



Building Bridges of Faith Against Domestic Violence





**Conference Proceedings of the
Project d/dl/ድልድል and EMIRTA Annual Conference
'Domestic Violence-Gender-Faith:
Promoting Integrated and Decolonial Approaches
to Domestic Violence Cross-culturally'**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia 11-12 November 2022

Published: May 2023

Edited by: Benjamin Kalkum and Romina Istratii



**Building Bridges
of Faith Against
Domestic Violence**



EMIRTA
Indigenous Wisdom for Excellence



**UK Research
and Innovation**

HFG

**HARRY FRANK
GUGGENHEIM
FOUNDATION**



SOAS
University of London



Table of Content

Preface1

PANEL 1: PREVALENCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, RISK FACTORS & AFFECTED GROUPS IN ETHIOPIA

Birye Dessalegn Mekonnen

Survival analysis and associated factors of time to first intimate partner violence after marriage among ever-married women in Ethiopia4

Tirsit Sahledengil

Trends, Demands, and challenges of protecting Domestic workers: lessons from selected places of Ethiopia (ABSTRACT)20

Abera Getachew

Prevalence of Child Abuse and Associated Factors in West Shewa Zone, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia (ABSTRACT)21

Lombebo Tagesse

Vulnerability of Female Domestic Workers vis-à-vis Intermediate (Brokers) and Parents' Related Factors: the Case of Hosanna Town (ABSTRACT)22

PANEL 2: SURVIVOR EXPERIENCES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, FAITH AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SURVIVOR SUPPORT SERVICES INTERNATIONALLY

Aysha Ahmed

Domestic Violence: The lived experiences of Bangladeshi Women in the UK (ABSTRACT)23

Rahmanara Chowdhury

Understanding Domestic Violence and Abuse in UK Muslim Communities: A Multi-perspective Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis Approach24

Erminia Colucci

Suicide and Domestic violence (ABSTRACT)33

Solomon Girma

Honour-based violence in life writing: Fadumo Korn's *Born in the Big Rains: A memoir of Somalia and Survival* and Halima Bashar's *Tears of the Desert*34



Pamela Shelley

Supporting African Christian Women Who Have Experienced IPV in England:
Service Providers' Perspective42

**PANEL 3: INDIGENOUS AND COMMUNITY-LED RESPONSES
TO GENDER INEQUALITY AND GBV**

Mulugeta Seyoum

The status of women in the Ethiopian linguistics:
a community reflective perspective (ABSTRACT).53

Tadesse A. Zerfu

Gender Based Violence and Reproductive Health in Ethiopia:
Current Challenges and Responses (ABSTRACT).54

Rahel Kassa

Capitalizing on socio-legal assets to address gender inequalities
in Ethiopia (ABSTRACT).55

Muluken Kassahun Amid

Integration of indigenous women's customary institutions fighting against
GBV among the Oromo communities in Ethiopia56

**PANEL 4: THEOLOGICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL RESPONSES TO DOMESTIC
VIOLENCE AND GENDER INJUSTICES IN FAITH COMMUNITIES**

Mahmoud Ali Gomaa Afifi

Qur'an Verse 4:34: Approaches to *Hadith* within Premodern *Fiqh*66

Selam Reta

A Christian Orthodox Theological Critique of the Feminism Movement73

Eyasu Barento

The Need for Inclusive Justice: Philosophical Appraisal on the Nature of
Justice Addressing Intersectional Discriminations in Ethiopia (ABSTRACT)80

Romina Istratii and Henok Hailu

The project d/dl/ድልድል approach: Employing St John Chrysostom's homilies on
marriage, conjugal cohabitation and domestic violence to build Ethiopian Orthodox
Tewahedo clergy's preparedness to respond to domestic violence (ABSTRACT) . . .81





PANEL 5: THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS MEDIATORS IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE EXPERIENCES AND RESPONSES

Amma Anane-Agyei

Domestic Violence (also named domestic abuse or family violence) in Black African families and the role religion plays in the African contexts (ABSTRACT)82

Benjamin Kalkum

Overlooked gatekeepers: traditional marriage counsellors in Zambia as an entry point for Gender Transformative Approaches in GBV prevention?83

Bantamlak Gelaw

The EOTC-DICAC programme approach to gender-based violence prevention and response (ABSTRACT)91

PANEL 6: FAITH-BASED AND CULTURE-SENSITIVE INTERVENTIONS TO RESPONDING TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND OTHER FORMS OF GBV/VAWG IN INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES

Zayid Douglas, Jacqueline Ogega and Dolphine Kwamboka

Promoting a Unified Response to, and Prevention Of Sexual and gender-based violence in Emergencies (PURPOSE) with Faith (ABSTRACT)92

Punita Lumb and Savroop Shergill

Engaging Faith in Higher Education to Address Gender-Based Violence93

Jess Littman, Gabi Phend, Stephanie Bazubagira Magali, Sarah K.G. Jensen, Vincent Sezibera, and Theresa S. Betancourt

Sugira Muryango: A community-integrated approach to family violence reduction and ECD promotion in Rwanda (ABSTRACT)100

Grace Bonareri Mose

Empowering Women and Girls, Transforming Communities, Promising and Best Practices to Address Gender Based Violence in Kenya: Reports from an Organizational Programme (ABSTRACT)101

Authors' Biographies102

Workshop Abstracts114



Project Background

Project d/d/d/ድልድል is dedicated to the development and strengthening of religio-culturally sensitive domestic violence alleviation systems in Ethiopia and the UK. The project is hosted at SOAS University of London, and is funded initially for four years by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) under the Future Leaders Fellowship “Bridging religious studies, gender & development and public health to address domestic violence: A novel approach for Ethiopia and the UK” (Grant Ref: MR/T043350/1; revised title), and supported with a research grant from the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation awarded in 2019 under the proposal “Religion, conscience and abusive behaviour: Understanding the role of faith and spirituality in the deterrence of intimate partner violence in rural Ethiopia.”

The project seeks to promote a decolonial approach to addressing domestic violence by engaging substantively with the religio-cultural belief systems of domestic violence victims/survivors and perpetrators, and understanding how these interface with gender, material, and psychological parameters to facilitate or deter domestic violence. It aims to generate new research and intervention approaches working with Ethiopian collaborators, and rural and urban communities, and to apply knowledge from the respective countries in order to inform approaches for integrating and better supporting ethnic minority and migrant populations affected by domestic violence in the UK. The project employs research, sensitisation, knowledge exchange and public engagement activities, collaborating with partners, stakeholders, and communities in the three countries with the aims to:

1. improve preparedness among clergy and seminarians to respond to victims/survivors and perpetrators of domestic violence in their communities.
2. increase religio-cultural sensitivity in non-governmental and state-led domestic violence sectors in the project countries.
3. develop integrated domestic violence support systems that can be sensitive and responsive to religio-culturally diverse populations; and
4. promote reciprocal research partnerships and development for all team members, project partners and collaborators.

The project is informed by previous ethnographic investigations of conjugal abuse in the Ethiopian Orthodox community in northern Ethiopia. The research evidenced the importance of religious beliefs and experience in understanding the life of the laity, intersections with gender parameters and norms, and complex associations with the continuation and deterrence of conjugal abuse in this religious society. The study revealed important tensions between theological and folklore religious understandings, with ‘faith’ being juxtaposed in complex ways to ‘culture’ to preserve or discontinue pernicious behaviour and norms associated with conjugal abuse. The current proceedings is published to disseminate key project outputs to a wider audience in an effort to improve understanding among religious stakeholders, state agents, and non-governmental domestic violence providers and practitioners about the complex role of religious beliefs and faith, in their cultural expression and embodiment, in experiences of domestic violence and abuse, and to promote cross-sectoral, faith-sensitive and integrated responses in Ethiopia, the UK and internationally.

Suggested citation

Project d/d/d/ድልድል and EMIRTA (2023) Conference Proceedings of the Project d/d/d/ድልድል and EMIRTA Annual Conference ‘Domestic Violence-Gender-Faith: Promoting Integrated and Decolonial Approaches to Domestic Violence Cross-culturally’. Project d/d/d/ድልድል: Bridging religious studies, gender & development and public health to address domestic violence in religious communities & EMIRTA: Indigenous Wisdom for Excellence. SOAS University of London.



Copyright

All outputs from this project are published in line with UKRI's open access policy and the project's commitments to open knowledge. All outputs are published under the Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial (CC BY-NC 4.0) International Licence, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>

Photos are reproduced with the consent of the workshop participants and with the permission of the partner organisations. Photos cannot be reproduced outside the context of this report.

Acknowledgements

Project d/dl/ድልድል would like to acknowledge the support and collaboration of EMIRTA Research, Training and Development Institute in the planning and delivery of the conference and the curation of the papers presented at the conference and included in the current Conference Proceedings.

We are deeply thankful for the excellent assistance of Mr Benjamin Kalkum, who coordinated communication with the authors and facilitated the editing and proofreading of the papers presented in the current publication.

The project is equally thankful to the invaluable assistance of the proofreaders, Ms Jessica Aitken and Ms Rachel Duncan, who provided timely and considerate proofreading guidance to the authors for the improvement of their papers.

Lastly, the project is grateful to Mr Daniel Desta of DDN Advertising in Addis Ababa for developing the cover page and paper-head logo of the working paper series.



Preface

In August 2020, Dr Romina Istratii, based at SOAS University of London, was awarded a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship (£1,287,659) to bring to fruition a challenging and novel project titled “Bridging religious studies, gender & development and public health to address domestic violence: A novel approach for Ethiopia and the UK” (revised title), now renamed Project d/d/d/ድልድል. This was envisioned as a research and innovation project dedicated to the development and strengthening of religio-culturally sensitive, domestic violence alleviation systems in East Africa and the UK.

The project works to generate new research and evidence around the ways in which religious beliefs, theology and the clergy can contribute to the deterrence of domestic violence, and to raise awareness about the religio-cultural parameters of domestic violence among practitioners within government and non-governmental sectors, with the overall objective of building better-integrated domestic violence support and referral systems in the project countries. At a more fundamental level, the project is keen to reverse the historical dominance of Northern societies in dictating domestic violence and gender-based violence theoretical understandings and practice internationally. The ultimate aim is to promote genuine knowledge sharing and learning between Ethiopia and the UK, and on a wider scale between the ‘Global South’ and the ‘Global North’, whereby evidence, lessons and good practices achieved in Ethiopia can inform ways to better integrate religious migrant and ethnic minority communities in the UK’s domestic violence support system.

The project was established on the basis of long-term working relationships with indigenous organisations in Ethiopia as a way of jointly implementing research and domestic violence interventions, ensuring that new evidence and approaches developed within the country inform the practices of Ethiopian organisations and benefit affected communities first, fostering sustainable impact over time. The project has numerous partners, collaborators and supporters in Ethiopia and the UK, who include the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC), the EMIRTA/አምርታ Research, Training and Development Institute in Ethiopia and the Fnot (ፍኖት) Psychosocial Counselling Charitable Organization.

The first two years of the project culminated in the Project d/d/d/ድልድል Annual Conference on 11-12 November 2022, which was delivered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with the option for UK speakers and audiences to join online. The Annual Conference was



co-organised with project partner EMIRTA Research, Training and Development Institute, who also collaborated with Dr Romina Istratii in conducting innovative research on domestic violence with the male population in the country.

The conference in Addis Ababa focused on the nexus 'Domestic Violence – Gender – Faith' and had three overall aims. The first aim was to promote a better integration of theological and religious perspectives in gender-sensitive work on domestic violence and abuse. While religious discourse is oftentimes appropriated, misused and can underpin the system that maintains the continuation of domestic violence and unhelpful help-seeking attitudes, it can also function as a coping mechanism, a healing tool and a mediation institution in religious contexts. The conference sought to explore this dual effect in a way that did not reduce 'religion' to either religious leaders or institutions, but approached religious worldviews holistically as an indivisible part of human identities and lived experiences.

The second aim was to facilitate a bridging of different theoretical frameworks and approaches to achieve a more integrated lens through which to appraise the issue of domestic violence and abuse and to identify appropriate responses by means of working collaboratively. Project d/dl/ድልድል understands that there is not a single aetiology or solution to domestic violence and abuse and that it is important to work with others to solve such an extensive and persisting societal problem. For example, a feminist understanding cannot ignore religious beliefs and the role of clergy since the former will often influence how people process traumatic events in their lives, how they explain abusiveness or how they mediate conflict. Conversely, a faith-informed approach cannot neglect a gender-sensitive understanding that acknowledges more profound societal or gender-related inequalities or the important contributions of women's movements in responding to the problem. The project also recognises the need to integrate psychological parameters and the work of psychological counsellors for understanding the causes and effects of intimate partner abusiveness and how best to respond to victims, survivors and perpetrators.

The third aim of the conference was to contribute to a diversification of knowledge production in the area of domestic violence and abuse that can overcome the dominance of a single epistemological framework and achieve genuine knowledge sharing, but especially learning from the wider 'Global South' to the wider 'Global North.' This aim informed also the decision to hold the conference in Ethiopia, recognising in this way the many barriers that keep African researchers from participating in European and North American conferences. In the long-term, Project d/dl/ድልድል envisions the



knowledge achieved in Ethiopia to inform also domestic violence responses in the UK, a society that is increasingly multi-cultural and multi-religious and finds itself challenged to integrate this diversity in the provision of domestic violence services.

Informed by these aims, the organisers worked hard to bring together specialists from Ethiopia and the UK, as the main project countries, as well as other countries in East Africa, Asia and other parts of the world to promote genuine knowledge sharing and to lay the grounds for new collaborations. The conference activities combined presentations, panel discussions, workshops and group activities creatively to explore the intersection of domestic violence and abuse, gender inequalities and religious beliefs and teachings from different theoretical and practical angles. A roundtable on the second day of the conference brought together feminist, religious and research organisations in the country and international specialists to explore a better integration pathway for religious, feminist and state resources to build effective referral systems and respond to domestic violence in Ethiopia. The conference programme also included a film screening that showcased effectively how spiritual, cultural and secular responses to mental health can combine to inform both attitudes and responses to mental health issues in a village community in Ghana.

The current Conference Proceedings complements the Conference Report that was published after the conference. While the Conference Report presented an overview of and the key take-aways from the panel presentations and the roundtable discussion to inform current practices and suggest policy directions, the Conference Proceedings presents the full papers of presenters who agreed to submit a full publication, thus offering a space for readers and relevant stakeholders to engage more closely with the contents of the presentations in their extended and written form.

The current Conference Proceedings includes 9 papers. Presentations whose authors did not submit a full paper for publication in the Conference Proceedings include only the abstract and authors' bios. The papers included in the Conference Proceedings were not peer-reviewed as part of the editorial process (to enable authors to publish their work in peer-reviewed journals in the future), but all papers accepted at the conference were selected by a highly experienced working group comprising academic members from both project d/dl/ድልድል and EMIRTA. The current version of the Conference Proceedings was approved by the conference organisers, and individual authors approved the final versions of their published papers.





Survival analysis and associated factors of time to first intimate partner violence after marriage among ever-married women in Ethiopia

Birye Dessalegn Mekonnen¹ and Yibrie Azmeraw²

Abstract

Background: Intimate partner violence is the most common form of gender-based violence, starting early in life and within a short period after marriage. This study aims to determine the timing of first intimate partner violence after marriage among ever-married women in Ethiopia.

Methods: Survival analysis using nationally representative data from the 2016 Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) was performed using Stata 14. Bivariable and multivariable Cox proportional hazard regression analyses were performed to identify predictors. Adjusted hazard ratios with a 95% confidence interval were used to determine a statistically significant association.

Results: The median time from marriage to first intimate partner violence among Ethiopian women was found to be two years. Several factors - getting married at <18 years old, being divorced/separated, rural residency, no formal education, primary education, not working, partner had no formal education, unemployed partner, and partner with an alcohol drink habit - were independently associated with the timing of this.

Conclusion: This study showed that the median time for the first intimate partner violence to occur after marriage among Ethiopian ever-married women is two years. Hence, policymakers, programmers and other relevant stakeholders need to establish effective strategies to reduce intimate partner violence and minimise the identifiable risk factors, before two years into the marriage. Moreover, there is a need to involve communities and societies in the design and development of programs to reduce violence against women in general.

Keywords: *Survival time, intimate partner violence, women, EDHS 2016, Ethiopia*

1 Amhara Public Health Institute, Central Gondar, Ethiopia. E-mail: birye22@gmail.com.

2 Debarq District Health Office, North Gondar, Ethiopia.



Introduction

Violence is the transgression of human rights which creates social and clinical health issues, as well as public health challenges (Leite et al., 2017; WHO, 2013, 2014). Intimate partner violence is defined as any type of behaviour directed at a woman or a girl by an intimate partner who causes physical, sexual, or psychological harm to those in the relationship (WHO, 2013). It is the most common form of gender-based violence and comprises all sexual, physical, or emotional harms, as well as marital controlling behaviours by an intimate partner (Ezekiel & Chitama, 2016). Although several interventions have been implemented to halt this problem, intimate partner violence has remained high among women and girls (George et al., 2016; WHO, 2013).

A multi-regional study conducted by the World Health Organization (WHO) revealed that the prevalence of lifetime intimate partner violence among ever-married women was 30% (WHO, 2013). Meanwhile, literature has reported an increase in the occurrence of intimate partner violence in Sub-Saharan Africa (Collibee & Furman, 2014; Heim et al., 2018). Recent evidence suggested that intimate partner violence starts early in life with the prevalence of 29.4% in married women aged 15-19 years (WHO, 2013). In Ethiopia, intimate partner violence is still high, with 34% of ever-married, reproductive age women having experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence by an intimate partner (EDHS, 2016).

Intimate partner violence has enormous sexual and reproductive health consequences such as psychiatric illnesses, physical injuries, sexually-transmitted infections, unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions and gynaecological problems (Bola, 2016; Fagbamigbe et al., 2015; Salazar & San Sebastian, 2014). Furthermore, stillbirths, premature labour, and low birth weight are possible adverse effects of spousal violence (Mulawa et al., 2018; Winchester, 2016).

Existing evidence has identified the risk factors of intimate partner violence including women's current age, religion, age at marriage or cohabitation, religion, education, place of residence, employment status, wealth status, partner education, and alcohol and substance abuse by the partner (Olayanju et al., 2013; Roman & Frantz, 2013; Thomson et al., 2015).

Despite the availability of studies on the magnitude and associated factors involved in intimate partner violence among ever-married and cohabiting women in Ethiopia (Chernet & Cherie, 2020; Ebrahim & Atteraya, 2020), there is a paucity of evidence on



the timing of their first intimate partner violence after marriage. There is also a dearth of information on the factors influencing the timing. This study, therefore, aims to determine the timing and associated factors of first intimate partner violence after marriage among ever-married women in Ethiopia.

Methods

Data Source

Survival analysis of the time to first intimate partner violence after marriage using nationally representative EDHS data (2016) among ever-married women. A two-stage cluster sampling was employed to obtain a nationally representative sample. The first and second stages involved the selection of 645 clusters (202 in urban and 443 in rural), with 28 households in each cluster, respectively.

The 2016 EDHS implemented a module of questions on the most common form of violence against women, which is domestic violence. As per the World Health Organization's (WHO) guidelines, in the 2016 EDHS, only one eligible woman was randomly selected per household for interviewing, and the interview was not implemented if privacy could not be obtained. Accordingly, a total of 5,860 women were selected in the violence against women module (EDHS, 2016). From this sample, a total of 4,687 (weighted) ever-married women were selected for the analyses. Data were weighted for the complex nature of the stratified, multistage cluster sampling strategy and non-responses.

Study Variables

The outcome variable is the time interval (in years) between the date of marriage and the date of first intimate partner violence. Women were asked independent questions regarding whether their husbands/partners had ever or currently did use three main forms of violence: 1) physical violence (hit, push, slap, kick, beat up, throw something, twist arm or pull hair, punch with a fist or with something else, tried to choke or burn, threaten or attack with any material); 2) sexual violence (force them to have sexual intercourse or any other unwanted sexual activity) and 3) emotional violence (say something to humiliate them in front of others, insult them or make them feel bad, threaten to hurt them or someone they care about). The expected response was either 'Yes' to any of the three questions, which implied experience of any spousal violence, or 'No', which implied no experience of any spousal violence. Any ever-married woman



who answered 'Yes' to any of the three questions was then asked 'How long was the first time you experienced any form of violence after marriage?' as recommended by Fagbamigbe et al., (2020).

Data Processing and Analysis

The data were analysed using STATA 14 statistical software. A Kaplan–Meier survival estimate was used to explain the timing of intimate partner violence from the date of marriage. Bivariable and multivariable Cox proportional hazard regression analysis was performed to identify the factors associated with time to first intimate partner violence after marriage. Variables with $p \leq 0.2$ in the bivariate Cox proportional hazard regression analysis were fitted to multivariate Cox proportional hazard regression analysis. Adjusted hazard ratios (AHR) with a 95% confidence interval (CI) were used to determine a statistically significant association.

Results

Characteristics of study respondents

A total of 4,687 samples of ever-married women were included and the collected data analysed. Among these respondents, more than one-fourth (26.3%) of women were aged 15 and 19 years. The majority (84.9%) of the women were married at the time of the survey. Nearly three-fourths (73.5%) were from rural areas. Of the participants, 45.9% had no formal education, and 53.8% were employed. Concerning wealth status, about 32.9% of women were from the poorest households.

Of the total 4,687 ever-married women selected for domestic violence interviews, 1,491 (31.8%) reported experiencing intimate partner violence after marriage. The highest report of intimate partner violence was found among respondents aged 45-49 years (40.4%) followed by those aged 15-19 years (37.8%), and women who got married before 18 years of age. The prevalence of intimate partner violence was higher among women in rural situations (33.9%), who were divorced/separated (33.7%), Muslim religion followers (35.4%), had no formal education (46.3%), and unemployed (36.0%) (See Table 1 in Appendix).

Time to first intimate partner violence after marriage

The median time to first intimate partner violence after marriage among Ethiopian women was found to be two years. On average, 64.2% of women aged 15-19 years,



72.1% of women who had no formal education, 82.6% of women whose husband had no formal education, and 88.2% of women whose husband consumed alcohol, experienced intimate partner violence within the first year of marriage (See Figure 1 in Appendix).

Factors associated with time to first intimate partner violence after marriage

The timing of intimate partner violence was significantly associated with age at marriage (AHR = 2.75; 95% CI: 1.68, 5.86), current marital status (AHR = 1.83; 95% CI: 1.22, 4.81), no formal education (AHR = 3.70; 95% CI: 1.93, 7.87), primary education (AOR = 1.73; 95% CI: 1.27, 4.91), working status (AHR = 2.75; 95% CI: 1.67, 6.88), residence (AHR = 2.25, 95% CI: 1.21, 5.52), educational level of partner (AHR = 1.67; 95% CI: 1.13, 3.93), partner with working status (AHR = 1.82; 95% CI: 1.26, 3.01), and partner with alcohol habit (AHR = 4.50; 95% CI: 2.38, 9.14) (Table 2).

Discussion

This study attempted to determine the timing of the first occurrence of intimate partner violence after marriage and examined the associated factors. More than half of ever-married women who reported intimate partner violence after marriage were found to have experienced it within the second year of marriage. This implies that a considerable number of Ethiopian women are still suffering from intimate partner violence.

In this study, the median survival timing of the first intimate partner violence after marriage was two years. This finding was in line with a study conducted in three African countries, Mozambique, Nigeria and Kenya. It reported the median time to first domestic violence of two years in Mozambique (Fagbamigbe et al., 2020); however, this median time was one year shorter than that of three years as found in Nigeria and Kenya (Fagbamigbe et al., 2020). The variations could be ascribed to differences in culture, beliefs, norms, and traditions across countries. Besides, the discrepancies could be attributed to differentials in sociocultural beliefs that consider a man as the head of the household, with the right to discipline an erring wife (Commission, 2013).

Women who married before 18 years have an increased risk of intimate partner violence than women who got married when older than 18 years. This finding is supported by previous reports (Eldoseri & Sharps, 2020; Fagbamigbe et al., 2020; Izugbara, 2018), which suggest that the risk of domestic violence is higher among women who married younger. Such a risk could also increase adolescents' and young women's suscepti-



lity to sexually-transmitted infection, and other reproductive health problems (Heise & McGrory, 2016).

Women who were divorced/separated had experienced an increased occurrence of intimate partner violence after marriage than women who were currently married. Similar findings have been reported from previous studies (Edwards, 2015; Fagbamigbe et al., 2020; Wong et al., 2016). These differences could be attributed to the women having got divorced and/or separated in part because intimate partner violence had been documented and this had ignited marital failure (Fagbamigbe et al., 2020). The reason could also be because women who could compromise over certain issues which bring conflict into their homes are more likely to save their marital connection and so are more able to avoid violence.

Intimate partner violence after marriage was found to be more prevalent among women with no formal education, and among women with only primary education compared to those women with higher education. These findings are similar to previous studies (Fagbamigbe et al., 2020; Thomson et al., 2015; Umubyeyi et al., 2014), which reported that the risk of domestic violence was higher among women with low education levels. This could be attributed to the fact that education may enable women to get information about their human rights status and allow them to have better negotiating abilities with their partner, thus helping to change male-controlled norms and values (Fulu et al., 2014).

