



LUNDS
UNIVERSITET

LUND UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
BIDS

“Not every literate is literate in the sense of understanding that a woman needs her own rights”

Exploring men’s support for women’s
empowerment in Ghana – a Minor Field Study

Author: Viktoria Nguema
Bachelor Thesis: UTVK03, 15 hp
Spring Term 2013
Tutor: Abdulhadi Khalaf

Abstract

Author: Viktoria Nguema

Title: “Not every literate is literate in the sense of understanding that a woman needs her own rights”: Exploring men’s support for women’s empowerment in Ghana

Bachelors Thesis UTVK03, 15 hp

Tutor: Abdulhadi Khalaf

Department of Sociology/BIDS ST 13

Development aid organizations are increasingly turning their focus on men and masculinities in the pursuit of women’s empowerment. Despite much effort to improve the lives of women, the hegemonic definition of empowerment in economic and individualistic terms have not been able to attack the unequal power structures between men and women, causing them to persist until this day. This essay explores male support for women’s empowerment in urban Ghana through the narratives of both male and female university students. A heavy emphasis is placed on context, whereby the data has been discussed in reference to African feminism and Ghanaian cultural values and history. The data showed that all male students expressed support for empowerment but that some tended to perceive it as threatening if it went ‘too far’, indicating that power over women remains important to the male identity. Education was given less importance in creating support among male students, while culture and exposure were identified as significant in the Ghanaian context.

Keywords: Ghana, urban, African feminism, empowerment, support, masculinities.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) for the grant which made my field study, and thus this essay, possible.

Most importantly, thank you to every single one of the students that were willing to share their views and opinions on this subject while at the same time opening up my mind and broadening my perspectives.

Without you, this could not have been possible.

Table of content

1. Introduction.....	5
1.1. Statement of Purpose	6
1.2. Research Questions	6
1.3. Importance of Male Support for Women's Empowerment	7
1.4. Limitation of Study.....	8
1.5. Literature Review	8
2. Theoretical framework.....	13
2.1. African Feminism	13
2.2. Tendencies of African feminism.....	14
3. Methodology	16
3.1. Group Interviews	16
3.1. Sampling	17
3.2. Key Informants	17
3.3. The Questionnaires.....	18
3.4. Data Collection and Methodological Challenges	19
3.5. Ethics	20
4. Analysis	21
4.1. "If there's no education, there's no empowerment": Empowerment and education	21
4.2. "Not every literate is literate in that sense of understanding that a woman needs her own rights": Empowerment and male support.....	23
4.3. "But they are still thinking like people who have not attended schools are thinking": Problematizing the role of education	25
5. Conclusion	29
6. Works Cited.....	30

6.1. <i>Internet sources</i>	33
7. <i>Appendices</i>	35
7.1. <i>Interview Questions: Students</i>	35
7.2. <i>Interview Questions: Akosua Adomako Ampofo</i>	35
7.3. <i>Interview Questions: Akosua Darkwah</i>	36
7.4. <i>Disclaimer</i>	37

1. Introduction

Since the 1970s policies related to improving women's lives have dominated the development aid industry (Awumbila 2006: 158). Indeed, nowadays the practice is so entrenched that three out of the eight United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are directly focusing on women. Despite much effort, women as a group have remained more disadvantaged than men as a group, whereby attention has increasingly been placed on understanding men and masculinities and how these might affect women.

Masculinity, or rather masculinities (as it is acknowledged that not all men have the same amount of power, opportunities or life trajectories) is a concept which refers to cultural ideals of what it means to be a man (Morrell & Ouzgane 2005: 4). The reason why it has been brought up is because intervention work has failed to understand how men experience and enact gender in Africa (Adomako Ampofo, Okyerefo & Pervarah 2009: 60). Traditionally, discourses have tended to highlight individual agency and education as important to the process of empowerment (Luttrell & Quiroz (2009: 9), while overlooking other factors. Arguments used often point to its effectiveness to achieve other goals such as economic growth, good governance or poverty reduction (Squires 2007; Tsikata 2007; Kabeer 2001), but less emphasis has been placed on questioning structures of power in personal, national and international relationships (Anyidoho & Manuh 2010: 271).

Cornwall (2011), Kwapong (2009), Adomako Ampofo & Boateng (2008), and Stocking (2004) are some of the scholars who also have pointed out men's lack of involvement in women's issues as a key cause to remaining inequalities between men and women. Men in Ghana still hold more power than women and it appears unlikely that change will happen unless those who have it let go of the privileges they receive based on their sex. This essay thus aims to examine men's support to empowerment and how power within gender relationships is perceived and expressed. This will be discussed in the light of Ghanaian cultural values and history, with a desire to expand on the literature of gender in Africa. To analyze this, both male and female perspectives will be included.

Ghana appears as an interesting case as it is an African country that has been praised for its successes in terms of its economic, social and political development (Abdulai & Gordon

2010: 27; landguiden.se). Another interest in the country lies in personal experiences, as I spent one semester as an exchange student in the spring of 2012 at the university where this field study took place. The essay is thus based on data obtained through a Minor Field Study conducted during a 10 week period from January to March 2013 in Accra, Ghana. The data consists of ten group interviews as well as individual interviews with two key informants.

1.1. Statement of Purpose

This essay aims to explore the perceptions of male students at the University of Ghana on the topic of women's empowerment and their willingness to support with a clear focus on power and African cultural values and history. Thus, this essay will answer the following questions:

1.2. Research Questions

- Do male Ghanaian students support women's empowerment? To what extent?
- How can the student's narrative accounts shed light on the issue of power within gender relationships in relation to women's empowerment?
- What factors might be identified as affecting the support for women's empowerment?

This paper is structured as follows. Section 1 continues with discussing importance and limits of the study, followed by a presentation of how empowerment, education and male support has been discussed by Western and African scholars. Section 2 will present the chosen theory, which is African feminism. Section 3 presents the methods used to collect data. Empirical evidence and conclusions will be discussed in sections 4 and 5.

1.3. Importance of Male Support for Women's Empowerment

In all societies, children are taught the social norms and expectations from the adults surrounding them. These norms are differently attributed depending on the roles the children are assumed to play in the future. As they grow up and enter adolescence boys tend to enjoy new privileges which are reserved for men while girls endure new restrictions reserved for women (Adomako Ampofo 2011: 198). Men are usually prepared to assume roles of leadership and professional roles, while women are trained in domestic chores. This also governs the ways they perceive each other as well as those who deviate from the norms.

