daughter would not admit it and even at some point accused me of trying to mar the relationship between her dad and her. I was so sure of what was going on, but who could I tell? This was our family, I could not afford to disgrace us.

Kate's account exemplifies how the obligation to keep her family from disgrace, kept her quiet for years, just hoping and praying that someday, her daughter would speak up.

Commenting on poster ad 8, participants also pointed to violence often occurring as a result of the traditional notion of meting out harsh punishments to children especially for various reasons. In the previous chapter for example, Habib's (mc/r) story about discipline in his community provides an insight into how violent practices could be considered as an act aimed at correcting people. Throughout our discussions on discipline, Habib for instance maintained the view that beating someone did not suggest one's hatred for that person but rather a show of concern aimed at putting him or her on the 'right track'. From Habib's traditional background therefore, letting children sit in resting corners, or preventing them from doing things they enjoyed as forms of punishments were 'too easy' and had the tendency of allowing children to repeat their bad deeds. Indeed the widespread nature of the use of corporal punishments in Ghana was unearthed when in response to my request for common forms of discipline participants cited the following:

> Eddie (u/y): I know of some people who actually decide to scald their children's fingers as punishment for them stealing things from their parents.

> Habib (r/a): Pulling of ears, denying offenders food.

> Doreen (mc/a): using hot iron to inflict wounds

> Emma (u/a): Ground ginger being stuck up your butt

> Samuel (u/a): Some even cut open the children's fingertips as a reminder of their bad deeds.

For respondents who advocated harsh punishment for offenders, this was a good step towards maintaining well-groomed youth and, ultimately, better adults, a virtue which for

them, modernity was gradually taking away. Conversely, other participants pointed to the fact that extreme forms of punishment only led to the children growing into violent adults and so should be reported and dealt with. For Mathew (u/mc/a), for instance, a critic of harsh punitive measures:

> It has recently come out through studies that most criminals we see today, are people who come from tough backgrounds… the violence they went through as kids has found expression in the violence they are repeating now.

Freda (u/y), another critic argued that:

> Children who are given so many restrictions at home, are the ones who behave so badly when they are in town. The plight of girls is even worse because in their quest to seek acceptance from other people outside their homes, they end up falling prey to abuse. I therefore don't believe that being so hard on children is the best.

To add to this, Sandra (u/y) stated:

> But madam, if you deny your child food, don't you think you are pushing him or her to go and steal? I think that really when the child goes to steal the parent can be blamed for really being the one messing up the child. It is a violent act and I think people who do that should be reported.

For participants with such views, harsh punishment was not the solution to crime, nor was it a deterrent for people to stop crime. They believed that because offenders often knew what the consequences of their actions could be, they prepared for them and went ahead with their plans anyway, ready for the consequences:

> Freda (u/y): Look at armed robbers, some are shot and others even have their arms cut off but they still take the risk of going on more trips whenever they get the opportunity.
>
> Emma (u/a): harsh punishments will not work today even if it may have worked in the past.

Such debate among participants showed that whilst some accepted that times are changing and so should people, others (such as Habib, who leaned towards the traditional adage 'spare the rod and spoil the child'), still believed that harsh punishments, as dictated by tradition, should be maintained to ensure decorum in society. From the above, it is evident that audience's engagement with depictions in the posters were meaningful because of

their ability to relate the narratives to their own cultural experiences in a way that exposed the occurrence of violence in families. Thus the poster ads foregrounded the criminality of abuse, and prompted people to recognise and also refrain from it.

Another area of discussion which emerged from respondents' reflection on the anti-gender violence campaign was the religious nature of the Ghanaian society and how some people's 'blind following' often resulted in violence. In a reflection on sample ad 9, participants in this study agreed that religion in Ghana plays a vital role in the lives of its citizens. They cited examples of Churches, Mosques and Shrines as places where people will usually go for arbitration, spiritual and emotional counselling from the clergy when all else failed, and also stay as places of refuge when people had no choices. However, respondents also pointed out the fact that acts of violence (such as sexually abusing some women and girls) often occurred during the performance of the conflict resolution role by the religious. This discussion evolved whilst respondents reflected on sample ad 7 with the caption 'Pastor 55 defiles girl 14', [Background: oooh, Wow, aah, why….]

In his comment on this caption, David (r/a) lamented that:

> Some pastors in Ghana today spring out of nowhere and claim
> that they have been called by God to preach the gospel. The next
> moment, you find that they have put up a structure, bought a few
> instruments to be played and a number of people to get the church
> going, only for us to soon discover that they are fake and only
> used their supposed authority to deceive vulnerable people.

Attributing the rise of gender violence in churches to the rise in fake pastors prompted other respondents to question the situation pertaining to Islam and traditionalism, since victims within these circles were hardly heard of. Linda for instance asked, 'I have never heard of an Imam raping anybody before, has anybody'? The subsequent discussion among participants explored how male domination over women found expression within Islamic communities in the country. However, in trying to answer Linda's question, male participants who were Moslem tried to prove that the process of ordination in Islam was more rigorous than in Christianity, thereby ensuring that the possibility of fake Imams was minimized. Nevertheless, Betty for instance was of the view that:

> Moslem men already have the liberty to marry as many wives as
> they can take care of, no matter the age difference. If we are not

hearing about rape for instance, it could be because it does not even find expression in their language.

Moreover, Judith (uc/a) adds:

> Their women are not allowed to come out openly with such news
>
> so you will find them covering up for their abusive men most of
>
> the time.

Clearly, from the point of view of Betty, Judith and others, religious customs, such as those expressed here, inhibited women's freedom of expression thereby likely contributing to the limited number of violent cases reported even though it may be prevalent. Others like Elsie (u/a), however argued that the situation was no different from what pertained within Christianity. For her, the pastors who commit abusive acts against their church members, just needed an excuse to dominate desperate and sometimes innocent women to fulfil their male egos. They therefore hid under the guise of religion to do this. She concludes by implying that in this era of change, women should become more 'aware' and avoid falling into male traps. This is how she puts it:

> I will blame this whole violence thing on the women and the level of ignorance that some show. How can you follow a pastor to his room because he says he can heal you? If you read your Bible well yourself, you will know that it is only God who can really heal or cleanse you. They don't read and then when it happens to them [implying rape] they feel ashamed to talk about it, and then it continues.

Whereas Betty, Judith and Elsie express the view that some pastors take advantage of the aura surrounding religion and take advantage of the unsuspecting, Eddie on the other hand feels that religion rather inhibits people's freedom to discuss various forms of violence, some of which are considered profane:

> It depends on the type of family that you find yourself coming from. If you come from a family that is all religious, they may not find it appropriate to talk to you about such things. However if your family is the type that is open and knows about all that is going on out there, they are more willing to talk to you about gender violence.

As suggested by Eddie (u/y), people's religious values influence their approach to gender violence. He seemed to be suggesting that the more religious the family, the less likely

issues would be discussed and thus the greater the risk of abuse being perpetrated. On the other hand, the less religious the family, the more open they were to the 'real' world thereby making it easier to discuss dangers with their children.

Another area of discussion around the causes of gender violence which emerged was poverty and how the poor were more likely to be abused than the well to do. This discussion emerged as Freda mentioned the torn clothes of the victim in sample ad 1, prompting Linda (uc/a) to share an experience with the group:

> I have this friend from a broken home, who is habitually beaten by her boyfriend for roaming around too much, and not being available when he needed her. Even though she often complained to her mother, the advice often received was that 'she should just stay at home to avoid further beating.

Linda (uc/a) indicated that further enquiries made by the group of friends into the plight of the victim, revealed that the boyfriend was actually responsible for the upkeep of the whole family because her friend's mother had no job. Linda lamented:

> Perhaps, her mother had weighed the option between her whole family starving and only one of them having to deal with abuse, and subsequently chose to go with the latter because of her economic dependency on him. The boyfriend's apparent control over the whole family inadvertently clamped down my friend's mother's authority and she sadly looked on as her daughter suffered.

Amidst participants' comments such as 'aaah, aaah' (expressing their disgust) they unanimously acknowledged how poverty and financial dependency contributed to abusive situations and in some instances could break up the family unit. Linda ended her account with the firm statement that: 'This can never happen to a rich man's daughter. If you even step on her toes, I bet you wouldn't like the way he will deal with you'.

Silvia (whose 'story' was recounted in the previous chapter), could not leave her abusive partner because when she arrived from the village to live in the city, he provided accommodation for her in an uncompleted building where he lived as a caretaker and also took care of her. At the time of the interview Sylvia's partner was unemployed which coupled with his frustration at having to take care of her and their children, led to him resorting to drink and abusing her.

Similarly Kate (mc/a cited above), attributed the incest in her family to the fact that her husband had to take care of their daughter during whole days while she worked, since he usually worked on a night shift. She told how maintaining the family was often a challenge for them financially thus making it important for them to keep this shift arrangement in order to avoid paying extra money to a nanny and have enough to pay their rent and other bills. It was during this period however that her daughter's abuse went on. Kate commented: 'I feel sad for poor mothers. Only God knows what we have to endure'.

For most victims interviewed and some participants, their experiences and observations, exemplified how poverty resulted in the perpetration of violence in Ghana. If in discussing the poster ads the participants offered a range of reasons for why gender violence was prevalent in the country, they also offered their views on the effects of gender violence.

Perceptions on the effects of gender violence

In describing the campaign posters, respondents reflected on the pain and sadness that violence often brought on its victims. As Tina commented with reference to sample ad 1 showing a family in an abusive scene:

> Tina (mc/r): I can see a man beating his wife and all his children…
> sort of also crying. The whole family is not happy.
>
> Samuel (u/a): The girl behind is holding her cheek, probably from
> the pain of being given a slap by her father.
>
> Ankrah (u/y): The children are sharing in the woman's pain. They
> are all suffering.
>
> Judith (uc/a): The little girl at the back looks scared from looking
> on.
>
> Joe (r/a): The one behind … I think she is even hurt. From the
> way she is holding her face, it looks as if she has been hit in the
> eye.
>
> Kate (mc/a): I can see the baby also crying. This means there is a
> lot of chaos in the house. You see babies cry a lot in reaction to
> different things. When there is a lot of tension around babies cry
> a lot. With the other girl looking away too, I feel that she has

> become used to the beating after seeing it over and over again to the point that now she doesn't even want to look anymore.

> Sandra (u/y): I see a woman looking very sad. She feels so bad and hurt from the experience she has just gone through. Probably she was a virgin and the man has 'de-virginised' her {all laugh}

> Betty (uc/a): But listen, even when you are not a virgin and some rapes you, you will still feel very hurt.

Participants also highlighted long term effects as well. As captured by Matthew (u/a):

> Matthew: Yes. Even recently, it has come out that most criminals we see today are people who come from tough backgrounds. This shows that all these hard punishments don't really help. The violence people experience from the very onset of their lives can therefore be blamed for the violence they are repeating now.

In my discussion with Kate about her daughter, she alluded to this long term effect of violence. In a very reflective way, she states:

> Now that she has grown a bit more, she is beginning to stay out for long periods. I kind of suspect that she understands her experiences better now and may be feeling guilty. I don't really know. She cries a lot but wouldn't say why, has also grown so big. I know there is a problem, I just know it.

The above statement thus showed, that Kate was aware about some of the psychological effects of violence (probably through her high level of education) and could see it reflect in her daughter's life. Further, with reference to sample ad 10 depicting girls being taken away from their culture to different places, participants were quick to point out that most of the girls usually ended up as prostitutes, house helps, and beggars. As Brenda (mc/a) summarized: 'they are promised to be taken abroad for a good life, but end up being made to do something else'.

Other contributions from participants, revealing their awareness of the effects of gender violence, concerned the stigmatization victims had to endure. This view was exemplified in a comment by Priscilla (one of the young women in the group) as she reflected on sample ad 4 depicting a woman after being raped. Describing this victim, Priscilla observed:

> She may not even be so sad about the pain of what has just happened to her but more so because of what people are going to say about her when the time comes for her to be married (pauses). In Ghana here, if a lady is raped for example, people will not take

> their time to find out how it all happened. They will say… oh, she
> was dressed indecently or she enticed the man and stuff like that
> implying that she is spoilt.

For Sandra (u/y) therefore, the pain for the victim of physical and psychological torture as a result of abuse, is relatively nothing compared to the judgement and stigmatization they suffer from society and its longer term impact on marriage prospects. For this reason, participants such as Sandra feel that young women are doubly challenged: first there is a need to protect themselves from abusive 'men' and secondly, to work towards being considered worthy for other 'men' – their prospective husbands.

Pertinently the 'judgement' of victims which Sandra alludes to, is also evident in George's (r/a) observation (see Chapter 5):

> Although sexual violence is not allowed, the ladies too, they
> should dress well. Guys are attracted to what they see so the girls
> should try and cover parts of their bodies very well.

Clearly for George, rape occurs as a result of victims not 'dressed well' thereby calling the incident upon themselves. The implication is that such 'ladies' do not deserve any pity for their plight. It is to such examples of society being judgmental of victims rather than of their perpetrators, that Sandra conveys her anger.

In the view of participants, the repetitive perpetration of violence leads to a situation in which both abusers and victims begin to accept certain violent acts as a 'natural' way of life, so the cycle continues. Brenda and Grace describe how some young women are attracted to men with abusive traits often because they see it as a 'normal' thing. As Brenda puts it:

> Brenda (u/p): [jokingly hitting a friend she came with] … Well,
> but some girls also like bad guys. They think they are cool and so
> are attracted to them[54].
>
> Tina (mc/r): Yes, and some women still love men who will beat
> them up before having sex with them. They think it is fun.
>
> Ankrah (u/y): With that, I think it has to do with their orientation.
> Such women may have come from abusive backgrounds and so

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[54] Brenda's gesture, and her friend's subsequent silence, suggested the latter was in a similar situation but did not want to let on. Thus although some participants were not always direct with comments they made, certain behaviours often gave them away.

> just enjoy themselves as they relive what may have been done to
> them, or to a family member in the past[55].

This interaction between participants showed their awareness of the fact that violent actions cause more violent behaviour and for people in these circumstances, life may become a cycle of abuse. As Mathew (u/a) captures elsewhere in the discussion:

> I think some people have actually been socialized into accepting
> abusive lives. That is what they know, what they think about and
> so on.

It is this idea of naturalized violence that leads Habib to question the normality of seeing a man being abused (Chapter, 5). For him, representing men being abused in communication materials is a complete misreading of facts whilst it is normal to see women being abused. Similarly, Prince (u/a) expresses similar sentiments when he comments:

> I feel that when guys report these things [abuse], they will not be
> given the same attention by the police as they do give the girls …
> for instance, if a boy reports rape, the police will say that he is
> framing the girls up. It is so unbelievable.

Thus for Prince , such normalization is so real that it leaves him feeling that law enforcers are more likely to address crimes reported by women than those reported by men.

A final effect which was also evident in the discussion was the silencing of victims, including children. Doreen (mc/a) cited Ghanaians' use of adages such as 'when an adult talks, a child should not talk back', and 'it is improper for a child to report an adult', which could often result in victims becoming wary of reporting abuse. To make this point clearer she also referred to sample ad 1, which depicts a worried looking boy sitting quietly in a corner as his father physically abuses his mother:

> Doreen (mc/a): That boy wants to talk, but he is scared he will
>
> also be slapped.

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[55] Notwithstanding the evidence that Ankrah and Brenda may have had, their comments implied they set themselves up as 'superior', looking down and regarding those who are abused as 'other' probably within the context of the wide publicity made against such behaviour.

For her this poster depicted the plight of many children who experience or witness abuse but do not have the courage to speak about it. To clarify this point, Sophia (mc/a) further explained:

> Because of all these issues, children these days are not 'transparent'. They don't tell their parents what exactly goes on and therefore endure abuse for as long as it lasts.