Women in rural residences were found to experience an increased occurrence of intimate partner violence after marriage than women in urban residents. This finding is supported by available literature (Edwards, 2015; Fagbamigbe et al., 2020; Strand & Storey, 2019). However, in contrast, a study conducted in three African countries has reported that rural residence provided a protective element against domestic violence among ever-married women in Nigeria (Fagbamigbe et al., 2020).

The results of this study revealed that women who were not working or had unemployed partners have an increased risk of intimate partner violence after marriage as compared to their counterparts. This finding is similar to previous studies (Fagbamigbe et al., 2020; Semahegn & Mengistie, 2015). This could indicate that employed couples may jointly contribute financially to the household economy, and are thus both involved in the decision-making processes of household issues, which means that they may have a lower chance of experiencing conflict.



Women whose husbands drank alcohol have an increased hazard of intimate partner violence after marriage compared to those women whose partners never drank alcohol. A similar finding has been documented in earlier studies (Abramsky et al., 2011; Fagbamigbe et al., 2020). This may be explained by the fact that alcohol can cause an altered mental state, aggression, clouded judgment, and irresponsible behaviour, all of which may increase the likelihood of a violent attack (Kambli et al., 2013).

Although the use of large, nationally representative data enhanced the generalizability of the findings, the study has some potential limitations. First, it was not possible to ascertain causality among key variables due to the cross-sectional nature of the data. Second, it might be hard for women to accurately recall their experiences, especially the date when their first intimate partner violence occurred. Third, self-reporting of intimate partner violence is usually associated with underreporting and social desirability biases. Finally, community-related factors were not assessed due to a lack of information in the dataset.

Conclusion

This study showed that the median time of first intimate partner violence after marriage among Ethiopian ever-married women is two years. The timing of intimate partner violence was associated with age at marriage, current marital status, educational level of women, working status of women, rural/urban residence, educational level of partner, partner's working status, and partner's alcohol drinking habit. Hence, to reduce intimate partner violence and minimize the identifiable risk factors, policymakers, programmers, and other relevant stakeholders should aim to establish effective strategies that take these factors into account within the first two years of marriage. Moreover, there is a need for more research to help involve communities and societies in the design and development of programs to reduce violence against women in general.

References

- Abramsky, T., Watts, C. H., Garcia-Moreno, C., Devries, K., Kiss, L., Ellsberg, M., . . . Heise, L. (2011). What factors are associated with recent intimate partner violence? Findings from the WHO multi-country study on women's health and domestic violence. *BMC Public Health, 11*(1), 1-17.



- Bola, S. L. (2016). Spousal violence and pregnancy termination among married women in Nigeria. *African Health Sciences*, 16(2), 429-440.
- Chernet, A. G. & Cherie, K. T. (2020). Prevalence of intimate partner violence against women and associated factors in Ethiopia. *BMC Women's Health*, 20(1), 1-7.
- Collibee, C. & Furman, W. (2014). Impact of sexual coercion on romantic experiences of adolescents and young adults. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 43(7), 1431-1441.
- Commission, N. P. (2013). *Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey 2013*. Retrieved from
- Ebrahim, N. B. & Atteraya, M. S. (2020). Intimate Partner Violence and Help-Seeking Among Ethiopian Women. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 1-9.
- EDHS (2016). Demographic and Health Survey 2016: key indicators report. *The DHS Program ICF*, 363, 364.
- Edwards, K. M. (2015). Intimate partner violence and the rural–urban–suburban divide: Myth or reality? A critical review of the literature. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 16(3), 359-373.
- Eldoseri, H. M. & Sharps, P. (2020). Risk factors for spousal physical violence against women in Saudi Arabia. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 35(5-6), 1269-1293.
- Ezekiel, M. J. & Chitama, D. (2016). Magnitude and factors associated with intimate partner violence in mainland Tanzania. *BMC Public Health*, 16(1), 494.
- Fagbamigbe, A. F., Adebowale, A. S. & Morhason-Bello, I. (2015). Survival analysis of time to uptake of modern contraceptives among sexually active women of reproductive age in Nigeria. *BMJ Open*, 5(12), e008371.
- Fagbamigbe, A. F., Akintayo, A. O., Oshodi, O. C., Makinde, F. T., Babalola, M., Araoye, E., . . . Dairo, M. (2020). Survival analysis and prognostic factors of time to first domestic violence after marriage among Nigeria, Kenya, and Mozambique women. *Public Health*, 181, 122-134.
- Fulu, E., Kerr-Wilson, A., Lang, J., Gibbs, A., Jacobson, J. & Jewkes, R. (2014). What works to prevent violence against women and girls. *Evidence Review of interventions to prevent violence against women and girls Pretoria: Medical Research Council*, 1580-1589.
- George, J., Nair, D., Premkumar, N. R., Saravanan, N., Chinnakali, P. & Roy, G. (2016). The prevalence of domestic violence and its associated factors among married women in a rural area of Puducherry, South India. *Journal of Family Medicine and Primary Care*, 5(3), 672.
- Heim, E., Ajzen, I., Schmidt, P. & Seddig, D. (2018). Women's decisions to stay in or leave



- an abusive relationship: Results from a longitudinal study in Bolivia. *Violence Against Women*, 24(14), 1639-1657.
- Heise, L. & McGrory, E. (2016). Violence against women and girls and HIV: Report on a high level consultation on the evidence and its implications, 12–14 May, 2015. Greentree Estate, New York. *STRIVE Research Consortium, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine*.
- Izugbara, C. (2018). Spousal age differences and violence against women in Nigeria and Tanzania. *Health Care for Women International*, 39(8), 872-887.
- Kambli, T. D., Kazi, Y., Chavan, Y., Velhal, G. & Aras, R. (2013). Study to assess determinants of domestic violence among women in Urban Slum of Mumbai. *Age*, 18(25), 26-35.
- Leite, F. M. C., Amorim, M. H. C., Wehrmeister, F. C. & Gigante, D. P. (2017). Violence against women, Espírito Santo, Brazil. *Revista de Saude Publica*, 51, 33.
- Mulawa, M., Kajula, L. J., Yamanis, T. J., Balvanz, P., Kilonzo, M. N. & Maman, S. (2018). Perpetration and victimization of intimate partner violence among young men and women in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(16), 2486-2511.
- Olayanju, L., Naguib, R., Nguyen, Q., Bali, R. & Vung, N. (2013). Combating intimate partner violence in Africa: Opportunities and challenges in five African countries. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 18(1), 101-112.
- Roman, N. V. & Frantz, J. M. (2013). The prevalence of intimate partner violence in the family: a systematic review of the implications for adolescents in Africa. *Family Practice*, 30(3), 256-265.
- Salazar, M. & San Sebastian, M. (2014). Violence against women and unintended pregnancies in Nicaragua: a population-based multilevel study. *BMC Women's Health*, 14(1), 26.
- Semahegn, A. & Mengistie, B. (2015). Domestic violence against women and associated factors in Ethiopia; systematic review. *Reproductive Health*, 12(1), 1-12.
- Strand, S. J. & Storey, J. E. (2019). Intimate partner violence in urban, rural, and remote areas: An investigation of offense severity and risk factors. *Violence Against Women*, 25(2), 188-207.
- Thomson, D. R., Bah, A. B., Rubanzana, W. G. & Mutesa, L. (2015). Correlates of intimate partner violence against women during a time of rapid social transition in Rwanda: analysis of the 2005 and 2010 demographic and health surveys. *BMC Women's Health*, 15(1), 96.



- Umubyeyi, A., Mogren, I., Ntaganira, J. & Krantz, G. (2014). Women are considerably more exposed to intimate partner violence than men in Rwanda: results from a population-based, cross-sectional study. *BMC Women's Health*, 14(1), 1-12.
- WHO (2013). *World Health Organization. Global and regional estimates of violence against women: prevalence and health effects of intimate partner violence and non-partner sexual violence*: World Health Organization.
- WHO (2014). *World Health Organization. Health care for women subjected to intimate partner violence or sexual violence: A clinical handbook*. World Health Organization
- Winchester, M. S. (2016). Marriage, violence and HIV: the shifting policy context in Uganda. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 18(12), 1333-1346.
- Wong, J. Y.-H., Choi, A. W.-M., Fong, D. Y.-T., Choi, E. P. H., Wong, J. K.-S., So, F. L., . . . Kam, C.-W. (2016). A comparison of intimate partner violence and associated physical injuries between cohabitating and married women: a 5-year medical chart review. *BMC Public Health*, 16(1), 1-9.

Abbreviations

AHR: adjusted hazard ratio

CI: confidence interval

CHR: crude hazard ratio

EDHS: Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey

MEASURE DHS: monitoring and evaluation to assess and use results demographic and health surveys

SNNPR: Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region



Appendix

Table 1: Distribution of ever-married women and intimate partner violence experienced by selected sociodemographic characteristics in Ethiopia, 2016

Characteristics	Distribution of Respondents		Intimate partner violence	
	Weighted frequency	Weighted percentage	Yes (%)	No (%)
Age				
15-19	1227	26.3	464 (37.8)	763 (62.2)
20-24	780	16.6	282 (36.2)	498 (63.8)
25-29	1010	21.5	303 (30.0)	707 (70.0)
30-34	966	20.6	226 (23.4)	740 (76.6)
35-39	349	7.4	111 (31.8)	238 (68.2)
40-44	251	5.4	63 (25.1)	188 (74.9)
45-49	104	2.2	42 (40.4)	62 (59.6)
Marital status				
Married	3979	84.9	1262 (31.7)	2717 (68.3)
Divorced/separated	585	12.5	197 (33.7)	388 (66.3)
Widowed	123	2.6	32 (26.0)	91 (74.0)
Religion				
Orthodox	3159	67.4	1002 (31.7)	2157 (68.3)
Muslim	1261	26.9	446 (35.4)	815 (64.6)
Protestant	211	4.5	31 (14.7)	180 (85.3)
Catholic	56	1.2	12 (21.4)	44 (78.6)
Place of residence				
Urban	1240	26.5	321 (25.9)	919 (74.1)
Rural	3447	73.5	1170 (33.9)	2277 (66.1)



Educational level				
No formal education	2150	45.9	776 (36.1)	1374 (63.9)
Primary school	1529	32.6	423 (27.7)	1106 (72.3)
Secondary school	656	14.0	189 (28.8)	467 (71.2)
Higher education	352	7.5	103 (29.3)	249 (70.7)
Respondent's working status				
Yes	2522	53.8	712 (28.2)	1810 (71.8)
No	2165	46.2	779 (36.0)	1386 (64.0)
Husband's educational level				
No formal education	1088	23.2	504 (46.3)	584 (53.7)
Primary school	1533	32.7	623 (40.6)	910 (59.4)
Secondary school	731	15.6	166 (22.7)	565 (77.3)
Higher education	1335	28.5	198 (14.8)	1137 (85.2)
Husband's current working status				
Yes	3224	68.2	872 (27.0)	2352 (73.0)
No	1463	31.2	619 (42.3)	844 (57.7)
Husband drinks alcohol				
Yes	421	9.0	261 (62.0)	160 (38.0)
No	4266	91.0	1230 (28.8)	3036 (71.2)
Watching TV				
Not at all	3459	73.8	1321 (38.2)	2138 (61.8)
≤1 a week	1064	22.7	57 (5.4)	1007 (94.6)
> 1 a week	164	3.5	113 (68.9)	51 (31.1)
Listening to radio				
Not at all	2798	59.7	873 (31.2)	1925 (68.8)
≤1 a week	781	16.7	381 (48.8)	400 (51.2)
> 1 a week	1108	23.6	237 (21.4)	871 (78.6)
Reading newspaper				
Not at all	3921	83.6	1372 (35.0)	2549 (65.0)
≤1 a week	200	4.3	16 (8.0)	184 (92.0)
> 1 a week	566	12.1	103 (18.2)	463 (81.8)



Decision-maker in the household				
Mainly respondent	79	1.7	34 (43.0)	45 (57.0)
Mainly husband/partner	3288	70.1	1213 (36.9)	2075 (63.1)
Jointly	1320	28.2	244 (18.5)	1076 (81.5)
Age at marriage				
Less than 18 years	1068	22.8	408 (38.2)	660 (61.8)
18 and above years	3619	77.2	1083 (29.9)	2536 (70.1)
Wealth status				
Poorest	1541	32.9	651 (42.2)	890 (57.8)
Poorer	1075	22.9	357 (33.2)	718 (66.8)
Middle	1032	22.0	237 (23.0)	795 (77.0)
Richer	714	15.2	152 (21.3)	562 (78.7)
Richest	325	7.0	94 (28.9)	231 (71.1)
Region				
Tigray	453	9.7	179 (39.5)	274 (60.5)
Afar	422	9.0	91 (21.6)	331 (78.4)
Amhara	401	8.6	161 (40.1)	240 (59.9)
Oromia	613	13.1	183 (29.9)	430 (70.1)
Somalia	464	9.8	127 (27.4)	337 (72.6)
Benishangul	302	6.4	98 (32.5)	204 (67.5)
SNNPR	532	11.4	160 (30.1)	372 (69.9)
Gambela	346	7.4	93 (26.9)	253 (73.1)
Harari	261	5.6	101 (38.7)	160 (61.3)
Dire Dawa	336	7.1	101 (30.1)	235 (69.9)
Addis Ababa	557	11.9	197 (35.4)	360 (64.6)



Table 2: Bivariable and multivariable Cox proportional hazard regression analysis of factor associated with the time of first intimate partner violence after marriage in Ethiopia, 2016

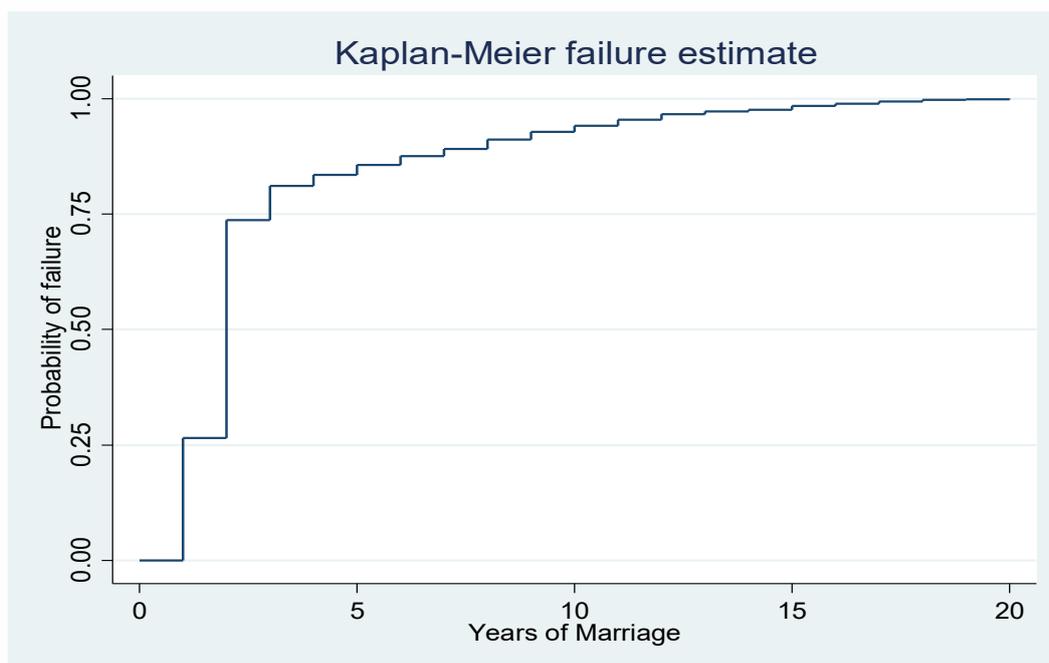
Variables	Unadjusted HR (95% CI)	Adjusted HR (95% CI)
Age at marriage		
Less than 18 years	2.72 (1.64, 5.71)*	2.75 (1.68, 5.86)*
18 and above years	1	1
Marital status		
Married	1	1
Divorced/separated	1.82 (1.14, 4.37)*	1.83 (1.22, 4.81)*
Widowed	1.76 (0.91, 3.14)	1.83 (0.97, 3.63)
Residence		
Urban	2.21 (1.19, 5.31)*	2.25 (1.21, 5.52)
Rural	1	1
Educational status		
No formal education	3.62 (1.91, 7.84)*	3.70 (1.93, 7.87)*
Primary school	1.72 (1.19, 4.32)*	1.73 (1.27, 4.91)*
Secondary school	1.31 (0.82, 2.94)	1.42 (0.88, 2.89)
Higher education	1	1
Respondent's current working status		
Yes	1	1
No	2.71 (1.63, 6.76)*	2.75 (1.67, 6.88)*
Husband's educational level		
No formal education	1.62 (1.12, 3.91)*	1.67 (1.13, 3.93)*
Primary school	0.78 (0.63, 1.87)	0.81 (0.64, 1.93)
Secondary school	0.88 (0.67, 1.91)	0.82 (0.75, 1.86)
Higher education	1	1
Husband's current working status		
Yes	1	1
No	1.25 (1.09, 2.63)*	1.82 (1.26, 3.01)*



Husband drinks alcohol		
Yes	4.25 (2.21, 8.92)*	4.50 (2.38, 9.14)*
No	1	1
Frequency of listening to radio		
Not at all	1	1
≤1 a week	1.01 (0.69, 1.47)	1.19 (0.98, 2.81)
> 1 a week	0.61 (0.51, 1.31)	0.81 (0.93, 1.09)
Frequency of watching TV		
Not at all	1	1
≤1 a week	0.67 (0.35, 1.53)	0.71 (0.32, 2.44)
> 1 a week	0.51 (0.34, 1.81)	0.69(0.26, 1.67)
Decision-maker in the household		
Mainly respondent	2.31 (0.96, 5.48)	2.33 (0.89, 4.31)
Mainly husband/partner	2.01 (0.86, 4.31)	2.42 (0.88, 6.10)
Joint decision	1	1

*Statistically significant (p value <0.05).

Figure 1: Probability of timing of first intimate partner violence among ever-married women in Ethiopia





Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate

The protocol was approved by the Ethiopian Health and Nutrition Research Institute (EHNRI) Review Board, the National Research Ethics Review Committee (NRERC) at the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Science and Technology, the ICF Macro Institutional Review Board, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As indicated in the EDHS 2016 publications, written consent for participation was obtained from each respondent. Though the dataset of the EDHS is not available as a public domain survey dataset, after developing a protocol, the authors requested the data by registration on the MEASURE DHS website at: www.dhsprogram.com. Finally, access to use the data for this research was granted from the demographic and health survey program team.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank the Demographic Health Survey Program team for the data.

Funding

No funding has been received from any source to conduct this study.

Availability of data and material

The dataset of the EDHS is not available as a public domain survey dataset but can be accessed with the request by registration on the MEASURE DHS website at: www.dhsprogram.com.

Consent for publication

Not applicable

Competing interests

The authors stated that there is no competing interest.



Trends, Demands, and challenges of protecting Domestic workers: lesson from selected places of Ethiopia

Tirsit Sahledengil

Abstract

Acute poverty, socio-cultural norms, and peer pressure are among the main factors that push girls and young women to migrate to urban centres for domestic labour works. Examining the trajectories to the domestic labour there are chains among the supplying places, smugglers and the brokers. I have conducted a research on the domestic violence that the domestic workers experienced. This study has been conducted in three towns such as Addis Ababa, Hosana and Wolita. The main objectives of the study were to understand the trend of recruiting domestic labour and to see the gaps in respecting basic human rights of the domestic workers. The research shows how the domestic workers are exposed to both gender based violence and violence against humanity in their trajectories. Methodologically, the study used qualitative approach including in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and focus group Discussions. Since I did a detail fieldwork in the area, my presentation will have a good contribution to further the project objective by showing the gaps in the intervention.



Prevalence of Child Abuse and Associated Factors in West Shewa Zone, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia

Abera Getachew

Abstract

Ethiopia is one of the countries where child abuse is a global problem. Child abuse is pervasive in all societies, and children are the future of those societies. Every civilization strives to provide every child with every opportunity to live, survive, and develop to their maximum potential. The data was obtained using the ISSPCAN Child Abuse Screening Tools for Children, a standardized structured questionnaire developed by the International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN) (ICAAS-C) Institutional based cross sectional study was employed in school children students from January 25 to February 20, 2017. The mean and percentage were utilized as descriptive statistics. Inferentially, ordinal logistic regression was carried out to identify factors associated with abuse. The study found 35 (8.5%), 267 (64.8%) and 110 (26.7%) of children encountered child abuse always, sometimes and never respectively. Residence of the children, occupation of the mother and age of the parents were significantly associated with child abuse. Children from urban community were 58% less likely to be abused often by their parent. The most commonly observed child abuse were child neglect, emotional, sexual and physical abuse. Government and non-government organization who have been working on child health should come up with more social policies that will prevent all forms of child abuse. School counselling and guidance establishment is highly recommended.



Vulnerability of Female Domestic Workers vis-à-vis Intermediate (Brokers) and Parents' Related Factors: the Case of Hosanna Town

Lombebo Tagesse

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore factors related to brokers and parents for the vulnerability of female domestic workers in Hosanna town. The research paradigm used was pragmatism. Convenience sampling was employed because domestic workers are not found in a large number in a given place at a fixed time. 130 female domestic workers participated in quantitative data (questionnaire) and 22 respondents have been participating in qualitative data including in-depth interview, key informants such as government officers, employers, brokers, and parents. Quantitative data were presented and analyzed by using SPSS version 22 software, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The result indicated that a significant number of respondents agreed that they prefer illegal brokers because the service of licensed brokers is “unsafe/ insecure”; and brokers and their assistants committed violence against the subjects. Parents/guardians were actively involved in the employment process of their daughters by communicating with brokers and employers, with or without the consent of their daughters. Parents, furthermore, have been collecting their monthly salary recurrently even in advance by letting the subjects down to stay in awkward running situations; and others advised daughters to abscond their work to employ in other employers' homes with high pay. To condense this situation, the government should take proper action on the policy regarding the licensing process of brokers; and advocacy on the right of domestic workers should be instigated.



Domestic Violence: The lived experiences of Bangladeshi Women in the UK

Aysha Ahmed

Abstract

One in three women (globally) are victims of domestic violence at some point in their lives (WHO, 2013). Gendered crime is rooted in the inequality between women and men in every society. Minority women's experiences of domestic violence differs considerably from other social groups (Gill, 2004). The presentation explores the challenges in accessing Bangladeshi women in talking about their experiences of domestic violence. I examine violence in the home and hear directly from women about their lived experiences of abuse that is hidden in the community. My research explores the impact and challenges of the societal, cultural, and religious perception and the diversity of women's experiences, through the lens of intersectionality. The strength women talk about in their faith and giving forgiveness of their abusers. It focuses on the barrier and challenges they face while they navigate the lack of understanding of their multiple identities of being a woman of colour, cultural norms, language, and religious belief. I will present the impact on social work practice and what mothers wanting from agencies and the cultural sensitivities when seeking to protect their children from domestic violence. Lastly, I will conclude in sharing the preliminary emerging themes from my research and discuss how women see the lack of support and how this collides and intersect in the choices they are making about the abuse they experience and their decisions to remain or leave the abusive relationship.



Understanding Domestic Violence and Abuse in UK Muslim Communities: A Multi-perspective Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis Approach¹

Rahmanara Chowdhury²

Abstract

This paper brings together two qualitative studies exploring how domestic violence and abuse (DVA) manifests within UK Muslim communities, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. Study one was conducted with UK-based Muslim female survivors of DVA (n=10). Study two was conducted with UK professionals working in a supportive capacity with DVA victims/survivors and those perpetrating abuse within Muslim communities (n=9). Through a multi-perspective interpretative phenomenological lens, the two data sets were analysed for overarching themes. These themes were subsequently used to develop a visual representation of the findings. The resulting outcome was the web model of DVA, presented below. It is argued that due to its comprehensive methodological approach this model has increased capacity for understanding the extended nature of how DVA manifests for UK Muslim communities, with particular emphasis on the active role of faith and on the additional nuances often missed by singular methodological approaches. Furthermore, due to its flexible nature, the model holds potential for guiding the provision of tailored intervention and support for all communities. This is achieved through better informed client care and the incorporation of collaborative working between macro level structures and expertise held within communities. This web model of DVA is a unique contribution towards inclusive and decolonial approaches within gender-based violence research relating to minority communities in the UK.

Keywords: *domestic abuse, intimate partner violence, Muslim communities, multi-perspective, intersectionality*

1 This paper is an abridged version of [Chowdhury, R., & Winder, B. \(2022\). A Web Model of Domestic Violence and Abuse in Muslim Communities—A Multi Perspective IPA Approach. *Social Sciences*, 11\(8\), 354.](#)

2 Markfield Institute of Higher Education, UK



Introduction

Within a UK context, current interventions in relation to domestic violence and abuse (DVA) have been largely based upon Caucasian population groups ([Cantos & O'Leary, 2014](#); [Green & Morton, 2021](#)). Furthermore, much of the research concentrates on DVA behaviours and the ontology of abuse between a couple (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Walker, 1979). Whilst such research has been pivotal to informing legislation, there is still very little focus on DVA manifestations within minority populations living in the west ([Biglia & i Marti, 2017](#)). The consideration of interactions within more close-knit communities, as well as cultural nuances and differing family structures, tends to be discounted, thus also occluding the role of in-laws and extended family members ([Lee, 2014](#); [Purkayastha, 2000](#)). However, there has been much discussion of shortcomings within service providers in meeting the nuanced needs of minority communities due to this lack of representation ([Green & Morton, 2021](#)). For instance, Afrouz et al. (2020) highlights the significant barriers to reporting that are present at the individual, family and societal levels for minority communities. Palacio ([2021](#)) focuses on the importance of differentiation between culture and faith, and its subsequent impact upon survivors. Theological perspectives are also put forward by Ayubi (2019) and Isgandarova (2019). Yet, these nuanced additional areas of consideration are given little attention within established approaches to understanding and addressing DVA.