Although women in Ghana today enjoy more rights and power than ever before, unequal power relationships remain between the sexes. Decision-making, attending meetings and performing religious sacrifices at household and community levels are still considered male responsibilities (World Bank 1999: 75). Meanwhile women are taught to refer to men as stronger and more responsible while men are taught to lead and control women (Adomako Ampofo 2011: 199). Although the increased access for women in terms of education, employment and resources has given them more control over financial decisions in the home, it has not necessarily given them more control over household decision in relation to social or organization matters (Malhotra & Mather 1997: 625). Perhaps this is because efforts to improve women's situations place very much attention on their economic disadvantage but virtually none on their disadvantages in terms of power (Anyidoho & Manuh 2010: 271).

This paper argues that the empowerment of women must be accompanied by changes in mindset and practices of men. If men are made to reflect upon the privileges that are given to them on the basis of their sex, their power can be used to support women's issues and challenge inequalities. Adomako Ampofo & Boateng (2008: 50) noted that "the shift in focus from gender relations and women's 'oppression' [...] to how masculinity is constructed, and sometimes operates to 'marginalise' women as well as some men, was associated with a much greater level of commitment among (male) students to the equal treatment of females". This study thus aims to deepen the understanding of male identities in relation to women's empowerment and identify factors that may affect levels of support for it among males.

1.4. Limitation of Study

I decided to center this study around Ghanaian university students because not all women's struggles are the same. Rural women have usually been targeted for research on empowerment, yet their experiences should not be assumed to speak for other groups of women. Neither have men's perspectives in the area of gender and development received much attention. I therefore chose to focus on urban and educated men and women, as a gap in the literature was identified. They were also selected because it was easier for me as a researcher to comprehend and relate to their realities rather than to rural women thanks to similarities in lifestyles and my previous experience as an exchange student at the University of Ghana in the spring of 2012. I say comprehend and relate to very humbly, as I acknowledge that there are still many aspects of Ghanaian societies and gender relationships that I am still learning about. Bryman (2008: 39) acknowledges that researchers bring their own biases into the field, so I have tried to maintain an awareness of this to avoid as much as possible to prescribe to what Mohanty (1988: 62) calls a "Western feminist discourse on third world women".

1.5. Literature Review

Empowerment has often been described in economic terms, accompanied by the understanding that if women are pushed into economic activities, empowerment will follow. The definition of empowerment has in recent years been expanded and now includes aspects of decision making, capabilities, social status and political participation. Wrigley-Asante (2012: 345) wrote that several studies in Ghana have described improving socio-economic positions of women when given access to credits to boost their income-generating potential and have made considerable economic contributions to their homes, but with little or no focus on how this has impacted gender relations in the household and its implications for women. Practices of focusing on the economic disadvantages of women have thus continued until today. Anyidoho & Manuh (2010) noted that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and international aid institutions such as the World Bank have indeed complied to this tradition with virtually no attention to the issue of power. Consequently, they stated that use of such language has failed to recognize that even economically advantaged women may be

disempowered in other areas of their lives (Win 2004 in Anyidoho & Manuh 2010: 272). Furthermore Luttrell & Quiroz (2009: 9) argued that the concept of empowerment has focused on individual agency, which has led to an emphasis on transformation through education (and, consequently, employment). This might explain the widespread assumption among international aid institutions that “a woman is empowered when she is educated” (Lemmer 2009: 81).

Indeed, education has often been presented as conducive to empowerment by different scholars (see Surarpur 2013; Bose & Kumarasami 2012; Danjuma, Malami & Gatawa 2011). Research has suggested that education for women improves child health, lower rates of infant mortality and lower rates of fertility (King & Hill 1993 in Darkwah 2010: 28). It also increases the cognitive ability of individuals, which is vital for individual’s capacity to question, reflect and act upon situations in their lives, gain new knowledge and ideas and change power relations within and outside the household (Kabeer 2005: 16). It is further assumed to be a tool for poverty reduction and good governance (Malhotra et al. 2000: 3). Educated women are also less likely to be victims of domestic violence (Kaber 2005: 16).

There are however several issues with these assumptions. Cornwall (2011: 2) calls it an ‘extremely worrying trend’ to see an empowered girl as the solution to any ills in developing countries. Furthermore, Malhotra & Mather (1997: 600) argued that the connection between education, employment and empowerment has been assumed rather than demonstrated and is often used as a measure for women’s advancement. Darkwah (2010) also pointed out the flaws of such assumptions in relation to Ghana, where economic empowerment as a result of a secure employment is based on the provision and availability of jobs rather than the education itself, which in turn is related to global international politics and structural adjustment programs (interview 27/2 2013). Education is also more likely to affect gender relationships if provided in a setting which promotes and embodies change (Kabeer 2005: 17). It thus appears that the emphasis on individual agency has failed to account for other factors that might affect the process of empowerment.

One aspect that has perpetually been overlooked is the part that men may have in the empowerment of women. Increasingly however, focus has been turned on their roles in facilitating, or hindering, the process. Belanger (1995:5) stated that women’s empowerment is incomplete without structural transformations of a male dominated society (cited in Lemmer 2009: 81). A structural approach to empowerment accounts for how inequalities affect entire

social groups rather than focusing on only individual characteristics, which is often combined with rights based approaches (Luttrell & Quiroz 2009: 9). Rights based approaches differ from utility based approaches which often insist on instrumental benefits of empowerment, not only for the individuals themselves, but for entire communities or countries as well. This development has perhaps followed the increased emphasis on results rather than quality within the aid industry; one need only to examine the objectives of the MDG, whose strengths is often pointed to its measurability. Utility based arguments often have economic objectives such as attracting capital and integrating small producers into the global markets but tend to ignore structural issues and assumes that access to resources automatically leads to increased choices and therefore to empowerment (Luttrell & Quiroz 2009: 10). However persistent inequalities might indicate that social norms are a structure that possibly affects the empowerment of women more than previously understood. Wrigley-Asante (2012: 359) noted that women continued to conform to gender norms even though they were taking up traditionally male responsibilities. As men continue to be brought up to become the head of a household (Adomako Ampofo 2011: 198), women's increased economic advantages have sometimes resulted in power conflicts, caused by men's fear of losing control and power over women.