From the various contributions participants showed their awareness of how society has silenced its young through various socialization processes and how this has contributed to the perpetration of violence. Kofi (u/y) decided to share his experience of this with the group [and the silence that ensued as he spoke was significant].

> Madam, when I was about 15 years, I lived with my grandma who sold in the market, so whenever I closed from school, I went to our neighbour's house until she closed from the market and came to pick me up. But you see, the woman in whose house I was going, was having sexual relations with me. At the beginning I was enjoying it [participants burst into laughter] but after some time I was always getting too tired after the act so I wanted to end this whole thing. My problem however was how to tell my grandmother that I did not want to go there anymore and why.

He recounts that as he expected, when he finally got the courage to do so, rather than him being encouraged to report to the police, he was the one to receive the brunt of his grandmother's anger, with the accusation of him being 'a bad boy'. His grandmother blamed him and at the same time avoided a confrontation with the neighbour. The reason for such an approach was probably to avoid 'dirty' family secrets being let out and bringing shame to both families.

Elaborating on the upshot of such silencing and being discrete about such issues, Elsie also recounted how her former schoolmates did not really benefit from their class on sex education. She remembers the 'screaming', 'booing' and giggling among her class mates whenever the teacher mentioned 'vagina' or 'penis', and how awkward they all felt during the entire session. Her example showed how these students (and others like them) would rather learn about sexual relations privately rather than have an adult talk to them about it in public. In Elsie's view too, people also silently suffered violence because they felt it was inappropriate to talk about it and feared the reaction. As she pointed out in support of the challenges and plight that victims of abuse faced:

> Such people are often left thinking and wondering should I tell
> my family, how are my friends going to see me, and how is the
> society going to see me?

A subsequent comment made by Albert (u/y), in response to why young guys for instance engaged in sexual abuse, was significant in that it gave a clue into how abusers take advantage of this silencing to perpetrate their acts:

> Albert (u/y): As guys, we know that the girls can't go and tell
> anybody when they are raped or handled roughly because they
> will lose their respect. To avoid the shame, they will keep quiet.

With this idea at the back of some perpetrators minds, Albert admits that rape for instance was a way through which boys subdued girls 'who were not friendly, and felt like yeah, they were all that'.

Reporting abuse, action and personal change

A message categorically conveyed in the anti-gender violence campaign was the need for victims of abuse, and witnesses to report any violent act to the police. In exploring whether respondents understood this message and if it further moved them into action, significant findings emerged. Clearly, whilst it was quite easy for the upper and middle class adults without children to report abuse and face the consequences, women in the same class who had families to look after were quite apprehensive about the call to report because of fear of the family disintegrating. For the relatively poor women, reporting was also not always an option because of the risk they faced in losing the financial support of their partners. For the younger generation on the other hand, knowledge gained through the campaign encouraged them to be more determined to resist abuse of any form and report perpetrators should the need arise.

One could say that this was much easier for them because they usually had no commitments tying them to their perpetrators. From her narrative for example, it emerged that by the time Auntie Amma, (middle aged and belonging to the upper class) finally gathered the courage to report her plight to the police, she was also ready to leave her husband if matters were not resolved. She says that comparatively:

> Thinking about leaving my husband after so much abuse wasn't
> too much of a challenge for me first because, there were no
> children between us for me to worry about how they will take it.
> Secondly, even though I wasn't earning too much as a secretary,

I had a stable source of income which I believed would sustain
me when I left[56].

On the other hand, even though Vera, a middle class primary school teacher admitted suffering so much abuse for most of her married life, she could not leave her marriage so easily because she had children with her husband and could not bear the pain the children would go through if separated from their dad. For this reason, she relied on family members to arbitrate in the hope that her husband would change, and although she admits they tried, things did not improve. Her thinking was quite similar to that of Mama (a poor rural adult participant) who also held the view that:

At times, sitting the perpetrator down to have an elderly person
talk to them about changing their character can also help a lot.

On the day of the interview however, Vera had come to the realization that using family members for arbitration wasn't enough and so had come to the police.

For Sylvia, Mama and others like them, a low income level and sometimes none at all, and the constraints of family life served as a double barrier against a separation. Knowing this, Sylvia's abusive husband for instance ensured she engaged in no form of employment as a way of maintaining his hold on her:

Sylvia (r/p): My husband's church members expressed their willingness to help me out of my state. They therefore gave me money to engage in petty trading. During one of my husband's abusive episodes however he poured away all the grains of rice and gari I had on sale, saying that the church people gave the money because he worshipped with them but he did not need that help anymore.

Subsequently, she started sneaking out when he was away to do menial jobs and earn some money for herself. For Sylvia, the campaign's messages pushed her to the police station to seek further help but since she was still dependent on him for a living, whilst she wanted her husband to be dealt with, she also pleaded against a harsh punishment. On the other hand, for other poor victims, like Linda's friend, whom she told the group about, reporting was not an option because that would mean the whole family losing their

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[56] Auntie Amma also later revealed that her parents continued to be of immense support to her financially if she happened to be in dire need and that contributed a lot to her stability after divorce.

source of livelihood. Even though her family also knew that what she was going through constituted abuse, their poverty forced her friend and wider family to endure it.

The different reactions to abuse among these participants thus depended on the nature of the constraints they faced when it came to reporting, and how ready they were for the consequences. Victims of abuse from the upper and middle class, such as Auntie Amma and Kate respectively, had high awareness of abuse but, they endured it for a long time for fear that reporting it and involving the authorities would mar the dignity of their family in the wider society. Similarly for George, Habib and Mama, who also knew what constituted gender violence, their cultural background and social upbringing were factors that constrained them in various ways.

For younger women, however, the situation was slightly different. Throughout the group discussion, these participants foregrounded their anger and frustration at the abusive nature of men. They expressed hatred towards the perpetrators represented in the posters, and by extension, towards all abusive men for subjecting women to this ordeal. Whilst some described the perpetrator in poster 4 (see chapter 4) as having a 'wicked face', 'unscrupulous', and 'unconcerned', others alluded to his wickedness by describing how he might have 'given her some beatings to keep her in control'. Through their reflection on the focused shots of the model crying, and shuttered look, these young participants more or less immersed themselves in the horrible experience of abuse depicted, to the point of almost feeling it personally.

Thus the successful identification and understanding of gender violence was linked to audience's recognition of these narratives in their everyday lives or the lives of others. When asked what they would do if ever trapped in this situation, or if their husbands abused them these younger women indicated confidence in their responses:

> Elsie (u/y): I will just leave. I think we should not trust anybody. We should just read things on our own and protect ourselves. Sometimes these counsellors, advisors, etc. take advantage of people's state and manipulate them as well. They do take advantage of victims. People! Just deal with life. When life hits you, deal with it [all laugh].

> Freda (u/y): I will call the police

> Sandra (u/y): Madam, I have learnt a lot about abuse and reporting. But I really don't feel that it is my duty to report

> people's problems for them. I think people should be able to
> value their lives and report their own issues.

For these young female participants therefore, everybody should know about the dangers of gender violence by now and either report it themselves or stay away from the abusive relationship. For Sandra especially, it is about time people took their own lives in their hands to ensure protection. Clearly, these more radical views held by the young participants were different from the careful approach taken by the adults when it came to reporting abuse, though of course, it was another matter knowing whether they would also be cautious if ever they got to that point.

In exploring respondents' readiness to talk about gender violence (as advocated for in the campaign), I asked participants whom their first contact would be if something untoward happened. It was apparent that family values such as love, unity, dignity, care, and being each other's keepers, were espoused across all ethnic groups. For these participants friends and families, were uppermost in their lists:

> Habib (r/a): My friends. I relate better with them than I do with
> my parents.

> Elsie (r/p): A family member

> Mathew (u/a): My siblings

> Tina (mc/r): Any one closest to me and ready to listen.

> Sandra (u/y): My mum if she is close by or my dad. Whoever is
> available.

For Vera (the teacher who suffered abuse for six years), her uncle who lived on the same compound as her, was the first she ever reported to. She indicated that as the abusive episodes became more persistent, she further reported the abuse to her brother-in-law hoping that he could solve the problem because he was a direct relative of her husband. At the time of interviewing, she had gone through almost all her relatives to no avail and had decided to report to the police.

Sadly, Kate (who suspected incest in her family) only had the courage to tell her sister, and was still nurturing the hope that her daughter would mature soon enough and report her father herself. Others, however, had reservations about sharing such confidences with family members. As seen in chapter 5 Sandra, who said she would not to dare to speak to

her mum in case she was ever abused, admitted that she would rather report abuse to her friends. She explained:

> At least, I don't have any fear when talking to my friends because they don't have any power over me, and also really can't deny me anything as a result of what I tell them.

Betty (uc/a), who also said she would report to a family member, did, however, exclude her auntie, indicating that she was always so quick to blame. She described this as

> A behaviour which never made any of our family members go to her in times of trouble. This however wasn't good for us when we were kids because we were usually afraid to discuss our concerns.

Adding to these examples, Sophia (mc/a) said she would tell her boyfriend if ever abused because 'I think I can easily talk to him better than I can to anybody in my family'. Her response was however met with giggles and signs of surprise. In reaction to this response, she added '… I come from a different home you know, so' [pauses as if to prompt participants to the fact that people are different and should be respected for that]. Clearly, Sophia felt the need to explain herself because she acknowledged that her view about her family was contrary to that held by many.

For the male participants, views on reporting were different. Whereas some felt it was important to report, others (such as Fred, Joe, George, Habib see chapter 5) were of the view that male victims would not be listened to by the authorities because such an occurrence would be more believable if reported by women than it would be when reported by men. As Fred and Joe stated:

> Prince (u/a): I see this communication campaign as the mouthpiece for women. It opens doors for them to report things that are happening to them.
>
> Joe (r/a): I also feel that when guys report these things they will not be given the same attention by the police as they do give the girls.
>
> Chris (u/y): Because it is a fact that men are more powerful than women, even when a man goes to tell the police that his wife has done something to him, they won't believe him because they feel it isn't normal… [all laugh]

Indeed most male participants believed abuse was a 'woman's thing' thus they were the ones the campaign was encouraging to report. However Emma and Samuel, (who earlier

shared his witnessing of the abuse that went on in his neighbour's house,) were clear they would act differently in relation to violence against women the next time they witnessed one:

> Samuel (u/a): I will call the police the next time around, because we have talked to him over and over again to no avail.
>
> Emma (u/a): I will report
>
> Eddie (u/y): Well, I came to this discussion with certain ideas but I think I am leaving here with something else to think about.
>
> Ankrah (u/y): I think part of the reason why Tina will not report on behalf of somebody is because of fear. She probably is afraid of the harm that may be caused her by the perpetrator so she would rather mind her own business.

From Ankrah's statement it is clear that many women feared being hurt by perpetrators of violence. It also showed participants' awareness that people needed to be tactful in their approach when they decided to report violence. This confirmed activists' views that as part of their talks in public places, they had to guarantee people protection if they offered any information.

Out in public; challenges ahead?

For some of the participants, the anti-gender violence campaign marked a significant change in the treatment of this vice in the country. With reference to the poster that communicated information about Rape, Sexual Assault, Fondling, and defiling boys as examples of gender violence, this is what some of them had to say:

> Mathew (u/a): Wow, things have now changed in Ghana. Not so long ago, it wasn't very common to see them [pauses] I think we have come quite far.
>
> Tina (mc/r): I think because a lot of people are still shy to report these cases, the campaign will encourage them to come out boldly today and not hide.
>
> Ankrah (u/y): Knowing that fondling and marital rape are all offences, have also made a big difference in what I was thinking about at first and now. I think more and more of these pictures and messages should be given to people. It will help a lot.

Doreen (mc/a): I also think these adverts are important because once the information is out, even if it does not change everyone, it would change some.

Kate (mc/a): It tells me I could report but[57] … [goes quiet and heaves a sigh].

For participants, the fact that through these adverts society (especially the younger ones) could now openly talk about sex, and the myriad ways in which it was used as a 'weapon' of abuse against women and children in Ghana, was significant. They therefore welcomed the sexual explicitness of the ads, breaking the cultural silence identified as one of the challenges Ghana faced. As captured by Susan:

Talk about and around posters would afford the Ghanaian youth the opportunity to discuss their own emotional and sexual challenges which hitherto was impossible.

Acknowledging the level of awareness raised since the exposure of the ads, participants further expressed views, with reference to the campaign, about the various ways a wider section of the population could be informed and encouraged to act:

Emma (u/a): I think it's a good idea but may not be too effective because they are not making the efforts in the right field. Because mostly people in the rural areas and illiterate children are the ones abused, and because most of them can't read or write I think communication should be more of a one-on-one thing. They should go to them individually and talk to them, their teachers, parents, etc. instead of using just the media.

Phyllis: Madam I don't agree. I feel that, the posters or pictures are very important because when the children see them they will be attracted to them, look at them, and even tell other people about the horrible pictures. It doesn't matter how they will express themselves but at least some discussion would have gone on so that if they happen to be going through abuse, they would easily know what they have to do. The one-on-one is good, but also the posters and adverts are helpful.

Like Emma above, other respondents had concerns regarding the police and justice system in the country. In expressing her disappointment with the way the police sometimes handled cases of gender violence, Linda stated:

The police!, the police! Madam, the stress you go through when you report a case to the police eh, you will regret you did. The

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[57] Kate obviously had not gathered the courage to report yet because of her own constraints.

number of times you will be asked to report there will even make
you sick.

To reiterate Linda's (uc/a) frustration, Sophia (mc/a) also recounted the countless number of times her neighbours had to call the police to resolve a case involving another neighbour being abused by her husband. She indicated that after a number of occasions where they had no response to calls, the neighbours themselves had to take the abused woman to DOVVSU but did not achieve much; in a short while, the abusive relationship ended. For Sophia therefore, 'reporting to the police doesn't help'. Other participants then picked up this point about the problem of police response through their personal knowledge but also sometimes through hearsay:

> Elsie (uc/a): Some of the police are not even dedicated towards doing their jobs. They therefore don't have time for people's domestic issues. The government provides them with vehicles, but they don't even use it to assist people.

> David (r/a): I think they also need more training even with the way they interview people. Sometimes you go to the police station, and there are so many people around such that you don't even have the privacy to report your case.

> Doreen (mc/a): Sometimes the victims themselves are scared of the police and so may not even say anything when the police come. Other times their presence also intimidates them, so really the police do not always help.

> Tina (mc/a): Madam, sometimes the police don't understand these things and so do not really help.

In contributing to the subject, Joe's comments and others, shifted the discussion away from the police to other institutions that offered support to victims of abuse in Ghana.

> Joe (r/a): But there are so many institutions you could explore when the police prove unhelpful. Apart from DOVVSU, CHRAJ [The Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice] is there and so many others. If your issue is lodged well, they will handle it for you.

> Sophia (mc/a): Agreed, the institutions are there but the processes they take you through are too many.

> Betty (uc/a): I think that the NGOs, and other organizations working on these issues are better trained. They ask relevant questions, and show you what to do. With the police, you may not even know whether they themselves are perpetrators or something like that [all laugh].

Conclusion

Through their reflection on the selected posters used in the campaign, participants in this study expressed their awareness about how factors such as poverty and society's adherence to various traditional norms in respect of marriage, family values, religion, and discipline resulted in the perpetration of violence in Ghana. They further attested to knowledge of the fact that various abusive situations resulted in the stigmatisation of victims, physical, emotional and psychological trauma. In their view, the combination of these effects with the aforementioned cultural expectations of people often leads to silencing of victims, most of whom continue to suffer unduly. The respondents further added that in circumstances where such violence persists and victims continue to find difficulty in reporting, they resort to accept violence as a natural part of life, a situation which also has devastating consequences.