This research aimed to explore the manifestation of DVA within the UK Muslim population, with a specific focus on Muslim female survivor experiences. It culminated in the development of a web model of DVA which supports practitioners in a more holistic approach when working with survivors (that is, individuals post-leaving an abusive relationship). The research sought to place survivors' experiences at the heart of practitioner understanding of DVA within minorities. However, it is argued below that the flexible nature of this model facilitates its potential for application to all population groups.

This research was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and received ethical approval from Brunel University London Research Ethics Committee (reference 12519-MHRNov/2018-14813-2).

Methodology

Two qualitative studies were conducted. Study one involved UK-based Muslim female survivors of DVA (n=10). Study two was conducted with UK professionals who were



involved in working with both DVA victims/survivors and those perpetrating abuse within Muslim communities (n=9). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both groups with the overall purpose of understanding the DVA experiences of Muslim female DVA survivors.

Within the survivor cohort, 90% were of South Asian origin and one survivor was of Irish origin. Whilst this sample was skewed towards this particular ethnic group, the professionals cohort were more diverse and included Pakistani (3), Indian (1), Chinese (1), East African Asian (1), Arab (1), English (1) and Indian/Pakistani (1). This allowed for a more balanced representation, especially since each professional was working with diverse ethnic groups within their practice.

Participants were recruited via convenience and snowballing sampling methods whereby community contacts of the researcher were sent details of the research and then requested to share with their networks. Some of the participants knew of the researcher due to her prior practitioner work in the field, however the relationship remained within a professional capacity.

The two data sets were analysed through a multi-perspective interpretative phenomenological lens for identifying overarching themes. This was in line with precedents ([Dancyger et al., 2010](#); [McNally and Gray-Brunton, 2021](#)) wherein themes from each study sample were individually derived (details in forthcoming papers). These were then brought together to ascertain the overarching themes across both studies ([Larkin et al., 2019](#)). In doing so, interlinking patterns and interactions were then mapped out as a visual representation of the findings. This resulted in the web model of DVA. Full details of the study can be found in Chowdhury and Winder ([2022](#)). Herein, the remainder of this paper will give a brief overview of the web model of DVA and the four levels it comprises.

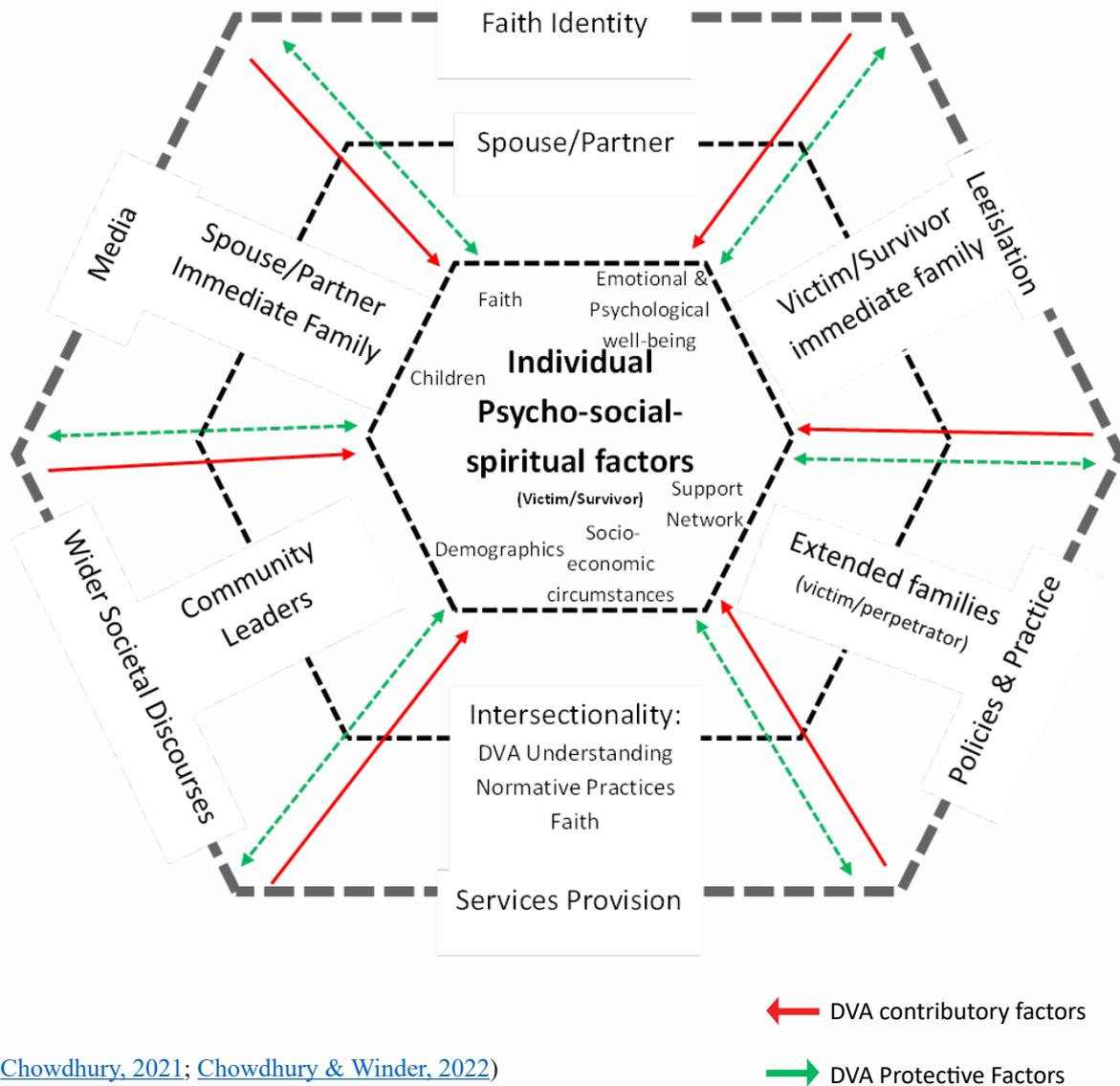
The web model of domestic violence and abuse

The web model of DVA (see Figure 1) consists of four levels. These are as follows:

1. individual psycho-social-spiritual factors
2. stakeholders
3. intersectionality
4. macro level factors.



Figure 1: Web model of DVA



(Chowdhury, 2021; Chowdhury & Winder, 2022)

Each of these four levels will be considered in turn.

1. Individual psycho-social-spiritual factors

Central to the web model of DVA are the survivors. Placing their experiences at the heart of understanding DVA underpins the development of the model. Within this, consideration is given to psychological, social and spiritual factors, where applicable. These areas pertain to understanding the person at the core of their DVA experience and what is particular to their experience. The model assumes no two experiences to be



the same and, therefore, practitioners are encouraged to work in collaboration with survivors in order to gain a deeper understanding of the specific circumstances that survivors are having to navigate. Examples of areas to explore include demographics, socio-economic circumstances, presence of any children, social support, emotional and psychological wellbeing, role of faith and any other areas that may be flagged up for each individual. Much of the current literature focusses on the aftermath of these factors, while the web model advocates consideration of these issues at the outset and how they impact upon the DVA experience throughout. Critical within psycho-social-spiritual factors is the idea that the remainder of the web model also shapes experiences and responses to the DVA experience at this level. This is explored further through the other levels of the web model.

2. Stakeholders

Where existing approaches to understanding DVA focus on the relationship within a couple, the web model of DVA proposes that the presence of additional significant stakeholders also requires consideration. Such individuals would often go beyond mere bystanders and were commonly actively engaged in the DVA. This was either in a positive or negative capacity, with each stakeholder group being specific to each survivor. Where stakeholders took a positive role, survivors would often draw upon their support as a primary resource. The importance of empowering communities and working with protective elements within community structures thereby becomes significant. In relation to this, Haslam et al. ([2012](#)) suggest that the protective elements within communities can act as a social cure, enabling the sharing of resources and developing internal empowerment ([Howarth, 2001](#)).

3. Intersectionality

In the web model of DVA, intersectionality refers to knowledge relevant to DVA, cultural normative practices and faith. However, intersectionality would also extend to include all of the protected characteristics; the three areas mentioned reflect those themes which were most evident within the data. By intersecting with the stakeholders' contributions and macro level factors, these impacted how DVA was experienced at the individual level. A lack of knowledge regarding DVA associated behaviours was identified as contributing to structures which enabled DVA to go unchallenged. Where harmful cultural normative practices were adopted, often in combination with a reductionist and androcentric approach towards faith, this further contributed to the ongoing maintenance and justification of DVA behaviours. This often came about through reducing



faith down to a set of rules and regulations which omitted the deeper ethos of the faith. However, these detrimental effects were often counteracted by holistic approaches to faith which sought to place precedence on overriding principles within the faith, such as protection from harm. In such cases, faith acted as a protective element and became a resource survivors could utilise to remove themselves from the abusive relationship. The impact of intersectionality was often obscured and difficult to ascertain clearly by survivors, yet they could distinctly identify the various dynamics they were required to navigate in order to free themselves of abuse and the intense and very personal strain this placed them under. Therefore, such knowledge would enable both the practitioner and the survivor to gain a better-defined understanding of the dynamics at hand.

4. Macro level factors

The final level of consideration related to macro level structures within society as a whole. Often this was not necessarily linked directly to DVA itself, however due to the nature of the impact, macro level factors filtered through the web model impacting the person at the core. Faith identity, particularly within Muslim communities, was described as often being associated with extreme negative narratives. This is in line with research exploring discourses relating to Muslims and Islam, present at a national governance level ([Gilks, 2020](#)). This intertwined with legislation, often in relation to national and international security measures, which then further impacted policies and practices at all levels of the macro structure and thereby the shape of services. Further influence was seen within media platforms and thereby in wider societal discourses. The macro level factors were observed as feeding into each other to uphold certain narratives which resulted in Muslim female DVA survivors feeling that they could not access support and reconsidering whether they should report abuse in the first place. The fear was that they would be feeding into popular negative narratives in doing so. On a deeper level, it permeated both individual and collective identities with the findings demonstrating the idea that Muslim communities are viewed under a lens of suspicion. This is also in line with precedents ([Abbas, 2019](#); [Abbas & Awan, 2015](#); [Gilks, 2020](#)).

Conclusion

The web model of DVA seeks to empower practitioners to work more holistically with clients by providing a structured framework which is client focussed. Due to the comprehensive methodological approach, this model has increased capacity for understanding the extended nature of how DVA manifests for UK Muslim communities, with



a particular emphasis on the active role of faith and additional nuances often missed by singular methodological approaches. The model illustrates the interconnected nature of communities and relationships within those communities and the significance of these in addressing DVA. Whilst the model was initially developed in specific relation to UK Muslim communities, due to its flexible nature, consistent feedback from service providers indicates that it can be applied to all communities. The need for such inclusive approaches to understanding and addressing DVA has been advocated by Green and Morton (2021).

Practitioners are encouraged to work in collaboration with the client in order to identify and tailor the model to each individual person and their specific circumstances. This facilitates movement away from a one size fits all approach. As the web model of DVA demonstrates, DVA is an individual experience that takes place within broader and multi-dimensional contexts. Those contexts have both direct and indirect impacts upon the DVA experience and survivors' potential for accessing support and, therefore, these cannot be excluded from approaches to understanding and addressing DVA. The model further advocates for collaborative working between macro-level structures and expertise held within communities, in recognition of the significant role that survivors' communities play.

Lastly, it should be noted that the model is not intended as a risk assessment tool but rather offers a structured framework which can be utilised to provide individualised, holistic support to those experiencing DVA.

References

- Abbas, M. S. (2019). Producing 'internal suspect bodies': divisive effects of UK counter-terrorism measures on Muslim communities in Leeds and Bradford. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 70(1), 261-282.
- Abbas, T. & Awan, I. (2015). Limits of UK counterterrorism policy and its implications for Islamophobia and far right extremism. *International Journal for Crime, Justice and Social Democracy*, 4(3), 16-29.
- Afrouz, R., Crisp, B. R. & Taket, A. (2020). Seeking help in domestic violence among Muslim women in Muslim-majority and non-Muslim-majority countries: A literature review. *Trauma, Violence & Abuse*, 21(3), 551-566.



- Ayubi, Z. M. (2019). *Gendered morality: classical Islamic ethics of the self, family, and society*. Columbia University Press.
- Biglia, B. & i Martí, J. B. (2017). DIY: Towards feminist methodological practices in social research. *Annual Review of Critical Psychology*, 13, 1-16.
- Cantos, A. L. & O'Leary, K. D. (2014). One size does not fit all in treatment of intimate partner violence. *Partner Abuse*, 5(2), 204-236.
- Chowdhury, R. (2021). *Web Model of Domestic Violence and Abuse*. London: Brunel University London.
- Chowdhury, R. & Winder, B. (2022). A Web Model of Domestic Violence and Abuse in Muslim Communities—A Multi Perspective IPA Approach. *Social Sciences*, 11(8), 354.
- Dancyger, C., Smith, J. A., Jacobs, C., Wallace, M. & Michie, S. (2010). Comparing family members' motivations and attitudes towards genetic testing for hereditary breast and ovarian cancer: a qualitative analysis. *European Journal of Human Genetics*, 18(12), 1289-1295.
- Dobash, R. E. & Dobash, R. (1979). *Violence against wives: A case against the patriarchy* (Vol. 15). New York: Free Press.
- Gilks, M. (2020). The security-prejudice nexus: "Islamist" terrorism and the structural logics of Islamophobia in the UK. *Critical Studies on Terrorism*, 13(1), 24-46.
- Green, S. O. B. & Morton, S. (2021). Listening to less-heard voices: Methodological approaches, considerations and challenges when researching domestic violence and abuse with vulnerable and marginalised women. In *The Routledge International Handbook of Domestic Violence and Abuse* (pp. 627-641). Routledge.
- Haslam, S. A., Reicher, S. D. & Levine, M. (2012). When other people are heaven when other people are hell: How social identity determines the nature and impact of social support. In *The social cure* (pp. 157-174). Psychology Press.
- Howarth, C. (2001). Towards a social psychology of community: A social representations perspective. *Journal for the theory of social behaviour*, 31(2), 223-238.
- Isgandarova, N. (2018). *Muslim women, domestic violence, and psychotherapy: Theological and clinical issues*. Routledge.
- Larkin, M., Shaw, R. & Flowers, P. (2019). Multiperspectival designs and processes in interpretative phenomenological analysis research. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 16(2), 182-198.
- Lee, D. H. (2014). Intimate partner violence against Asian American women: Moving from theory to strategy. *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law*, 28, 315.



- McInally, W. & Gray-Brunton, C. (2021). Research made simple: Using multiperspective interpretative phenomenological analysis to explore healthcare phenomena. *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 24(3), 71-73.
- Palacio, C. (2021). *Dialogical Narrative Analysis on Islam in British Muslim Women's Stories of Domestic Abuse* (Doctoral dissertation, University of East London).
- Pence, E. & Paymar, M. (1993). *Education groups for men who batter: The Duluth model*. Springer Publishing Company.
- Purkayastha, B. (2000). Liminal lives: South Asian youth and domestic violence. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 9, 201-219.
- Walker, L. E. (1979). *The Battered Woman Syndrome*. New York: Harper and Row.

Declarations

Competing interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

Acknowledgements

The author wishes to thank the participants who gave their time and stories to the research and Professor Belinda Winder for her comments and feedback on the original published paper.



Suicide and Domestic violence

Erminia Colucci

Abstract

There is a large body of studies that have highlighted the impact of violence against women, particularly domestic/family violence, on physical and mental health, including suicidal behaviour. Women from immigrant and refugee backgrounds and in LMICs are exposed to additional risk factors for domestic/family violence as well as experience further barriers to stop or escape the situation of violence. During this presentation, Dr Erminia Colucci will discuss the impact that domestic violence has on suicidal behaviour. Some of the examples provided will include findings from a theatre-based study that explored the social and cultural aspects of domestic violence as perceived by Indian women living in Australia and barriers to accessing services.



Honour-based violence in life writing: Fadumo Korn's *Born in the Big Rains: A memoir of Somalia and Survival* and Halima Bashar's *Tears of the Desert*

Solomon Girma¹

Abstract

This paper discusses the ways in which memory and trauma of honour-based violence have been depicted in Fadumo Korn's book, *Born in the Big Rains: A Memoir of Somalia and Survival* (2006) and Halima Bashar's *Tears of the Desert* (2008). It explores how these elements function to form both individual and collective identities. Based on the data collected from these memoirs, the researcher argues that Fadumo and Halima, as victims of the cultural practice of circumcision, in South Sudan and Somalia, respectively, have produced a memory of their individual experiences of circumcision in childhood that is worth sharing. A qualitative research design was employed and both primary and secondary sources were used. The findings revealed that circumcision has been a source of both individual and cultural trauma which contributed to the formation of the contemporary identities of the two authors.

Keywords: *Honour-based violence, FGM, circumcision, remembering, trauma, identity*

Introduction

Honour-based violence, trauma and communities

Honour-based violence concerns all cultures and communities. However, it is especially prevalent in very traditional communities in Africa. It differs from other types of violence in that it is often committed with the approval of member/s of a family and/or community. Gregory et al. (2020) state that honour-based violence is carried out in order to protect the so-called 'honour' of a family or community against a family member

¹ University of Gondar, Ethiopia; E-Mail: fassol86g@gmail.com; Tel: +251 920570919



who is believed to have broken an existing cultural and religious code.

Even though it is common for both sexes, females are more vulnerable to such violence (Gill, 2014:3). Such practices can manifest as physical abuse, psychological abuse, and emotional abuse. Circumcision by female genital mutilation (FGM) is one of the harmful practices that comes under the category of honour-based violence and children are most likely to be victims of this. This practice causes both physical and psychological pain, with complex consequences in the women's lives, which the researcher addresses as trauma as reflected in the memoirs of two women, Fadumo Korn and Halima Bashar, who underwent FGM at a young age in Somalia and Sudan, respectively.

Trauma in literature

In classical medical usage, according to Erikson (1995), 'trauma' refers to a blow that inflicts an injury or an event that provokes an injury. Also, the term 'trauma' is commonly used to refer to the stress that results from the blow. Indeed, trauma is considered a constellation of life experiences and discrete happenings (Erikson, 1995, p. 185). These experiences are often deplorable or abnormal happenings which make life unpredictable. When such abnormalities occur, initial responses, according to Neal (1998), are shock and/or disbelief, followed by chaos and uncertainty (p. 4). Moreover, such incidents leave individuals with psychological wounds, which create further problems. Consequently, traumatic wounds inflicted on individuals can combine to form a complex culture that is more than the sum of the private wounds that create it.

For some victims, the sense of difference - that is, difference from people who have not experienced such a stressful event - can become a kind of calling, a status, whereby victims are drawn to others similarly marked. In Erikson's (1995) words, this "estrangement becomes the basis of communality" (p. 186) for the victims. Similarly, for Neal (1998), this kind of trauma is shared collectively and frequently and has a cohesive effect as individuals gather in small and intimate groups to reflect on the tragic experience and its consequence on present realities (p. 4).

The function and significance of these communities created by victims is to provide a way of cushioning the pain, to offer a context for intimacy and to serve as the repository for bonding traditions (Neal, 1998, p. 188). For Erikson, it is not the specific nature of the incidents that brings people together, rather, it is the shared experience that becomes a common culture, a source of kinship. Thus, communal trauma can take two



forms: damage to the social tissues that hold human groups intact and the creation of social climates, communal moods that come to dominate a group's spirit (Erikson, 1995, p. 190). In the following sections, the author explores how the two memoirs reflect these issues.

Cultural and historical background to *Born in the Big Rains* and *Tears of the Desert*

Both authors lived in challenging situations characterised by civil war, and described briefly below, to enable a better understanding of their experience.

Born in the Big Rains by Fadumo Korn

During Siad Barre's rule, Somalia deteriorated into a defacto state due to clan-based conflicts: "Confrontation between the government and a coalition of clan-based forces [...] weakened the government internally and led to the overthrow of Said Barre in 1991" (Nyadera and Ahmed, 2020, p. 154).

Faduma is a daughter of a nomadic family in Somalia, where she encountered exciting and harmful life experiences. She was infibulated at a young age and suffered its consequences all her life. The main focus of her memoir is dedicated to remembrance of how her circumcision affected her life. This is set against the background of the civil war in Somalia during the Barre regime and the consequent disintegration of Somalia and the migration of thousands of Somalis, including herself.

Tears of the Desert by Halima Bashar

Sudan has, also, been torn by civil war which has claimed - and is still claiming - the lives of many men and women. The Islamic fundamentalist government had sought to dominate the minorities in the south and amass the resources of the nation until the civil war divided it into two independent nations: Sudan and South Sudan. In particular, the conflict in Darfur is one of the most tragic incidents that ever happened in Sudan, although similar events have been witnessed in the country since the 1960's. The root cause of these conflicts has always been issues of power and resource. Despite the relative peace, El-Gack (2016) demonstrates that the 2003 conflict still continues and may sometime cause the separation of Darfur from Sudan.

Tears of the Desert recounts the life and experience of Halima Bashar amidst the conflict. Halima was born to the Zaghawa tribe, a black Sudanese tribe and was a success-



ful student who made it to university to study to be a medical doctor. In the middle of her studies, however, this fierce and bloody conflict broke out and her family and tribe fell victim to the *Janjaweed*, a junta of Arab descent. Halima was raped and tortured by the junta which contributed to her fleeing the country.

Discussion

Fadumo's society in Somalia values circumcision as a cultural practice which is assumed by her tribe to have multiple benefits that are both cultural and economic. Being a mark of beauty and womanhood, it is a good source of income for excisors, the women who perform the mutilation (Korn & Eichhorst, 2006, p. 139). While it is believed to eliminate libido and help protect female morals, the most basic reason is that, "Somalis have their daughters circumcised to make them beautiful and clean" (p. 41). Moreover, when girls get circumcised, they get respect from their peers. A good illustration of this is described when Fadumo was living with her uncle in Mogadishu and met the daughters of European diplomats, including those of the then Spanish Ambassador in Mogadishu. She was surprised to discover that the girls were not circumcised and thought this worth sharing with her friends at school because, for her, not being circumcised meant a girl is filthy (p. 77). These feelings exemplify how circumcision contributes to Somali girls developing self-esteem.

Circumcised girls also enjoy certain privileges in their work life. In Fadumo's culture, "as soon as a girl is circumcised, she is allowed to slaughter goats or bring her father a ritual water before he prays" (Korn & Eichhorst, 2006, p. 26). Accordingly, as a child, Fadumo had known circumcised girls who had such privileges in her family: "my cousin Nadifo...was big and already circumcised and had permission to take care of the animals all by herself" (p. 15). This might have encouraged Fadumo to undergo circumcision when she was "seven years old" (p. 36). She knew it was a symbol of purity, yet she also knew that "it was going to be painful" (p. 36) because she had often seen girls crying and falling ill after circumcision.

Circumcision of a girl is traumatic because no anaesthesia is used during the process, which also causes more pain afterwards. In her autobiography, *Desert Flower* (1998), Waris Dirie - a Somali model, author, actress and human rights activist - explains that: "The health problems I've coped with since my circumcision also plague millions of girls and women throughout the world. Because of the ritual of ignorance, most of the women on the continent of Africa live their lives in pain" (Dirie 1998, p. 213).



As Fadumo recollects, the cutting “was a lightning bolt to the head...I bucked under an all-consuming, devouring pain” (Korn & Eichhorst, 2006, p. 38). This experience exemplifies the trauma of all girls who are circumcised. Once over the pain of the cutting, girls continue to suffer difficulty in urinating. Most importantly, what makes circumcision in Somalia especially complex, compared to in Africa, Asia, United States and Europe, is that most of the “girls are subjected to infibulation” (p. 41), an extreme form of circumcision.

Weeks after her circumcision, instead of recovering, Fadumo lost her appetite and all her body ached; she was not able to play and enjoy life as her friends were doing (Korn & Eichhorst, 2006, p. 44-45). The pain lasted one year. She was barely able to walk and developed serious pain in her toes, knees and ankles. Consequently, she travelled to Mogadishu with her father to get better treatment, where a Togolese doctor diagnosed rheumatism in her fingers (Korn & Eichhorst, 2006, p. 79). He was unable to cure her and she went to Rome for three months, again seeking treatment - but without success. She travelled to Germany, but again found no cure.

However, it was in Germany that she met her husband, Walter, who she later married in a simple ceremony compared with “the intoxicating celebrations for which parents saved for years so that for days they could fete hundreds of guests” (Korn & Eichhorst, 2006, p. 117). In addition to her nostalgia for her culture and excitement of getting married, Fadumo was worried about the Somali custom of opening the stitch because it was burned to her mind that this takes place on a bride’s wedding night, with the bride, an aunt, mother in-law or the groom doing the opening. When she met Walter, her vagina was sewn and it needed to be opened for her to have sex. Even though she knew the procedure in Germany would be relatively safe and quick, she had painful memories of her circumcision in Somalia: “I remained fearful of the excisor’s dirty fingers and the pain they had wrought” (p. 123).