It therefore becomes important to apprehend why this occurs. One way would be to distinguish what it means to be a man in Ghanaian societies. The need for context specificity is vital here, since male ideals differ across the world whereby it would be useless to discuss masculinities based on Western gender models. Biological fatherhood has been identified as an important factor by Adomako Ampofo, Okyerefo & Pervarah (2009: 60), "not only because of the authority and control fatherhood portends, but also because of the symbolic significance of a competent, heterosexual, performative phallus". As previously mentioned, being the head of a household is another important part of the male identity. Adomako Ampofo (2011: 199) wrote that young males are exposed to more rigorous definitions of being boys, while girls are less sanctioned for being deviant from their roles. This means that a girl who assumes more roles than the 'traditional' domestic role which is expected of her may be less threatening than a boy who does the same in relation to his maleness. In connection, Ratele raised the question of "how to analyse males who are powerless in relation to other males but at the same time members of a powerful gender group in relation to females". These perspectives may shed light on Ghanaian gender relationships and "the

factors underlying many males' contrariness or indifference to feminist action around social issues" (2008: 517).

Women's empowerment can appear problematic for men in several ways. Silberschmidt (2011: 99) argued that the lack of access to income-generating activities might be an obstacle for gender equality and emerging support for it among men. This might be especially true in situations where support for income-generating activities is directed towards women and men feel emasculated and belittled due to their own lack of income. Failing to acknowledge such aspects may have serious implications on the advancement of women. In Ghana, Adomako Ampofo, Okyerefo & Pervarah (2009) pointed to exactly this when arguing that misunderstandings on the cultural significance or attributes of manhood has been why efforts intended to make men more sensitive to gender issues have failed.

Perhaps this is why scholars such as Cornwall (2011: 2) argued that too little attention is directed towards men and masculinities to develop their reflexive awareness of their own privileges and power. According to Stocking (2004: vii), men have usually been seen as perpetrators rather than potential contributors to gender equality. Nonetheless, de Keijzer (2004: 29) stated the importance to address that men, sometimes unknowingly, create problems in processes of empowerment. Such issues originate from the belief of power and authority over women which they grow up with as men, the ways men are socialized to handle or express emotions and the costs of hegemonic masculinity, sexuality, relationships and health. To use such an approach could benefit in similar ways as those demonstrated by Adomako Ampofo & Boateng (2008: 50), who noted an increase of involvement among men for women's advancement when shifting the focus from women to masculinities. Kwapong (2009) named another valid reason for men's involvement as it is men who decide whether to hold on to or let go of the powers and privileges given to them by society. Sadly however, Cornwall et al. (2011: 198) noted as: *"I didn't see men arguing for equal pay for men and women. I didn't see men demanding greater political representation for women ..."* .

Reasons as to why instrumental arguments have been used in the discourse of empowerment could be that it is considerably easier to attack the symptoms, rather than the cause, of a problem. In other words, it is easier to implement a law to place more girls in schools rather than attack the underlying reasons why they were not allowed to be there in the first place. Instrumental arguments also tend to fit with already existing institutional practices and wider policy objectives of neoliberalism (Squires 2007: 2; Cornwall et al. 2011: 1; Luttrell & Quiroz

2009: 4). Without addressing the subject of power, instrumental arguments can therefore seem less threatening. Yet it must be done, even though men as a group have, and will, continue to challenge the efforts which attack their authority (Stocking, 2004: vii).

Previous studies on masculinities in relation to gender equality and women's empowerment in have seemingly mainly dealt with areas in Latin America and Asia, as well as rural settings. A possible explanation for this could be that empowerment is usually discussion in economic terms, which may fail to acknowledge that economically advantaged women can be disempowered in other areas (Win 2004 in Anyidoho & Manuh 2010: 272). This study will move this discussion into a West-African urban setting. It will be interesting to expand on the existing, but rather small, literature on urban educated men and women and highlight their own stance on this issue.

2. Theoretical framework

While numerous theories on empowerment exist, several of which emphasize power structures as those by Kabeer (2001), Malhotra et al. (2002) and Rowlands (1997), I have however chosen to use the viewpoint of African feminism. The advantage of this approach lies in its emphasis on contextualizing. This paper assumes the position that empowerment must be discussed in the light of African traditional and cultural norms and history.

2.1. African Feminism

Research on Africa has consistently been influenced of whatever topic that may be of importance in the West, often working as a test-ground of whatever developmental policies or ideas which may be politically significant (Pala 2005: 300). Data gathered from the continent has at times been used to justify conquest or interfere in internal affairs and given unfair depictions of gender relationships and the people living in the continent. Morrell & Ouzgane (2005: 5) wrote that such work share the tendencies to portray or emphasize struggle and disharmony among men and women while victimizing women and ignoring their history which speaks of agency and achievement.

African feminism is a contestation of that, where scholars have demanded context-specificity (Adomako Ampofo et al. 2004: 35; Modupe Kolawole 2002: 92; Blay 2008: 67). It is shaped by African women's resistance to Western hegemony and cultural heritages that have experienced traumatic colonization by the West (Mikell 1997: 3-4). African feminism can therefore be looked upon as decolonization of the self (Wane 2011: 7). This means breaking out of the Eurocentric paradigms and methodologies which have helped maintaining simplified and one-dimensional images of Africans (Steady 2005: 314).

Oyewumi (1997: 23) suggested that studies on Africa should not rest upon Western intellectual traditions, as these continuously have positioned Africa as the 'Other'. Western feminist writers have reproduced negative and colonial discourses on women in third world, oftentimes by distinguishing themselves from such women by presenting them as primitive,

traditional, religious, and family oriented, in contrast with civilized, educated, modern and independent Western women, who are free to make their own choices with control over their own bodies and sexualities (Mohanty 1988: 65; Amadiume 1987: 2). It is clear that the West has often placed itself as the norm by which Africans are compared to by others as well as themselves (Oyewumi 1997: 18).

Adomako Ampofo et al. (2008: 328) discussed the tendencies of feminists in the West to view women as a homogenous group where similarities were emphasized over differences. When women are positioned as a coherent group with no differences in experiences, desires or interests regardless of their race, ethnicity, class or location, their experiences and their differences in oppressions are erased. This creates a false image that there only exists one (1) woman and one (1) type of oppression, without acknowledging that gender can vary in its expressions. Instead, Western feminists' have usually perceived gender, gender relations and patriarchy as universal and something that can be applied cross culturally, where "legal, economic, religious and familial structures are treated as phenomena to be judged by western standards" (Mohanty 1988: 80). Hegemonic analytical tools and understandings of women's empowerment might thus reinforce the belief that women in developing countries have not evolved to the same extent as the West has (ibid). Similarly, the portrayal of African women as different from and at "a lower stage of development (read: evolution) than Western women [...] thus attempts to push African women into development mainly by making them more alike Western women" (Steady 2005: 316).

Furthermore, African feminism aims at discussing gender roles in relation to other oppressive mechanisms due to the unique history and legacies existing within and affecting African cultures. These include racism, neocolonialism, (cultural) imperialism, socio-economic exclusion and exploitation, military rule, religious fundamentalism, globalization as well as dictatorial and corrupt systems (Ardnt 2002: 32; Modupe Kolawole 2002: 92).