Although there were opposing views about traditional notions of discipline in the society, the different views put across revealed that whilst some people still adhered to tradition as a way of ensuring decorum, others acknowledged changing times and the fact that society should accept such changes. To respondents in the latter category, strict adherence to cultural expectations and religious dictates for example, ended up giving perpetrators more power to operate and further violated their victims (an example being how pastors exercised their domination over unsuspecting and innocent women under the guise of religious practice). Such reflections signalled participants' interpretation of how patriarchal tendencies in the society resulted in the naturalization of violence, the silencing of victims and the continuous perpetration of violence against women.

In spite of the apparent awareness of the above, the discussion further revealed that when it came to reporting abuse, various factors such as class, gender and generational differences had a significant influence, and also sometimes dictated the expected action to be received from the police. Whilst the younger generation seemed to welcome the advertising messages, expressing their frustration at the issue and seemingly more willing to report abuse, their older counterparts were less committed to reporting abuse, for different reasons. With Auntie Amma (an educated upper class woman) for example, the shame associated with violence, and also her adherence to societal expectations in respect of maintaining families, resulted in her suffering abuse for long. However, having a

relatively good financial standing and no children in her marriage, reporting her abusive husband when she felt it was time to do so, was easier for her.

In contrast, however, it took a long time for Vera (also well-educated but middle class) to report her abusive husband to the police since she hoped the intervention of family members would help. For other victims like Sylvia, even though she knew about the campaign, reporting was not that easy because of her financial dependence on her husband, the very young age of her children and her illiteracy which barred her from reasonably well paid and meaningful employment.

Similarly for Mama, another poor participant, reporting to family members came more easily to her than reporting to the police because she could not do without her abuser's financial support. Thus on the whole, the embarrassment of admission, victims' marital status, the presence of children in the family, pressure of sustaining heterosexual relations and the limited economic power of some women determined their ability to report. Even though participants' views alluded to the fact that the ads were beneficial in so far as they prompted them to knowledge of various aspects of abuse and promoted the need to report, the reality is that some victims could not just report abuse and walk away, if need be, from their relationships or abusive experiences.

The chapter also revealed differences in people's views on reporting based on their gender. Whilst, most females expressed the willingness to report abuse, only a few men saw the practice as primitive and therefore requiring change. A majority of the male participants were of the view that gender violence was more female oriented and as such did not believe abused men stood the chance of being heard. Additionally, the chapter also showed that whilst people are quite apprehensive about reporting abuse to the police, due to various reasons given, family members and friends are increasingly becoming sources to which victims turn to share their otherwise 'embarrassing' experiences and gain the support they need.

In contrast to literature cited by researchers (see Talbot 2000, Qualter, 1991; Ferguson 1983) criticising advertising's over reliance on stereotypes and its potential block to social change, I argue in this chapter that activists' deployment of 'realist' codes in their advertising, and their use of the campaign as an 'educational kit' to re-orient how people thought about gender violence was significant: it contributed to raising people's consciousness on the issue by focusing especially on encouraging women to seek help.

End note: Reflecting on the state of gender violence in Ghana, 2013

Introduction

This section opens up The Ark and DOVVSU's reflections on the outcomes of the campaign I have been investigating, and further explores their outlook on the future in respect to violence against women.

Chapter 3 highlighted the main aim of the anti-gender violence campaign as one which set out to sensitise the Ghanaian public, especially women, on the reality and pervasiveness of abuse and to educate them about the necessity to report any act of violence perpetrated against them and others. In reflecting on how far they have been able to achieve these aims, Mr. Berko (from The Ark) notes that although cases of violence still exist, through their educational and communication efforts via the media, training programmes for organisations, street durbars, open market campaigns and community sensitisation programmes, many people have become more conscious of gender violence than in the past:

> We have partnered with a lot of media houses to create awareness about the prevalent nature of gender violence in Ghana. We have also been able to direct people on what to do and where to go in times of crises including our own outfit. (Interview 1, October 2013).

Mr. Asare also adds:

> We have come a long way since we started. A few years ago a lot of women did not know what rights they had and did not even know where to go to seek help. Now, you find most of them sometimes even playfully saying that 'If you touch me, I will take you to DOVVSU'. Basically, it is their way of telling you that they know where to go to seek help if you abuse them. We can therefore say that now women have become more aware of their situation and are in a better position to have them addressed if they so wish (Mr, Asare: Interview 1, October 2013).

Officials of DOVVSU also held a similar view, pointing to new areas of concern, further procedures and working with groups they had not managed to reach, for example children. In the words of Phyllis:

> In fact, I will say that a lot of awareness has been created now. We have done a lot. Whilst the campaign addressed sections of the public, we realised along the line that some groups were left out so we had to change our modus operandi and get to the hard

to reach group. For example, it came to our notice that child pornography was very high in private schools where children had access to a lot of technical gadgets that they were using without being monitored by their parents. Together with 15 other NGO's, we came up with SOP'S i.e. Standard Operating Procedures about how to create awareness among this group to curb physical and sexual abuse most importantly. Whenever we went for our radio programmes therefore, we slotted in something about child helplines or even the internet and our children and we also reached them through various internet sites. We therefore adjusted our activities as we went along, and this helped (Interview 2, November 2013).

As Phyllis added later on, awareness among particular marginalized groups such the female porters, had been remarkable. As some were now reporting abusive cases quite often, others eagerly and independently championed the fight against gender violence. She thus concluded that they now understood the implications of abuse (Interview 2, November 2013) and so were in a much better position to act. For such a group therefore, the protection offered by DOVVSU for instance was key, since it ensured their safety and also gave them the confidence needed to act. DSP Lawrencia was also of the view that their constant monitoring of trends in abuse nationwide, adapting and expanding their efforts accordingly to address particular needs in particular regions, had also helped in sensitising people about the prevalence of common crimes and how to address them:

We look at our annual report to see the most common cases then we decide on how to tackle them. Every region has its own trends. 'Defilement' may be very common in one region whereas in other regions it may not come up at all. So really, through such individual assessments of problems per region, we further strategized on how to handle communication differently in our educational activities. For example, instead of talking to some schools about only child abuse, we added education on teenage pregnancy to help them generally to have a good knowledge about themselves (Interview 2, November 2013).

The Ark and DOVVSU also held the view that the improvement attained in relation to awareness also meant some achievement of their second major objective in the campaign – to encourage reporting. Vida notes:

If you look at our statistics, you will see that the trend of reporting has increased. We record over 12,000 cases annually. For us we even think that it is just the tip. We believe there are so many more that are not being reported. Yet since we have not conducted

any research to compare our awareness creation to the increase in reporting, we cannot really give a firm conclusion. What we can say is that, based on the information given out, people are now reporting and they are confident that the system can help them if everything goes well (Interview 2, November 2013).

Vida's assertion is further corroborated by the increase recorded in the statistics of reported cases of abuse between 1999 when the campaign started until 2013. As cited in Amoakohene, (2004 p. 2374), reports of violence against women to DOVVSU increased from 360 in 1999 to 3622 in 2002. By January to December in 2010, they recorded a total of 986 for defilement and 286 for rape. Additionally, there were 3113 assault cases reported. As mentioned in the introduction, in 2012 and 2013, reported cases of defilement were 1,114 and 1227 respectively, that of rape were 292 and 315, and total assault cases, 4571 and 4661 (DOVVSU annual reports, 2011, 2012, and 2013). In addition to both organizations' acknowledgement of the campaign's effectiveness in creating greater awareness and improving the rate of reporting abuse, they also hold that these successes are also partly the outcome of an improvement in women's position in the country lately. As Mr. Berko stated:

> Women today are more advanced than their colleagues in the past as a result of all the education going on. Most of them have moved on from the days of massive unemployed and all that. They are now standing up for themselves (Interview 1, October 2013).

Mr. Asare further cites some evidence that does seem to indicate a relation between their campaigns and 'awareness creation' and women's more action oriented responses:

> Our helplines are always very busy immediately after our campaigns. We have realised that more people come in after we had sessions of some sorts with them. So I can say that there is a correlation between awareness creation and action. We are creating awareness each day, and some women are taking charge of their lives, but each day we have different abusive issues keep coming up (Interview 1, October 2013).

The final part of his statement, however, opens up discussion of the continuity of gender violence in new forms. Thus despite these achievements, both organisations held that a lot more still needed to be done. In moving this discussion further, Mr Berko explained:

> People just haven't accepted the fact that it is wrong to beat a woman. So you see, these and many others stand in our way most of the time and act as some of the challenges for us attaining hundred percent no-violence (Interview 1, October 2013).

Thus, the issue of individual attitudes was raised as a factor contributing to the difficulty in totally eliminating violence. DOVVSU on the other hand, believed that the inadequate support available for victims sometimes worsened matters. For example, Vida highlighted the fact that although some victims of assault or rape followed through with their newly acquired knowledge and came to report, they did not always get the support they needed:

> When it comes to medical assistance for victims, (most of whom can't afford it), we have had to coerce and convince some medical teams to help us with very serious cases. Some members from the Ghana Medical and Dental Association, and the Female medical practitioners who have volunteered on occasions to help, but this hasn't been adequate considering the constant cases we get. The Police Hospital has also given us three medical officers i.e. a paediatrician, a gynaecologist and a general practitioner to always be there for us, but to think gender violence occurs throughout the country, this help becomes woefully inadequate (Interview 2, November 2013).

Vida's statement above therefore opened up the unavailability of expertise and facilities, as an issue that did not help in providing the utmost care that victims need. Phyllis also addresses this issue:

> We have been trying to set up a Crisis Response Centre where doctors will be permanently based to offer care for victims at any moment. We have also been in talks with some telephone companies to come to our aid by providing helplines through which people can easily get to us. With Marie Stopes again, we are looking at how to address some social issues affecting our Kayayei girls [female porters] who come from the villages to the cities in search of greener pastures. Apart from enforcing the laws governing them, we aim to do a lot with them on how they can protect themselves (Interview 2, November 2013).

In addition to improving the various care and support systems available to victims, DOVVSU further mentioned the expansion of their facilities as a way of making them more accessible to the public no matter where they were. The interviewees also unanimously agreed that a further improvement in the means of communication they currently deployed and the quality of their staff nationwide to act appropriately in the case of abusive cases would also enhance their work. Phyllis articulates their wishes for future developments:

> We believe that if we are able to expand, especially to reach the grassroots, it will help. There are about 700 police stations nationwide. So we are thinking that if all these stations had

> DOVVSU offices, or even if there were about 350 DOVSSU offices, with all of them doing their own physical outreach, followed by printing poster ads, imagine how far we would go even in 6 months. Also these days, lots of people have mobile phones with radios on them. Even if we could occasionally send text messages about where and how they could reach us, and also continue radio advertising, imagine the number of people we could save. Lastly, I think our people should also understand their mandate there. If you send someone to a place and the person [in charge?] does not appreciate what is to be done – then there continues to be a problem (Interview 2, November 2013).

In the light of the limited resources available, Mr. Berko also suggests that:

> If all non-governmental agencies, relevant ministries and stakeholders could come together, and strategize about how to go to the villages, and provide some support towards addressing the issues of violence that persists there, I believe a lot more would be achieved. As the only organisation running a shelter for abused women in the country, you will agree with me, that there is only so much The Ark can do (Interview 1 October 2013).

Whilst the organisations have their own views on how to move forward, they both believe that continually addressing the public about the effects of abuse is necessary especially to enable those who still believe that violence is the solution to problems to have a re-think. As DSP Lawrencia put it,

> As for the education, I was even saying today that since the men are mostly the perpetrators, why don't we involve them now? On a few occasions, we have had some sessions with men, who unfortunately did not show any commitment to what we were communicating to them on violence. In fact, their responses to some of our questions was as if to suggest that they had only responded to our invitation out of necessity, and not because they really wanted to. At the end of the meeting, we asked them to write down their commitments to help stop abuse. Whether they did anything with it or not, is another thing, so a lot more education is needed (Interview 2, November 2013).

Mr. Berko, also admits that, throughout the campaign, their focus was on women, and how they could help them. But their next strategy, he suggested, was to focus on the men and they had actually begun this. Additionally, Mr. Asare was hopeful that through their numerous educational activities, and through the power of word of mouth, more people, especially men, would refrain from abuse:

> On most of our campaigns we speak about what we do, where we are and how we can be reached. It is our belief that through even

> word-of-mouth we will have a very wide reach. Looking at the number of people we encounter on every field trip that we go on, we hope that even if one person from there tells a friend about us and the friend also mentions us at another place, the education will spread (Interview with Ark, October 2013).

Above all, both organizations share the view that although they are committed to pursuing the fight against gender violence, a lot still depends on women themselves. This was first articulated in Mr. Asare's comment (above) about women having been equipped through the campaign to address their violent situations in a better way 'if they so wish'. DSP Lawrencia, also from DOVVSU adds:

> Well, we have done our best to bring our services to the doorstep of the people, so that women and children especially will have that boldness and confidence to report abuse and have it solved. A lot of sensitization has gone on and awareness created. It is therefore left for women to speak up and have their issues addressed. If the awareness has been created, they should take it hook, line and sinker and live with what they have learnt. It is not a matter of breaking marriages but making sure that the right thing is done. Reporting is key. We hope more women come out a lot and not suffer in silence … we will continue doing our best (Interview 2, November 2013).

As earlier raised in chapter three, 'doing their best' also required funding from donors. For the Ark especially (as a non-governmental organisation), their 'very existence' depended on this. As Mr. Berko noted, their work has often been stalled or delayed due to lack of funds as was seen in the long break between the launch of the campaign and the start of actual work. Similarly, their use of more illustrations in their communication efforts and the limited number of activities they engaged in towards raising awareness about gender violence, were mostly attributed to lack of funds. The case with DOVVSU was also similar. Although they were a government body, the officials explained that their financial quota for the year usually enabled them achieve very little for them, and more often than not, they had to rely on funding agencies to come to their aid. Overall, therefore funding remained a major constraint to the work of both organisations.

I will pick up on some of the points made by the officers at The Ark and DOVSU as I reflect on the research project as a whole. I turn next to highlight aspects of the project and the research findings.

Conclusion

> Although communities play an integral role in condoning, perpetuating, and supporting gender-based violence, they are also an important part of the solution to such violence. Without changes in people's attitudes and beliefs, that uphold violence against women, measures such as legal reform will have limited impact or worse: in extreme cases, where reform is introduced in the absence of popular support, violent backlash against women can result (Pickup 2001: 229-230).

Introduction

This concluding chapter reflects on the thesis as a whole: summarising the project, outlining the research findings, highlighting significant aspects of the methodology and methods and pointing to implications the thesis might have for further research and action.

The research project

This doctoral thesis started off as a quest to understand the issue of gender violence after encountering the experience of a close friend. This led me to the anti-violence campaign running in the country at the time and to exploring in what ways the campaign might be contributing to a greater public awareness of the issue. Focusing on Ghana's social, economic and political developments since independence, I set this study in the context of continuing gender inequalities, notwithstanding the changing position of women in the country. I further highlighted how such inequalities increased the risk of violence against women. I thus emphasised the significance of patriarchal relations, embedded in institutions and cultural practices, and the need to address those relations, whether nationally or internationally, in order to curb such violence.