Even after the surgery was successfully completed, she was unable “to produce a drop [of urine], remembering how the sting of the urine felt running over an open wound” (p. 124). The delivery of her son, little Philip, was also dramatic and painful (p. 145). Before his birth, she dreamed “every night the same kinds of pictures of her womb sewn shut, and the child unable to be born and dying” (p. 143). Painful memories of her circumcision were always there. Eventually, she had to give birth with a Caesarean operation. These memories demonstrate that the wounds in our bodies heal overtime, yet the wounds in our minds may take longer to heal - or may not heal at all.



Marja Tiilikainen and Janneke Johansson (2008) approach trauma by comparing the different situations for circumcised women in Somalia and abroad. In Somalia, the cutting of the woman's outer genitalia conveys cultural value. However, when they settle abroad, these women start to feel physically diminished and of less worth (p. 67). Likewise, Fadumo was comfortable speaking about her circumcision while she was a little girl among Somalis. Once she permanently settled in Germany, Fadumo no longer enjoyed the cultural benefits of circumcision; only the pain occupied her mind.

Fadumo used all means - from learning how to live with trauma to working with people and institutions - to stop circumcision and similar cultural practices that were perilous for women. One of her achievements was her promotion of ethnomedicine to improve communication between doctors and patients from different cultures because Somali women are inhibited regarding sharing gynaecological illness with doctors (Korn & Eichhorst, 2006, p. 156).

Even though some victims, such as herself and Waris Dirie, contributed to the fight against the common threat of FGM (Korn & Eichhorst, 2006, p. 157), in Somalia, the challenge is, yet, huge because women have few rights within Islamic culture. Fadumo had to work hard to convince Somali men that circumcision is never mentioned in holy Qur'an (p. 166) and that they should help in ending the practice. She also worked in collaboration with FORWARD (p. 159), a foundation for women's health research and development, whose services were widely accessible, including in Ethiopia (p. 163). Her work demonstrated that circumcision causes trauma, and that the trauma is shared by women of all ages who have been circumcised.

As in Somalia, circumcision is an important and deeply rooted socio-cultural facet of the Sudanese Zaghawa tribe. As Halima explains, "all girls in the tribe were circumcised, and most of them experienced it while they were ten or eleven years old" (Bashar, 2008, p. 65). The Zaghawa celebrated circumcision as a mark of the passage from girlhood to womanhood; however, as Halima tells her readers, it was never a pleasant experience for the women who went through it. At times, the children suffered a cut vein or an infection which sometimes killed them (p. 71). The memoir of her personal trauma inflicted by circumcision has similarities to that of Faduma, as presented below.

Halima remembers and explains that her circumcision was as painful as only a circumcised woman could imagine: "with the first slash of the razor blade, a bolt of agony shot through me like nothing I had ever experienced. I let out a bloodcurdling scream, and as I did so I started kicking and fighting to get free. But all that happened was the



huge woman bore down on me, clamping my legs in her vice-like grip” (Bashar, 2008, p. 67). This makes clear the major physical pain she felt. This experience has, hence, influenced her private and social life greatly.

However, like Faduma, Halima was not just victim of circumcision and the other harmful practices performed on her. She fought it whenever she had the chance. Being aware of the large number of circumcised women in her village and the great need for appropriate healthcare facilities (Bashar, 2008, p. 186), she decided to study gynaecology. Since, in her young life, she saw mothers and babies in her village dying and getting ill from childbirth, of the four subjects of a medical degree at her university, Halima chose to specialize in gynaecology. This decision marked a change in her identity - from a victim to a problem solver.

Conclusion

As Tepora (2014) asserts, the exploration of experiences of trauma needs to emphasize recovery, reconciliation and healing without downplaying the essentially violent nature of the experiences (p. 487). Memory is an important tool that women use to come to terms with a traumatized past, either as individuals or as a specific group. The traumatic memories of both authors are, thus, important in terms of creating awareness about the physical and psychological harm the practice caused them and the many other circumcised women. Moreover, as Erikson (1995) and Faduma’s story demonstrate, the traumatic experience can attract other victims who have experienced honour-based violence and thus create supportive communities. Similarly, Halima’s story shows how the experience spurred her to learn medicine. Thus, both women found ways to use their experience constructively.

References

- Bashar, H. (2008). *Tears of the Desert: A memoir of survival in Darfur*. One World.
- Dirie, W. & Miller, C. (1998). *Desert Flower: The extraordinary journey of a desert nomad*. William Morrow.
- Erikson, K. (1995). Notes on trauma and community. In C. Caruth (Ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (pp. 183-199). Johns Hopkins University Press.



- Gill, A. (2014). Introduction: 'Honour' and 'honour'-based violence: Challenging common assumptions. In A. Gill, C. Strange & K. Roberts (Eds.), *'Honour' killing and violence: Theory, policy and practice* (pp. 1-23). Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gregory, G. A., Fox, J. & Howard, B. K. (2020). Honour-based violence: Awareness and recognition. *Paediatrics and Child Health*, 30(11), 365–370. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paed.2020.08.001>
- Korn, F. & Eichhorst, S. (2006). *Born in the Big Rains: A memoir of Somalia and survival* (T. Levin, Trans.). Feminist Press at the City University of New York.
- Neal, Arthur G. (1998). *National trauma and collective memory: Major events in the American history*. M.E. Sharpe Inc.
- Tepora, T. (2014). Coming to Terms with Violence: Sacrifice, collective memory and reconciliation in inter-war Finland. *Scandinavian Journal of History*, 39(4), 487-509, DOI: 10.1080/03468755.2014.938111
- Tiilikainen, M. & Johansson, J. (2008). Introduction. *Finnish Journal of Ethnicity and Migration*, 3(2). The Society for the Study of Ethnic Relations and International Migration (ETMU).

Declarations

Competing interests

The author declares that there is no conflict of interests.



Supporting African Christian Women Who Have Experienced Intimate Partner Violence in England: Service Providers' Perspective

Pamela Aben Shelley¹

Abstract

Intimate partner violence (IPV) also happens in African Christian families, and some of these women seek support from service providers. This study aimed to explore service providers' experiences in supporting African Christian women survivors of IPV in England in order to make recommendations for practice, policy development and future research. This study utilised an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) approach to explore the experiences of nine service providers (social workers, psychotherapists, and managers of women's aid agencies). The interviews were conducted via Zoom and telephone, they were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, and subsequently analysed using IPA.

The researcher found that service providers: 1) acknowledge that Christianity is part of a woman's identity; 2) recognise the vital role clergy play in supporting African Christian women survivors of IPV; 3) are aware of the intersection of individual, Christian and cultural belief factors that hinder African Christian women survivors of IPV from leaving abusive relationships and they advocate for an intersectional approach to effectively address IPV; and 4) seek collaboration with clergy which is currently lacking in order to provide holistic support to these women.

Service providers who support Christian women should have training on Christianity, collaborate with clergy and offer training on IPV to the clergy in order to effectively address IPV in the African Christian community.

Keywords: *Service providers, social workers, psychotherapists, managers of women's aid agencies, intimate partner violence, partner abuse, support*

¹ Doctoral Researcher, Brunel University London, UK



Introduction

This paper presents part of the preliminary findings of the service providers' perspective from my study. It also presents a brief background of the study, the methodology and the preliminary results, a discussion of superordinate theme one and conclusions.

Background of the Study

Intimate partner violence (IPV) does happen in African Christian families. Several researchers have found that Christian women have experienced sexual, physical, financial, emotional and spiritual abuse from their male partners or husbands (Aune & Barnes, 2018; Evangelical Church Alliance Report, 2012; Kagou & Kamgno, 2015; Nevhutanda, 2019; Office for National Statistics, 2018; Takyi & Lamptey, 2020; Wang et al., 2009). Some Christian women survivors of IPV seek formal support from service providers.

Service providers deliver trauma-informed support to these women (Beecheno, 2021; Sevcik et al., 2015; Standing Together Against Violence, 2020; Thompson, 2001). Nevertheless, researchers argue that some service providers are unable to understand Christian women's spiritual needs and the critical role clergy play in supporting these women (Drumm et al., 2014; Faith & VAWG Coalition, 2020; Nason-Clark et al., 2018). Consequently, some Christian women refrain from seeking support from service providers, which hinders their recovery and healing (Drumm et al., 2013). Therefore, service providers' understanding of the intersection of Christianity and IPV will shape the support they provide to African Christian women survivors of IPV. Nevertheless, there is limited research on the experiences of service providers in supporting African Christian women survivors of IPV.

Most scholars have acknowledged the intersection of Christianity and IPV and concluded that the misinterpretation of biblical scriptures on male headship, female submission, forgiveness, divorce and suffering are contributory factors to IPV (Beecheno, 2021; Houston-Kolnik et al., 2019; Peterson, 2009; Nason-Clark et al., 2018; Shaw et al., 2022; Tedder & Smith, 2018; Zust et al., 2017). For instance, in the UK, Nigerian women survivors of sexual abuse reported that Christian beliefs reinforce the notion of male superiority (Ajayi et al., 2022). Likewise, some African women survivors of IPV in the UK reported that their Christian beliefs hinder them from leaving abusive relationships (Heron et al., 2022). A woman's Christian beliefs will therefore shape her experience and disclosure of IPV, as well as her help-seeking behaviours and journey of healing and recovery.



Sadly, however, most service providers cannot conduct Christian and spiritual needs assessments of Christian women who have experienced IPV. It is, therefore, important for clinicians to have an understanding of scriptural principles on gender roles, submission and forgiveness in order to provide culturally competent services to their Christian clients (Ringel & Park, 2008). Furthermore, Beecheno (2021) recommends that secular service providers adopt an intersectional feminist approach to effectively address IPV in the Christian community.

The Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown led to an unprecedented increase in the rate of IPV (Refuge, 2020), an increased workload for service providers and reduced physical contact with women survivors. However, there is limited literature on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown on service providers' roles in supporting African Christian women survivors of IPV in England.

What is the Problem?

There is scarce research on service providers' experiences in supporting African Christian women survivors of IPV in England. There is, therefore, a need to explore how service providers support these women.

Purpose

The study aimed to explore service providers' experiences in supporting African Christian women survivors of intimate partner violence in England in order to make recommendations for practice, policy development and future research.

Research Questions

In an effort to understand how service providers support African Christian women survivors of IPV, a number of questions were developed based on the literature review that address several areas related to service providers' experiences. The researcher was interested in answering the question: What are the experiences of service providers in supporting African Christian women who have experienced intimate partner violence in England?

To answer the main question the following sub-questions were asked:

1. How do service providers support African Christian women survivors of intimate partner violence?
2. How do service providers work in collaboration with clergy to support African



Christian women survivors of intimate partner violence?

3. What is the impact of Covid-19 on their role in supporting African Christian women who have experienced intimate partner violence?

Significance of the Study

It was envisaged that the findings of this study would make a unique contribution to expanding the body of knowledge on IPV and Christianity in England, which might benefit African Christian women survivors of IPV, clergy, service providers and anyone that supports Christian women survivors of IPV. Furthermore, the findings may influence future policy directions in the African Christian community in England and future research.

Ethical Considerations

The College of Health Medicine and Life Sciences, Brunel University London, granted ethical approval for the research. The Ethics Committee approved all the documentation shared with the participants. Informed consent was obtained from each participant in the study. Participants were reminded of their right to withdraw from the study until the data analysis stage. They were also given pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality.

Methodology

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith et al., 2009) through an intersectional feminist lens (Crenshaw, 1991) was used to explore the experiences of nine service providers. These service providers were selected to participate in the study based on their experiences in supporting African Christian women survivors of IPV. They were recruited from women's aid agencies, psychotherapist associations websites and county councils in Greater London, the East Midlands, and the east of England. However, the service providers' accounts are based solely on their experiences and do not represent the agencies for which they worked.

Participants represented a range of IPV service agencies: manager of generic women's aid agency (1): manager of specialist women's aid agencies (2): manager of women's refuge with Christian ethos (1): family and child social workers (2): psychotherapist (1): family psychotherapist (1) and Christian psychotherapist (1). All the participants were female. Their employment service ranged between six and twenty years. All partici-



participants had attended training on cultural diversity with a brief training on religion, and, coincidentally, they were all Christians. Semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom and telephone. Each interview was audio recorded, transcribed, and analysed using IPA. The preliminary findings are presented below.

Preliminary Findings

Six superordinate themes emerged from the data. These themes are:

1. The role of the service providers in supporting African Christian women survivors of IPV.
2. The reasons African Christian women do not leave abusive relationships.
3. The service providers' acknowledgement of the clergy's role in supporting African Christian women survivors of IPV.
4. The challenges of supporting African Christian women survivors of IPV.
5. The possible solutions to address IPV.
6. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on IPV.

For this presentation and article, the researcher addresses research question one.

Addressing Research Question One: How do Service Providers Support African Christian Women Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence?

In addressing this research question, superordinate theme one, the role of the service providers in supporting African Christian women survivors of IPV, emerged from the data. This theme is presented and discussed below. Due to the word count limitation participants' verbatim quotes will not be presented in the findings.

Superordinate Theme One: the Role of the Service Providers in Supporting African Christian Women Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence

This superordinate theme emerged because all participants, managers of women's aid agencies, social workers and psychotherapists described how they support African Christian women survivors of IPV. The following sub-themes emerged from this superordinate theme: listening to the woman's story: Christianity is part of the woman's identity: striving to meet spiritual needs and multiagency working. These sub-themes



are discussed below.

Sub-theme One: Listening to the Woman's Story

All participants stated that their first step was to listen to African Christian women's stories of IPV to assess the situation and provide them with appropriate support. Participants reported that listening to women's stories with empathy, respect and compassion, and being non-judgemental enabled them to build a trustful and respectful relationship with the women; this enabled them to open up and discuss their Christian beliefs and spiritual needs. Consequently, the participants were able to identify and address the women's spiritual needs. *This finding has not been reported in the literature on IPV in the Christian and African Christian communities. However, it is in line with Brown et al.'s, (2013) study, where psychotherapists used basic therapeutic skills such as empathy and a non-judgemental and accepting attitude, which made it possible to engage clients on a religious level. This finding therefore extends the knowledge into the context of IPV in the African Christian community.*

Sub-theme Two: Christianity is Part of a Christian Woman's Identity

The research findings indicate that all the social workers, psychotherapists and managers of women's aid agencies who participated in this study acknowledged that Christianity is part of an African Christian woman's identity and needs to be incorporated into her support. For instance, Charity, a manager of a specialist women's aid agency, emphasised that "many organisations need to recognise that Christianity is very important, it's part of the identity of the person". This finding corroborates those of several studies where social workers, psychologists, police and other professionals (Wendt, 2008), clinicians (Ringel & Park, 2008) and domestic violence and abuse staff and counsellors (Sevcik et al., 2015) acknowledged that a Christian woman's identity influences her journey of recovery and healing from IPV. In this study, an African woman's Christian worldview and beliefs on marriage, submission, forgiveness and divorce were found to shape her experience of IPV and her decision to seek help and/or leave an abusive relationship. This study therefore extends this knowledge into the African Christian community.

Sub-theme Three: Striving to Meet the Christian Woman's Spiritual Needs

All participants used trauma-informed counselling approaches such as psychosocial and educational support, a self-determination approach, motivational interviewing, a person-centred approach and biblical counselling. For example, Grace used motivatio-



nal interviewing and curiosity approaches to challenge and address Christian women's beliefs on husband headship and wife submission. This finding is similar to findings from Beecheno's (2021) study, where a psychotherapist and social worker used discursive techniques suited to Christian values to encourage Christian women to think differently and question whether the abuse they experienced is mandated by God, and to reinterpret the scriptures from a feminist perspective. All participants in this study had a Christian background and scriptural understanding and were therefore able to speak using appropriate Christian language to which these women could relate.

It would have improved the study if professionals or service providers from other faith backgrounds or of no faith had been included to discuss how they support Christian women. However, this finding supports the need for service providers to have knowledge about Christian beliefs around male dominance, submission, marriage, forgiveness and divorce to effectively address IPV in the African Christian community. This study's finding highlights the need for further research on non-Christian or non-religious service providers' experiences in supporting Christian women survivors of IPV.

Most participants entered into African Christian survivors' worldviews, explored their beliefs and practices such as prayer, Bible study, church attendance and participation in church activities, and incorporated these into the survivors' care. For example, Rinah, a Christian psychotherapist, uses biblical scriptures to counsel survivors and to encourage them to pray, study the Bible, attend church services and meet Christian friends. Similarly, Grace, a manager of a women's refuge with a Christian ethos, states that some staff pray for women, and chaplains provide spiritual support to the women. Likewise, Blessing, a specialist women's aid agency manager, leverages the Christian community as a support network for these women. Furthermore, participants acknowledged that every African Christian woman has unique IPV experiences and consequences. Therefore, they adopt an intersectional feminist approach to give every Christian woman individualised support.

Sub-theme Four: Multi-agency Working

Most participants in this study collaborated with other professionals and agencies to effectively support these women. This finding is similar to those from a study of Lea and Callaghan (2016), in which service providers (domestic abuse staff, police, children's services staff, judiciary) provided effective holistic support to survivors of IPV through authentic partnership working across multiple agencies. However, in this study, only two participants – Blessing (manager of a specialist women's aid agency), and





Grace (manager of a women's refuge with a Christian ethos) actively collaborated with clergy to support African Christian women survivors. Therefore, service providers and clergy must adopt a community coordinated approach to provide comprehensive care to these women (Faith & VAWG Coalition, 2020; Nason-Clark et al., 2018; Sevcik et al., 2015; Standing Together, 2020). The collaboration between service providers and clergy has been explored in superordinate themes four and five but is not discussed in this paper.

Limitations

This study focuses on a small sample comprising of nine service providers: social workers, psychotherapists, and managers of women's aid agencies, all of whom had a personal Christian background; therefore, the findings may not reflect the practices or understanding of non-Christian service providers. It is possible that non-Christian service providers may not understand the intersection of Christianity and IPV, and may not, therefore, be able to incorporate the women's Christian beliefs and practices into their care. Finally, the themes generated emerged from the service providers' self-reported stories and experiences; hence, these recollections may lack certain details, which have, therefore, not been included in the data.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Despite the study's limitations, it provides valuable insights into the intervention into and prevention of IPV. The service providers acknowledged that an African Christian woman's Christian beliefs are part of her identity and stated that they strove to meet her spiritual needs. Therefore, with training on religion and Christianity, service providers can incorporate an African woman's Christian beliefs into her care to provide holistic support.

The researcher made some recommendations for practice and further research. First, service providers who support African Christian women survivors of IPV should have training on the intersection of Christianity with IPV and other factors in order to effectively support these women. Second, service providers and other professionals should collaborate with conservative African clergy and other clergy to provide holistic care to African Christian women survivors of intimate partner violence. Finally, further research is required to explore the experiences of non-Christian and no-faith service providers in supporting African Christian women survivors of IPV to remedy the dearth of research



on IPV in the Christian community, particularly in the African Christian community. The findings contribute to the literature on IPV and Christianity by providing an in-depth understanding of service providers' experiences as responders to IPV.

References

- Ajayi, C.E., Chantler, K. & Radford, L. (2022). The role of cultural beliefs, norms, and practices in Nigerian women's experiences of sexual abuse and violence. *Violence Against Women*, 28(2), 465-486.
- Aune, K. & Barnes, R. (2018). In Churches Too: Church responses to domestic abuse - a case study of Cumbria.
- Beecheno, K. (2021). Conservative Christianity and Intimate Partner Violence in Brazil: Using Feminism to Question Patriarchal Interpretation of Religion. *Religion and Gender*, 11 (2), 245-264. DOI:10.1163/18785417-bja10007
- Brown O., Elkonin, D. & Naicker, S. (2013). The Use of Religion and Spirituality in Psychotherapy: Enablers and Barriers. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 52(4), 1131-1146. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24485123>
- Clato-Day, S.R.M. (2020). *Examining clergy responses to parishioners who experience domestic violence: A phenomenological study*. (Doctoral dissertation, Northcentral University).
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Identity politics, intersectionality, and violence against women. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241-1299.
- Drumm, R., Popescu, M., Cooper, L., Trecartin, S., Seifert, M., Foster, T. & Kilcher, C. (2014). "God just brought me through it": Spiritual coping strategies for resilience among intimate partner violence survivors. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 42(4), 385-394.
- Dyer, J. (2010). Challenging assumptions: Clergy perspectives and practices regarding intimate partner violence. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 29(1), 33-48.
- Evangelical Alliance Report (2012). 21st Century evangelicals: How's the Family? *London Evangelical Alliance*. Retrieved from <http://www.eauk.org/church/resources/snapshot/how-the-family.cfm>
- Faith and VAWG Coalition (2020). Keeping The Faith: What survivors from faith communities want us to know. [KeepingtheFaithFINAL.pdf \(contentfiles.net\)](#)
- Heron, R.L., Eisma, M. & Browne, K. (2022). Why do female domestic violence victims remain in or leave abusive relationships? A qualitative study. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 31(5), 677-694.



- Houston-Kolnik, J.D., Todd, N.R., & Greeson, M.R. (2019). Overcoming the “Holy Hush”: A Qualitative Examination of Protestant Christian Leaders’ Responses to Intimate Partner Violence. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 63, 135–152. DOI 10.1002/ajcp.12278. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15426432.2014.900373>
- Kagou, A.J.A. & Kamgno, H.K. (2015). ‘First Intimate Physical Violence and Fertility in Cameroon’. In Djamba, Y.K and Kimuna, SR, (Eds.). *Gender Based Violence Perspective from Africa, Middle East and India*. Springer International Publishing, 17-32. DOI:10.1080/17441692.2012.688061.
- Lea, S.J. & Callaghan, L. (2016). “It Gave Me My Life Back”: An Evaluation of a Specialist Legal Domestic Abuse Service. *Violence Against Women*, 22(6), 704-721. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801215610013>
- Nason-Clark, N. (2009). Christianity and the experience of domestic. *Social Work & Christianity*, 36(4), 379-393.
- Nason-Clark, N., Fisher-Townsend, B., Holtmann, C. & McMullin, S. (2018). *Religion and Intimate Partner Violence: Understanding the challenges and proposing solutions*. Oxford University Press.
- Nevhutanda, T.R. (2019). Guidelines for support to survivors of intimate partner violence for church leaders in selected Pentecostal churches in South Africa (Doctoral dissertation, North-West University (South Africa)). Retrieved from <https://respository.nwu.ac.za/handle/10394/3544>
- Office for National Statistics (2018). *Domestic abuse: findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales: year ending March 2017*. Published online: ONS.
- Peterson, E. (2009). Addressing Domestic Violence: Challenges Experienced by Anglican Clergy in the Diocese of Cape Town; South Africa. *Social Work & Christianity*, 36(4), 449-469.
- Refuge (2020). Refuge sees calls and contacts to National Domestic Abuse Helpline rise by 120% overnight. Retrieved from <https://www.refuge.org.uk/refuge-sees-calls-and-contacts-to-national-domestic-abuse-helpline-rise-by-120-overnight/> Accessed 27 Sept 2020.
- Ringel, S. & Park, J. (2008). Intimate partner violence in the Evangelical community: Faith-Based interventions and implications for practice. *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*, 27(4), 341-360.
- Sevcik, I., Rothery, M., Nason-Clark, N. & Pynn, R. (2015). *Overcoming conflicting loyalties: Intimate partner violence, community resources, and faith*. University of Alberta.
- Shaw, A. R., Enriquez, M., Bloom, T., Berkley-Patton, J. & Vidoni, E. D. (2022). We Are Our Sister’s Keeper: The Experience of Black Female Clergy Responding to Intimate Partner Violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 37 (1-2) NP968-NP990. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260520918574>
- Smith, J.A., Flower, P. & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: Theory, Method and Research*. Sage.



- Standing Together against domestic abuse (2020) *In Search of Excellence: A refreshed guide to effective domestic abuse partnership work – The Coordinated Community Response (CCR)*. Retrieved from <https://static1squarespace.com/static/5ee0be2588f1e349401c832c/t/6087f76f7e98573c85c5e3fe/1619523443499>
- Takyi, B.K. & Lamptey, E. (2020). Faith and Marital Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa: Exploring the Links Between Religious Affiliation and Intimate Partner Violence Among Women in Ghana. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 35(1-5), 22-52. doi:10.1177/0886260516676476
- Tedder, A M., & Smith, DE. (2018). A Phenomenological Study: Black Clergy Leaders' Response to Violence against Women. *Pastoral Psychology*, 67, 429-442. DOI: 10.1007/s11089-018-0821-5.
- Thompson, E.I. (2001). Service Providers' and Catholic Clergy's Responses to Partner Violence. *Journal of Religion & Abuse*, 3(1-2), 71-91. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1300/J154v03n01_05
- Wang, M.C., Horne, S.G., Levitt, H.M., & Klesges, L.M. (2009). Christian Women in IPV Relationships: An Exploratory Study of Religious Factors. *Journal of Psychology & Christianity*, 28(3), 224-235.
- Wendt, S. (2008). Christianity and domestic violence: Feminist poststructuralist perspectives. *Affilia: Journal of Women & Social Work*, 23(2), 144–155. doi:10.1177/0886109908314326.
- Zust, B.L., Housley, J. & Klatke, A. (2017). Evangelical Christian Pastors' Lived Experiences of Counselling Victims/Survivors of Domestic Violence'. *Pastoral Psychology*, 66, 675-687. DOI: 1007/s11089-017-0781-1.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest. The author is responsible for the content and writing of this article. The author did not receive any funding to conduct this study.