2.2. *Tendencies of African feminism*

Ardnt (2002: 32) listed three tendencies within African feminisms:

- ***The idea of cooperation or complimentary with men.*** Several scholars have pointed to the need to include men in gender struggles since African societies tend to

emphasis collectivity, ethnic groupings and kinship (see Morrell & Ouzgane 2005; Modupe Kolawole 2002; Kwapong 2009). African feminism thus, arguably, should not merely be categorized as involving women's issues but societal issues (Wane 2011: 14).

- ***The affirmation of motherhood and the family.*** Mikell (1997: 8) mentioned that Western feminists have often found it problematic that African women take their reproductive roles seriously and celebrates their ability to give birth and refuse to subordinate their biological role to other roles in society. Likely, several writers have testified of the status women receive as mothers or providers of life (Drew 1995: 5; Akyeampong & Obeng 2005: 30).

- ***The concern to criticize patriarchal manifestations in African societies in a differentiated way.*** The struggles of African women are bound to the wider struggle of the African people to free herself from poverty and ideological dominations (Pala 2005: 299). More African women are today more willing to call themselves feminists, and thus faces the challenge of how to use African culture in a positive and assertive way to challenge the issues facing them as women, as well as their communities and states (Mikell 1997: 28).

3. Methodology

This study followed a loosely structured qualitative approach. It was acknowledged from the beginning that new perspectives would probably emerge as the field work proceeded, as they indeed have, causing the research topic to alter several times. The strengths of qualitative research are that it gets hold of thoughts and perceptions, which are powerful tools in understanding how people construct their realities (Punch 2005: 168). It also answers the questions of “why” rather than “what?”.

The study was done during the period of January 2013 and March 2013 at the University of Ghana in Accra, Ghana. The data consists of ten group interviews and individual interviews with two key informants.

3.1. Group Interviews

The interviews were conducted through the use of group interviews. These are time-effective as it allows the researcher to explore the minds of several people at once. This was particularly effective in my case, as on several occasions people had to cancel or change the time or date of an interview. It was therefore reassuring that even though one or two people would not be able to show up, I could still have an interview as three or four people attended.

There were a total of 10 focus groups, of which four were all male groups and six were all female. The number of participants in each varied from between 2-6, altogether comprising of 34 students. On average, the group interviews lasted between 40-60 minutes each. The choice to use group interviews seemed the most appropriate because of its advantage to use human interaction to ask open-ended and follow-up questions (Bryman 2008: 229-230).

However, focus groups of course present challenges as well. Group interviews require more skill from the interviewer to balance group dynamics (Bryman 2008: 475).

3.1. Sampling

The participants in the study are female and male students at the University of Ghana in Accra, Ghana. The sample comprised of 19 females and 15 males. The majority of students were enrolled in level 200-400, meaning from their second to final year of their undergraduate education, except one participant who was in level 600 (last year, master student). Two students were also graduates from last year who were now working as teacher's assistants at the university. Additionally, they range from various ethnic groups in Ghana, including the Fantes, the Ewes, the Gas and the Dangmes, some of who are matrilineal while other are patrilineal. They also come from different educational disciplines.

Participants were selected according to their student status and level of education. There were no regards to ethnic groups or previous knowledge of gender related issues as I wanted a wide range of perspectives. I used several gate keepers, who were old friends at the university who introduced me to my participants, which I believe afforded me some level of confidence. Intentionally I wanted to bring together different types of people, but later decided to interview groups of friends instead. This was done by asking someone I had met or been presented to, to bring a couple of friends. It was surprisingly effective and I believe that familiarity among the participants ultimately helped in creating an open environment where they could express themselves freely.

3.2. Key Informants

Two interviews were held with professors at the University of Ghana to expand on the knowledge on gender and culture in Ghana. I was already familiar with them before my departure as I had read their work when reviewing existing literature and they seemed as excellent sources of knowledge. Initially, more key informants were considered for interviews but they were unfortunately abroad during the period that I was in Ghana.

The first interview was done February on 27 2013 with Akosua Darkwah. She is a senior lecturer in sociology and gender studies and a member of the Center for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA) at the University of Ghana. Darkwah has written about women in the informal economy and the implications for women of the discovery of oil in Ghana. She is

currently investigating gender dynamics in the export processing zones of Ghana as well as the changing conceptions of mothering in Ghana (ug.edu.gh).

The second interview was held on March 20 2013 with Akosua Adomako Ampofo, director of the Institute of African Studies and a lecturer of African and Gender Studies. She was also the first head of CEGENSA. Adomako Ampofo has written on the topics of gender-based violence, constructions of masculinity and femininity, the sex industry and women's mental health (nai.uu.se).

3.3. The Questionnaires

The questionnaire for the group interviews followed a semi-structured design. It included nine questions in total, with room for follow-up questions. I tried to maintain the questions as open-ended as possible to reduce the risk of projecting my own biases or prejudices onto the participants. Open ended questions also allow the participants to steer to whatever subjects they feel are important (Bryman 2008: 475). All interview questions were quite broad and included several topics related to empowerment, touching upon the subjects of how students define empowerment, male and female support for empowerment, and how social relationships could be affected in relation to empowerment (see appendix 7.1). The questions were designed this way because I believe that the topics are interconnected which would enable a deeper level of discussion.

The questionnaires used for the key informants followed a structured design and were developed with regards to their areas of expertise specifically. They were also based on previous research done by them. The aim of these interviews was not only to broaden my understanding of Ghanaian culture and gender relationships and discuss findings on a more academic level, but also to add to my knowledge of African feminism (see appendix 7.2 and 7.3).

3.4. Data Collection and Methodological Challenges

The ability to generalize findings tends to be an important aspect of most research. In Bryman (2008: 376-377), LeCompte and Goetz argue that this can be a problem for qualitative researchers due to their tendencies to employ case studies or small samples. Arguably, university students do comprise of a relatively small group in Ghana which makes any findings less generalizable. It is however here argued that not only was it not a concern for this study, but that it would be rather unwise to draw general statements based on a certain context. Dolphyne (1991: 1) wrote that a clear contrast can be found between Westernized urban centers and rural societies whose beliefs and way of lives often reveal that they have hardly been touched by foreign cultures. This implies that research conducted in any urban setting in Ghana should not primarily be expected to be applied to other contexts, and vice versa.

A lot of attention when researching about empowerment has been directed to poor and rural women who have been assumed to be worst off (Anyidoho & Manuh 2010: 272). Therefore I wanted to look at the situation of urban women who have been educated, who may be perceived as already empowered (if one assumes that empowerment is understood as higher income, economic terms or access to jobs but which fails to capture other perspectives).