In reviewing relevant literature, I observed that although Ghanaian scholars have written extensively on gender violence, their focus was predominantly on its causes, prevalence and effects on victims. A few questioned the gendered stereotypes reproduced by the media, including advertisements (Addy, 2007, Tsegah 2009) but none raised the media's role in creating awareness about gender violence. A further review however showed, that through various social marketing campaigns, international scholarship on the other hand has done so. These however had their limitations, which notably, has also been the concerns of feminist research. As reiterated in this study, feminists have consistently criticised advertising on the grounds of reproducing patriarchal relations; it is thus seen

as a regressive practice and not one to be used in the attempts to change women's position. Even a literature writing from a 'social marketing' perspective, which does acknowledge advertising as a potential tool to change behaviours, seemed to concentrate on a producer's perspective and usually followed clear cut stages through which they assumed consumers would go in any change process. Thus most evaluations are done systematically and statistically, ignoring the various differences consumers bring to bear in their understanding and interpretation of media texts.

My study was thus conceived as working across these absences or gaps, to consider the place of 'advertising' (the poster advertisements produced by Ark and DOVVSU) in challenging gender violence. I therefore engaged with it as a progressive tool for change in the anti-violence campaign. The study was also intended to move beyond a 'producer' perspective and a quantitative evaluation to also consider how varied audiences or consumers for these posters (by gender, class, social-cultural and generational differences) made sense of them and how the campaign may have impacted, and made a difference in their ways of thinking and acting in everyday life. I thus built on 'producer' and more sociological/development perspectives but took them further. I also wanted to ensure that men's involvement in social change, in relation to abuse was acknowledged. Hence their inclusion in the group interviews.

The research thus adopted three ways into researching the issue of gender violence and the anti-violence campaign in particular. These included interviews with those working in the field, namely at Ark and DOVVSU, to explore why and how the campaign developed and how they understood what they were doing. It also involved collecting poster advertisements for qualitative textual analysis in terms of the representation of gender and violence. Additionally, the poster's address to spectators was also explored. Lastly, interviews with women 'victims', and a series of group interviews were further held, to open up the impact of such a campaign in qualitative terms, and to explore wider understandings relevant to gender violence.

In tackling these three 'stages' or 'moments' of research, I was guided methodologically and interpretatively by the approach Paul du Gay et al (1997) refer to as 'The circuit of culture'. In highlighting the different moments and processes through which meanings can be made, the approach points to the need to look closely at the distinctiveness of each – in this case, 'production', 'representation' and 'consumption' – whilst also paying

attention to the overlaps, articulations and tensions between them. Having gone through all these stages in attaining and analysing my data, I move on to highlight several related aspects of the research, taking into account the 'circuit of culture' model I adopted.

Research findings

First, the research affirms the views of some scholars that gender violence is deeply embedded in particular cultural and economic patterns of patriarchal relations in Ghana. This was not just evident from what the officials at Ark and DOVVSU had to say, but was also manifest in the group discussions and individual interviews. As Betty (an elderly participant) noted : 'Keeping family secrets as a cultural value to be upheld does not benefit women, but rather helps to maintain the ego of Ghanaian men' (pg. 163). Similarly in discussing her daughter 's incident of abuse by her father, Kate also alluded to how the cultural notion of an older male person as the head and provider in a family instilled fear into abused children, thereby preventing them from speaking up about their ordeals in situations where such adults molested them (pg. 163).

For Betty and Kate therefore, this prescribed adhering to prescribed gender roles and cultural norms greatly inhibited the freedom with which women could open up about their problems thereby leading to the many instances of abuse. Their contributions thus pointed to their awareness of male domination over women, the endorsement it finds in the society and how these lead to the abuse of women. Hence, their arguments confirmed the assertion by Ibeanu, 2001; Radford and Stanko (1996) and Nhalpo (1991), that the family and the institution of heterosexuality which underpins it endorse patriarchy, hence one in which violence features as a form of control of the powerless (women) by the powerful (men). The subjugated position of women, thus inhibited them from talking about abuse (Ardayfio, 2005).

Other participants further highlighted the fact that because the culture endorsed harsh forms of punishment as an effective way of correcting children, the latter were further constrained for the fear of not being believed and thus punished. This was the case with Kofi, where instead of his grandmother standing up to his abuser, rather vented her anger on him for being a 'bad boy' (p. 161). From these experiences shared by participants, the deep-rooted power inequalities in the Ghanaian culture and its contribution to violence (Parkes and Heslop, 2011; Cusack, 2009; Awumbilla 1994) was highly emphasised (pp 37), calling for the need to re-evaluate the core structures and values of the society.

In the introduction to this thesis, I raised the issue of the increased levels of poverty of some women in spite of the relative improvement in women's lives in Ghana over the years. A second major finding of this study is that the economic situation whereby men are employed and as such are in control of the income in the family, whilst their female partners stay unemployed for various reasons (illiteracy being key), continue to be a 'recipe' for violence. As could be deduced from the individual interviews with the abused, poverty was a major factor that kept them in abusive relationships. Sylvia felt she had nowhere to go because it was her abusive partner who gave her food and shelter when she arrived from the village, and Mama could not bear the thought of living alone because she had no substantial income to sustain her children and herself. Thus confirming the arguments by Adu Gyamfi (2014), Bashiru (2012) and Morris (2012) that many women fell into the trap of economic dependence on their husbands, and therefore could not leave abusive relationships.

Archampong (2010), and Obeng (2008) further argue that the low levels of education of women (such as Sylvia and Mama), inhibit their ability to take up any professional or substantial work that would make them self-sufficient, thereby tying them to the circumstances in which they find themselves. These researchers arguments were further exemplified in the experiences of Auntie Amma, Linda and Judith (educated, middle and upper class women), who had less trouble ending their abusive relationships, and also boldly criticised the patriarchal tendencies of some men because of their apparent literacy and financial independence. A comparison of the lives of these women to that of Sylvia and Mama above, further confirms the argument by Macmillan and Gartner (1999) that women with regular paid income are less dependent on their husbands, thereby limiting the likelihood of violence against them.

The issue of poverty and illiteracy, and their link to violence is further emphasised by Linda in her contribution to the violent experience shared by another participant, noting that: 'This can never happen to a rich man's daughter. If you even step on her toes, I bet you wouldn't like the way he will deal with you'. Similarly, in concluding her narrative of her plight, Kate adds in a state of self-pity that: 'I feel sad for poor mothers. Only God knows what we have to endure'. Having said this however, and considering the violent experiences of upper class victims as shared by the police, this study also lends it support to the arguments by Bennet, (2001) and Sen, (1998) that women across all income categories in countries worldwide are subject to male violence. Whilst acknowledging

this paradox, it is my hope that, the recorded improvement in the education of women in Ghana (Tsegah 2011, UNICEF, 2013) will translate into an increased awareness about their risk of violence, and the knowledge about what actions to take to curb such violence. Additionally, their gainful employment and good financial standing should effectively be harnessed in self-help groups for example, where victims could share their success stories to motivate and support others who may still be suffering abuse. Through these groups again, it is hoped that more women will be empowered to make bold decisions concerning their lives and stand by them.

I return to the discussion of religion as embedded in the Ghanaian tradition and its contribution to the perpetration of violence as the third major finding of this study. Notably, this study raised two main issues concerning religion - the first being that religious beliefs and practices in the society are literally interpreted by people to justify their acts of violence, and the second relating to the abuse of power by some pastors and the religious in carrying out their duties. As highlighted by Mr. Berko (chapter 3), the biblical call for women to be submissive to their husbands was usually taken out of context and literally interpreted by many to justify their abusive acts. He further noted that unfortunately, some women also held this view and thereby endured various forms of abuse in relationships without reporting. For him therefore, it was not the case of the church perpetuating violence, as the misinterpretation of its doctrines by people for various reasons.

Whilst The Ark's position on the church supported that of Oduyoye (2009) in so far as the researcher also argues that some practices performed in the name of religion is derived from popular beliefs, taboos and literal interpretation of the Qur'an and biblical scripture, it challenges that of other scholars like Cusack, (2009) who is of the view that religion actually teaches people to be violent. Thus this finding contributes to the discussion on the relationship between violence and religion, the latter being an important aspect of socialisation in the country. Participants on the other hand, unearthed a different dimension to religion. Their discussion pointed to how male supremacy and dominance found expression among some religious leaders who used their superior positions as an excuse to abuse some women and children.

In addition, they revealed that the extent to which people upheld religious values largely influenced their approach to the discussion of sexual issues leading to violence. Thus

depending on one's religious inclination, the subject of violence was either discussed or not. In some participants' view therefore, 'blind' adherence to religious doctrines embedded in the culture, also led to the perpetration of violence especially among the youth since they did got get such knowledge early in life. Considering these findings on religion, one could argue that poster 9 for example did not only call on churches (and by extension Mosques) to effectively arbitrate violent cases. More so, it was a call for parents to engage in discussions on sexual issues with their children, and also for church leaders to sit up and address the issues of violence perpetrated by their own.

Finally, considering how all the above individual and social structures contributed in one way or the other to violence in the country, I turn now to discuss its effects on victims as revealed in this study. The views and experiences of participants on this issue, exemplified researchers findings about its long-lasting psychological, emotional and physical impact (Essel, 2013; Obeng, 2008; and Yorke 2007). In acknowledging her suspicion that her daughter's obesity, regular tantrums, and increasing desire to be away from home lately, could be linked to her childhood abuse, Kate expressed some of the effects that violence had on its victims. As noted by Essel (2013) such tendencies of isolation by victims was because they feared people might know about their predicament and in cases when this situation prolonged, some ended up depressed or with a low self-esteem.

As Priscilla, another participant also lamented, in addition to all the suffering that the abused encountered [as expressed by Mathew, Brenda, and Tina p. 170] they also had to endure stigma, not alone, but often together with their families. As the interview revealed, this was one of the reasons why Kate had not reported the suspected incest in her family to the police, not knowing how she would manage the public knowledge that may ensue after she did, or a broken home in case her husband was jailed. With such revelations from participants, the findings of Adu Gyamfi (2014) about the increasing rate of deaths as an ultimate result of violence, becomes even more alarming considering the reality of the issue. It therefore calls on the concerted efforts of all to help curb the situation.

In 'establishing the field' of this thesis (chapter 1), I discussed the success of social marketing campaigns in using advertisements among others to create awareness and advocate change. I also raised its limitations and the fact that my study aimed to address some of these. In the following section therefore, I discuss findings on how the use of

poster advertisements as a key tool in the anti-violence campaign were envisaged, worked textually and were taken up by different groups, in a way that studies from the social marketing perspective ignore. Aware that they particularly needed to address those with limited literacy, The Ark and DOVVSU saw the visual medium of an advertising-style, public information poster as appropriate for their purposes. With limited funding available and believing that they were the 'experts' in this field, the posters were designed in-house. From the 'producers' point of view they aimed to engage 'ordinary' women to educate them on the various forms gender violence could take and get them to take action against such abuse by reporting to the authorities. They recognized, however, that if the posters were to achieve that, women needed to be able to emotionally identify with the scenes and experiences represented and to feel that they were being addressed. Thus, no-one style was adopted.

Most posters from The Ark and DOVVSU represented acts of violence or the effects of violence on women (and families). What is interesting is that the organizations, mostly for financial and cultural reasons, avoided the codes of an aestheticized sexuality and objectification of women, as manifest in much commercial advertising (A strategy similar to most social marketing campaigns on gender violence internationally).They rather aimed for more 'realist' codes even when the poster advertisement was in a cartoon/comic style rather than photographic. In this way the representational emphasis was clearly on violence, making them distinctive and amplifying their 'shocking' nature.

What the analysis of the poster ads reveals is that the posters perform in a variety of ways: First, they graphically represent acts of violence that are often hidden from view. In this way the reader learns what violence is. Through such representation, the hitherto private becomes transparent and public. Secondly, they 'name' acts of violence as criminal and denaturalise them, and exhort 'victims' (and others) to report such acts to the authorities. The posters are thus a tool in consciousness raising.

However, the research also points to some more problematic issues with the poster executions. Representations feature men and women across generations, suggesting the prevalence of violence among the young and old alike, and appealing to different age groups. However, there was a tendency in the posters I was able to collect (as discussed in Chapter 4) for women to be represented as 'victims' and men as 'perpetrators' and for women to largely be represented as relatively poor and associated with family and the

domestic. This confirms the argument by researchers (Russell 2011; Tsegah, 2009; Addy, 2005; Talbot, 2000; Qualter, 1991; Ferguson, 1983; Tuchman, 1978; Goffman, 1979) that advertising reinforces women's inequality and often reproduce dominant (patriarchal) ideologies.

Perhaps the more striking issue is the contradiction the advertisements pose in relation to women. Although the whole campaign was in some senses about 'empowering' women to take control of their lives, the visual representation they are encouraged to identify with is woman-as-victim, often signified by her supine position, tears, fear etc. with only feeble signs of protest (for example, Figure 3). Such visuals arguably reproduce patriarchal relations. This stereotyping, and thus selectivity therefore did not allow space for considering the autonomous and assertive nature of some women, nor did it convey the possibility of men as 'victims'. Additionally, it also ignored the fact that not all men were 'perpetrators' (Ursula, p. 87), and that gender violence might equally take place in the street, the workplace and other spaces. The posters simply did not show this reality.

Furthermore, there is a tension too between the visual and verbal address. If the visuals engage at an emotional level the words operate at a more rational level, ordering the viewer to act. In Chapter 4, I discussed the use of the 'imperative' and what Pateman (1980) , following Searle, calls 'directives' – the use of language in a way that conveys the need for immediate action on the part of its hearers. As captured by DSP Lawrencia in her evaluation of the campaign, they have done their best. What is left is the 'boldness and confidence of women and children to report and find help'. Similarly in discussing the posters in the focus groups, Judith states that 'the adverts should show that women can also fight back' (p. 152) – as if to say that if you have given us the responsibility, then also prove that we are capable. It could therefore be argued here, that insofar as women 'victims' are largely being called on to act, the burden of responsibility for stopping men's abuse continues to lie in women's hands, not men's.

Another key finding in this study is that responses and understandings of advertisements depend on age, gender, education, rural or urban upbringing; and to interpret the advertisements, people rely on a diverse range of experiences and knowledges in their everyday lives. For example, with Sylvia and Vera, economically dependent and still living with abusive husbands, the portrayals in the advertisements of women as victims seemed 'normal'. The representations of violence resonated with their own experiences

of abuse, and throughout the discussion, they remained quite reflective as they acknowledged some experiences in their own abusive lives being reflected.

As Sylvia commented in response to the effectiveness or otherwise of ads, even though the ads were effective in telling people what to do, the directives they gave were not options that she could take because she had nowhere to go and above all '… he is the one taking care of me' (p. 199). Thus for her, understanding the portrayal of women as victims in the ads came quite easily because of her own circumstances.

Similarly, others who were frustrated by and challenged these representations seemed to be the more assertive and aware ones, whose circumstances placed them in a position where they could fight back. Linda and Judith (educated, middle and upper class), and the young women, Freda, Sandra, confidently articulated that men's violent behaviour was a result of their desire to be the more powerful; and they jumped at every opportunity to demonstrate this power, often targeting women and children. They therefore held that the poster advertisements should show women as capable of standing up to men and criticised them for always depicting women as 'victims'. Significantly, Joe and Mathew also held this view (pg. 153) and called for perpetrators to change. In the view of these participants, such stereotypical portrayals reproduced patriarchal relations and in effect disempowered women. These women thus rebutted the 'sexist' comments made by some of the male participants with confidence and conviction, in a way a literature on women in Ghana emphasising women's lack of agency, does not fully acknowledge (see Bashiru, 2012).

Some male participants, for example, Matthew (educated, with an urban upbringing) agreed with the representation of men as perpetrators of abuse and advocated the need for them to give up certain attitudes. Others, however, like Habib and Eddie (both educated but the former a moslem with rural upbringing, and Eddie with an urban upbringing) defended the 'reality' of the posters by stating that some acts of violence by men were justifiable when the women may have provoked such acts. For Habib and Eddie, however, the posters' public exposure of men's violence against women was very uncomfortable and angered them since such depictions mis-communicated the intention of abuse which, from their point of view, was to discipline women. For yet other male participants including Joe (educated adult with a rural upbringing), the 'reality' of the posters was not

'balanced' because only men were depicted as abusers even though in everyday life, women too could be abusers and men victims.