Acknowledgements

I thank my supervisors, Prof. Holly Nelson Becker and Dr Wendy Martin, for their supervision, guidance and mentoring throughout my study, and Prof. Pam Alldred for her supervision and support in the first year of my PhD journey. Finally, I sincerely appreciate the participants who shared their valuable experiences.



The status of women in the Ethiopian linguistics: a community reflective perspective

Mulugeta Seyoum

Abstract

Ethiopia is a historic and ancient country that is home to a great diversity of linguistic societies. The literature that reflects the nation's history captures the role of women and their social, political, cultural, and religious contributions to the community. Cultural linguistics explores the relationship between language and cultural conceptualization. A body of evidence suggests how people use gendered markers, words, including personal pronouns, not only to express their beliefs around gender but also to shape the way they see the social world and their place in it as a woman or a man. Just like any other culture, oral tradition is passed from generation to the next, both vertically and horizontally. Moreover, as a medium of communication, language expresses hidden notions of power. There are proverbs, linguistic literatures and other written and unwritten resources that can promote the contributions of women in every aspects of human life. Synthesizing gender dimensions of linguistic expressions among diverse Ethiopian ethnic groups, in the quest to find solutions for practice is very important. Likewise, proverbs and allegorical discourses focusing on women in Ethiopia are often negative. We recommended that society should be mindful of disparaging derogatory linguistics used against women in the country. This is because language powerfully affects human thinking and brings gender bias attitudes. In this regard, all concerned parties — including female writers, lawyers, politicians, social activists, journalists, actors, mothers, sisters, and other professionals—should take the lead in the campaign to combat language that dissuades women from participating actively in society.



Gender Based Violence and Reproductive Health in Ethiopia: Current Challenges and Responses

Tadesse A. Zerfu

Abstract

GBV is a complex and multifaceted problem affecting humans regardless of age, gender, economic background, nationality, or religion. It frequently has negative effects causing women, who often experience it, to suffer long-term physical, psychological, and social health problems. GBV may lead to negative physical health problems such as injury, unintended pregnancy and complications, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV/AIDS, increased risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD), and even death. It also causes social isolation leading to mental health problems such as stress, anxiety, embarrassment, sadness, post-traumatic stress disorder, drug abuse and suicide. In Ethiopia, one in three women experience physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, and two-third experience female genital mutilation (FGM). Furthermore, a significant proportion of Ethiopian women, particularly girls, face harmful traditional practices such as early marriage and childbearing and domestic violence. Poverty, malnutrition, poor access to health care services and sanitation, poor reproductive health outcomes, and limited access to information are the faces of gender-related challenges affecting the lives of millions of women in Ethiopia. Despite efforts made to address GBV in the health system, Ethiopia still needs to strengthen effort to combat GBV related challenges. Interventions may include stronger community's awareness and better and holistic treatment of GBV victims. This requires fulfilling essential infrastructure, services integration and ensuring privacy and confidentiality.



Capitalizing on socio-legal assets to address Gender inequalities in Ethiopia

Rahel Kassa

Abstract

Ensuring gender equality and maintaining gender justice is of paramount importance to the realization of human rights for all. This entails tapping into the cultural and contemporary legal norms, assets, and shields to promote gender equality and gender justice in developing countries such as Ethiopia. The global human development shows that Ethiopia is among countries with low Gender Development Index scoring 0.846 and ranking 121st out of 160 countries on GNI scoring 0.502. Aiming to bridge these gaps, Ethiopia has stepped up multiple efforts to conform to legislative and policy requirements. Yet, even after ratification of several international human right instruments and after the ratification of the 1995 constitution, such measures remain to be insufficient. Tradition ensures continuity and conformity of ancestor's norms and signifies aspects of culture which indicates way of thinking accompanied by its implementation. Utilizing the indigenous cultural assets such as dispute resolution mechanisms and propitious religious norms help solve gender-related disputes and inequalities and proactively protect gender injustices. Co-mingling indigenous cultural norms and structures and embedding them in the formal legal systems could favorably guide in tackling gender-based violence and harmful practices and protect the human security of women. Likewise, consolidating gender socialization and legalization could serve in shaping the foundation. Focus on the untitled sides of the existing socio-legal assets for promoting and upholding gender equity and gender-justice not only is familiar to local communities but also ensures better protection of women's rights.



Integration of indigenous women's customary institutions fighting against gender-based violence among the Oromo communities in Ethiopia

Muluken Kassahun Amid¹

Abstract

In the Ethiopian Oromo community, there are numerous indigenous women's institutions engaged in fighting against gender-based violence (GBV), particularly in rural areas. However, their roles and contributions supporting human rights and gender equality are largely neglected. This paper investigates the role of Oromo women's customary institutions in fighting against GBV and highlights the need and challenges to integrating them into modern systems engaged in similar activities.

The research adopted a qualitative approach with an ethnographic design to understand the practice from an emic perspective. It was conducted in four zones of Oromia Regional State and the Oromo Nationality zone of Amhara Regional State. Both primary and secondary data were employed. The study explores the approach and methods of seven customary institutions - *Siinqee*, *Ateete Goraa*, *Saddeta Hanfala*, *Qanafa*, *Cifree*, *Ruufoo Marabba*, and *Gaarayyu*. These are women-led institutions, directly and indirectly engaged in protective and corrective activities and measures against GBV for girls, married and elderly women. They are legitimate, familiar, and accessible to the wider rural community compared to formal institutions. Their remedies are based on win-win solutions enforced by social sanctions imposed by women. They help fight against GBV through a bottom-up approach.

No right of women can be fully realised without contextualising approaches to the local reality according to norms the society understands and lives. However, indigenous customary women's institutions are inadequately integrated into modern approaches. Therefore, both state and non-state actors need to adopt an inclusionary and integrative approach toward these customary institutions and use them as agents of change at grassroots level.

Keywords: *GBV, indigenous women institutions, neglect, integration, agent of change*

¹ Ph.D. candidate, Addis Ababa University Center for Human Rights; Email: mulkas2003@gmail.com



Introduction

In many parts of the world, women face disproportionate structural inequalities. Moreover, they are often exposed to multiple forms of violence including physical, sexual, and psychological threats (Becker, 1999). To cope with such challenges, formal and informal women's exclusive institutions have been established at international and local levels. In Ethiopia, various women-centred, mutual support institutions have been established by different generations, alongside more formal institutions. For instance, the socio-economic women's associations, *Iddir* and *Ekub*, are customary institutions well known among diverse communities. While *Tsiwa Maheber* and *Jama'a* institutions are religious women's institutions established by Orthodox Christians and Muslim female followers, respectively (Burgess, 2013). Historically, the Women's Welfare Association (formed during the imperial regime), and the Revolutionary Ethiopian Women Association (REWA, formed during the Derg regime) were government-affiliated women's associations in Ethiopia (Burgess, 2013). Currently, Women and Children Affairs organisations have been established at federal level and regional levels (Kassahun, 2021).

Apart from the above institutions, there are informal customary exclusively women's institutions engaged in fighting against patriarchy and gender-based violence (GBV) in Ethiopia. For instance, the *Rufo Marabba* of the *Walloo*, *Siinqee* of the *Oromoo*, and *Ma-Zarsii* of the *Hamer* people are women-led customary institutions involved in dispute resolutions to ensure the right to access to justice (Kassahun, 2021). These customary institutions have unique attributes differentiating them from modern institutions involved in similar work. Firstly, they are established as per local customs. Although they have neither legal personality (legally recognized entity) nor permanent office, they are widely known and have legitimacy among the communities concerned. They are more active and vibrant in rural areas, where over three quarters of the country's population resides. They aim to provide win-win solutions, oriented on future relations for conflicting parties. Historically, they predate the formal, modern state and non-state actors engaged in ensuring women's rights and empowerment. They work on socio-economic issues, conflict resolution and human rights concerns of women and the wider society. Consequently, they serve as agents of change through bottom-up societal transformation.

Oromo is one of the largest communities in Ethiopia and has three integrated world-view concepts that interpret and guide the relationship between and among nature and human beings. These are *Ayyaana* (spiritual), *Uumaa* (nature) and *Safuu* (morality and ethics) (Megersa, 1993). Although there are some harmful practices in parts of their



society, the status and role of women are generally defined through these concepts. Spiritually, in principle, women and girls are believed to have a highly sacred and special status derived from God, called *Waayyuu* (Østebø, 2009). Disrespecting the rules of *Waayyuu* is considered a transgression of the laws of God.

Naturally, Oromo society symbolises women's reproductive role in parallel with the earth's nurturing creativity: as the land carries and feeds human beings from birth to death, the mother also procreates, carries, feeds, and nurtures the creation of God (human being) (Getahun, 2016). Hence, women should be dignified and honoured, like Mother Earth. They believe that, as there is no sunlight without the sun, there are no men without the existence of women. Ethically, the proverb, 'the honour of human beings resides in women' (*kabajni ilma namaa dubartiidha*) represents this value within Oromo society (Hussein, 2004).

In Oromo's indigenous socio-political system, termed the Gadaa system, the law of vulnerable groups is known as *Seera muka laaftu* (the law of softened wood) (Kassahun, 2021). Concerning women, the law entitles various affirmative actions to address their vulnerability and their important role in society. For instance, they are excluded from serving as soldiers to avoid endangering their lives during conflicts and wars. Moreover, if they complain about GBV, they do not have a burden of proof - their word is considered as convincing (Kassahun, 2021).

Among the various exclusively female institutions engage in eliminating gender-based discrimination and women's socio-economic empowerment, this paper investigates the role of Oromo seven women's customary institutions: *Saddeta Hanfala*, *Siinqee*, *Ateete Goraa*, *Qanafa*, *Ruufoo Marabba*, *Gaarayyu* and *Cifree*. It explores their approach and methods used in fighting against GBV and the challenges faced in integrating with modern actors engaged in the same tasks.

Research Methodology

The research is an empirical study. It adopted a qualitative approach with an ethnographic design to understand the practice from an emic perspective, which is based on understanding and interpreting facts from the perspective of a society's cultural practices. The study was conducted in four zones of the Oromia Regional State and the Oromo Nationality zone of Amhara Regional State (ANRS). Specifically, the data was collected from the *Arsii Zone* (*Tiyyoo* and *Lemu Bilbilo* woredas (districts)), *West Arsii Zone*



(*Shashamanne* city and woreda), East *Shewa* Zone (*Dugda* woreda and *Adama* city), West *Shewa* (*Ambo* city and woreda), and the ANRS Oromo Nationality Zone (*Dawa Chaffa* and *Sanbate* woredas).

Both primary and secondary data were collected using 35 semi-structured interviews, four focused group discussions, non-participant observations, audio-visual analysis and literature reviews, as well as legal and policy analyses. The key informants and research participants are the *Abbaa Gadaa* (male leaders), *Haadha Siinqee* (female leaders), elders, university scholars, journalists, officials and experts from the Culture and Tourism offices and the Women and Children's Affairs offices in the study area. The data were collected between August and October 2020.

The types and roles of Oromo indigenous women's institutions in the fight against GBV

This research identified seven indigenous women institutions that were, directly and indirectly, engaged in combatting GBV committed against women and girls. In the *Arsii* and *West Arsii* area, the married women institutions of *Saddeeta Hanfala*, *Siinqee*, *Ateete Goraa*, and *Qanafa* are commonly known and, in several areas, the four names are used interchangeably. However, they have significant differences.

Saddeeta Hanfala /Dubartii is a council of eight elected non-kin married women from the local women's social organization. This council collectively represents the interests of women in customary legislative and executive decision-making and dispute resolution processes at local level (T. Obsa, Personal Communication, 24 August 2020). It is led by *Haadha Saddeeta* (Mother of *Saddeeta*). If women or girls are abused or insulted by family members or outsiders, initially *Saddeeta* members support the case. Depending on the gravity of the offence and the offender's act of non-repentance, they organise and mobilise women to protest against the accused person and to seek justice for the victim. Attending protests is mandatory for all married women because the violation of one women's rights is seen as a violation of all women's rights. Then, men elders and *Saddeeta* women representatives jointly consider and dispose of the case through arbitration (G. Anota, Personal Communication, 25 August 2020). The offender is required to admit his fault, apologise, reconcile with and pay compensation to the victim, and slaughter animals for the participants.

The same procedure is used in *Siinqee*, *Ateete Goraa*, and *Qanafa*. However, in *Siinqee*, a difference lies in the institution being led by elected *Haadha Siinqee* (Mother of



Siinqee). All members are married women with a *Siinqee* stick, which is a sacred stick given by the mother to her bride girl on her wedding day to symbolise her transition from girlhood to womanhood (S. Dube, Personal Communication, 24 August 2020). The *Siinqee* women also gather when a son beats his mother or father; when a husband tries to stop his wife from participating in women gatherings; where a husband takes or sells his spouse's personal property of cattle gifts (called *Horii Siinqee*) or when the husband intentionally causes serious bodily injury on his wife or when he insults her or undermines her dignity (Adem, 2014). In such cases, the above procedure is followed to seek justice for the victim and punish the offender. If the alleged offender fails to compromise the process and decision imposed on him, the gathered women impose a serious curse called *Abarsa Siinqee* and collective ostracization from any social life (Kumsa, 1997). Moreover, the function of *Siinqee* and *Ateete Goraa* extend to stopping and mediating conflict among warring groups or individuals.



Picture 1: *Siinqee* women's gathering to resolve disputes with male arbitrators

Meanwhile, *Qanafa* is an exclusive institution for women that entitles special protection and treatment for post-partum mothers until six months after childbirth (BBC News Afaan Oromoo, 2021). During this period, a woman is exempted from any indoor and outdoor activities. In social life, *Qanafa* women get the privilege and special honour wherever they go outside of their home for any purpose. If a person violates such rules, they are subject to the above *Siinqee/ Ateete Goraa* liability. *Qanafa* women are identified by a special ornament tied at their foreheads (Kassahun, 2021).



Picture 2: Post-partum mother wearing a Qanafa on her forehead

Among the *Walloo Oromoo*, *Ruufoo Marabbaa /Dubarti* and *Gaarayyuu* are popular institutions for married women and unmarried girl, respectively. In the *Ruufoo Marabbaa*, women collectively engage in conflict resolution, praying and blessing God, and requesting a marriage proposal from a groom (Mohamed Z, Personal Communication, 05 August 2020). In case of GBV and other personal or group conflicts, the members of the *Ruufoo Marabbaa* intervene and consider the case to bring about justice for the victim. *Gaarayyuu* is an institution concerned with boy-girl friendships and protection; a girl enters it at her own request, with the consent of her family. The boy has the right to play with her outside the home (such as publicly performing traditional dance with her) and is responsible to protect her wherever she goes (like at the market, collecting firewood, or fetching water). If the boy or a third person harms her (including any GBV), the boy is liable whether he was at fault or not (Arbeye A, Personal Communication, 13 August 2020). However, *Gaarayyuu* friends are forbidden to marry each other. Hence, their temporary friendship lasts until she marries.



Picture 3: Gaarayyu girls wearing Irmadi - a belt symbolising that they have a Gaarayyu boyfriend



Picture 4: Cifree older women leading an Irrecha Festival

Last, but not least, *Cifree/ Haadha Caaccuu* institutions are known among the west and east Shawaa Oromoo communities (Didha G, Personal Communication, 15 September 2020).



The status of *Cifree* is given to a group of elderly women above eighty years of age. The *Cifree* women are exonerated from any household responsibilities. They are empowered to monitor and check the rightfulness of cultural rituals and resolve family and community conflicts including GBV (Kedir, 2010). They are identified by their free hairstyle, cultural cloth, pearl necklace, and the symbolic ornament they carry known as *Caaccuu*.

Challenges of integrating formal and informal institutions to realise the rights of women in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, the importance and involvement of indigenous customary institutions in realizing the rights of women are largely neglected by both state and non-state actors. Among other reasons, the hasty generalization of customary institutions as antagonists of women's rights undervalues their contribution and roles. Moreover, cultural diffusion due to urbanization, media, religion and modern education limit such cultural practices to remote rural areas, whereas governmental and NGOs working on women's rights are mainly confined to urban areas. Failure of proper legal policy and institutional frameworks or platforms to guide and regulate the integration of customary and modern institutions creates challenges to establishing a coordinated network (Kassahun, 2021). Recently, the Oromia Regional State established customary courts to integrate the informal arbitration system with the formal judiciary system. However, the 'one size fits all' approach of the law disregards the diverse nature of customary institutions from one place to another.

Concluding remarks

There are a variety of indigenous customary women's institutions that help to combat GBV through a vernacularised bottom-up approach in contrast to modern institutions' top-down approach. However, there is no adequate strategy to integrate them with modern government institutions and NGOs engaging in similar activities. No rights are fully realised without involving local actors and contextualization within the local reality; therefore, concerned stakeholders need to adopt an inclusionary and integrative approach toward valuable customary institutions in the fight to eradicate GBV.



References

- Adem, J. (2014). *Women and Indigenous Conflict Resolution Institutions in Oromia: Experience from Siinqee of the Wayyu Shanan Arsii Oromoo in Adami Tullu Jiddu Kombolcha District of the Oromia National Regional State* [MA Thesis]. Addis Ababa University.
- BBC News Afaan Oromoo (2021, April 14). *Aadaa Oromoo: "Qanafni Kabajaafi Gaachana Dubartiiti."* Retrieved September 24, 2022, from <https://www.bbc.com/afaanoromoo/oduu-56740208>
- Becker, M. (1999). Patriarchy and Inequality: Towards a Substantive Feminism. *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 3(1), 21–88.
- Burgess, G. (2013). A Hidden History: Women's Activism in Ethiopia, *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 14(1), 96–107.
- Getahun, M. (2016). Oromoo Indigenous Knowledge and Practices in Natural Resources Management: Land, Forest, and Water in Focus. *Journal of Ecosystem & Echography*, 6(2), 1–9.
- Hussein, J. W. (2004). A Cultural Representation of Women in the Oromoo Society. *African Study Monographs*, 25(3), 103–147.
- Kassahun, M. (2021). *Gadaa System and Women's Rights: The Role of Oromoo Women's Customary Institutions in Ensuring the Protection of Rights of Women*. CARD Ethiopia.
- Kedir, S. (2010). *Sirna Gadaa fi Dubartoota*. Berhanena Selam Publisher.
- Kumsa, K. (1997). The Siinqee Institution of Oromoo Women. *Journal of Oromoo Studies*, 4, 115–152.
- Megersa, G. (1993). *Knowledge, identity, and the colonizing structure: The case of the Oromoo in East and Northeast Africa* [PHD Dissertation]. SOAS University of London.
- Østebø, M. (Ed.). (2009). Wayyuu - Women's Respect and Rights Among the Arsi-Oromoo. *Proceedings of the 16th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, 2, 1049-1060.



Declarations

Competing interests

The author declares that he received a research fund from the Center for the Advancement of Rights and Democracy (CARD Ethiopia).

Acknowledgement

This research was originally conducted through the sponsorship of CARD Ethiopia's Werdwet Research fellowship. The author would like to thank CARD Ethiopia staff, data collectors and research participants for the successful completion of the research. The author would also like to extend his gratitude to anonymous reviewers of this paper.



Qur'ān Verse 4:34: Approaches to *Ḥadīth* within Premodern *Fiqh*

Mahmoud Ali Gomaa Afifi¹

Abstract

Qur'ān 4:34 is the verse that addresses the issue of marital discord and is taken to allow wife-hitting. According to this verse, the husband may discipline his recalcitrant wife through a three-step procedure: 1) advising her, 2) abandoning her sexually and 3) hitting her. As far as the issue of marital discord is concerned, Islamic tradition - particularly premodern *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) - has been criticized for being influenced by patriarchy and, hence, promoting the chastisement of women. This paper however attempts to demonstrate that the treatment of marital discord within premodern *fiqh* reflects a principled dynamic which reveals ethical concerns about spousal abuse.

Keywords: *fiqh*, Qur'ān 4:34, interpretation, ethics, wifely discipline

Introduction

This short paper argues that the ethical value of a tradition cannot be realised unless such a tradition is studied closely and on its own terms (Gadamer, 1975; Asad, 2009). Only then can the reader not only figure out the ethical underpinnings of the tradition but also understand the extent to which these ethical underpinnings informed the process of interpretation. As Karen Bauer argues, different realities might have different truths and proceed from different assumptions (Bauer, 2015, 220). Alasdair MacIntyre similarly asserts that a definition of justice must differ based on who we are and what a person's rationality requires of them in practice (MacIntyre, 1988, 2). With this in mind, two perceptions of what is ethical are not necessarily antithetical.

Qur'ān 4:34 is the verse that addresses the issue of marital discord and is taken to allow wife-hitting. According to 4:34, the husband may discipline his recalcitrant wife through a three-step procedure: 1) advising her, 2) abandoning her sexually and 3) hitting her. As far as the issue of marital discord is concerned, Islamic tradition, parti-

¹ Lancaster University, United Kingdom; Email: m.a.afifi@lancaster.ac.uk



cularly premodern fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), has been criticized for being influenced by patriarchy and, hence, promoting the chastisement of women (Ahmed, 1992, 92; Chaudhry, 2014, 97). This paper, however, attempts to demonstrate that the treatment of marital discord within premodern fiqh reflects a principled dynamic which reveals ethical concerns about spousal abuse.

The four classical Sunni schools² of premodern fiqh articulated different methodological principles, which deftly address certain relevant ethical concerns and have led to different conclusions on the issue of marital discord. The four schools studied here are the ḥanafīs, the mālikīs, the shāfi'īs, and the ḥanbalīs. More particularly, this paper traces such methodological groundings in the different approaches of the faqīhs (jurists) of each school towards ḥadīth (the Prophet's Sayings).

Interpretation of marital discord within the *ḥanafī* school

The *ḥanafī faqīhs* - as well as others - seem to consider hitting as an option only because of the general terms in which the Qur'ān seems to prescribe/allow it. According to the *ḥanafīs*, *ḥadīth* reports cannot qualify the generally stated injunctions of the Qur'ān. This would explain why the *ḥanafī faqīhs* used *ḥadīth* reports which affirm the general plain sense of Q 4:34 regarding the issues of wifely discipline and wifely obedience to the husband, while dismissing *ḥadīth* reports that resist or qualify hitting. Yet, one report by Abū Ḥanīfa (the eponym of the *ḥanafī* school) showed that his conclusion regarding marital discord was also reflective of a living tradition that appeared to be in conformity with textual evidence. I call this conformity between text and lived practice as 'prescriptive normativity', where the religious text supported the norm.

However, I have observed that late *ḥanafī faqīhs* managed to go beyond such prescriptive normativity to wield an explorative authority of interpretation. For instance, al-Kasānī (d. 587/1191)³ - unlike other *ḥanafī faqīhs* - seemed to develop a *ḥadīth* discourse whereby he attempted to restrict the husband's authority to discipline his wife. In the course of dealing with the rulings of marriage, al-Kasānī seeks to impose

2 These four schools are known as *madhāhib* or schools of Islamic legal thought, which appeared in the ninth century and gained affiliations from laypeople and students of knowledge. The four schools are recognized as major references of Islamic rulings that make the bulk of Islamic law. Each school is named after a person who is said to be the originator of its rules and its law-making philosophy. The *ḥanafī* school is named after Abū Ḥanīfa (d. 150/767) based in Iraq, the *mālikī* school is named after Mālik (d. 179/795) based in Medina, the *shāfi'ī* school is named after al-Shāfi'ī (d.204/820) based in Iraq then Egypt, and the *ḥanbalī* school is named after Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) based in Iraq.

3 The two dates refer to the Gregorian and Islamic calendars, respectively.



constraints on the act of wifely discipline in six ways: 1) making the husband's authority to discipline his wife contingent on her *nushūz* (recalcitrance against the husband); 2) emphasizing the gradual process of discipline with its three steps; 3) defining hitting to be un-severe/non-injurious/not disgraceful; 4) assuming the permissibility of hitting being conditional on its effective result in settling *nushūz*; 5) he concludes his elaboration on the previous points with a section that mandates both the husband and the wife to treat each other according to the principle of *ma'rūf* (kindness); and 6) he cites no *ḥadīth* regarding wife's *nushūz* or obedience while quoting the Prophet only for his teaching to the Muslim male community: The best of you is the best to their wife (Al-Kasānī, 1910, 2/334).