Including students as research objects removed the need for a translator and the issues associated with them as mentioned by Cornet (2010: 141) thanks to their proficiency in the English language. Because of their level of education, they were also likely to be familiar with topics such as development, empowerment, and gender. It could also be argued that this group is more likely to exert influence in their societies since their level of education makes them more viable to occupy high positions of power. Accordingly this may possibly reveal how the future of Ghanaian gender relations may look.

The choice to use same sex groups was decided beforehand, an approach I am convinced has been positive and effective in order to obtain data. The participants did not seem shy and shared their experiences and thoughts in a very openhearted manner. However in retrospect

some curiosity has arisen in regards of whether the data could have altered or presented new viewpoints if there had been mixed focus groups instead. This would have enabled an actual dialogue between the sexes, where contestants could have responded each other on questions such as the perception of the attitude towards women's empowerment by the opposite sex. However as I feared that it could have negative effects in accessing data, as observed by the World Bank (1999: 66) where the women in the study tended to take a back seat in discussions when men were present, I decided to go with the previous decision. However as the participants from the mentioned study were overwhelmingly from rural sites, it must be acknowledged that the dynamics could have been different in my groups.

3.5. Ethics

All participants were ensured of their anonymity and confidentiality regarding their identities. They were also informed that their responses would be used for my thesis. During any time of the interview they were allowed to stop or to refuse to answer a question.

4. Analysis

The data demonstrated a heavy inclination to support for women's empowerment among males. Most of them regarded empowerment as important, but only as long as it did not interfere with their entitlements. Such attitudes had been detected by the female students, who stated that many of their male classmates still regarded them and their roles in traditional ways. Not all males did however comply with such expressions of masculinities. Education was clearly seen as conducive to empowerment by both male and female students although they also stated that it did not have the power to change mindsets and practices by itself. Rather, other factors were identified as important for the rise or lack of support for empowerment among males.

4.1. *“If there's no education, there's no empowerment”*: Empowerment and education

As expected, education was perceived as significant to the development of individuals. All participants stated that education is important since “knowledge, they say, is power, so if you are educated you are empowered” (Kwame, male student). Similarly, Fosua (female student) stated that “we are well educated so we understand women's empowerment so we are able to apply it”. At the same time, the correlation between education and empowerment was not voiced without being problematized. Some expressed the concern that education alone is not enough to promote change. Several male students discussed the issue of males who pass through the educational system without reflecting upon their views on women:

For me, I see that even those guys [...] still have that mentality that I'm the man, I'm the boss. Because I remember when a guy slapped a girl [on] Big Brother [Africa]... Could you believe that I was talking with some friends, and they were like “if I was in the same

situation I would have slapped her and beaten her up”. I was shocked, because I didn’t expect to come from them. So when they said that, I was like “seriously?” and they were like “yeah”. And I asked “why would you do that?” and they said “o but she has gotten me angry”. So if you get angry at Yaw (male friend), it means you should start fighting with Yaw or you start attacking Yaw? You don’t do that. (Ato, male student)

I feel like the majority of the guys on this campus, yes they’re smart people and they’re serious and everything, but at the same time, they don’t give it a chance to look on the other side. (Edem, male student)

It’s not only about being educated, because it doesn’t necessarily change your mindset or the way you think. (Koby, male student)

Kabeer (2005: 23) wrote that education must provide its students with the analytical capacity and courage to question unjust practices, or its potential for change will be limited. Although the participants agreed with the assumption between empowerment and education, they also felt that the education they had received had failed to do so. Pointing to the argument put forward by Anyidoho & Manuh (2010) that an analysis of how power operates between the sexes is practically invisible in the discourse of empowerment might be useful in explaining above statements. One of the inherited privileges that men are socialized to believe according to de Keizjer (2004) is the undoubted authority which men believe that they hold over women. Thus, it is here argued that the notion that it would be more OK for a man to assault his girlfriend rather than his male friend is an expression of that privilege.

4.2. *“Not every literate is literate in that sense of understanding that a woman needs her own rights”: Empowerment and male support*

Male privileges were often present during discussions, as all males stated that they supported the empowerment of women and thought it to be an important issue for mostly instrumental reasons. Interestingly enough, several expressed difficulties of letting go of their position as for example the head of the family. Empowerment was thus perceived good as long as it did not get out of hand.

If the mother and the father [live together], the father will always be the leader. There cannot be two kings. (Yaw, male student)

I'm a very understanding person, but I think I would have a problem if my wife would forget that she's my wife, and she's the women in the house and that I'm the king and she's the queen, and the queen answers to the king. No matter how educated she is, that would be fundamental in my house ... (Kwame, male student)

Because really and truly, if we are going to speak candidly, there are some men who do not want dominant women to come and oppose them. Majority of men, I would say [...] I don't care about the woman's academic accreditation, I don't care about her financial status, as long as I make more money than the woman... (Kwabena, male student)

The females in the study discussed this from their perspective as they had observed such attitudes among their male classmates. They often described the males as 'threatened' by female students who excel in class and speak their minds. A few also said that since men are benefitted by the status quo, some are reluctant to changing it. These statements opposes the

assumption by Stocking (2004) that men have not been made to reflect upon their own privileges and power, and instead suggests that they are *aware* of them and *enjoy* them. This inherently exhibits the importance of understanding masculinities in relationship to women's empowerment, as men not only affects the process of empowerment but in some part determines the extent of it. Consequently, several female students testified of male students who "in spite a lot of education, [...] still have this traditional mentalities that deep deep down they just prefer you to be dependent on them" (Abena, female student).

The male students discussed their privileges as men in relation to cultural values on several occasions. Kofi (male student) claimed that "today's talk about empowerment is alien to our society because it takes away that element of submissivity, [i.e.] women submitting to their husbands". de Keijzer (2004: 33-34) wrote: "Many men seem interested in the possibilities provided by more equal gender relations, having suffered the consequences of hegemonic masculinity in their relationships with their fathers, brothers, or other men. At the same time, they may enjoy or appreciate the advantages of being a man in an unequal society." Indeed above statements demonstrate how women's empowerment can be perceived in relation to authority and power between the sexes (in contrast to when focus lays on utility), but they also demonstrate the need to discuss empowerment in relation to Ghanaian cultural values, as they were repeatedly used to legitimize current gender relations. This shows a clear distinction between acknowledging the benefits of women's empowerment and its usefulness for the national economy and questioning one's own access to power.