The above differences in the response and understandings of the advertisements was also evident through the various reported cases The Ark and DOVVSU recounted. Instances of the judge who was being verbally and emotionally abused (see p. 90) and men who are unable to speak of their abuse by female partners because of the 'shame' (see p. 86) all unearthed how different circumstances were brought to bear in responding to the ads. Additionally, the interviewees from both organisations are also well aware, as Ursula explains that, 'If you are not careful you will tend to always blame the men, but 'some women can be very abusive' (p. 87). What this assertion and cases emphasise therefore is the fact that these officials are very aware that violence takes place in all sections of the community, and also that different groups deal with it in different ways.

It is therefore ironical that these situations are not reflected in the poster advertisements. Indeed, there is just one reference in Figure 7 to a female abuser: 'Woman jailed for defiling boy, 14' (Chapter 4). Thus analysis of the poster advertisements, and many of the views of those consuming them suggest their over-simplification and reproducing of patriarchal relations in their polarisation of 'strong' male perpetrators and 'weak' female victims, even if the latter are also urged to act. Additionally, the arguments by Judith, Linda, Mathew, Sylvia and Joe exemplify the notion of the active audience and contributes to the debates of researchers (including Darke, 2011; Anane-Agyei, 2009; Amoako, 2008; Leiss et al., 2005, Eshun, R. 2004; Silverstone, 2003 and Bird, 2003) surrounding the audience's active engagement in creating or changing meanings in ads.

On the other hand, as a first stage in tackling the issue – and denaturalising violence against women ('After all, the men have no right to beat the women', Ursula p. 87), their call to act is significant. As noted by Henrichson et al, (writing about very different posters in Namibia),

> A poster is…not…an isolated object but…an active agent in a
> variety of processes. These also involve different people, spaces
> and moments of time. Posters act (2009, p.162).

Similarly, the anti-violence posters 'act' to persuade others, largely women, to 'act', and indeed the increased report of cases at DOVVSU go to prove this. Also, from the discussion with participants, it was evident that even though their sources of knowledge

varied, depending on generational differences and social status, the media / posters featured quite prominently.

For most upper and middle class adults (Linda, Betty, Judith, Auntie Amma), knowledge about gender violence was mainly through school, friends and the media, whilst for the younger generation, school talks, posters and the media proved the most popular. Significantly, people's reliance on the media not only for information, but also for educational purposes in Ghana was emphasised. Even for others, information in the ads helped them to trace the location of the organizations where they could go for help. This finding further revealed the importance for producers to deploy a variety of channels in any communication strategy, since audiences also vary in terms of where they go for their information.

On interpretation, the study also revealed that the educational quality of ads was seen as particularly useful to the youth and some adults. By acknowledging the cultural silence on abuse, these research participants saw the ads as communicating how to break the silence and be more outspoken, in order that gender violence might begin to be curtailed. With reference to the discussion of sexual issues associated with gender violence for example, such people found the advertisements potentially performing the roles expected of parents but which they hardly accomplished due to social and cultural norms. Also for people like Sandra, Albert and other young participants, the advertisements were appreciated for the education they provided on gender violence (p. 176) and practical solutions they offered in the light of their own experiences. Linda's assertion that the knowledge she gained from ads 'toughened' and 'empowered' herself and her female classmates 'and made us believe that we could report abuse' (p. 144); also suggested the ads ability to help people address particular challenges they had In these cases the ads were regarded positively.

On the contrary, other participants (Habib, Frankie, Kate, Joe and Anna) did not share these views and demonstrated that ads were unlikely to change people's mind-set, socialization or personal circumstances that shaped their behaviour towards violence. With Frankie for the example, the use of the English language in the posters acted as a barrier for the illiterate public, Thus in his view, the messages conveyed by these ads were meaningless to them and did not make any impact on them (p. 146). For Joe on the other hand, people's personal experiences were much stronger than the directives of ads, so no

amount of these was going to change perpetrators who held strong beliefs that justified abuse (p. 146).

As revealed by this study, older women, and the relatively poor (like Kate, Vera, Anna and Judith) had all reached some challenging points in their marriages before, but were determined to hold on for various reasons . Even though they understood the information and 'directives' in the ads, a combination of the traditional belief against 'washing dirty linen in public', constraints of poverty and economic dependency, the need to uphold the dignity and privacy of family and to prevent its breakup (see also Adu-Gyamfi 2014, Ardayfio, 2005), often prevents them from reporting abuse. For Mama and Brenda, the additional fear of how to bring up their children in the event of divorce and the shame associated with the revelation of having been abused by a partner, also deterred them.

In most cases, participants who had reported abuse, acknowledged that it was to other family members or friends rather than to the police or another organization. Auntie Amma first reported her abusive experience to a friend, Vera reported to her husband's family, and at the time of interview, Kate had only spoken to her sister with no plans at all of going to the police. The interviews hence confirmed the point made by officials from 'The Ark' and DOVVSU that reporting abuse sometimes bestowed extra burdens on women since they often ran the risk of losing any form of economic support from their abusers and also had to face the stigma that will be attached to them. To avoid such outcomes therefore, 'victims' sometimes resorted to either 'accept' the abusive life or, at best, seek minimal help (an example being Sylvia, who went to the police but only for them to warn her husband rather than the usual arrest).

But for middle and upper class older women, such as Auntie Amma, reporting her abuse later on and deciding to leave, tended to be easier once she realised that what had happened to her was an infringement on her rights and a crime as such. Similarly, younger women declared they felt they would act on the 'directives' in the posters to report abuse, if they were in that situation. More 'liberated' and 'empowered', most of them did not really see themselves as potential victims.

As a whole, the discussions revealed that participants adopted different positions in relation to their interpretation and understandings of advertisements on gender violence depending on age, class, gender and socio-cultural upbringing. Hence these findings

confirm that meanings are not fixed in the ads themselves, and do not have a uniform effect as social marketers often suggest.

Above all, these limits to reporting abuse also point to the limits of the posters as 'active agents' contrary to argument by Henrichson et al., 2009.

In view of these findings above, I suffice to say here that the feminist qualitative methodology I adopted to investigate, enabled me unearth women's experiences and views on gender violence (drawing on standpoint feminism), highlighting the presence of patriarchal discourses and related power relations, and also show how different responses from audiences, could be seen as a consequence of their diverse backgrounds (drawing on postmodern feminism). This approach further enabled show that identity is neither fixed nor unitary, and that different experiences result in the plurality and diversity of women's lives thereby leading to the varied responses they give to advertising texts.

Particularly, in using the concept of the Circuit of Culture by Du Gay et al., 1997, I explored the campaign from different perspectives ie. How gender violence was envisaged in the country, how this was represented in the posters and how different groups responded to the campaign. Largely, focusing on just one moment of the circuit, without a careful consideration of the others would definitely be an inadequate attempt at solving this deep rooted societal problem. Even though exploring production provided an insight into the various factors influencing the encoding of meanings into the ads (Curtin & Gaither, 2005, p. 100) that alone, would have provided a one sided perspective, without hearing what the campaign's consumers thought and felt about it and vice versa.

Hence findings from the study confirms the proposition made by Du Gay et al. (1997: 3-4) that for a significant outcome to be achieved on any identified subject, there must be the need for a transformation in each of the moments of cultural work - representation, identity, production, consumption and regulation.

Methodology and methods

In the ways I have discussed above, adopting a 'circuit of culture' approach gave the study a distinctiveness in relation to the analyses of other social marketing campaigns which privilege producer perspectives. But as a model it also demanded a mixed method approach. In the absence of written sources, I relied on interviews with key workers in the field (Ark and DOVVSU), and the materials they could provide, in order to be able to

fill in the background, and understand the conception and implementation of the anti-violence campaign. I also learnt that establishing the trust of these workers and establishing cordial relations was important. It not only contributed to the quality of the interviews, in which they were often very honest. But also I was able to interview 'victims' at DOVVSU and seek further clarifications from The Ark later in the research period when I had left the field. A more business-like approach might not have opened up these opportunities.

Collecting media material from the campaign proved more challenging than I had anticipated. Considering the length of time the campaign had been running I presumed I would have access to a large range of poster and broadcast advertisements, as well as other promotional material. Instead there was relatively little (and again I had to rely on my key respondents at the two organisations) to assure me that the sample I did collect was fairly typical of the material they produced. However, given the limited material, it meant I was really forced to focus on the posters and the restricted number of them meant that I adopted a more in depth textual approach, closely scrutinising images and words, than I might have done if I had gathered a much larger number. Doing this had its advantage as well, since I think, it helped open up a richer range of issues.

The third method – conducting group interviews alongside one-to-one interviews with victims – was arguably the most challenging aspect of the fieldwork. It was an ongoing learning experience for me. Whilst on the whole I maintained a degree of detachment – listening and observing – there were occasions when I felt it was important to intervene. An example was on occasions when some of the male participants expressed what might be described as sexist views by attributing violence against women to their 'loud mouthedness', or to some other alleged provocative act.

> Eddie: Madam what if the man is straightening the woman? Pertaining to the beatings eh, the ladies, they should learn to shut up [people laugh]. They can be so annoying that if you are not careful, [pauses] ...Women of today talk too much. You say one, they say five. And really it is annoying (p. 151).

In one instance, drawing their attention to Figures 7 & 8 and the apparent high incidence of abused children, I asked Eddie and Habib to reconsider their arguments [about women calling violence upon themselves through the way cited above and later as George argued, through the way they dressed] to be sure they were really right. This then generated much

debate among the group with others disagreeing with them as well. On these grounds – producing further debate – my teacher-like intervention seems justified.

But there were also other occasions where I learnt that a more subjective rather than objective stance was important. In talking about my own personal experiences, and building up confidence in this way, victims like Anita (p.81) and later on Sylvia, Mama, Brenda and Vera seemed to feel secure enough to more freely share their own stories. In the process of doing these interviews I often felt worried – since I saw responses to the poster advertisements as at the core of the research – that I was spending more time on the issues of abuse raised by the participants and rather less discussing the poster advertisements; such that I sometimes restructured questions to allow more time on the latter. Overall, however, when it came to writing I realised the virtue of the wider discussions. The respondents were very insightful in opening up for me a deeper knowledge of their views and experiences of gender violence, and astutely highlighted the challenges in overcoming it.

During the course of doing the group interviews, I also learnt the need for a researcher, especially when discussing a sensitive area such as this, to pay equal attention to the relatively silent contributors as well as to the very vocal ones. Participants like Kofi, Vera, Sylvia and Mama, contributed minimally but this stemmed from having experienced abuse (Kofi) or still being in abusive relationships (Vera, Sylvia and Mama). This however raised the issue of the limits of the advertising campaign which they felt could not solve their problems (p.no 198 - 199). This perspective took some time and gentle probing to emerge. What this suggests is that it is important for researchers to recognize that 'silent' participants may also have significant things to raise but need to be encouraged to speak out.

Most times, participants often referred to 'my friend' or 'someone I know' when addressing gender violence. However, the conviction with which they sometimes spoke about these 'other' people led me to wonder whether they were really talking about themselves but displaced the story onto others because this was easier to handle. In other instances, I wondered whether they were providing the exact facts of the experiences they shared, or rather holding back on account of the stigma about 'washing dirty linen in public'. I did not manage to find a way in the group settings to explore this further, but

the issues raised perhaps suggest that group interviews followed by one-to-one interviews with some members of that group might have been productive.

Reflecting on the interviews as a whole, I realise that in some ways I was contributing to the work being done by those at The Ark and DOVVSU. The interviews added to the knowledge about violence and its effects, they gave a voice to victims and made gender violence the subject of public discussion. But what I did not do, unlike both organisations, was take the posters into community settings where they could be used as one of their educational tools. My own project would have been further enriched if I had been able to observe some of these sessions, including training sessions, and market storms[58].

Moving forwards

As raised earlier, the reach of the campaign was geographically restricted and the challenge is clearly to reach out more widely. In the remote, rural areas where literacy is still a challenge, perhaps the poster is still the most effective medium to use, but may not be the most appropriate in urban areas. This study advocates for more funding to be made available to support non-governmental organisations pursuing this work to enable them to seek professional communicators from advertising agencies who may be better equipped to devise cross-media campaigns more suited to diverse audiences.

Additionally, I recommend the adoption of different representational strategies to address different groups, in different regions and with different cultural backgrounds. Even though raising the issue of men as victims may pose challenges of communication whether of the posters themselves or engaging in 'community' work, I believe that the issue still needs to be tackled, encouraging a discussion of masculinities and that not all men are powerful at all times. Indeed, at certain moments in certain contexts, they could be as vulnerable as women when it comes to violence. The visual representations and language used should also avoid the pitfalls of the victim/perpetrator and 'imperative'/ 'directive' speech acts in order to steer away from perpetrating stereotypes. (Perhaps,

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[58] Market storms was how the organisations referred to the occasions where they visited big open markets, and mounted stages and sometimes big screens from which they educated the public and showed them relevant materials.

campaigners could learn from international examples that have used neutral features to communicate violence[59]).

This study also highlights the limits of what advertising can do. It shows that for many, there is a gap between understanding the posters in terms of what abuse is, realising one is a 'victim' of a criminal offence, and doing anything about it in terms of bringing the abuse into the light of day by reporting to the police.

The pressure of community institutions and cultural values so often contribute to 'victims' maintaining a silence. But silence is also a broader issue. As the study revealed, abuse, and sexual violence especially, are not discussed in the home (as was reflected in how embarrassed and awkward younger participants in the focus groups felt in discussing issues like rape and other acts of sexual violence). Similarly, silence also descended on another occasion when Kofi (a male victim of abuse) narrated his story of abuse [chapters 5 and 6]. Similarly, whilst participants in the individual interviews were willing to share intimate information about abuse, contributors in the focus groups hid their own experiences and views and expressed opinions relating to their 'friends'.

Others also made generalised statements about the broader society as a way, it seemed, of keeping silent about abuse near to home and family. This study therefore calls for the incorporation of conversations about gender violence within the family as a primary socialisation institution to encourage young people especially to speak up in situations of abuse as the posters advice. Just as families are successful in imparting gender roles early in life, the discussion of various forms of abuse at this level will also go a long way in sensitising both sexes about the harmful effects of abuse and the need to report.

The analysis demonstrated that the poster advertisements were deployed in a way that pushed for social change and did increase consciousness of abuse and the numbers reporting gender violence (even if this did not produce an equivalent rise in the numbers convicted as suggested by Phyllis - see p.85 above). To that extent the study supports the view of The Ark and DOVVSU that their achievements were substantial but that there was still a lot of work to do. The support for 'victims' and for those dealing with victims and perpetrators in the police and legal institutions is relatively lacking. Clearly more

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[59] The Tasmanian campaign on gender violence depicted a fist in the motion to punch, Australia used the picture of a home setting to depict domestic violence, the Texas council used the picture of fingers on a mobile phone to communicate the need to report abuse and North Queensland used cartoon characters.

funds need to be invested in community work, in providing facilities for victims – counselling services, medical aid, emergency shelters; and also to improve the police/legal handling of cases and court procedures, through an expansion of training for the law enforcers across the country.

However, this study recommends the establishment of 'self-help groups', where victims can talk about their experiences and survivors of abuse can also share their views and encourage others to report abuse as is being practiced with the 'Freedom Programme' in the United Kingdom. This will definitely increase the confidence of other victims who for various reasons may not see the 'light at the end of the tunnel'.