The *mālikī fiqh*: husbandly discipline

An explorative hermeneutics of marital discord in connection with *ḥadīth* is further applied in the *mālikī fiqh* tradition. While *mālikī* scholars paid high regard to *ḥadīth* reports, they would generally assess the textual evidence (including *ḥadīth* reports) against the overall interests of the Muslim community; i.e., the principle of *maṣlaḥa*, whereby law-making process must be guided by what brings benefit and prevents harm for the community at large. Based on *maṣlaḥa*, the *mālikīs* expanded the methodological doctrine of *ḍarar* (harm) prevention that was initially introduced by Mālik (the eponym of the *mālikī* school) in the context of marital discord (Mālik, 1997, 2/75). Mālik is hardly found to define what constituted 'spousal harm', except that he once referred to the classical definition of husbandly *nushūz*⁴ as one form of *ḍarar* (harm) (Mālik, 1994, 2/190-1). The late *mālikī* *faqīhs*, however, expanded their discussions on spousal harm to the extent that they integrated marital discord with public law and legal liability (Fadel, 2019). Interestingly enough, the *mālikī* doctrine requires that a husband proven to be involved in spousal aggression is to be punished in the same manner as the *nāshiz* (recalcitrant) wife is: i.e. the judge (in Arabic *qāḍī*) first admonishes the husband, then asks the wife to abandon the marital bed if admonishing fails, and finally the judge hits him if sexual abandonment fails (Al-Desūqī, n.d., 2/343). This procedure is to be applied unless the wife asks for divorce; indeed, if the wife asks for divorce because of harm, she must be given an immediate divorce (Al-Desūqī, n.d., 2/343; 'Ilīsh, 1984, 3/550-1). Moreover, unless the news of the wife's *nushūz* had already reached the ruler, and the ruler was assured that the wife's *nushūz* could be fixed through her husband, then the

⁴ This is husbandly *nushūz* in its classical form of a husband's unfair treatment of his co-wives, particularly regarding sexual intimacy.



whole case should be taken to the ruler who would himself administer the three-step process of discipline to the wife (Al-Desūqī, n.d., 2/343; al-Ḥaṭṭāb, 1992, 4/15; ‘Ilīsh, 1984, 3/545-1; al-Ṣāwī, 2/511,). Yet, the husband would not be allowed to hit the nāshiz wife, if he doubted the effectiveness of hitting (al-Desūqī, n.d., 2/343; Ibn al-Ḥājib, 2000, 278; Ibn Ishāq al-Jundī, 2005; ‘Ilīsh, 1984; 3/545). With such rulings, the mālikī doctrine not only turns marital discord into a public matter (Fadel, 2019) but also “obscures the line between the public and private spheres,” (Chaudhry, 2014, 110). It also pushes forward the interpretation that Q 4:34 addresses its content to the community rather than the individual husband, which Ibn Ashur, the 20th century mālikī exegete, maintains as a possible interpretation (Ibn Ashur, 1984, 5/34).

The mālikī faqīhs, to the extent that they tend to disempower the husband from taking on the discipline process independently, do so by four means: 1) couching their presentation of the treatment of spousal abuse before the judge in egalitarian terms, where husband and wife are treated equally before the law for their abusive behaviour (Al-Desūqī, n.d., 2/345; ‘Ilīsh, 1984, 3/550); 2) requiring the authority to interfere once informed about a case of nushūz; 3) subjecting the husband to punishment if he harms the wife in any way, not only through hitting (Al-Desūqī, n.d., 2/345; ‘Ilīsh, 1984, 3/550); and 4) treating husbandly aggression as a possible direct consequence of wife-hitting, whereby the latter is therefore to be avoided.

The shāfi’ī fiqh: A reconciliatory hermeneutics

Unlike the ḥanafī and mālikī faqīhs, al-Shāfi’ī (the eponym of the shāfi’ī school), and his students after him, paid extra regard to ḥadīth to the extent that an authentic ḥadīth report had the authority to qualify a general statement of the Qur’ān. Based on this principle, al-Shāfi’ī used the Prophet’s extreme discouragement of hitting in concluding that wife-hitting is better avoided, and the husband would do better to forgive his nāshiz wife. Somewhere else, in the book of *al-Umm*, al-Shāfi’ī quoted the ḥadīth statements that allowed the husband to hit his wife. However, he seems to reconcile the ḥadīth reports discouraging wife-hitting with those allowing it when he appeals to *ma’rūf* (kind treatment) as the guiding principle of marital relationship. Hence, he produces a reconciliatory hermeneutics that prioritizes the injunctions that discourage wife-hitting over those Qur’ānic and Prophetic injunctions that allow it (Al-Shāfi’ī, 2001, 6/288, 481, 492, 7/341, 366-7). I argue here that al-Shāfi’ī’s reconciliatory hermeneutics - despite being textually based - involved rationalization, as he and his late students emphasized what



is preferred (avoiding hitting) over what is allowed (hitting).⁵

The *ḥanbalī fiqh*: strict commitment to *ḥadīth*

The reliance of *fiqh* on *ḥadīth* reports and past narrations reached its apogee with the *ḥanbalī* school, whose founder, Ibn Ḥanbal, would prioritize *ḥadīth* narrations over analogical reasoning. According to one report, Ibn Ḥanbal was approached for sixty thousand legal inquiries regarding the chastisement of women, for which all his answers consisted simply of presenting past citations of authority (Abu Zahr-Ibn Ḥanbal, n.d., 230-1). However, the late *ḥanbalī* *faqīh*s failed to use the Prophet's *ḥadīth* to produce an anti-hitting hermeneutics. This omission is caused by Ibn Ḥanbal's stratagem of literal hermeneutics, whereby his interpretations were based on the plain meanings of religious texts including the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth*, and past citations of authority. Ibn Ḥanbal's commitment to this narration-based hermeneutics led him to produce two different opinions on a matter in case he came across two different narrations about it (Abu Zahr-Ibn Ḥanbal, n.d., 231). The *ḥanbalī* *faqīh*s followed Ibn Ḥanbal's narration-based hermeneutics and, particularly regarding the issue of marital discord, they seemed more often than not to merely reword the original texts.

Such lack of engagement with *ḥadīth* - I suggest - kept the *ḥanbalī* *faqīh*s from developing a *ḥadīth*-based preference for avoiding wife-hitting. An attempt to develop such *ḥadīth*-based preference within the *ḥanbalī* school can however be traced in a 20th century's commentary on *Zād al-Mustanqī'*, which is a source text of *ḥanbalī* *fiqh* (Al-Ḥajjāwī al-Maqdisī, n.d.).⁶ In this commentary, the author deftly utilizes different *ḥadīth* reports in addressing the issue of kind treatment between spouses as emphatically and equally to men and women, mandating particularly the husband to treat his wife as well as he would like a son/brother-in-law to treat his own daughter/sister (Ibn 'Uthaymīn, 2007, 180-5).

Conclusion

To conclude, this paper has explored the different arguments which shaped the different interpretations of Q 4:34 within *fiqh*. In this endeavour, I go beyond patriarchy as

5 Here, I am using words of Kecia Ali in Ali, Kecia (2008). *The best of you will not strike: Al-Shāfi'i on Qur'ān, Sunnah, and Wife-Beating. Comparative Islamic Studies*. London: Equinox Publishing Ltd.

6 *Zād al-Mustanqī'* is authored by al-Ḥajjāwī al-Maqdisī (d. 968 A.H./1560 C.E.), and is itself a commentary on another source text entitled *al-Muqni'* by Ibn Qudāma (d. 620 A.H./1223 C.E.).



the only explanation why these interpretations came to be so; rather, I engage with the methodological approaches which the *faqīhs* applied when they produced their different readings of marital discord. The different approaches that guided the *faqīhs*' discussions on marital discord are revealed in the different treatment the *faqīhs* applied to *ḥadīth*. My approach is situated in a theoretical framework that seeks to study a past text in its own terms and according to its own arguments, thus, such a text can be reconstructed in a contemporary context, without rescinding the past or ignoring the present.

References

- Abu Zahr (n.d.) *Ibn Ḥanbal: His Life and Ideas*. Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi
- Ahmed, L. (1993). *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (Reissue). Yale University Press.
- Al-Desūqī, Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmed Ibn 'Arafa (n.d.). *Hāshiyat al-Desūqī 'ala al-Sharḥ al-Kabīr*. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr. [بالتك - ي ق وس د ل ا ة ش ا ح و ر ي د ر د ل ا خ ي ش ل ل ر ي ب ك ل ا ح ر ش ل ا ب ا ت ك - 343 ص](#) al-maktaba.org, accessed 21/08/2022.
- Al-Ḥaṭṭāb, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn Muḥammad (1992). *Mawāhib al-Jalīl fī Sharḥ Mukhtaṣar Khalīl*. Dār al-Fikr.
- Al-Jundī, Khalīl Ibn Ishāq (2005). *Mukhtaṣar Khalīl*. Cairo: Dar al-Hadith.
- Al-Maqdisī, al-Ḥajjāwī (n.d.). *Zād al-Mustanqī'*. Riyadh: Dar al-Watan for Publishing. [بالتك](#) shamela.ws, accessed 12/02/2023.
- Al-Ṣāwī, Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad Ibn Muḥammad al-Khalwatī (n.d.). *Hāshiyat al-Ṣāwī*. Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif.
- Asad, T. (2009). The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam. *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences*, 17(2), 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.5250/quiparle.17.2.1>.
- Bauer, K. (2017). *Gender Hierarchy in the Qur'an: Medieval Interpretations, Modern Responses* (Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization). Cambridge University Press.
- Chaudhry, A. S. (2013). *Domestic Violence and the Islamic Tradition*. Oxford University Press.



- Fadel, Mohammad (2019). From Disciplining Recalcitrant Wives to Disciplining Recalcitrant Spouses: The Historical Evolution of the Maliki Doctrine on Marital Discord and Its Implications for Current Law. An unpublished paper presented to *Islamic Law and Sexuality Conference*. University of Exeter.
- Gadamer, Hans-Georg (1975). *Truth and Method*. Sheed & Ward.
- Ibn al-Ḥājjib (2000). *Jāmi' al-Ummahāt*. Al-Yamama for Publishing. [تبتكمل - تاهمأل عماج باتك](#) [\(shamela.ws\)](#), accessed 12/02/2023.
- Ibn Ashur Muhammad al-Tahir (1984). *Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*. Al-Dar al-Tunisia for Publishing.
- Ibn 'Uthaymīn (2007). *Zād al-Mustaḥqni'*. Dar Ibn al-Jawzi, [ىل ع عتدمل ا حرشلا باتك - 380ص](#) [\(al-maktaba.org\)](#), accessed 25/08/2022.
- 'Ilīsh (1984). *Minaḥ al-Jalīl*. Dar al-Fikr. Beirut. [- لىلخ رصتخم حرش لىلجل ا حنم باتك - 551ص](#) [\(al-maktaba.org\)](#), accessed 21/08/2022.
- MacIntyre, A. C. (1988). *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* Dame Press: University of Notre Dame.
- Mālik, Imam (1994). *Al-Mudawwanah al-Kubrā*. Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiya. [تبتكمل - قنودملا باتك](#) [\(shamela.ws\)](#), accessed 12/02/2023.
- Mālik, Imam (1997). *Al-Mwaṭṭa'*. Dar al-Gharb al-Islami.

Declarations

Competing interests

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest and that he has not received funding to do this research.



A Christian Orthodox Theological Critique of the Feminism Movement

Selamawit Reta

Abstract

This paper examines and applies a theology-informed critique of major feminist values by drawing on Orthodox Christian anthropology. The study highlights the significant motivations and aims that underly western feminist movements by revisiting the historical background of their evolution including their Christian aspects. The study seeks to provide a nuanced analysis to prevent hasty generalisations or radical views, such as hailing the movement as a whole as perfect, without faults, or seeing it as absolutely at odds with Christian theology. Such an inquiry is important, especially so from the vantage point of the Christian faith as it can diffuse existing confusion and minimize the likelihood of easy generalizations being used in Christian communities. The paper will focus on the feminist tenets that the author feels should be accepted and developed further as part of the fabric of Christian faith. Meanwhile, I will challenge those ideas and interpretations that are based on erroneous assumptions and risk endangering relations between men and women as envisioned within the Orthodox Christian faith. It is important for the faithful Christian community to be able to navigate the complexities of the feminist cause and to respond appropriately in an effort to enlighten and support the improvement of human relations as espoused by both Christianity and feminism alike.

Keywords: *Orthodox Christianity, Feminism, Orthodox Anthropology, Orthodox Soteriology*

Introduction

Feminism as a movement has placed religious believers in controversial positions, especially Christians. On one hand, the feminist movement in general tends to see the essence of its approach as perfect, whereby every woman should should accept and live by its standard. while, on the other hand, Orthodox Christian believers, specifically,



and religions, in general, tend to blindly demonize the movement. The author believes the two sides involved in this conversation - feminists and Orthodox believers - need to be well-informed, so as to avoid hasty generalizations; thus, promoting healthy conversations. I believe hasty generalizations are very abundant and create a vast gap in understandings between feminists and religious people, who currently find themselves at cross purposes with each other in a variety of aspects of life.

The writer of this paper believes that the Orthodox Christian understanding of reality is a coherent and inclusive ideal; thus, I choose to use two branches of Orthodox Theology - Orthodox Anthropology and Orthodox Soteriology - to critique the feminist movement. The first because the inherent question of feminism lies not in understanding or comparing the expressions of femininity and masculinity but rather in what we perceive it means to be a human being. From this perspective, understanding the claim from an Orthodox vantage point would clear related confusions. The second approach - the soteriological approach - seeks to clarify the inherent state of human nature, its implications in power relations, and the need for redemption. The author believes both approaches - feminism and Christianity - are part and parcel of the same thing because the one great moment in history, that of God becoming Man, has transformed the understanding of what it means to be saved and what it means to be a real human being (Anthropos).

The feminist model and its historical genesis

In our modern world, 'feminism' represents a multitude of ideas and sects. The ideological demands of feminists are many and varied, for feminism is not a single monolithic movement, but a powerful river with many streams. Feminists hold very varied ideals and claim the title 'feminist' for a tremendously diverse group. Lawrence R. Farley expresses the varied positions held by feminists as:

Some are militant homosexuals, and heavily invested in the gay rights movement. Some eschew all organized religion, while others are very religious. Some declare themselves Christians and are members of churches (sometimes leaders in churches), and strive to reform the Church on more feminist principles. Some simply demand equal pay for equal work, and value opportunities for advancement in the marketplace. Some women, dissenting from much of the angry rhetoric that characterizes the movement and many of its excesses, would not identify themselves as 'feminist,' but still sympathize



with and support some of the same social goals. When speaking of feminism, it is difficult, if not impossible, to generalize (Farley, 2012, 3).

Schrupp (2017) further explains the dynamic nature of the movement: “Feminism is not so much a fixed program but an attitude ... these viewpoints are always shaped by specific issues and the specific problems of the time - and, of course, by the subjective ideas and views of the thinker or activist concerned” (p. 6). Thus, different feminists end up having very different and sometimes even opposing points of view. Therefore, it is important to understand the historical backgrounds of feminism, the ideological changes that occurred in each phase, using an Orthodox theological critique. Here, the writer aims to look deeper into the social, familial, economic, and religious roles of women in history before Christianity. Two specific historical contexts are chosen; the Greco-Roman historical context and the Jewish historical contexts. These are chosen because they constitute the specific environments directly connected with milieu of early Christianity.

Greco-Roman historical studies have established that most women of the period were set apart from male society. According to Kraemer and D’Angelo (1999), descriptions of the time show “men at the centre of decision-making, political history, and family life. Because of the fashionable ubiquity of ancient European patriarchal customs, less known situations of similarity between men and women are the focus of this brief sketch in Greek and Roman gender relations” (p. 33). Further historical assessments suggest that women in Greco-Roman times had social and political disadvantages leading to their reduced participation in decision-making. When looking at the Jewish context, Freedman (1992) describes the dynamics of the relation between men and women as follows: “The Israelite family was in all periods a male headed household, in which descent and transmission of property were reckoned through males” (p. 9477). This showed that women were subordinate in their marital context, implying both their economic and social power lies only in their relations with their husbands. It was through motherhood that women could regain a decent position in society; according to the Old Testament, motherhood was expected and honoured, reflecting social need (Judges 21:16-17) and divine sanction (Genesis 1:28).

Following the early Christian movement, there were small but definite changes in the Middle Eastern community of the first century. According to Freedman (1992), “[t]hese changes coupled with other attitudes seem to create a somewhat broader discussion about the role of women in society during the 2nd and 3rd centuries.” (p. 9478) These conversations and changes developed further after the establishment of the monastic



orders. Monasticism seems to have played a great role in creating a liberated state for both men and women. In a time when a woman could only gain societal respect and position through marriage and her ability to give birth, by living in a nunnery, she could gain greater liberty by freely choosing to live life in Christ and, without marrying, could still be a valuable member of a Christian monastic society.

In the medieval era, some of the movements that started to enable women to be active outside of traditional roles originated in monasteries. Other than this, as Walters (2005) explains: “Women who couldn’t get married were considered as outcasts and sent to monasteries to seclude them from the ‘normal’ society” (p. 19). Thus, monasticism created a fruitful environment for such women to engage in deep theological and social dialogue with each other and this led to the creation of movements that enabled them to escape traditional norms and fight for better positions in their society. Regarding this, Margaret (2005) concludes: “Generally speaking, from the 13th century on, women in Europe demonstrated a stronger need for community life - life beyond marriage and monasteries. Women lived together in pairs or in smaller collectives, working together, or else formed larger organized convents with up to one hundred members” (p. 18).

The reformation also provided fruitful ground for women to express, more outwardly, the God given gifts of women rather than those of the traditional views. The sixteenth century English author, Jane Anger, took up a challenging position by insisting that “Eve was superior to Adam: a second, and hence improved, model. Whereas Adam was fashioned from ‘dross and filthy clay’, God made Eve from Adam’s flesh, ‘that she might be purer than he’, which ‘doth evidently show how far we women are more excellent than men ... From woman sprang man’s salvation” (Walters, 2005 p. 18). Subsequently, the Enlightenment period showed a stronger positioning of women regarding the gender difference they faced, this included women such as the French author, Marie de Gournay (1565–1645), the English teacher and writer, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797) and the French artist and human rights activist, Marie Gouze (1748–1793). These women were all involved in developing ideals that challenged the status quo regarding what was understood to be the natural inequality between men and women. Most female influencers of these times expressed their discontent in books and influential stories that are still relevant today.

In spite of the active engagement of women in pointing out the societal problems they faced, no actual changes occurred in their society, their ideals remained within women and their minds. However, the nineteenth century gave rise to social revolutions which mostly focused on establishing equalities among the rich and the poor. Women were



forerunners in these socialist movements and were involved in establishing communes and projects to benefit them. Among the important figures were Claire Démar (1799–1833) and Jeanne Deroin (1805–1894) who argued for equal rights claiming that “women can never be truly represented by men and must have their own voice, on the grounds that men and women are different and do not have the same preferences and interests. In this, they were reacting to the lack of contemporary theorizing on formal equality” (Schrupp 2017, p. 22). Moreover, in the middle of the nineteenth century many organized movements regarding women’s political equality surfaced in the US and Europe, the majority of the requests voiced by the movement were voting rights, divorce rights and equal pay rights between men and women for the same work.

The shift in focus of the questions raised is striking. Initially, women were concerned with essence, i.e., voicing questions that were about the inherent value of women in God’s eyes. This was the guiding principle that shaped the majority of women’s approach due to the establishment of the movement in theological environments like monasteries which were directly involved in studying, interpreting and applying the principles in the lives of believers. But as time progressed the movements tended to develop a political outlook; possibly due to the slow removal of religion from public places. Whatever the reason, the movement clearly now had a political backdrop.

The modern feminist movement is highly influenced by Simone de Beauvoir’s ideals reflected in her book, *The Second Sex*. The book claims that, for reasons of nature, societal norms, history and a psychoanalysis, woman came to be seen as the “other” with respect to men. This ideal has its base in existentialist philosophy which she further sums up as: “There is no human nature or essence, she now insists that there is no essence of the feminine either, and for the same reason: existence precedes essence, it doesn’t follow it” (De Beauvoir, 1949, p. 357). She takes this as an invitation to shift from ontology to sociology and politics when understanding the human condition, and the feminist understanding of it, in particular. Modern feminism, instead of understanding the ontology of being - of woman-ness, feminine-ness or humanness - from the nature bestowed on them, turned to the social and political arena, thus, allowing it to be interpreted according to contemporary ideals.

The above historical exposition shows the basic leap the feminist movement made, the leap from essential affirmation of women and their capability to political affirmation. This is due to the changing landscape of the European and American worldview. The world changed from an ideal where a human being was defined through their relationship with the divine to one based on the command s/he gained in society. The source



of these powers lay in political, social or economic expressions. So, by virtue of this, if a person was to be valued, it was through these expressions. However, when these expressions become the sole and definitive expressions of a person's value, we can be sure the intrinsic value of a human being is lost. So, when women were looking for value in expressions that were not transcendental, for sure the value granted would also be non-transcending and not of the full expression of humanity.

The Orthodox theological model

Here the author proposes a new perspective for the modern movement and a revisiting of the Christian model of viewing the issue of feminism – based on Orthodox Theology. Here, theology frames the inherent question of feminism not in the expressions of femininity and masculinity but rather on what we perceive to be a human being. Similarly, Orthodox Anthropology bases its understanding of what a human being as expressed in the Genesis story: “And God created man in his own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them Male and Female” (KJV, Genesis 1:27). The renowned Orthodox theologian, Vladimir Lossky (1978), explains “Thus the mystery of the singular and plural in God: in the same way that the personal principle in God demands that the one nature expresses itself in diversity of persons, likewise in man, created in the image and likeness of God” (p. 67-69). He parallels the Triune nature of God with humans' diversity establishing an unwavering value in God Himself and equality among the sexes.

Orthodox Christian soteriology presents the reality of sin and its conditions. It believes that creation exists in a fallen world, but a fallen world which is redeemed but has yet to realize its full potential in the coming world. Here, Lossky (1978) presents three realisations of the salvation of human beings - the union of the sexes, the reunification of paradise and the unification of spirit and body (p. 69). This shows the recognition of the state of human beings which is apparent to all and practical ways of restoring sanity. This, together with the Orthodox understanding of what it means to be a human being, and specifically a women considering the realities of the world, provides a way that the women's movement can return to its roots in a Christian ethic.

Conclusion

From the Orthodox theological perspective, feminism's revolt against the perverse societal norms, which ended up impairing society's ability to see itself as whole and



healthy, is primarily Christian and noble. Orthodox Christian theology does in fact originate in admitting the wrong that is in the world (Romans 3:9-10, Galatians 3:22); not only the acknowledgement of their existence but also the continual resistance against the evils in the world (Ephesians 6:10-18, John 18:36, 1st Peter 5:8). In this regard, feminism in its essence is truly Christian. But as the movement progressed, rather than looking for the definition and understanding of women's vocation, life, responsibility, status and equality from an ontological origin, it looked for answers in society itself, which was the heir of the problems in the first place. So instead of looking to the image and likeness in which both men and women were made, feminism used the image of men as its vision and calls women to adapt themselves to this. The author believes that this is the central problem of the movement and that Orthodox theology provides a model to circumvent this issue.

References

- De Beauvoir, Simone (1949, 2009). *The Second Sex (Le deuxième sexe)*. Éditions Gallimard.
- Farley, L. R. (2012). *Feminism and Tradition: Quiet Reflections on Ordination and Communion*. St Vladimirs Seminary Press.
- Freedman, D. N. (1988). The Anchor Bible Dictionary. In C. Meyers, *Discovering Eve: Ancient Israelite Women in Context* (pp. 9476-9480). Oxford University Press.
- Lewis, P. A. (2017). *A brief history of feminism*. MIT Press.
- Lossky, V. (1978). *Orthodox Theology: An introduction*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press.
- Ross Shepard Kraemer, M. R. (1999). *Women and Christian Origins*. Oxford University Press.
- The New Testament and Old Testament Bible, KJV. (n.d.).
- Walters, M. (2005). *Feminism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.

Declarations

Competing interests

The author declares that there are no conflicting interests.



The Need for Inclusive Justice: Philosophical Appraisal on the Nature of Justice Addressing Intersectional Discriminations in Ethiopia

Eyasu Barento

Abstract

This philosophical reflection is an articulation on the theoretical foundation and practical implications of inclusive justice in addressing the problems of victims of injustices. Intersectionality as the phenomena when a single subject faces multifaceted problems and as a theory can help us to fully grasp and understanding to articulate the lived experience of a child (who may be a female, with poor mental or physical health, from poor family, displaced because of conflict and subjected to exploitative labour). The general objective of the study is to examine the nature of inclusive justice with practical efficacy of healing the chronic problems of injustices in diversified societies (with the challenges of identity politics, human trafficking and poverty, gender or age based discriminations). By extension, the study will yield philosophical comments for policy implications of maintaining and prevalence of justice for all in Ethiopia. As a desk research, it uses qualitative research method backed up by the critical social theory perspective to unhide the possible contradictions of aspiration for justice; where three empirical cases of child abuse are used to solidify the philosophical 'speculative' analysis. It is concluded that strong foundation for inclusive justice and culture of democracy with sense of humanity can boost the practical and theoretical successes in addressing the problems of the wretched who are the 'targets' of intersectional injustices exemplified by the child above. Finally recommendation is given for varied stakeholders of justice-rights advocates and public policy makers, well-wishers of humanity.