However there were also students who expressed criticism towards male privileges and duties, as they saw the empowerment of women as a relief since it meant removing some of the economic burden on the shoulders of men. Ato (male student) stated that such a scenario would be "so nice", while Afua (female student) said that empowerment "lessens the job of the man [...] I mean if your wife is not empowered, it means she will always be under you and you will always take care of her. But if she is empowered, she is able to contribute to the family and the society". These statements explicitly focus on the utility of women's empowerment; yet it would be valuable to examine them through an analysis of power as well since the economic strength of women has shown to possibly be threatening to the male identity (Silberschmidt 2011; Ratele 2008: 517).

The question yet to be asked though, is what role men can have in the empowerment of women? The students named reasons similar to those put forward by Cornwall et al. (2011).

When [women] take up these positions, I think that the men around need to push them on. For instance, if you have a female first minister or a chief director... Some guys cannot stand the fact that his boss is a woman. That is when you have him undermining her. And then what happens? It is either [that] she is not going to do too well or he'll have himself sacked. In the instance where she doesn't do too well, people say she failed. So I think men too have to understand that if [women] are there, they are there because of their competence. And therefore, they should be given a push, just a slight push... (Edem, male student)

In almost every university, you have females going far education wise. But when they finish, the same men they go to school with expect the women to settle down, be ready to take care of the man and the home, whilst the man goes and actually puts his education and what he's learned to use. He doesn't empower the woman in the sense of like, OK we both finished, you can also put what you learned to use, you can work [while] I can help you in the home and all that. (Esi, female student)

Akosua Adomako Ampofo argued that men must be sensitive to their privileges but acknowledged at the same time that “most people do not willingly give up their privileges” (interview 27/3 2013).

4.3. “But they are still thinking like people who have not attended schools are thinking”: Problematizing the role of education

Though education is put forward as the aid to inequalities between men and women as well as vital for the cognitive ability to question injustices, the two previous sections demonstrate that the correlation may not be as linear as previously assumed. All male participants in this study

have been educated until university level and are among empowered women (all female participants stated that they indeed felt empowered), but some “are still thinking like people who have not attended schools are thinking” (Edem, male student) – i.e. in a ‘traditional’ way. It would be, however, too easy to disregard the effects education has in broadening individual’s minds. After all, all male participants stated that they do indeed support women’s empowerment and the pursuit of women’s rights. The issue however seems to lie in the fact that the education has failed to make them question *their own* rights and the premises of which they receive them.

Consequently this calls for other considerations, besides education, that might affect gender relationships in relation to women’s empowerment. The students were able to identify several factors that according to them affected such dynamics, such as the need for female role models. Another factor was the roles of which the homes play. As an observation, I noticed that males who had sisters or (what they viewed as) an empowered mother tended to express more support for women’s empowerment.

Exposure was also pointed out several times as having transformational powers to change people’s mind, more so than education could. In agreements with Kabeer (2005), Akosua Darkwah argued that this is because the school does not challenge their students to see things in new perspectives enough (interview 27/2 201).

You may finish this school but you may not get that exposure. (Edem, male student)

When you get that exposure, you change. But when you live in Ghana alone, Africa alone... (Yaa, female student)

When asked what this exposure entailed, this often included travelling outside the country and opening up one’s mind to other ways of thought. This indeed is particularly interesting. Not only because most Ghanaians cannot afford to go abroad, but also because gaining new perspectives would, according to the students, involve foreign perspectives. Meanwhile African feminism advocates that issues concerning the African people should be discussed and criticized, but with respect to traditional cultures and norms since they remain valuable. This becomes especially troubling since cultural values were often seen as conflicting with the ideals of women’s empowerment.

One thing I also think about is the fact that we are a very religious country [...] there are certain parts of the Bible that say that women should be submissive to their husbands and men are seen as the breadwinners of the family [...] so I think this religious influence also transcends into our cultural values and becomes embedded in what we believe in as a society. (Kwabena, male student)

Similar statements were made by several males, in accordance with the seemingly unrelenting belief that they should still be regarded as the head of a home. What becomes problematic about these statements was discussed by professor Darkwah (interview 27/2 2013) who explained that “that is reading the Bible in a particular way. Choosing what part of the Bible to teach will determine which story you are going to tell”. In addition, Adomako Ampofo (interview 20/3 2013) argued that colonialism brought new restrictions for women which was further problematized by Darkwah (interview 27/2 2013) as she claimed that Christianity is not really Ghanaian culture.

It is true that colonialism destroyed many traditional ways of organizing socially. In many pre-colonial African societies there existed political institutions for women such as the queens or queen mothers and women’s associations and networks (Drew 1995: 2-3). For instance, among the Asante people in Ghana status was traditionally given through age (lived experience) and knowledge (spiritual connectedness) regardless of sex (Akyeampong & Obeng 2005: 27). However in Britain, access to power was gender-based which was then forced upon African societies through colonialism (Oyewumi 1997: 123-124). As a result, women were stripped of their powers and status. It is thus within this context that the participants have grown up. But regardless of what preceded the present culture, what they believe is their culture inevitably becomes the truth.

Also interesting was that several females disregarded empowerment on the basis that women who are ‘too’ empowered become ‘disrespectful’ towards their husbands. Some females voiced their critiqued with regards to women acting superior towards men as soon as they become empowered. But as most Ghanaian societies are quite hierarchical (Adomako Ampofo 2011: 198), where those on top are expected to express their power in certain ways, is it then so strange that women internalize such behaviors? Thus, the view that women are less being sanctioned for being deviant (Adomako Ampofo 2011: 199) may not be completely

true if one regards the behavior of empowered women as deviant from traditional expectations. It indicates that male powers are not entirely questioned even among the females, but could also point to the female student's desire of empowerment not becoming a struggle between men and women.

In relation, some of the female students discussed the expectations which are put on them to be, what they referred to as, 'good traditional wives'. A good wife, according to them, should be respectful towards her husband by not disregarding him or the home and remember that "she is the glue that holds the family together" (Abena, female student). This is also repeated by African feminism which reaffirms the mothering role of women. Indeed, Ekua (female student) remarked that:

One problem I do have with women activist in Ghana is that the majority of them are not with their husbands, and it's like if my husband is doing this and this and I don't like it, I can just quit the marriage [because] I have my rights and all that [and] I don't need a man. Yet they don't tell you "this is what I do to still keep my husband, to still keep my home intact".

It must however also be mentioned that these expectations were put on by some of the females by themselves and that they did not downplay the importance or status of that role. The homes seemed to be a much valued institution which perhaps should not suffer at the 'expense' of women's empowerment.