As raised in the introduction, and indeed throughout participant interviews, the socialisation of Ghanaians into particular ideas of masculinity and femininity, and the support these practices gain from the society at large, leads to the continuation of gender violence. Additionally, Shefer's observation about the apparent submissive nature of women and the controlling nature of men, as a result of various norms and practices (2007 p. 2) also holds true. However, the dynamics exhibited in the focus groups of this study also show that 'this discourse of male dominance-female submissiveness presents a unitary and essentialist picture of masculinity, femininity and heterosexual relationships' (Shefer 2007 p. 2) can be challenged. As evidenced in the lives of Auntie Amma and Kofi, women can equally be bold assertive and independent, whilst men can also be 'victims'. There is therefore indication that it is time for a re-consideration of values.

This study therefore holds that just as the socialisation of people along particular masculine and feminine lines has led to the notion of male dominance and female submissiveness, it is time for the tables to turn, and at best for the society to re-socialise its female population especially in a way that enables a self-confidence. Just as these dominant roles that lead to abuse were learnt, so can they be unlearnt to be replaced by other ways of doing things. In this way, both men and women would be able to see each other as equals with diverse strengths and weaknesses that can be harnessed and supported. This would lead to a more co-operative way of living. In this regard, I will echo the words of Shefer 2007 and Adomako & Boateng 2007 who argue that:

> If we cannot acknowledge alternative masculinities and femininities and
> see the resistance, the strength of both men and women, we cannot

successfully challenge the dominant mode of gender identities and gender relations (p.2).

Men and women, but especially boys and men must undergo transformations if we are to see more equal gender relations, and men, especially, must understand how masculinity operates and what it does to women and men (Adomako & Boateng 2007 p. 51)

Rooted deeply in society, abuse and the culture of silence is a difficult problem to deal with. It will require the re-consideration of values that people hold, improved education, especially for girls and women, greater economic affluence, together with reform of religious and other institutions to curb its practice. Perhaps, the regular deployment of entertainment media (such as story lines in soap opera) encouraging a national conversation as well as the extension of more targeted campaigns, is needed to make serious inroads. But what was heartening in the interviews, and which gives hope for the future, is that at various moments when the men in the focus groups expressed views that supported abuse or reflected the view that 'women ask for it', some of the women at least, jumped in to quite vehemently argue with them. I end this thesis with their energetic ripostes:

> **George (r/y)**: Madam, although sexual violence is not allowed, the ladies too, they should dress well.
>
> **Female participants' response**: No, no, no, no, no …
>
> **George (r/y)**: Wait, wait, wait and let me finish what I am saying. Sometimes, how they dress is too much. The guys too are attracted by what they see, so at least the girls should try and cover some parts of their bodies well.
>
> **Linda (uc/a)**: If you see something and it will worry you, why don't you just take your eyes off it and be free. I think what these men are saying is so out of context and off the hook… I just think men do what they do because women are considered the weaker sex often with no strong voice to talk for us. Men just want to be powerful, that's all.

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APPENDIX A

Figure 11

APPENDIX B

Figure 12 Warning signs of abuse - The Ark
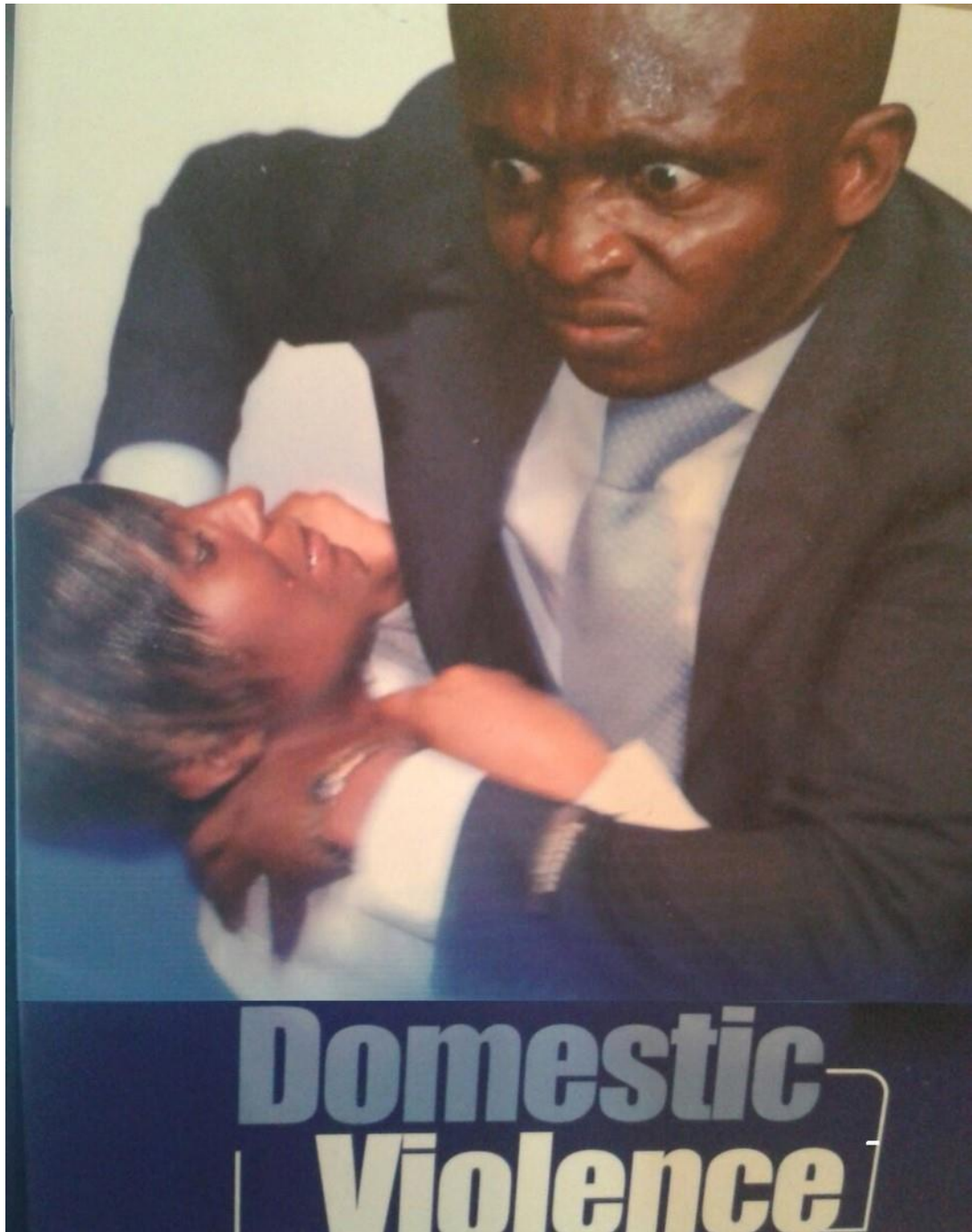
Figure 13 : Domestic Violence   THE Ark

Figure 14   Forms of abuse   DOVVSU

Figure 15 Hiding won't help, Speak up   The Ark
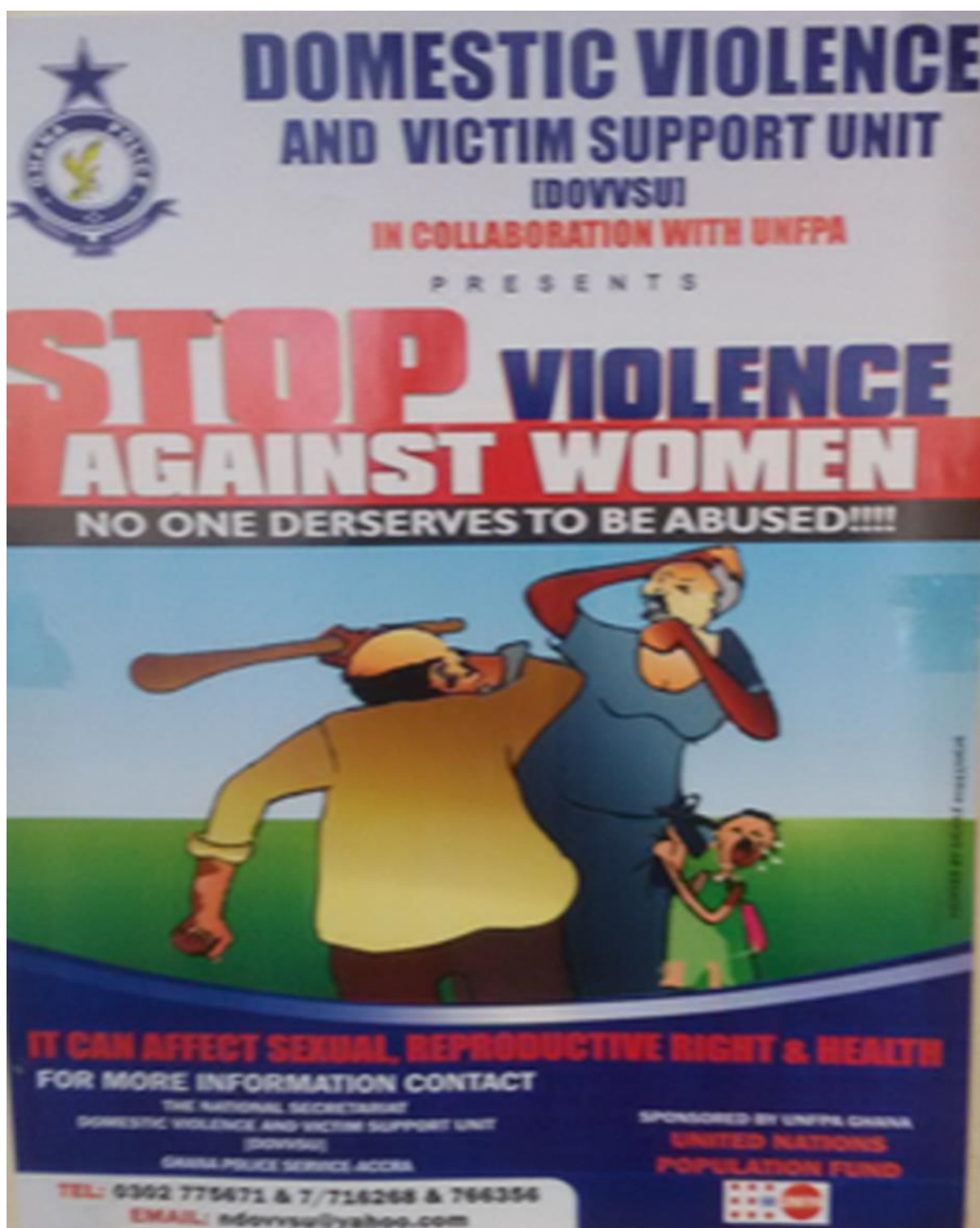
Figure 16 Stop violence against women. No one deserves to be abused   DOVVSU
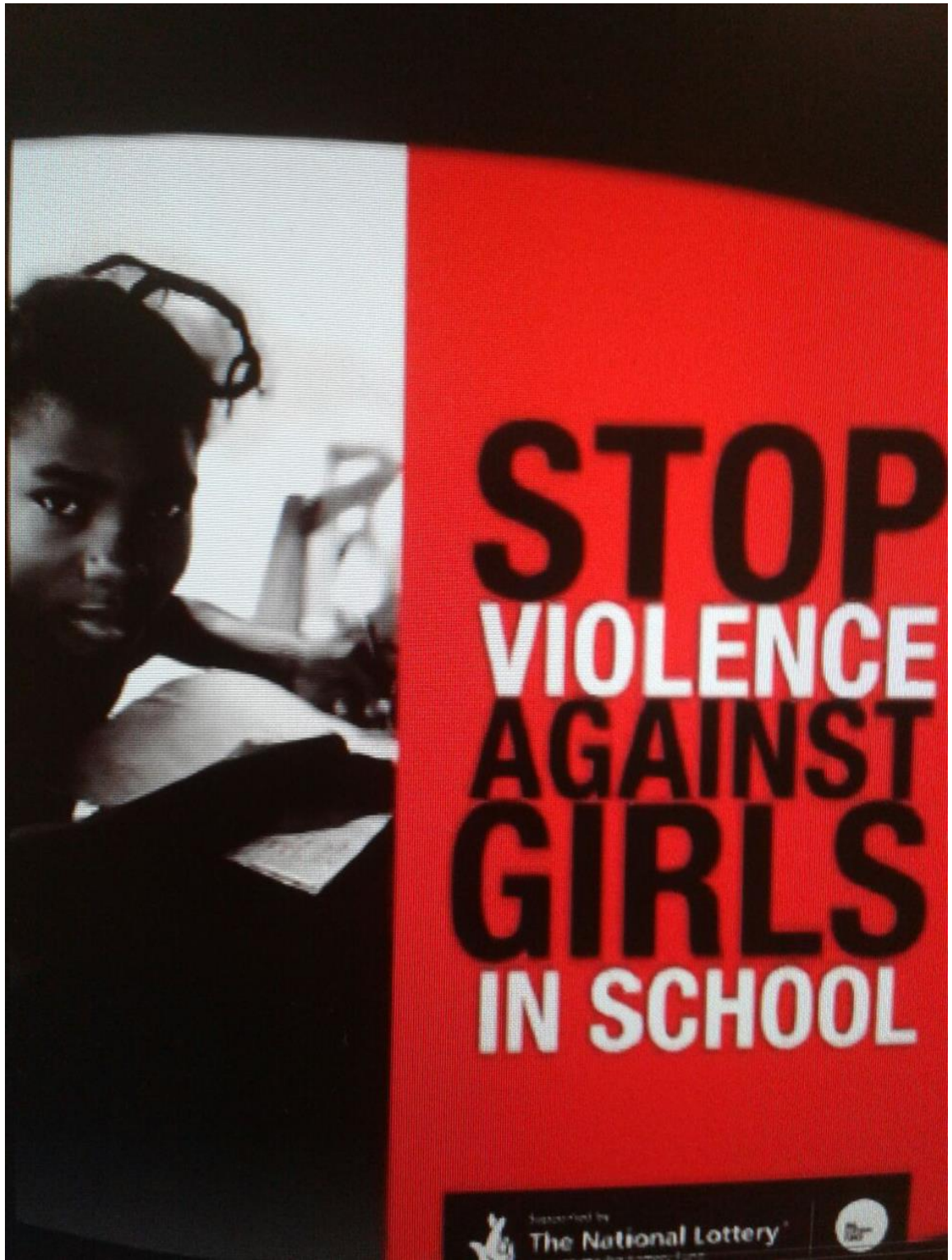
Figure 17 Stop violence against girls in schools   DOVVSU
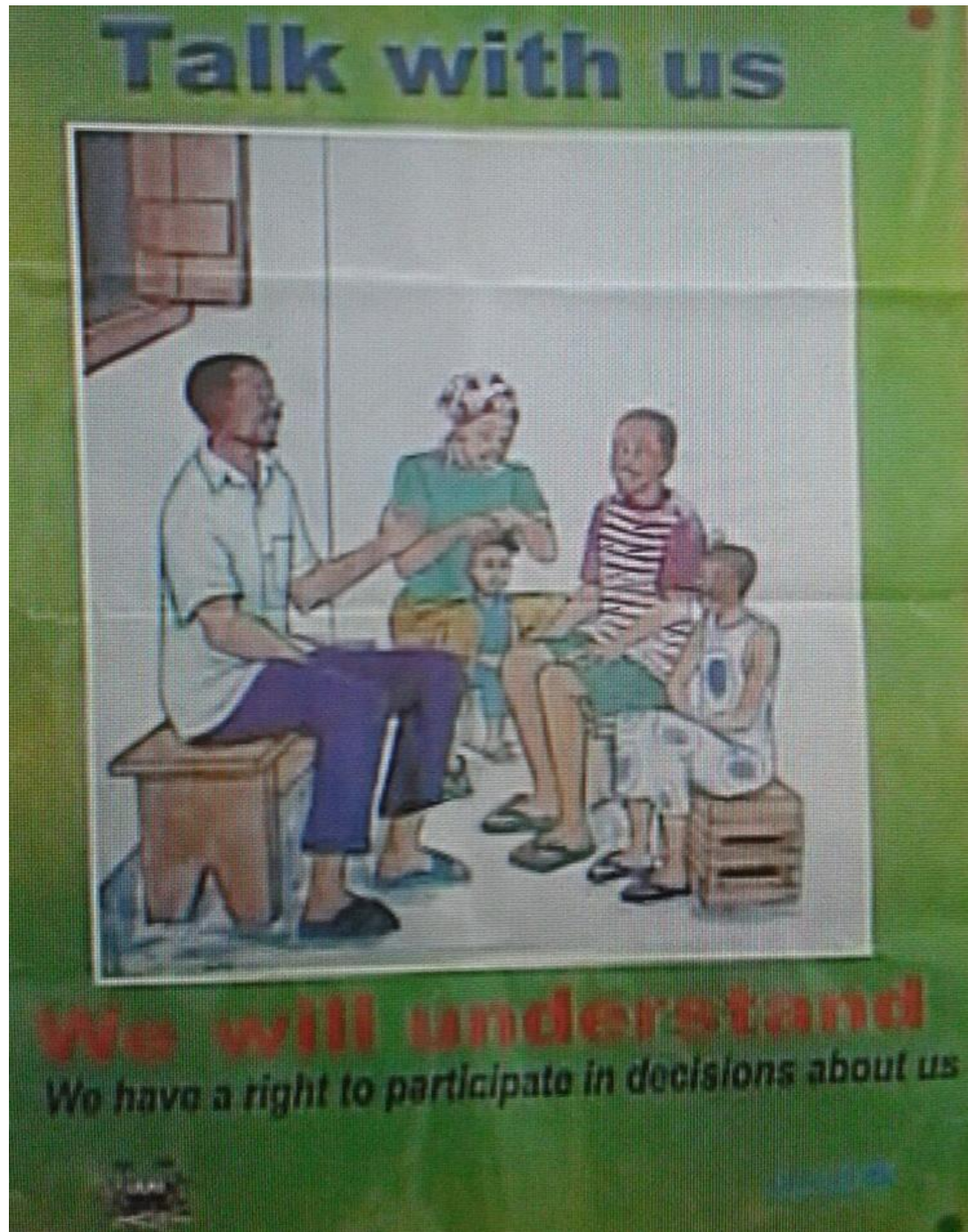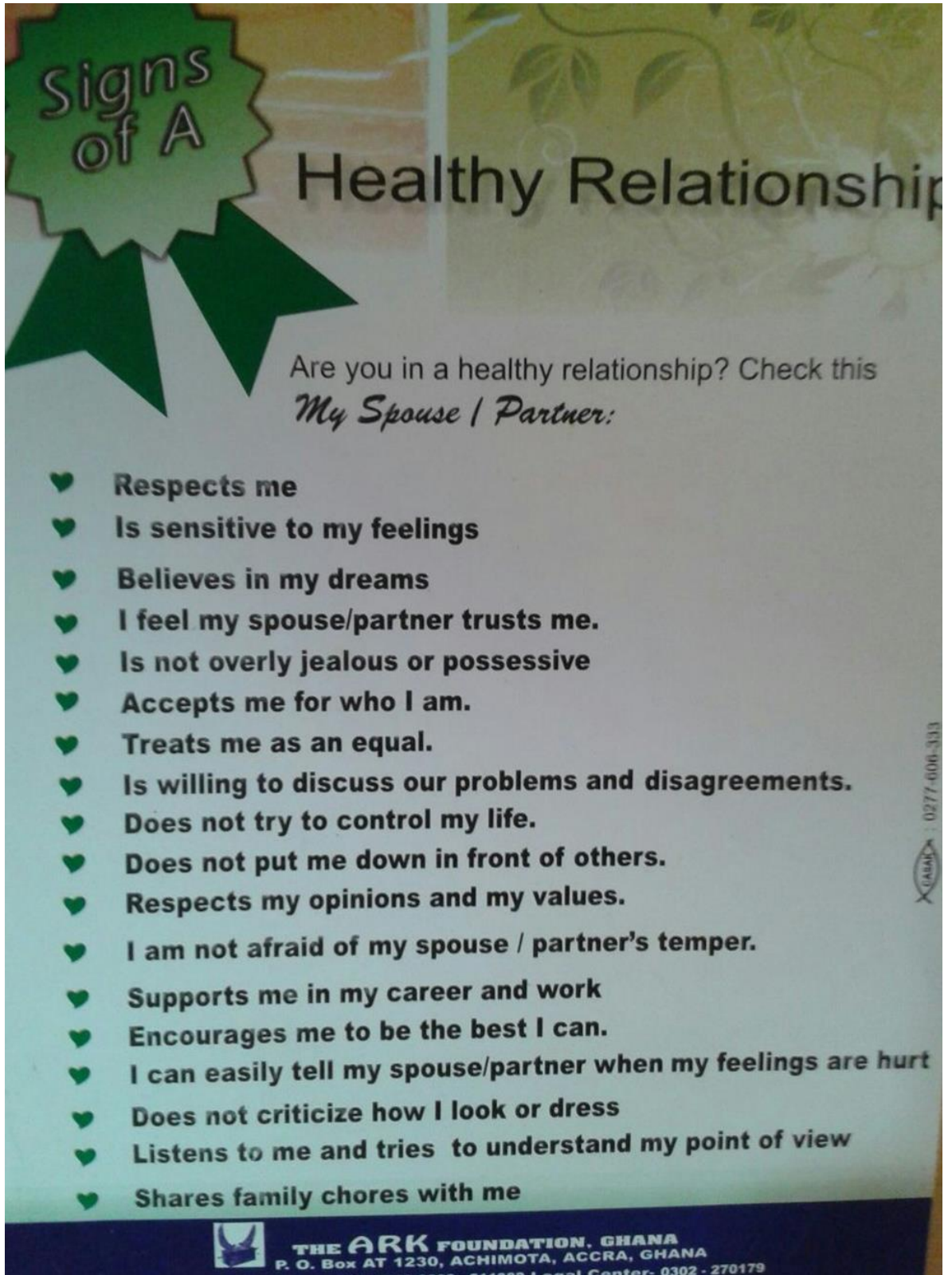
Figure 18   Talk with us. We will understand. We have a right to participate in decisions about us