The project d/d/ደ ል ደ ል approach: Employing St John Chrysostom's homilies on marriage, conjugal cohabitation and domestic violence to build Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo clergy's preparedness to respond to domestic violence

Romina Istratii and Henok Hailu

Abstract

In February 2021, project d/d/ደ ል ደ ል initialised an intervention with Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahədo clergy in Ethiopia that sought to build the clergy's preparedness to respond to domestic violence in their communities. The intervention was designed on the basis of Dr Romina Istratii's previous long-term anthropological research on conjugal violence in Ethiopia. As the development wing of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahədo Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOTC DICAC) was found to be ideally positioned to facilitate the delivery of these workshops. The workshops were designed to be culturally appropriate and were delivered in Amharic by Dr Romina Istratii supported by two trainers, a certified psychologist and EOTC deacon, Mr Henok Hailu, and a practising attorney affiliated with EWLA, Ms Bezawet Birhanu. Each workshop was delivered over two half-days. Each workshop included presentations on a) domestic violence definitions, realities and attitudes in the community, b) theological training employing Church teachings and Patristic responses to marriage-related issues, and c) safeguarding training and education on domestic violence laws in the country. The second unit, which presented the teachings of the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwahədo Church on gender relations, marriage, conjugal cohabitation, and domestic violence, was complemented by St John Chrysostom's homilies about the same. The speakers presented the theological material developed to respond to community and clergy ideas around gender relations, marriage and domestic violence and in particular the reception of St John Chrysostom's teachings by the clergy participants. The participants' engagements, questions and assessment feedback pointed to gaps in theological knowledge in the community and the need for further theological awareness, demonstrating ultimately the potential of faith-informed responses to make a significant contribution in Church-led response to domestic violence in the Ethiopian Orthodox community.



Domestic Violence (also named domestic abuse or family violence) in Black African families and the role religion plays in the African contexts

Amma Anane-Agyei

Abstract

This presentation focused on domestic abuse in the context of Black African families living in the UK. England and Wales, the crime survey of Wales, in the year ending March 2019, it was estimated that 10.4% of black British women aged 16 to 74 had experienced domestic abuse in the last year, compared to 7.2% of white women, with Black African women accounting for 4.1%. Refuge, a domestic abuse charity found that between March 2020 and June 2021, Black women were 14% less likely to be referred to Refuge for support by police than white survivors of domestic abuse. It is likely such figures significantly underreport the extent of the problem. Amma explored the reasons why it might be hard for Black African women to leave an abusive situation in the UK context, not least issues of culture, religious expectations and duties and shame to name but a few. She focused on how Black African Evangelical Churches and indeed Pastors may serve in perpetuating this issue, both in Ghana and in the UK context, rather than actively working to address violence in family homes. She utilised her experience as a specialist social worker, working in one of the most ethnically diverse boroughs in England to consider issues of safeguarding, and how social workers might work effectively with Black African women experiencing domestic Violence as well as children living with domestic violence. She concluded by arguing that there are many black African Evangelical Pastors who impregnated church members and refuse to accept parental responsibilities due to their role in the Church, using a case study.



Overlooked gatekeepers: traditional marriage counsellors in Zambia as an entry point for Gender Transformative Approaches in Gender-based Violence prevention?

Benjamin Kalkum¹

Abstract

Traditional marriage counsellors in Zambia transmit knowledge regarding traditional gender roles to the next generation, as it is still standard - among both urban as well as rural populations - to receive lessons before getting married. This gives them a unique position to shape gender norms, yet they are mostly overlooked by international academics and donors. This article explores the role Christian ideas play in their teachings as, nowadays, they are usually Christians themselves. It observes that Christian ideals of marriage, like becoming one flesh, contradicts certain traditional teachings which presuppose a patriarchal hierarchy in marriage, and often alter them in a more gender equitable way. It concludes that traditional marriage counsellors are an exceptional target group for gender transformative approaches, and that religion - although ambiguous - may be a promising entry point to transform certain gender-unequal and potentially harmful teachings.

Keywords: *Zambia, gender, domestic abuse, IPV, tradition, culture, religion, marriage*

Introduction: About this research and its author

In Zambia, nearly every couple receives lessons from a traditional marriage counsellor, where they are taught separately about traditional gender roles in marriage.² The bride's family chooses a female counsellor for the bride, who is - in Bemba - called

¹ This research was done in collaboration with Stellenbosch University. Email: bkalkum@gmail.com.

² Marriage counsellors of this type can be found across all ethnic groups in Zambia, and the structure of marriage initiation and preparation is pretty similar. In this work, I use the Bemba terminology, as it is the most common term and is also understood in other ethnic groups. Similarly, many Bemba customs have transpired into other traditions, probably due a certain hegemonic role of Bemba culture in the Zambian Copperbelt, where due to the massive labour migration in the 20th century many other ethnic groups came in contact with them.



nachimbusa, and her counterpart, chosen by the groom's family, is called *shibukombe*.³ The curriculum ranges from general responsibilities for daily duties to explicit bedroom etiquette: what to wear, what things to keep under your bed, how to shave, how to have sex, and who should switch off the light afterwards. Furthermore, they are usually consulted first - before the family - when conflicts arise at a later stage in the marriage. This is why, in English, *nachimbusas* and *shibukombes* are usually referred to as 'marriage counsellors', even though this captures only a certain part of their work. However, this article will mainly focus on their role in marriage preparation, when they give extensive lessons to the couple. This does not happen in competition with religious marriage preparation, which in many churches is also mandatory. On the contrary, many are also active as counsellors in their church. The borders between traditional and religious gender norms become increasingly blurred here. Overall, their role as custodians of traditional - and religious - gender roles and relations can barely be underestimated, but limited literature exists, and what does exist is mostly local; meanwhile, very few international development projects have worked with traditional marriage counsellors as a target group to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV).⁴ As is often the case with local cultural phenomena, these counsellors seem to be invisible to international academia and development donors - or seen as unsuitable for interventions aiming towards greater gender equality (Istratii, 2017).

I came to Zambia in 2019 and since then I have spoken with a number of marriage counsellors, and I was able to conduct 12 in-depth interviews. Still, it is important to recognize that my understanding of their teachings is superficial, at best. When one considers the multidimensional meaning of the symbols they use in their teachings and their interconnectedness to traditional stories and beliefs, I realise I understand only a fraction of this cultural universe. But, as a Christian theologian, I am well familiar with Christian symbols, stories and beliefs, and therefore I focused on observing how the counsellors would refer to *these*, and the significance they would give them in their teachings. Thus, through this research, I want to explore what role Christianity plays in traditional marriage counselling today, and if it has in any way altered or influenced

3 The terms, 'banachimbusa' and 'bashibukombe', can also be found, wherein the 'ba' in Bemba is simply a respectful prefix in addressing a person.

4 Several final papers have been published at local universities, especially Mapala (2004), Chewe (2013), Maamba (2015) and Simbotwe (2016). Lumbwe (2004, 2009) reflects on their role in marriage ceremonies in general. There are also journal articles by Mulauzi et al. (2014) and Mwanza et al. (2019), and monographies by Richards (1956), Chondoka (1988) and Rasing (2001, 2003). Mbozi (2000) acknowledges their role with regards to HIV/AIDS, and Martinez-Perez et al. (2016) with regards to the practice of *labia elongation*.



traditional gender norms, especially those pertaining to male supremacy, which are considered risk factors in intimate partner violence (IPV).

What are traditional marriage counsellors in Zambia and what do they do?

After the parents have selected and engaged their favourite counsellor for their child, the actual counselling usually takes place in a series of eight to twelve evenings.⁵ The lessons for women usually take longer, because their numerous duties in the house are explained in detail. The counselling is concluded with a joint meeting involving both groom and bride for the 'comparison of teachings' (*ukusulula kufiteta*). This practice - in combination with the long history of intermarriage in Zambia's Copperbelt - is probably the reason for the high homogeneity of teachings that I observed, even among counsellors from different ethnic backgrounds and from different parts of the country.

What influence does Christianity have on the teachings of traditional counsellors?

The counsellors I spoke to in my research all identified as Christians, and they did not know any counsellor who would not identify as Christian. Even though they see it as their primary task to teach the traditional norms and practices, they all also include Christian teachings and point out how a certain practice aligns with Christian values or Biblical verses. They almost unanimously stated that tradition and religion complemented each other, and they saw themselves equally as religious as purely traditional counsellors. As Lukunge⁶, a Catholic *nachimbusa* of 50 years of age, explained:

I'm a traditional marriage counsellor, but I can also involve God in those things. So, I can just be there in between. [...] because when you just talk about traditional [marriage], it means you don't involve God in whatever you are doing. [But] if we just follow the religious part..... ah, what we see now, things are getting messed up. You just follow: 'No, God talks about this, this.' You should

5 The families usually avoid selecting a relative and prefer to choose from their wider community, e.g., the village, or the church. The main criteria is that the chosen person displays the ideals the parents want to see in marriage and family life, although factors such as ethnicity and Christian denomination can play a role in their choice, too. Parents usually want to choose someone who shares their own ethnicity or at least well familiar with their traditions. As most families in Zambia are ethnically mixed, and many people live in areas other than their 'tribal homeland', it can be challenging to find someone who suits their expectations; therefore, it is not unusual that a *nachimbusa* or *shibukombe* is brought from outside the community. The counsellors usually receive a small amount of money, which is enough for some to make a living by this.

6 Each interviewee chose a pseudonym for her/himself.



teach that person the realities of life. [...] Now, if you just say: 'Luke chapter whatever, whatever, whatever, Jesus said of this on marriage' - then you are [...] spoiling that person; maybe he'll just be talking about chapters. What about the realities? Because when you go into marriage, you're not going to be just talking about scriptures. You'll be doing things which are real!

Lukunge feels that a certain decency limits Christian teachings regarding the realities of life; for example, it would be impossible for a preacher to speak about sexual practices, female periods, or childbirth: "So those are the *real* things we should talk about *and* involve the scriptures." When they were directly asked whether Christianity and tradition can sometimes contradict each other, some agreed, and some disagreed with this. Points of contention which were mentioned were sexual cleansing, divorce, and infidelity. Additionally, they mentioned all practices which were interpreted as a pagan ritual and/or seen in connection with "evil spirits", like women's practice of putting on a string of colourful beads in the bedroom. Traditionally, these are not only an accessory to arouse the man when performing certain dances, but they also have a spiritual dimension, which has brought many Christian churches to reject the practice. "It comes out like you're worshipping that person", explained Lily (46, Catholic). Another point of contention was doing chores. Helping a woman in the house is seen traditionally as taboo for a man, especially when his relatives are around. They will typically accuse his wife of having poisoned or charmed him to abandon his traditional role. Contrary to this, within a Christian perspective helping the woman is very much allowed.

Apart from these rather outward differences, my overall observation is that the main point of contention between traditional and religious marriage ideals concerned the general relationship of the genders: is it a relationship between a superior and an inferior, or is it one between equals, or rather a complementary relationship? The counsellors all pointed out that tradition and Christianity generally align on the position that the man is the head of the family, and that the woman has to submit (cf. Eph 5,22-23), but for Memory (43, Catholic), it all comes down to a different interpretation of what consequences "submissiveness" might entail:

Traditionally [...] we tell the lady that you should be submissive. Now this submissiveness, the way we take it traditionally, it's not the way [how] in Christianity it's supposed to be. [Traditionally,] we tell the woman to comply to everything that the husband wants. We tell the woman: 'even if your husband wants to have sex at any time, you should give it to him; whether you're sick or



not.' That's traditional; but according to Christianity it's not supposed to be like that. When people are joined together, according to Christianity, they are one. So, you have the right to express to your partner to say: 'My dear, today I'm not feeling well.' But traditionally [...] you're not supposed to refuse when your husband wants sex. So, you can see that this thing is conflicting. There are so many but that's one of them.

The same applies to decision making, where it is commonly considered to be the traditional norm that the woman should quietly accept her husband's decisions, but not within Christian teaching:

On decision making, the final person is a man – traditionally! But religiously, I think you can just sit down: 'You see, what I'm thinking is this. What about if we had done this?' You will be given chance to talk - religiously! But traditionally, you just keep quiet; he is able to do whatever he wants to do. (Lukunge, 50, Catholic).

Overall, the counsellors understand that the Christian ideal of marriage encourages communication on an equal footing, overcoming traditional taboos and asymmetries. As Lily (46, Catholic) put it: "A woman is always on the apologizing side in the traditional way, but that's not the way it's supposed to be." All this still presupposes a clearly patriarchal framework, where the man is the head and the woman submits, as the Bible says. But *within* this patriarchal framework, the counsellors I spoke to unanimously interpret the couple's relationship as one of equality:

But the Christian way is, we say: 'No, you are both equal.' The man is the head of the house, but the way God created us we are both equal. So, we start at the same page; we work in the same direction. So there's nothing like: 'No, this other one is more superior than the other one, no!' (Lily, 43, Catholic).

This implies a complementary relationship, where men and women are equal in their value and dignity, but different in their roles. This is at odds with tradition in Zambia, which is generally understood to maintain that the man is superior to the woman in every aspect, and in the context of which the man owes the woman nothing apart from providing for her materially.



The potential of traditional marriage counsellors for Gender Transformative Approaches (GTA)

Nachimbusas and *shibukombes* see themselves as custodians of traditional knowledge, but they also incorporate a Christian perspective in their teachings. These two normative realms overlap, but there are also points of contention, especially regarding the interpretation of male headship. In their teachings, the counsellors I spoke to utilised Christian norms and values to relativise the position of male superiority, as it is entailed in the concept of male headship, even though the concept as such is reinforced rather than weakened by their work. Nevertheless, within the patriarchal framework they address a number of harmful norms related to the continuation of IPV by emphasizing that man and woman are created by God as equals, become one through marriage, and that being the head means to love the woman as Christ loved the church, which is with unconditional selflessness. Therefore, it can be stated that Christianity, incorporated into the teachings of traditional marriage counsellors, influences gender norms in Zambia in an ambiguous way, strengthening some norms, while weakening others. However, it seems that Christianity has at least some potential to address harmful traditional gender norms and practices. The idea that marriage should be determined by love might be the most promising angle to take. A 'logic of love' was the most prevalent argument against certain gender unequal practices:

[.] the Bible says that the man should love the wife. The task for a man, is just to love the wife, and loving your wife, we all know how, what that means. You just love a person. When you love a person, you'll not shout at that person. You'll not raise a voice at that person, you talk softly. You pay attention to what she's saying, whether she's saying things which are not even relevant, you pay attention and listen. That's loving a person. That's all!
(Memory, 43, Catholic)

Conclusion

The exact influence *nachimbusas* and *shibukombes* exert in Zambia is difficult to determine. To my knowledge, there are no studies examining how many couples still go through counselling before marriage today. The Zambians I put this question to usually replied: "Almost everyone!", even in urban areas. However, counsellors' role today is complemented by alternative sources and examples influencing gender norms and roles: modern (and usually Western) literature, movies, pornography, but, above all,



social media. Hence, it is not unlikely that they have lost some of the influence they had in the past. However, traditional marriage counsellors are clearly still reaching a very large part of the population during a decisive moment of their lives. They play a pivotal role in transmitting gender norms and marriage practices that are likely contributing to the high rates of GBV in Zambia. They certainly could - and most likely should - play a role in changing these norms, even though their epistemology of gender and underlying cosmology may not be fully compatible with mainstream Western theorization of gender (Istratii, 2017; Le Roux & Loots, 2017). I hope that this research contributes to highlighting the work of Zambian researchers on traditional counsellors, and thus encourages more Western academics and development practitioners who operate in Zambia to grant them more attention in the future.

References

- Chewe, M. M. (2013). *A comparative study of catholic and bemba marriage educational programmes in selected parishes of Lusaka district and their impact on marriage and family life*. University of Zambia. <http://dspace.unza.zm/handle/123456789/3529> (accessed 5.4.2023)
- Chondoka, Y. A. (1988). *Traditional Marriages in Zambia: a study in cultural history*. Ndola, Mission Press.
- Istratii, R. (2017). Mainstream Gender and Development Concepts and Theories at the Interface with Local Knowledge Systems: Some Theoretical Reflections. *The Journal of Development Practice* 3.
- Le Roux, E., & Loots, L. (2017). The unhealthy divide: How the secular-faith binary potentially limits GBV prevention and response. *Development in Practice* 27(5), 733–744. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614524.2017.1327023>
- Lumbwe, K. (2004). *The role of music in the traditional marriage ceremonies of the Bemba-speaking people of Northern Zambia*. University of Cape Town.
- Lumbwe, K. (2009). *'Ubwinga', a subset of Bemba Indigenous Knowledge Systems: a comparative study of pre-colonial and post-independence wedding ceremonies in Lusaka and Kitwe, Zambia*. University of Cape Town.
- Maambo, M. (2015). *Perceptions of Selected Married Men and Women on Nkolola Initiation Ceremony in Mazabuka and Monze Districts of Southern Province, Zambia*. University



of Zambia. <http://koha.unza.zm:4480/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=4430> (accessed 5.4.2023)

Mapala, M. M. (2004). *Traditional Marriage Counsellors and HIV/AIDS: A Case Study of Alan-gizi National Association of Zambia*. University of Zimbabwe.

Martínez-Pérez, G., Mwenya, M., Tomás-Aznar, C. & Bagnol, B. (2016). Becoming and Being a Women: Meaning and Values of Labial Elongation for Zambians in Cape Town. *Géneros. Multidisciplinary Journal of Gender Studies*, 5(2), 986-1013. <https://doi.org/10.17583/generos.2016.1705>

Mbozi, P. (2000). The impact of negative cultural practices on the spread of HIV/AIDS in Zambia. In Bofo, S. T. K. (Ed.), *Media and HTV/AIDS in East and Southern Africa: A Resource Book*. UNESCO.

Mulauzi, F., Nyambe, I. & Mtanga, N. (2014). Women ceremonies and rites as a communication tool for HIV/AIDS information: A Zambian perspective. *Zambia Journal of Library and Information Science* 2(1&2), 141-155.

Mwanza, S., Phiri J., Akombelwa M. & Chibamba A.C. (2019). Understanding Cultural Roles of Traditional Marriage Counsellors in Ng'ombe Compound of Zambia. *Journal of Lexicography and Terminology* 3(1).

Rasing, T. (2001). *The Bush Burnt, the Stones Remain: Female Initiation Rites in Urban Zambia (African Studies Centre (Leiden/The Netherlands))*. LIT Verlag.

Rasing, T. (2003). *HIV/AIDS and sex education among the youth in Zambia: Towards behavioural change (African Studies Centre (Leiden/The Netherlands))*. LIT Verlag.

Richards, A.I. (1956). *Chisungu. A Girl's Initiation Ceremony among the Bemba of Zambia*. Tavistock Publications Ltd (Republished in 1982 by Faber and Faber).

Simbotwe, V.M. (2016). *Community perceptiopns of traditional marriage counselling in Lusaka District*. University of Zambia. <http://dspace.unza.zm/handle/123456789/4907> (accessed 5.4.2023)

Declarations

Competing interests

The Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.



The EOTC-DICAC programme approach to GBV prevention and response

Bantamlak Gelaw

Abstract

The presentation will focus on EOTC-DICAC programmes for GBV prevention. I will introduce the organization, the resources it leverages on and the areas of its work. I will then present on the outcomes of GBV-related projects that were implemented or are being implemented using the Church structures. In the second part of the presentation, I will discuss challenges faced in relation to the full use of the church structure and consider solutions to these, as well as offer some suggestions moving forward.



Promoting a Unified Response to, and Prevention Of Sexual and gender-based violence in Emergencies (PURPOSE) with Faith

Zayid Douglas, Jacqueline Ogega and Dolphine Kwamboka

Abstract

COVID-19 singlehandedly dismantled numerous systems, processes, and relations that either prevented, or mitigated sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) worldwide - increasing incidence. Implemented in urban/peri-urban Kenya and Bangladeshi refugee settlements, the PURPOSE Project aims to enhance integration of faith-based and inclusive approaches into SGBV prevention, mitigation and response, seated in COVID-19 emergency programming. PURPOSE utilizes various approaches including male engagement and norms change targeting faith leaders to facilitate multiple actors' (e.g., husbands, faith/community leaders, local governance) participation in SGBV prevention and response targeting women and girls. The project capacitated actors seated within, or on the periphery of SGBV referral and response including health workers and faith leaders to strengthen their, or partake in the, delivery of survivor-centered response. Further, PURPOSE provides enhanced livelihoods and a wide array of support including skills trainings, startup support, and psychosocial groups to survivors and those at risk for SGBV and incorporates faith-based empowerment approaches into livelihoods activities to encourage transformational self-development. Since October 2020, the project has sensitized over 3400 individuals on SGBV; trained or provided direct support to over 300 women and girls in livelihoods and savings; and trained over 100 faith and community leaders on gender equality and SGBV. The project will pilot a training curriculum for faith leaders to effectively engage with SGBV referral mechanisms in summer 2022 and will incorporate pilot learnings into programmatic guidance. This project adds to the knowledge base concerning faith-based approaches to SGBV in emergencies, and would like to share alongside & learn from likeminded actors in-person.



Engaging Faith in Higher Education to Address Gender-Based Violence

Punita Lumb¹ and Savroop Shergill²

Abstract

This paper reflects on two separate community events presented by the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Toronto as forms of decolonial intervention addressing gender-based violence within diasporic religious and cultural communities in Canada. The first event this paper looks at is an International Women's Day panel discussion where panellists from different faith groups addressed the intersections of gender-based violence and faith. The second event was a community screening of the documentary film, *Because We are Girls*, and a subsequent panel discussion which addressed the issue of gender-based violence in the diasporic Punjabi community in Canada. The aim of both events was to interrogate and expand upon the role of hegemonically secular academic institutions in addressing gender-based violence, specifically as it relates to different religious diasporic religious and cultural communities in Canada. The intention behind this programming was also to explore how collective healing from gender-based violence can be achieved through the acknowledgement of the impacts of white supremacy, colonisation and patriarchy. The positive community response, high level of community engagement, and expressed desire for a collective move towards healing made evident that community-centred approaches can be meaningful interventions.

Keywords: *gender-based violence, decolonial interventions, collective healing, South Asian feminism, diasporic communities.*

Introduction

In this paper, we offer our reflections, as scholar-practitioners, on co-curricular programming in higher education that addresses gender-based violence and faith from decolonial perspectives. We explore what it can look like to disrupt heteronormative and Eurocentric narratives in an institution in the Global North, to centre narratives

¹ Associate Director of the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Toronto, PhD Candidate Savroop Shergill - MSW, RSW, University of Toronto

² XXX



from the margins including the Global South. In this paper, we briefly locate ourselves in relation to this work and then describe how we worked together on two programs that troubled ideas of gender and unpacked violence and feminist activism within diasporic communities in Canada. We also present a summary of outcomes and future directions of this work.

Context and gap

Generally, Canadian universities are secular institutions though the oldest universities modelled themselves after British Christian institutions (Anisef, Axelrod & Lennards, 2015). Higher education institutions can operationalise secularism in diverse ways including open systems that do not privilege one religious, or a non-religious belief system, over another or more closed systems that actively exclude religion and belief from the public sphere to safeguard secularism (Ahdar, 2013; Dinham & Jones, 2010). Overall, very little about faith is taken up by Western universities and colleges in terms of student support services, or even acknowledgement of the religious identities of their students on campus (Dinham, Francis, & Shaw, 2017; Jones, 2014). Religion, faith and the related politics are very much part of the student experience however, regardless of how secularism shapes an institution.

Universities are in fact multi-faith spaces given the importance of faith or cultural traditions to many students in relation to their identity development and sense of belonging. When they bring their whole selves to campus, students are bringing religion, spirituality, cultural traditions, or worldviews along with their intersectional identities (Gilley, 2005; Mayhew, Bowman, & Rockenbach, 2014). The university space, in this sense, is a microcosm of global ideas, ways of being, and a space where we can and should address global and local social issues. This is what sparked our interest in contributing to this conference, by exploring the role of higher education in a multi-sectoral approach to addressing gender-based violence in faith-based communities.

The Multi-Faith Centre, situated as it is within a secular institution, is a place of inclusion and engagement in diverse ways that allow for students to explore identity, faith, spiritual wellbeing, community and belonging. However, in our work, we were interested in going beyond inclusion and thinking about how we can engage with spirituality to disrupt and decolonize dominant narratives particularly on topics related to faith, gender, violence and activism. Furthermore, we wondered what it would mean to address gender-based and sexual violence from a more complex place; one that unpacks the



role of colonial and patriarchal interpretations of religion and their role in normalizing misogyny while amplifying the work of women identifying as activists within faith communities, for whom reclaiming faith or religion is an act of resistance against violence and a source of comfort in their healing.

Case studies

Gender justice for International Women's Day

To commemorate International Women's Day, our centre holds an annual event that invites speakers from underrepresented communities to share about the work they are doing at the intersections of gender, faith, and activism. For 2020, this event included a panel of women from Muslim, Jewish and Sikh communities who addressed issues of violence and gender and experiences within their own faith communities. Students had the opportunity to learn about gender-based violence in relation to how religion is interpreted and acted out in faith-based communities. The space allowed the participants to explore religion and patriarchy in a critical manner without degrading the idea of having faith and respecting that people hold religion and traditions as sacred. In the planning of this event, we focused on the following questions to enable complex and nuanced discussions about the relationship between faith, gender-based violence and faith-based communities.

1. In what ways do the texts/traditions we follow support or embolden patriarchy? What is the role of interpretation and how has the history of colonialism impacted how we interpret text/traditions?
2. How does feminism challenge issues in faith traditions/communities? What does feminism look like in faith-based communities? What is feminism as informed by local traditions, worldviews, and cosmologies versus white and Western feminism?
3. What are some ways in which patriarchy has evolved or changed for you/in your community?
4. How has feminist theory/theology/activism evolved in your community?
5. How has the 'me too' movement impacted faith communities?
6. What do faith-based communities already do well and how can that be leveraged to address gender-based violence?