5. *Conclusion*

This essay has explored men's support for women's empowerment with a clear focus on context specificity. The core of the discussion has been education and its ability to make men question the privileges and power they receive on the basis of their sex.

The data revealed that all men included in the study were positive to the empowerment of women and that most seemed to support it for instrumental reasons. Some did show reluctance to empowerment if it went 'too far' and questioned or challenged their status as heads of the home. Although education has often been pointed to as conducive for empowerment, both male and female students stated that it alone does not have such transformational powers and pointed to fellow male students who seemed to pass through the educational system without reflecting or challenging their views on women. The students thus considered other factors, such as female role models, home environments, exposure and cultural values, to be of relevance for levels of support among men.

This suggests that the current use of language of defining empowerment will continue to attack the symptoms rather than the causes of inequalities between men and women. Through the narratives given by the students, it has become clear that there is a difference between acknowledging for instance the benefits of women entering the national economy and understanding that "a woman needs her own rights". Schools, and to a large extent even international aid organizations, could make great impacts if addressing power and increase their focus on men to discuss masculinities and how it might operate.

The theory of African feminism was used in this essay to provide a greater sensitivity to the Ghanaian context. This essay assumed the position that empowerment must be discussed in the light of Ghanaian cultural values and history. This standpoint revealed that the concept of culture is a problematic when Christianity is sometimes put forward as inherently Ghanaian and that cultural values themselves can be perceived as the causing difficulties to achieve support for empowerment. It also made it evident that although empowerment was important to all male and female students, the powers which males have sometimes stand unquestioned, by males and females alike. Empowerment was undoubtedly important to the students, but perhaps not always at the expense of harmonious relationships at household levels.

6. Works Cited

- Abdulai, Abdul-Gafaru & Crawford, Gordon (2010) *Consolidating Democracy in Ghana: Progress and Prospects?*. Democratization, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 26-67.
- Adomako Ampofo, Akosua (2011) “*When Men Speak, Women Listen*”: *Gender Socialisation and Young Adolescents’ Attitudes to Sexual and Reproductive Issues*. African Journal of Reproductive Health, vol 5, no 3, pp. 196-212.
- Adomako Ampofo, Akosua; Beoku-Betts, Josephine; Ngaruiya Njambi, Wairimu; Osirim, Mary (2004) *Women’s and Gender Studies in English-Speaking Sub-Saharan Africa*. Gender & Society, no. 18, pp. 685-714.
- Adomako Ampofo, Akosua; Beoku-Betts, Josephine; Osirim Johnson, Mary (2008) *Researching African Women and Gender Studies: New Social Science Perspectives*. African and Asian Studies, no. 7, pp. 327-341.
- Adomako Ampofo, Akosua & Boateng, John (2008) *Multiple Meanings of Manhood Among Boys in Ghana* in “From Boys to Men: Social Constructions of Masculinity in Contemporary Society” by Shefer, Tamara; Ratele, Kopano; Shabalala, Nokuthula; Buikema Rosemarie. UCT Press, Lansdowne.
- Adomako Ampofo, Akosua; Okyerefo, Michael P. K.; Pervarah, Michael (2009) *Phallic Competence: Fatherhood and the Making of Men in Ghana*. Culture, Society & Masculinity, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 59-78.
- Akyeampong, Emmanuel & Obeng, Pashington (2005) *Spirituality, Gender and Power in Asante History* in “African Gender Studies: A Reader” by Oyewumi, Oyeronke. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Amadiume, Ifi (1987) “Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society”. Zed Books Ltd., London.
- Anyidoho, Nana Akua & Manuh, Takyiwaa (2010) *Discourses on Women’s Empowerment in Ghana*. Society for International Development, vol. 53, no. 2, pp. 267-273.

- Ardnt, Susan (2002) *Perspectives on African Feminism: Defining and Classifying African-Feminist Literatures*. Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity, no. 54, pp. 31-44.
- Awumbila, Mariama (2006) *Gender Equality and Poverty in Ghana: Implications for Poverty Reduction Strategies*. GeoJournal, vol. 67, no. 2, pp. 149-161.
- Blay, Yaba Amgborale (2008) *All the 'Africans' are Men, all the 'Sistas' are "American", but Some of Us Resist: Realizing African Feminism(s) as an Africological Research Methodology*. The Journal of Pan African Studies, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 59-73.
- Bryman, Alan (2008) "Social Research Methods" third edition. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Cornet, Candice (2010) *Fieldwork among the Dong National Minority in Guishou, China: Practicalities, Obstacles and Challenges*. Asia Pacific Viewpoint, vol. 51, no. 2, pp. 135-147.
- Cornwall, Andrea; Armas, Henry; Botha, Mbuyiselo (2011) *Women's Empowerment: What Do Men Have to Do with It?* in "Men and Development: Politicizing Masculinities" edited by Cornwall, Andrea; Edström, Jerker; Greig, Alan. Zed Books, London.
- Cornwall, Andrea; Edström, Jerker; Greig, Alan (2011) *Introduction: Politicizing Masculinities* in "Men and Development: Politicizing Masculinities" edited by Cornwall, Andrea; Edström, Jerker; Greig, Alan. Zed Books, London.
- Darkwah, Akosua K. (2010) *Education: Pathway to Empowerment for Ghanaian Women?* IDS Bulletin, vol. 41, no. 2, pp. 28-36.
- Dolphyne, Florence Abena (1991) "The Emancipation of Women: An African Perspective". Ghana Universities Press, Accra.
- Drew, Allison (1995) *Female Consciousness and Feminism in Africa*. Theory and Society, vol. 24, no. 1, pp. 1-33.
- Essof, Shereen (2001) *African Feminisms: Histories, Applications and Prospects*. Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity, no. 50, pp. 124-127.
- Lemmer, E. M. (2009) *Empowerment of Women Students Through Educational Attainment: A Narrative Enquiry*. Africa Education Review, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 80-95.