Figure 19 Signs of a healthy relationship

Figure 20 Treat your househelp properly   DOVVSU

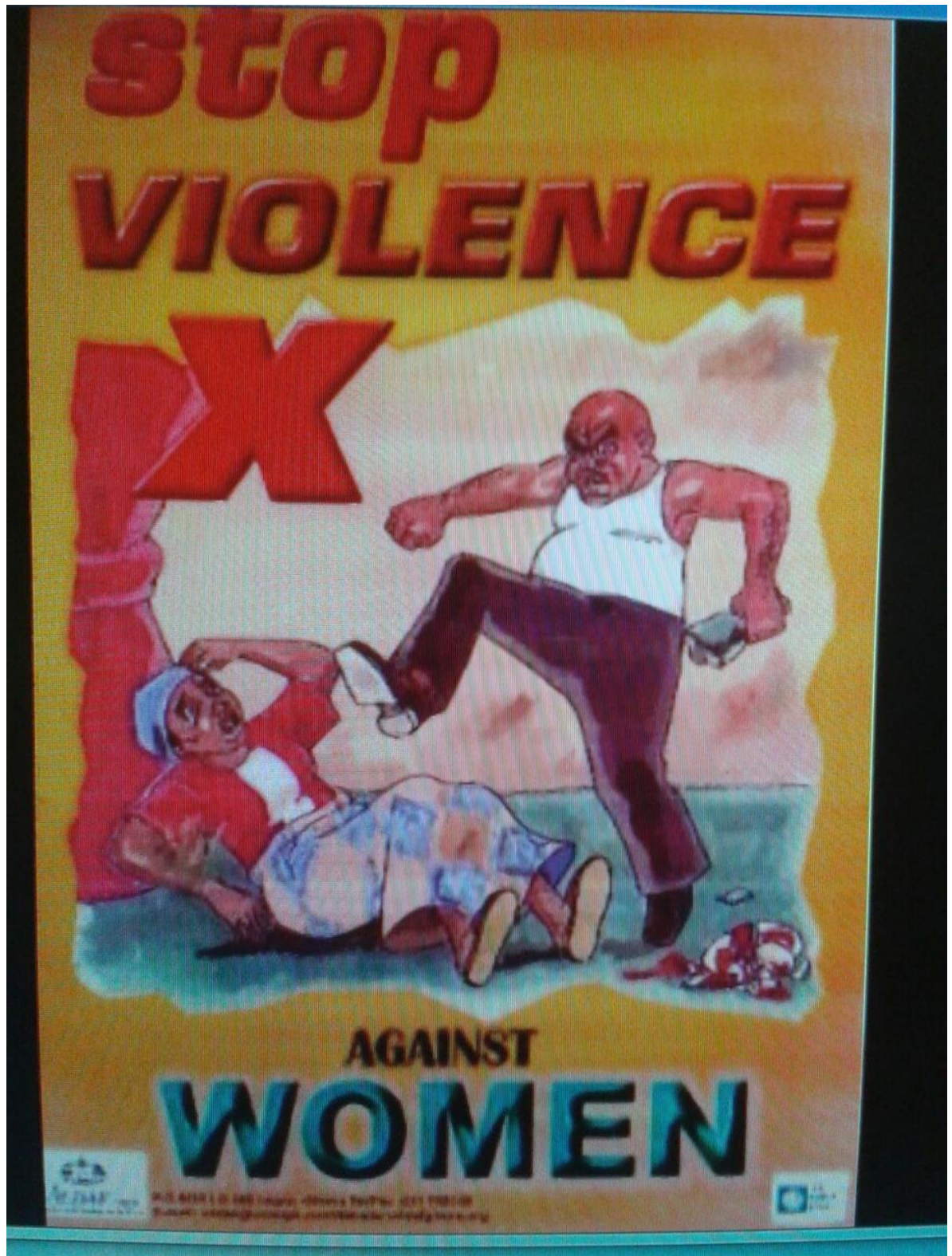Figure 21   Do you need help 24 hour counselling service

Figure 22 Stop Violence Against Women

Figure 23 Speak out against violence   DOVVSU

Appendix C   A guide to analysing Ads

1.   What are the differences in the styles used in the posters? (Distinguish between them)

2.   What characters are used in the advertisements: men, women, children, all, cartoons? How many are used in a poster at a time?

3.   How are both sexes depicted – In terms of occupation, location, physical appearance, position in the ad?

4.   How have visuals changed over time?

5.   How are families depicted in posters?

6.   What roles do they play? – Perpetrator, victim, family member?

7.   What are they doing (in terms of action)? Struggling, sitting, standing, lying?

8.   What relationships are suggested by the way depictions are presented?

9.   How are these relationships shown?

10.   How is violence represented and depicted in the poster?

11.   What information is given to the public?

12.   How are texts deployed to convey particular meanings?

13.   How are these meanings communicated to the public/ how do the ads address its audiences?

14.   How are the audiences expected to respond to the ads directives?

15.   What themes are identified in the ads?

16.   Have they changed over time?

Appendix D – Letters to Organisations

US

University of Sussex

Silverstone Building
Brighton
BN19RH
[Insert date]

The Executive Director
The Ark Foundation
P. O. Box AT 1230
Achimota, Accra

Dear Madam,

REQUEST TO HOLD INTERVIEWS WITH A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ARK FOUNDATION

I write to request for an opportunity to speak with any representative of your organization to enable me gather information for my project work.

My name is Marian Tsegah, a first year PhD student with the University of Sussex, UK. I am currently in Ghana to conduct research on the communication strategies deployed in the awareness creation and sensitization of the Ghanaian public on the issue of gender based violence in the country.

From the literature I have gathered so far for the study, The Ark Foundation has featured prominently as one of such organizations working directly on this subject in Ghana. I therefore humbly request to be given the opportunity to speak with any representative of your organization to clarify issues discussed in the literature and also to further explore other themes on violence that are often used in your communication materials.

May I take this opportunity to assure you that this study is purely for academic purposes and the information obtained from your outfit will be solely used for that purpose. I am your main point of contact for this study and can be reached on 0244-381337 or through email marian_tsegah@yahoo.com / m.tsegah@susex.ac.uk. My address whilst in Ghana is Marian Tsegah, P. O. Box SR 175 Spintex Rd Accra.

If you have any questions or issues that you wish to speak to someone other than myself, the supervisor of the research is:Janice Winship; j.winship@sussex.ac.uk; Silverstone 318, University of Sussex, Brighton, BN19RH.
I look forward to visiting your organization to fulfil the above stated objectives that I have.

Counting on your assistance.

Thank You.

Yours Sincerely,

Marian Tsegah
(Researcher/Phd Student)

Cc: The Deputy Program Manager
Capacity Building & Advocacy (CABA)

US

University of Sussex

<div align="right">

Silverstone Building
Brighton
BN19RH
[Insert date]

</div>

The Co-ordinating Director
Ghana Police Service
DOVVSU National Secretariat
Police Headquarters
Accra

Dear Sir/Madam,

<u>REQUEST TO HOLD AN INTERVIEW ON GENDER VIOLENCE IN GHANA</u>

I write to request for an opportunity to speak with any representative of your organization to enable me gather information for my doctoral thesis.

My name is Marian Tsegah, a first year Phd student at the University of Sussex, Brighton. The aim of my study is to explore the various communication strategies deployed in the awareness creation and sensitization of the Ghanaian public on the issue of gender based violence in the country.

Acknowledging the extensive work your organization has done on this subject, I deemed it fit to seek first-hand information from you to advance this study. I therefore humbly request to be given the opportunity to speak with any representative of your organization to clarify issues that I have already read about in the literature and also to further explore other themes on violence that are often used in your communication materials.

May I take this opportunity to assure you that this study is purely for academic purposes and the information obtained from your outfit will be solely used for that purpose. I am your main point of contact for this study and can be reached on 0244-381337 or through email <u>marian_tsegah@yahoo.com</u>/ <u>m.tsegah@susex.ac.uk</u>. My address whilst in Ghana is Marian Tsegah, P. O. Box SR 175 Spintex Rd Accra.

If you have any questions or issues that you wish to speak to someone other than myself., the supervisor of the research is:Janice Winship; j.winship@sussex.ac.uk; Silverstone 318, University of Sussex, Brighton, BN19RH.I will be grateful to obtain information about how conveniently this interview can be organized together with what it takes to reach these people.
I look forward to visiting your organization to fulfil the above stated objectives that I have.

Counting on your assistance.

Thank You.

Yours Sincerely,

Marian Tsegah
(Researcher/Phd Student)

Appendix E – Participant information sheet

US

University of Sussex

Study title

'Making a difference: A study of the social marketing campaign in awareness creation of gender based violence in Ghana'.

Invitation
You are being invited to take part in a research study. Please read through the information below so that you can understand what the research is about and how it will be used before you decide to participate. You can keep hold of this sheet for information whether or not you decide to participate.

What is the purpose of the study?
The purpose of this study is to examine how The Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service and The Ark Foundation – a nongovernmental organisation have deployed social marketing to create awareness about the existence of gender based violence in the country.

Why have I been invited to participate?
You have been invited to participate because you are a Ghanaian have some knowledge about the country's culture and communication efforts that have been undertaken by these and other organisations about gender violence in the country.