- Kabeer, Naila (2005) *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: A Critical Analysis of the Third Developmental Goal*. *Gender and Development*, vol. 13, no. 1, Millennium Development Goals, pp. 13-24.
- Kabeer, Naila (2001) *Resources, Agency, Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment*. *Development and Change*, vol. 30, pp. 435-464.
- de Keijzer, Benno (2004) *Masculinities: Resistance and Change* in "Gender Equality and Men: Learning from Practice" edited by Ruxton, Sandy. Oxfam GB, Oxford.
- Kwapong, Olivia (2009) "Male Support for Gender Equality". Ghana Universities Press, Accra.
- Luttrell, Cecilia & Quiroz, Sitna (2009) *Understand and Operationalising Empowerment*. Overseas Development Institute, London.
- Malhotra, Anju & Mather, Mark (1997) *Do Schooling and Work Empower Women in Developing Countries? Gender and Domestic Decisions in Sri Lanka*. *Sociological Forum*, vol. 12, no. 4, pp. 599-630.
- Malhotra, Anju; Schuler, Sidney Ruth; Boender, Carol (2002) *Measuring Women's Empowerment as a Variable in International Development*. World Bank Workshop on Poverty and Gender: New Perspectives.
- Mikell, Gwendolyn (1997) *Introduction* in "African Feminism: The Politics of Survival in Sub-Saharan Africa". University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia.
- Modupe Kolawole, Mary (2002) *Transcending Incongruities: Rethinking Feminism and the Dynamics of Identity in Africa*. *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, vol. 17, no. 54, pp. 92-98.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (1988) *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*. *Feminist Review*, no. 30, pp. 61-88.
- Morrell, Robert & Ouzgane, Lahoucine (2005) "African Masculinities". Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Oyewumi, Oyeronke (1997) "The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourse". University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

- Punch, Keith F. (2005) "Introduction to Social Research: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches" second ed. SAGE Publications Ltd. London.
- Ratele, Kopano (2008) *Analysing Males in Africa: Certain Useful Elements in Considering Ruling Masculinities*. African and Asian Studies, vol. 7, pp. 515-536.
- Silberschmidt, Margrethe (2011) *What Would Make Men Interested in Gender Equality? Reflections from East Africa* in "Men and Development: Politicizing Masculinities" edited by Cornwall, Andrea; Edström, Jerker; Greig, Alan. Zed Books, London.
- Steady, Chioma Filomina (2005) *An Investigative Framework for Gender Research in African in the New Millenium* in "African Gender Studies: A Reader" by Oyewumi, Oyeronke. Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Stocking, Barbara (2004) *Foreword* in "Gender Equality and Men: Learning from Practice" edited by Ruxton, Sandy. Oxfam GB, Oxford.
- Squires, Judith (2007) "The New Politics of Gender Equality". Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Wane, Njoki (2011) *African Indigenous Thought: An Anti-Colonial Project* in "The Politics of Cultural Knowledge" edited by Wane, Njoki; Kempf, Arlo; Simmons, Marlon. Sense Publishers, Boston.
- World Bank (1999) *Consultations with the Poor: Ghana Synthesis Report*, Informal publication series prepared for Global Synthesis Workshop: Consultations with the Poor, Poverty Group, PREM, Washington DC.
- Wrigley-Asante, Charlotte (2012) *Out of the Dark but Not Out of the Cage: Women's Empowerment and Gender Relations in the Dangme West district of Ghana*. Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 344-363.

6.1. Internet sources

- Landguiden, "Ghana: ekonomi, statistik och fakta"
 < <http://www.landguiden.se/Lander/Afrika/Ghana/Ekonomi> > Accessed at 2013.08.04.

Landguiden, ”Ghana: sociala förhållanden”

<<http://www.landguiden.se/Lander/Afrika/Ghana/Sociala-Forhallanden>> Accessed at 2013.08.04.

Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, “J. Akosua Adomako Ampofo, ‘White Women Have More Sex’: Race, Othering, and Gender and Sexual Identities of Foreign Women in Ghana.”

<http://www.nai.uu.se/events/previous_events/2006/lectures_2006/en/2006/0601T000000U9/index.xml?Language=sv> Accessed at 2013.08.05.

University of Ghana, “Department of Sociology: Akosua Darkwah”

<<http://www.ug.edu.gh/index1.php?linkid=651§ionid=846&page=5>> Accessed at 2013.08.01

7. Appendices

7.1. Interview Questions: Students

1. What comes to mind when you hear women's empowerment?
2. Is women's empowerment imported or imposed from outside?
3. Do you think it has similarities or differences in meanings in Ghana and in the West?
4. How does a woman become empowered?
5. Are there any challenges that Ghanaian women face when trying to become empowered?
6. Do you think women in Ghana live up to your description of what empowerment is?
7. What do you think is the attitude towards women's empowerment among your male friends?
8. What happens to the traditional male role if women become empowered?
9. Is women's empowerment important?

7.2. Interview Questions: Akosua Adomako

Ampofo

1. What does women's empowerment entail to you?
2. Is there any particular cause within the realm of women's issues that you feel more strongly about?
3. Is it important to you to label yourself as a feminist scholar?
4. What are the differences between African feminism and Western feminism?

5. Do you think there is a difference in the understanding of gender and the goals of equality in Ghana than from Western countries?
6. How do you think that feminism and feminists are perceived in Ghana?
7. Is it possible for African feminism to acknowledge all the different realities of African women?
8. Do you think that being from a particular society can affect your attitude towards women's empowerment and the rights of women in general? (Meaning, do you think that people from matrilineal societies perhaps have a more positive view on women?)
9. Many students have repeatedly mentioned the importance of being a so called 'good wife'. According to you, what does it really entail?
10. How come men find it to be an insult to take on some of women's responsibilities in the household?
11. In the article "Gender Studies..." old social divisions in African culture are mentioned as being destroyed during colonialism. How did these social divisions look like in different ethnic groups/societies in Ghana?
12. Do you think that African women are being portrayed justly in today's research dichotomy?
13. Do you think that men should be more interested in women's issues?

7.3. Interview Questions: Akosua Darkwah

1. The theoretical approach to empowerment has been claimed in various ways already, but what, according to you, does empowerment entail to Ghanaian women?
2. According to students that I have spoken to, education is continuously mentioned as conducive for the empowerment of women. However your study on the same subject suggests otherwise. How do you think that this relationship really works?
3. Do you believe that education has gotten too much recognition as a tool of empowering women?
4. Do you think that a person can empower another?

5. In the West, the feminist movement has been conducive for the rights of women. Yet African feminism is, according to the literature, still quite small. Do you think that feminism is necessary for the advancement of African women and their rights?
6. What is your understanding of the statement that the development industry distorts the agendas of many movements, such as human rights movements or feminist movement, when they adopt it?
7. According to the interviews I have done, empowerment tends to be framed in relation to the public sphere, i.e. jobs, economic opportunities, etcetera... Do you believe that there are other aspects that are being missed, that does not fall under this category?
8. How has globalization affected women in Ghana?
9. What are the obstacles for Ghanaian women to be empowered?
10. Religion appears to justify the inequalities between men and women. Repeatedly I have heard that it says in the Bible that women are below men by those students I have interviewed. What is your view on this?

7.4. Disclaimer

The names of the students that were interviewed for this study have been changed to protect their identities and ensure their anonymity.