Do I have to take part?
No, participation is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. You can still choose to withdraw your participation after you have signed the form.

What will happen if I decide to take part?
If you wish to take part in this project, I will give you a consent form to fill even though you can still change your mind anytime afterwards. I will then find out from you the most convenient days during which I can come and have about an hour long interview with you or invite you over to participate in a focus group discussion. We will agree on a time and location that suits you via phone or email.

I have a list of suggested topic areas about gender violence in Ghana which I will raise with you during our interaction, but you do not have to discuss anything you don't wish to. The audio of the interview or focus group discussion will be recorded and later transcribed. You will be sent a transcript of the interview and be invited to make comments on it should you wish.

What are the possible disadvantages or benefits of taking part?
Taking part will involve a commitment of some of your time. I however hope that you will enjoy taking part, whilst imparting your knowledge on this topic. The results of this study will contribute to the academic understanding of women and gender based violence as seen in the Ghanaian context.

Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?
Identifying information will be kept strictly confidential and will be seen only by me. Your name and contact details will be stored separately from the transcription of your interview. You will be referred to by a pseudonym (false name) in the transcription and all subsequent reports.

What should I do if I want to take part?
If you wish to take part you should contact me to let me know, and then we can arrange when and where to hold the interview or focus group discussion. You can choose to have the interview either in your office, home, a public place of your choice, or a public place arranged by me if you prefer. Before the research takes place I will read out this information to you again and request that you ask me any questions you may have before we proceed.

What will happen to the results of the research study?
The results will be used in my PhD thesis at the University of Sussex. They may also be used in further academic publications authored by me.

Who is organising and funding the research?
I am conducting the research as a PhD student at the University of Sussex in the school of Media Film and Music. My studies is being funded by the Ghana Education Trust Fund.

Who has reviewed the study?
This research will be reviewed and approved by a Social Sciences and Arts Cluster-based Research Ethics Committee (C-REC) at the University of Sussex.

What do I do if I decide I want to withdraw my participation?
You are free to withdraw your participation even after you have signed the consent form. You can withdraw at any stage up to 2016 when the PhD thesis will be submitted. There will be no repercussions for withdrawing your participation, you do not have to give a reason, and any data that I have relating to you at that time will be permanently deleted. If you wish to withdraw please inform me or my supervisor.

Contact for Further Information
Your main point of contact is the researcher:

Marian Tsegah
Silverstone Building, University of Sussex, Brighton, BN19RH
m.tsegah@sussex.ac.uk

or

Marian Tsegah – P.O.Box SR 175 Spintex Rd. Accra
Tel: 0244 381337 email: marian_tsegah@yahoo.com

If you have any questions or issues that you wish to speak to someone other than the researcher about, the supervisor of the research is: Janice Winship; j.winship@sussex.ac.uk; Silverstone 318, University of Sussex, Brighton, BN19RH

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet
Marian Tsegah

Appendix F – Consent form

University of Sussex

CONSENT FORM FOR PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Project Title: 'Making a difference: A study of the social marketing campaign in awareness creation of gender based violence in Ghana'.

Project Approval Reference:

I agree to take part in the University of Sussex research project named above. I have had the project explained to me and I have read and understood the Information Sheet, which I may keep for my records.

Please indicate which aspects of the research you would like to take part in:

- ☐ Interview only
- ☐ Focus Group discussion

I understand that agreeing to take part in this interview means that I am willing to:

- Be interviewed by the researcher.
- Allow the interview to be audio taped.

I understand that if I agree to take part in the focus group discussion, it means that I am willing to:

- Join other people in having a discussion on the subject at a place and time that we all agree upon.
- Allow the discussion to be recorded and transcription of the discussion to be written up by the researcher.

I also understand the following:

- I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that I disclose will lead to the identification of any individual in the reports on the project, either by the researcher or by any other party.

- I understand that I will be given a transcript of my interview and a copy of the researcher's notes (if participating in the focus group discussion) which I will be invited to comment on should I wish to.

- I understand that I have given my approval for information given during our discussions to be used in the final report of the project, and in any further publications.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Signature: _____

Name: _____Date: ___/___/_____

Topic guides for interviews and focus group discussions

Title of Study: 'Making a difference: A study of the social marketing campaign in awareness creation of gender based violence in rural Ghana'.

Interview with Activists / Staff of the Ark Foundation

❖ Background of Ark Foundation

- When was the organisation set up?

- What factors influenced the setting up of the organization?

- What were the organisation's initial goals and organizational structure?

- Have these goals and organizational structures changed over the years?

- How has it changed?

- What factors motivated these changes?

- Can you share your long term goals with me?

- How does your organisation think of itself in relation to others in the field?

- Do you work in collaboration with any other organisation actively working on gender violence in Ghana?

- Can you mention some of them and the activities you engaged in with them?

- Are your operations guided by any gender related theory or approach?

The Ark's Communication Strategy / Advertising Campaign

Programs and program components

- What are some of the specific programs you have engaged in?

- Who constitute your target group?

- What are some of the activities included in your programs?

- How did the organization decide on these type and the range of activities to be involved in?

- Was the choice based on a needs assessment of some sort eg. Type and scale of the problem?

- Can you tell me about how the anti-gender violence campaign developed?

- Was it different from other campaigns you had done up to that point?

- Did your target audience actually need the education on gender violence or they knew about it and only needed the motivation to report cases of violence?

- How do you communicate information on gender violence?

- How did you come by your advertising materials?

- What objectives or roles did you set for your adverts to achieve?

- What influences your choice of advertising media?

- Did you develop your own advertising concept or you worked with an Advertising agency?

- If yes, how was it like working with the agency?

- If no, how did you come about your communication materials?

- Was the choice of adverts based on any research findings?

- Do you have any anonymous helpline where people can still lodge their complaints without having to come over?

How are women represented and targeted in the advertisements?

- How do you target women through your advertisements?

- Was the use of victims in your advertisements a priority in selecting who featured in your advertisements?

In what ways did the advertising campaign build on commodity advertising at the time?

- Commodity advertising often uses the "ideal" kind of woman to sell products, services or ideas. What was your criteria in selecting models who featured in your adverts?
- Did you base any of your advertising strategies on any commodity advertising strategy? Eg, Sponsorships, branding, etc

Has the campaign raised women's consciousness and sense of themselves?

- Would you say that your target audience currently understand issues of gender based violence better than they did in the past?
- Have more women become aware about their rights to report violence?
- Have they understood that they have the right to stay away from an abusive relationship?
- What has been the level of patronage of your outfit since the campaign started?

What other impacts and outcomes did the campaign achieve?

- What were some of the challenges you encountered in trying to achieve your objectives.
- What successes do you think this campaign achieved?
- What lessons have you learnt from your experience in this field?
- How can this work be developed further?

- How do you publicize your activities?

- Were there other interventions, beyond social marketing which contributed to the effectiveness of the campaign?

Appendix G – Interview guides

<u>INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND VICTIM SUPPORT UNIT OF THE GHANA POLICE SERVICE (DOVVSU)</u>

<u>Background of DOVVSU</u>

• When was the organisation set up?

• Who constitute your target group?

• Did your target audience actually need the education on gender violence or they knew about it and only needed the motivation to report cases of violence?

• Can these be described as some factors which influenced the setting up of the organization?

• Are there any other factors you would like to share with me?

• What were some of DOVVSU's initial goals?

• What type of activities does DOVVSU engage in to achieve these goals?

• How did the organization decide on the types and ranges of activities to be involved in towards the achievement of its goals?

• Was the choice of these activities based on a needs assessment of some sort eg. Type and scale of the problem?

• Do you work in collaboration with any other organisation actively working on gender violence in Ghana?

• Can you mention some of them and the activities you engaged in with them?

• Would you say that the goals set by DOVVSU have been achieved?

• Did you have to change these goals over the years?

- In what ways have they changed?

- What factors motivated these changes?

- Can you educate me on what your long term goals are?

DOVVSU Communication Strategy / Advertising Campaign

- How have you communicated your services to the general public?

- To what extent have you used advertisements?

- What objectives did you have for your advertisements?

- What type of advertisements have you used so far?

- What media have you used so far?

- Which medium would you describe as the most effective?

- How has the public response been?

- What is the current statistics on gender violence in Ghana?

- Did you develop your own advertising concept or you worked with an Advertising agency?

- If yes, how was it like working with the agency?

- If no, how did you come about your communication materials?

- Was the choice of adverts based on any research findings?

- Do you have any anonymous helpline where people can still lodge their complaints without having to come over?

In what ways was the campaign similar to and different from other social marketing campaigns?

- Do you handle any other societal problem apart from gender violence?

- Can you tell me about some of the strategies you use in addressing this problem?

- Had you done anything similar to it in the past?

- Is your strategy for addressing gender violence any different from what you have done in the past?

- How could these be developed further?

- To what extent did you require government policies or legislative backing to help you achieve your objectives?

- Looking at the statistics, what would you say has been the trend in the perpetration of violence since the establishment of DOVVSU.

- Among the sexes, who would you say is reporting violent cases the most?

- What have you identified as some of the common causes of violence in the country?

Has the campaign raised women's consciousness and sense of themselves?

- Would you say that your target audience currently understand issues of gender based violence better than they did in the past?

- Have more women become aware about their rights to report violence?

- Have they understood that they have the right to stay away from an abusive relationship?

- What has been the level of patronage of your outfit since the campaign broke?

What other impacts and outcomes did the campaign achieve?

- What were some of the challenges encountered in trying to achieve your objectives.

- What successes do you think this campaign achieved?

- What lessons have you learnt from your experience in this field?

- How can this work be developed further?

- How do you publicize DOVVSU's activities

- Were there other interventions, beyond social marketing which contributed to the effectiveness of the campaign?

- Would you want to give me any information which will help my study but which I haven't asked of?

Guide for Focus Groups

As indicated earlier, I will engage a sample of the campaign's target audience to determine the extent to which the anti-gender violence campaign has created awareness about the issue of violence among them. Questions asked will be with the aim of finding what they made of the various messages in the campaign, how they understood and responded to it, and how it may have sensitised them to the whole issue of gender violence. I will show them pictures from the campaign to stimulate their memories and ask them the following questions:

Background

- Had you heard anything on gender violence before the campaign? Eg discussed gender violence with parents, friends or learnt it from school?
- What were your opinions on gender violence before this campaign?

About the campaign

- Do you remember the advertising campaign about gender violence?
- What was your reaction?
- Did you discuss the advert with anyone after you had seen it?
- Did the adverts give you a new perspective on gender violence?
- Did the advert affect you in any way? How?
- What did you feel about the campaign using pictures of abused women?
- How do you think men responded to the campaign?

- What are some of the important things you have learnt from the campaign?

- Was the education important?

- What will you do if you happen to witness an abusive scenario?

Outcomes

- Have the advertisements (pictures, talks, films) changed your perception about gender violence?

- Do you think that gender violence is a big societal issue?

- Do you think we should keep talking about it?

- In what situations?

- What are some of the important things you have learnt from the campaign?

- Was the education important?

Guide for individual interviews

Victims of Gender Violence – Opinions and Experiences

- Are you married or ever been married?

- How long?

- Have you suffered any violence or abuse from your partner?

- If yes, what type of violence?

Possible Causes

- What type of violence did you experience?

- Why did your partner inflict harm on you?

- Who or what provoked him?

- Does your family, church, office or people in your neighbourhood know about your situation?

- Have any of them tried to intervene?

- What was your partner's reaction?

Possible Effects

- How did you feel after the violent act?

- How important is what others around you think about gender violence?

- Would you rely on their support in fighting violence?

- How were people relating to you before the incidence?

- How are they relating to you after you reported or left?

- Do you remember any of their comments?

- How have these affected your behaviour?

- What was your reaction after the abuse?

- In which circumstances would you consider not reporting violent situations?

- Have you left the relationship?

- If yes, when and how?

- From where did you obtain any protection?

- Where do you report your case?

- Are you aware of DOVVSU, FIDA and the ARK FOUNDATION?

- Are you aware of the kind of services they offer?

- Have you reported your case to any of these outfits?

- Would you consider going back one day?

- What are some of the reasons that would make you go back?

- Is violence against women normal?

- What is your personal opinion on this subject?

- Would you like to give me any important information that I have not asked you?

Appendix H - Names of Participants

Interview 1 (The Ark Foundation)

Mr. Samuel Berko	Programs Director
Mr. Asare	Assistant Programs Director
Petrah Adu-Parkoh	Librarian

Interview 2 (DOVVSU)

DSP Lawrencia

Phyllis

Vida

Gershon

Ursula

Lydia

Cecilia

Interview (3)

Sylvia

Auntie Amma

Brenda

Mama

Focus group discussions (Young Participants)

Nathan	Mike	Naomi
Ankrah	Bridgit	Alex
Eddie	Chelsea	Drew
Chris	Magdalene	Ivy
Kofi	Nana	Tony
Freda	Esther	George
Sandra	Newton	
Albert	Dzifa	

(Older Participants)

Priscilla	Emma	Phyllis
Linda	Samuel	Mathew
Betty	Prince	Sophia
Elsie	Kate	Habib
Judith	Doreen	
Tina	Vera	

Sample transcript

Linda: I don't understand men. You can't tell me that you saw a Benz passing and because you loved the loved the car so much you decided to drive it off when the owner unfortunately left his key in it whilst going to the washroom.

Eddie: It happens! People steal people's cars.

Linda: How often does it happen?

Eddie: It happens

Linda: Ok, let me come down from the Benz level I even think it's a little too high.

Marian: Mmmm

Linda: Let's say you go to a restaurant and you buy what you can afford. I also come and buy mine with all the extra's that come with it. Will you say that you will take my food from me because you are so drawn to me? It doesn't happen. I just think the men do what they do because we are the weaker sex often with no strong voice to talk for us. A one year old baby, how was she dressed to seduce you, Razak? {All laugh} Men just want to be powerful, that's all.

Eddie: I still say it is attraction because even though some children are abused that of the grown-ups is still more.

Priscilla: I think towards the end of last year almost all sexual abuse cases that were in the news had to do with children, 2 years, 6 years, and 4 years and so on.

Newton: I think it is very important to understand the way men are, try to understand how they operate and protect yourself. For example, if I know that an armed robber operates this way I will put in measures to prevent them from getting me. A rapist acts like a predator, looks around for his victims and assesses the ease or difficulty with which he can get her. When he studies the victim and knows that she can't do anything, he pounces.

Esther: listen to this, Customs man defiles two daughters. How am I supposed to know that my father will rape me tonight. A father will sometimes come home, ask the kids how they are and give them kisses a number of times. As he gives these kisses and so on the children will see it as very normal and may never take it as a sign of the father wanting to rape any of them. The unfortunate can however happen and will we blame it on the children? They just take advantage of women and girls, that's all.

Dzifa: I also think that some men do it because they are frustrated about how their lives have turned out. They usually would have had an idea about what they want to become but realise after a while that their dreams could not materialise. They then take all this out on the women.

Elsie: So if you are frustrated, the women should suffer?

Tony: Well sometimes I also think the men do that upon the instructions of others. Some go to juju men (voodoo) to ask for spiritual powers to help them get quick money. These men sometimes then tell them to go and have sex with children as part of the requirements they need to complete whatever magical things they are doing and I think this is where they do all that nasty stuff. They do it feeling that when they get so much money they will have the power over everything and will also have the women following them.

Ivy: Some men also blame it on the devil, and others also take alcohol and drugs and act under the influence of these things. For some of the young guys too it is some sort of competition and fun. They debate on who will be the first to sleep with a particular girl maybe in their area or school or something and then they go ahead to do that.

Marian: OK, thank you all for your contributions. Will any of you also want to give me their impression about the adverts? Once you see them, what comes to mind or how do you react to them?