There was no standard set of responses to these questions, instead they were open and invited people to engage in a more intimate way with the various dimensions and intersections of this topic. We were prepared for heavy discussions that night and had various supports available to students if they needed them, but what we were not fully prepared for was the immense emotion of gratitude and solidarity.

Overwhelmingly, the speakers and attendees felt that they could be their whole selves and discuss this topic from a more holistic view rather than one that focuses only on singular perspectives. What we realized was that within these spaces, along with addressing and healing from gender-based violence, we witnessed moments of healing colonial wounds (Mignolo, 2021), in which the narratives of those often silenced were amplified and resonated.

Community film screening and discussion

In an effort to develop programming which specifically addressed the needs and lived experiences of South Asian communities from various faith backgrounds, we partnered with organisers and academics in the Punjabi Sikh community in the Greater Toronto Area and put together a two-part screening and panel for the Canadian documentary film “Because We Are Girls” (Sangra, 2019). The film followed the real life narrative and lived experiences of three sisters who grew up in a small British Columbian town, and were sexually abused by a male relative for years before coming forward with their story; subsequently facing a significant stigma and backlash from their own community for speaking out. This screening was born out of a growing need within the South Asian folks we were interacting with to address and challenge the persistence of gender-based violence in their communities. In particular, to do so outside of commonly held colonial, white supremacist understandings and stereotyping of how gender-based violence operates within South Asian culture(s) (Thobani, 2015).

The first event was held at the local Cineplex movie theatre in Brampton to ensure it was accessible to the larger community. The second event was held at the Multi-Faith Centre, to enable it to be more easily available to students and folks working at the University. This event held space for community members, organisers, and academics from the diasporic South Asian community in the Greater Toronto Area to engage with the ways in which gender-based violence manifests and is perpetuated within South Asian communities, as well as collectively work towards understanding how cycles of violence can be ended and communal healing can commence. In the planning of the event, we focused on developing and posing the following questions to our panellists





and audience. We were hopeful that this set of questions would allow for complex, critical and nuanced discussions aimed at challenging, ending and healing from gender-based violence within the South Asian communities of faith.

1. The final scene between the girls and their parents is so powerful. I would love the panellists to provide any advice they could about having difficult conversations with their parents. How do we bridge that cultural and generational gap between parents and children so these conversations can happen?
2. Let's talk about the difference between how the mom and the dad reacted in the conversation. After a screening, we went to where the director and two of the sisters engaged in a panel, it was pointed out that the father becomes silent because perhaps in his past experience that has been the strategy that works and choosing to speak could lead to being ostracized or killed. However, in this context, silence is no longer working. Perhaps we could talk about strategies that can be implemented in these difficult conversations?
3. How do we approach these conversations with men? Often women are the ones doing the work. What happens when men do the work - when they're the ones having the conversation? What difficulties arise? Perhaps you could say something about intergenerational trauma here?
4. What steps can we take to dismantle gender roles that seem to be so deeply entrenched in our society? Not just in a Punjabi context but in a global patriarchal context.
5. How can we as a community support our youngest members? How can we be more vigilant in spaces where predators hold positions of power and have trusted access to young people? (e.g., in Gurdwaras - which are the designated places for community assembly and worship for those who follow the Sikh religion).

Similar to our previous event, there was no standard set of responses to these questions from panellists or audience members. The responses that emerged were deeply personal, emotionally challenging and complex due to the nature of the topic being discussed. We made sure to have various supports available to organizers, panellists and those in attendance which included making sure that individuals with social work and counselling experience from the community were present and available. The amount of community support, solidarity and desire for collective healing left us feeling deeply touched, thankful, raw, and ultimately hopeful.



Many folks in attendance and on the panel expressed their feeling that they finally had the space to share their stories and be held and heard by their community in a way that they did not think was possible. To us, this event and the discussion that it generated demonstrated the immense possibility and desire to heal from intergenerational and colonial wounds within community when those most marginalized and erased can share their lived experiences and be received holistically by others from their community.

Conclusion

Over ongoing conversations and reflection on this work, we have realized that decolonizing conversations about faith and gender-based violence may not have an arrival point, rather, the process of discussion and engagement within community is an essential part of the healing and work towards new understandings and social justice. This work has prompted us to think about the many ways we can be more thoughtful, critical, reflective, open to criticism, and more actively engaged in community while we try to address big issues like gender-based violence. This has also prompted us to increase our engagement with student partners from under-represented communities. For example, we have ongoing programs that focus on gender-based violence within communities of Asian heritage and include community talks, yoga as healing rooted in Eastern tradition among other programs. We are hopeful about continuing our work and creating spaces that decentre dominant narratives and progress towards dismantling systems of power while supporting personal and community healing.

References

- Ahdar, R. (2013). Is secularism neutral? *Ratio Juris*, 26(3), 404-429. doi:10.1111/raju.12020.
- Anisef, P., Axelrod, P. & Lennards, J. (2015). Universities in Canada (Canadian Universities). *The Canadian Encyclopaedia*. Retrieved from <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/university> Accessed 17 Feb. 2023.
- Dinham, A. & Jones, S. (2010). *An analysis of challenges of religious faith, and resources for meeting them, for university leaders*. Retrieved from <http://data.theeuropeanlibrary.org/BibliographicResource/2000001156115> Accessed 17 Feb. 2023.



- Dinham, A., Francis, M. & Shaw, M. (2017). Towards a theory and practice of religious literacy: A case study of religion and belief engagement in a UK university. *Religions*, 8(12), 276. doi:10.3390/rel8120276.
- Gilley, D. V. (2005). Whose spirituality? cautionary notes about the role of spirituality in higher education. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 104, 93-99. doi:10.1002/tl.218.
- Grosfoguel, R. (2006). World-Systems Analysis in the Context of Transmodernity, Border Thinking, and Global Coloniality. *Review (Fernand Braudel Centre)*, 29(2), 167–187. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40241659>.
- Mayhew, M. J., Bowman, N. A. & Rockenbach, A. B. (2014). Silencing whom? linking campus climates for religious, spiritual, and worldview diversity to student worldviews. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 85(2), 219-245. doi:10.1080/00221546.2014.11777325.
- Mignolo, W. (2021). *The Politics of Decolonial Investigations*. Durham & London: Duke University Press.
- Sangra, B. (Director). (2019). *Because We Are Girls* (Film). National Film Board of Canada.
- Thobani, S. (2015). Sovereignty, Culture, Rights: The Racial Politics of Gendered Violence in Canada. *Borderlands*, 14(1): 1-26.

Declarations

Conflicting interests

The authors of this article, Punita Lumb and Savroop Shergill, declare that there is no conflict of interest.



Sugira Muryango: A community-integrated approach to family violence reduction and ECD promotion in Rwanda

Jess Littman, Gabi Phend, Stephanie Bazubagira Magali, Sarah K.G. Jensen, Vincent Sezibera, and Theresa S. Betancourt

Abstract

We propose a virtual presentation of the Sugira Muryango intervention and research. Sugira Muryango (“Strengthen the Family”) is a lay-workers-delivered father-engaged home-visiting intervention for families living in severe poverty with infants and children aged 0-36 months in Rwanda. The intervention addresses early childhood development (ECD) through a focus on the whole family. Unlike most ECD interventions, Sugira Muryango addresses between-caregiver conflict as well as caregiver-child conflict. Alongside traditional ECD topics such as nutrition and play, Sugira Muryango teaches conflict resolution and power-sharing skills to couples. A cluster randomized trial (CRT) of Sugira Muryango found that the intervention was effective in reducing incidence of intimate partner violence immediately after intervention (Betancourt et al., 2020). The effect on intimate partner violence continued for at least one year after intervention (Jensen et al., 2021), and will be measured again in a longitudinal follow-up with this cohort taking place in 2022. Sugira Muryango also reduced harsh discipline of children, with significant effects measured both immediately and one year after intervention. After the initial CRT, Sugira Muryango was expanded to reach an additional 10,000 families through the training of a new volunteer social protection workforce, the Inshuti z’Umuryango (“Friends of the Family”) (IZUs). Through the PLAY Collaborative approach to local ownership and oversight, 2,608 IZUs have been trained to deliver the Sugira Muryango intervention. The expanded version of Sugira Muryango, utilizing the PLAY Collaborative approach, includes an embedded study which will provide additional evidence on community-engaged intervention for family peace and development.



Empowering Women and Girls, Transforming Communities, Promising and Best Practices to Address Gender Based Violence in Kenya: Reports from an Organizational Programme

Grace Bonareri Mose

Abstract

Domestic violence and female genital mutilation (FGM/C) remains as major concern in sub Saharan African today and presents a barrier to the attainment of gender parity. Kenya is not an exception as these vices are widespread in families and communities. The prevalence of GBV in Kenya stands at over 35% especially among women and girls aged 15-49 (KDHS, 2014). This raises questions on the efficacy and relevance of response and prevention. Many organizations, government agencies and churches have provided interventions with minimal impact mainly because they adopt Eurocentric and Western approaches which conflict with the religious and cultural values of the Africans. FGM among the Abagusii which is a site for our project, continues at 85% prevalence rate. HFAW was started by Grace to address rampant GBV and FGM in Kenya. Having grown in rural village she understood vulnerabilities women have to overcome, the power structures and how culture objectify women and girls. FGM's as a cultural practice had drastic impact on her life. Yet she didn't understand why DV and FGM were not reducing with much ongoing advocacy work. She embarked on postgraduate studies on FGM and adopted a theoretical framework, Popular Education (PE) by Paul Freire. She proceeded to South America in 2010 to learn the model's real-life application to transform communities. Grace discovered that this model is powerfully transformative due to its critical consciousness raising, participatory and community engagement. The model adopted religious principles and pillars of the Lutheran church and involved the affected community in its design and implementation. The principles, and pillars resonated with the African values and religious beliefs. Convinced that this model will work to address GBV and FGM Grace moved from USA in 2011, founded HFAW and trained 5 women in Chile and 30 TOT in Kenya to help in spreading the model to end prevent the vices. The presentation showcased reports and real-life applications of this model to combat and prevent GBV and FGM in villages among the Abagusii community, Kenya.



Biographies

Authors and speakers in alphabetical order:

► *Abera Getachew*

Abera Getachew (Assistant Professor), is a Lecturer at Addis Ababa University. He has been teaching, conducting research and providing community service in the areas of my specialization at Ambo University (AU) for four years and at Madda Walabu for five years. He is a member of the research team for Higher Education Studies in the Addis Ababa University School of Psychology, Institute of Education and Behavioural Sciences. He teaches and supervises undergraduate and post graduate students who are doing research within the different functional areas of Psychology. He holds a BA Hons (Psychology and Sociology, 2007) and an MA (Counselling Psychology, 2013, with distinction). He was given the responsibility by the faculty to support the students as a career development coordinator and student counsellor. He is working on a study that investigates the role of counselling in institutions of higher learning; academic counselling; career counselling; soft skills for job development; mental health; drug abuse; child abuse; career development; and the ability to adapt to change at various educational levels.

► *Amma Anane-Agye*

Amma Anane-Agyei is co-ordinator of African Families Service (AFS) in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, United Kingdom (UK). She is a qualified social worker and has been employed since 1978 in London Brough of Tower Hamlets, UK. She received the 'Lifetime Achievement Award' by Keolis Amey Docklands which covers the City of London, the London boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Newham, Greenwich, and Lewisham at the third Community Champions Award Ceremony 2019. This award recognises an individual whose achievements have been far-reaching and sustained over several years. She is also a Trainer, Consultant & Registered Expert Witness Assessor on issues pertaining to Black African Children and Families. She has chaired, spoken, and organized local, national, and international conferences and seminars. She is often called upon to contribute to government report, research and offered opinion on national television, newspaper, and radio broadcasters. She is a co – author and author of four publications.

✉ ammayaw@aol.com



► *Aysha Ahmed*

Aysha Ahmed is a PhD Researcher in the Institute of Applied Social Research, University of Bedfordshire, and a registered social worker professional with over 33 years of experience in Children's Safeguarding Services. Aysha has a wealth of knowledge in Child Protection, Domestic Violence, Child Sexual Exploitation, and Social Care Management. Alongside her role she is a Visiting Lecturer for the Social Work Programs. Aysha is also a Freelance Training Consultant and facilitate national and local conferences and Webinars, and an advocate for Domestic Violence and Honour-based Abuse.

✉ aysham97@gmail.com

► *Bantamlak Gelaw*

Bantamlak Gelaw has been working as Health and Nutrition coordinator for EOTC-DICAC since 2014. In this role, he coordinates health related and nutrition projects, such as: clergy mobilization for immunization, community based complementary food production, infant and young children feeding (IYCF) .Since 2021 he has acted as the Health and Social Affairs Department head at EOTC-DICAC. He also has been lecturer and head of nursing department at St. Lideta Health Sciences College. He holds a second degree in Public Health from Addis Ababa University.

✉ 24bantish@gmail.com

► *Benjamin Kalkum*

Benjamin Kalkum is researching on religion and gender norms, in particular masculinity norms, in the Sub-Sahara Africa. After his Master's thesis about the religious foundation of masculinity norms, for which he interviewed married Christian men in Zambia, he worked in an HIV prevention project in Zambia's Northwestern Province, where he became curious about the teachings of local traditional marriage counsellors. After having relocated to Ethiopia to join his wife, he became associated researcher at Project d/dl/ድልድል, where he continues to work on the intersection of religion and gender, and focuses on particular on masculinity norms and the impact of pornography. Next to his duties as a father, he also works as a freelance consultant.

✉ bkalkum@gmail.com  [Benjamin Kalkum](#)

► *Birye Dessalegn Mekonnen*

Birye Dessalegn Mekonnen has completed a Master of Public Health in Reproductive and Child Health from the University of Gondar. He has more than five years working experience



in clinical areas, and more than six years of teaching experience. He has been a lecturer of reproductive and child health at Teda Health Science College. He is experienced in primary research and systematic review and meta-analysis. He has 20 research publications and one book chapter. He is currently working in Public Health Emergency Operation Center Zonal Technical Assistance under the Amhara Public Health Institute.

✉ birye22@gmail.com

► *Dolphine Kwamboka*

Dolphine Kwamboka, the World Vision Kenya PURPOSE Coordinator, completed her undergraduate degree in community resource management where she majored in gender and development studies and is currently pursuing her Master's degree in project planning and management at Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology. She has extensive experience working with women at risk and survivors of SGBV as an agent of support and guidance together with communities whilst coordinating different gender initiatives in Kenya.

► *Erminia Colucci*

Dr Erminia Colucci is Associate Professor in Visual and Cultural Psychology in the Department of Psychology at Middlesex University London (UK) and a registered Clinical and Community Psychologist (Italy). She is also a Visiting Professor at Gadjah Mada University (Indonesia). Her main area of research and training is in Cultural and Global Mental Health (PhD in Cultural Psychiatry), and Applied Cross-Cultural Psychology and Visual Anthropology (MPhil in Ethnographic Documentary), with a focus on low-middle income countries and immigrant and refugee populations. Erminia is passionate about using arts-based and visual methods in her research, teaching and advocacy activities. Erminia is the founder of Movie-ment and Chair of the World Association of Cultural Psychiatry SIG on Arts, Mental Health and Human Rights.

► *Gabriela Phend*

Gabriela Phend, MA, has been working on the Sugira Muryango project since early 2021. She oversees project implementation and research and manages relationships with key stakeholders, including national and local government representatives. She has been based in Rwanda since 2017, where she has led a variety of education and health interventions, including for two years as an Education Peace Corps Volunteer and later as National Malaria Coordinator with IntraHealth International. Gabriela has an MA in Women's History from Sarah Lawrence College and a BA in History from Brigham Young University. She is passionate about integrating gender and social inclusion in development interventions.



► *Grace Bonareri Mose*

Grace is the Founder and Director of HFAW. HFAW is a non-partisan, not for profit and feminist organization that works with rural and peri-rural communities to reduce gender disparities through economic empowerment, reduction of GBV, promotion of sexual and reproductive health rights and advancement of human rights through a Popular Education (P.E) model. Grace is also Lecturer at Kenyatta University. She is passionate community mobilizer working to build a grassroots movement to reduce GBV and end FGM in the Abagusii community, Kenya. Part of her work involves empowering women and girls. She embraces total community engagement and participation including working with men to break the silence. Grace's work is informed by a long history of advocacy for women which convinced her that homegrown models work better and faster to solve problems. Grace worked as the Director of the Education Fund's Diverse Communities Health Initiative of Family Planning Advocates in New York State and earlier as the Director of Domestic Violence Hotlines for the New York State Coalition against Domestic Violence and Faculty at SUNY Albany. She holds a Doctorate and Masters in Women Studies from the State University at Albany, New York.

✉ bonarerigm@gmail.com

► *Henok Hailu Ayele*

Mr Henok Hailu Ayele is a young researcher in the areas of: mental health focusing on indigenising mental health concepts in the local context, mental health and religion, mental health aspects of children and adolescents, and neuro developmental disorders. Mr Hailu has 10 years' experience of work, in local non-governmental organizations and higher education in teaching and clinical works. He is a member of faculty at Addis Ababa University in the Department of Psychiatry, Clinical Psychology Program. He also serves as President of the Ethiopian Psychologists Association and as an executive committee member of the Pan African Psychology Association (PAPU). He is also a deacon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church.

► *Jacqueline Ogega*

Dr Jacqueline (Jackie) Ogega is the Senior Director for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion at World Vision US, where she leads a team of technical experts in GESI integration. Jackie has over 27 years of experience in international development, peacebuilding, education, and training. She has worked with various organizations including Creative Associates, PCI, World Learning, CRS, and Religions for Peace, and directed multi-million-dollar programs involving multi-sector donors. Her expertise includes providing strategic direction and thought leadership, leading business development, and ensuring program quality and impact. She has led



the development of World Vision's GESI approach, technical tools, DME toolkit, promising practices, and training. Jackie is a mentor with USAID AGILE gender training, and Mastercard mentorship program for young changemakers. She is the author of *Women, Religion, & Peacebuilding*, *Home Is Us*, and *Landowner*. She has a PhD. in peace and conflict studies from Bradford University in the United Kingdom.

► *Jess Littman*

Jess Littman, MSc, is the Program Manager of the Longitudinal & Spillover Study of Sugira Muryango. She earned her BA in International Development & Peace at New York University and her MSc in Measurement & Evaluation at American University. She previously served as the Senior Evaluation Associate at Educate!, an organization supporting youth in Africa to develop the skills they need to succeed in today's economy. Prior to that, she served as the Director of Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning at AfricAid, an organization mentoring girls in Tanzania to complete their education and become leaders. She is interested in research utility and effectiveness.

✉ jess.littman@bc.edu

► *Lombebo Tagesse*

Lombebo Tagesse is a PhD candidate at Addis Ababa University in the Department of Sociology, a lecturer and a researcher. His educational background includes an MA in sociology from Haramaya University, and a BA in Civic and Ethical studies from Dilla University. He worked as coordinator of a research team at national level on Industry Extension Service Program at Ethiopian TVET institutions in 2021. Plus, he was a team leader in national research entitled "Sciences and Culture Interrelated to Indigenous Knowledge in Ethiopia" which was conducted by the Higher Education Strategic Center under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education in 2021. He also worked with the Ethiopian Population Council, Freedom Fund, and London School of Hygiene and Tropical Disease as research consultant on migration projects specific to girls' migration, returnees and potential migrants. His researches and publications emphasize on health extension program, gender mainstreaming, awareness of migrant female domestics on contraceptive methods, and beggar children as income generators. Concerning policy development work, he has successfully developed a policy recommendation and policy brief on 'Industry Extension Service Program in Ethiopia'. Finally, he successfully accomplished field trainer duty in the National Election Board of Ethiopia; and a center coordinator in the third Ethiopian National Population Census.

✉ lombbeb.tagesse@aau.edu.et





► *Mahmoud Ali Gomaa Afifi*

Mahmoud Ali Gomaa Afifi is a PhD student at the University of Lancaster. Mahmoud Afifi is currently in his fourth year of a PhD study programme in Religious Studies at Lancaster University of UK. His topic deals with the interpretation of Quran 4: 34 in connection with the treatment of wife abuse in Muslim communities across the UK. Mahmood received his undergraduate education at Al-Azhar University in Cairo Egypt in Islamic studies and English translation, and received his MA in Islamic Studies from Claremont Graduate University in California, USA in 2012 on the topic of gender violence.

✉ m.a.afifi@lancaster.ac.uk

► *Mulugeta Seyoum*

Priest Dr. Mulugeta Seyoum is an Associate Professor of Linguistics at the Addis Ababa University's Academy of Ethiopian Languages and Cultures (AELC). He earned his PhD in Linguistics from Leiden University in the Netherlands and his MPhil in Linguistics from Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), Trondheim. He has served at various capacities in the University including director of the AELC. He has long served as chairman of EOTC Ma-hibere Kidusan and various other civil organizations, which he still does now.

► *Muluken Kassahun Amid*

Muluken has served as a Public Prosecutor (Oromia region), Instructor (Mettu University), Researcher (CARD Ethiopia), and Consultant (NDI for International Affairs) on legal and human rights issues. He has published several articles and books. Muluken has presented more than 30 papers at national and international research conferences, including conferences organized by the Association of Human Rights Institutes and University of Pretoria, African Human Rights Moot Court Competition and British University in Egypt, World Human Rights Cities Forum and Gwangju International Center, UN OHCHR and Hanns Seidel Foundation in Ethiopia and Ethiopian Federal Parliament. His particular research focus includes Constitution, Federalism, Human Rights, Gender Equality, Climate Change, and emerging legal issues. Currently, Muluken is serving as Attorney and Legal Consultant, and Assistant Professor of Law (Mettu University and Ethiopian Civil Service University (Adjunct)). He is also a PHD Researcher at Addis Ababa University Center for Human Rights.

✉ mulkas2003@gmail.com



► Pamela Aben Shelley

Pamela is a qualified nurse and 4th Year Doctoral Researcher at Brunel University London. She worked as a Midwife for 12 years at Rosie Hospital, Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, with a particular interest in caring for women who had experienced IPV during pregnancy and postpartum. She also worked for 6 years as a Health and Disability Nurse Assessor assessing women survivors of domestic abuse for welfare benefits. She is also a Christian leader in a church in Cambridge, and she provides support as 'women-helping-women' to Christian women survivors of intimate partner violence. Her professional experience, lived Christian experience, and personal experience of intimate partner violence experience inspired her to conduct this research to contribute to knowledge in intimate partner violence and Christianity

► *Punita Lumb*

I am currently the Associate Director of the Multi-Faith Centre at the University of Toronto, and I am also a PhD Candidate at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. My research focuses on decolonial approaches to internationalization of higher education. I acknowledge the privilege and power these roles give me, not only within the institution, but also when I relate with various communities locally and globally. I am also a woman of colour, of South Asian heritage, a child of immigrants; all identities that pit me directly against colonial structures of privilege and power (Grosfuguel, 2006). I recognize that I sit with both power and marginality, and complicity and resistance within an institution. These are contradictions that I continually reflect on and contend with in my work.

► *Rahel Kassa*

Rahel Kassa is a researcher, lawyer and a development professional. She holds graduate degrees in Master of International Studies in Development Cooperation and a Master of Business Administration degree. Rahel earned her first degree in Bachelor of Laws. Rahel's research interest focuses on human-centered sustainable development issues; policy and legal research; human security and justice; gender and development; and understanding the policy and development insinuation aspects of the nexus between indigenous knowledge and contemporary science and innovation development. Rahel is currently working as a Researcher and Consultant at EMIRTA Research, Training and Development Institute.





► *Rahmanara Chowdhury*

Dr Rahmanara Chowdhury is a Chartered Psychologist and Course Lead of the BA and MA Islam and Pastoral Care programmes at the Markfield Institute of Higher Education (MIHE). She has a masters in Psychology and completed her doctoral research at Brunel University London (funded by the ESRC GUDTP). She has authored several books on the topic of domestic abuse and published in peer reviewed journals. She is the Head of the MIHE Centre for the Study of Wellbeing which seeks to facilitate grassroots expertise leading on their own narratives in relation to wellbeing issues.

► *Romina Istratii*

Dr Romina Istratii is UKRI Future Leaders Fellow at the School of History, Religions and Philosophies at SOAS University of London. She is Principal Investigator of the UKRI-funded project “Bridging religious studies, gender & development and public health to address domestic violence: A novel approach for Ethiopia and the UK” and creator of project d/dl/ድልድል. She is a critical international development thinker and practitioner from Eastern Europe with decade-long experience in developing cosmology-sensitive and people-centred methodologies and approaches for analysing and addressing issues with gender dimensions in religious societies of Africa. In 2019, she initialised the Decolonising Research Initiative under the aegis of the SOAS Research Directorate and in 2020, she co-founded of Decolonial Subversions, an open access, multilingual, peer-reviewed publishing platform that aims to subvert western epistemology and to promote the diversification of knowledge production. She is the author of the monograph *Adapting Gender and Development to Local Religious Contexts: A Decolonial Approach to Domestic Violence in Ethiopia* (Routledge, 2020).

✉ ri5@soas.ac.uk

► *Sarah K.G. Jensen*

Dr Sarah K.G. Jensen is a Co-PI on the Longitudinal & Spillover Study of Sugira Muryango together with Theresa S. Betancourt. Sarah has MA degrees in Clinical Psychology from the University of Copenhagen and Neuroscience from UCL, and a PhD in Developmental Psychology from King’s College London. Her research interests include understanding how children’s early environments shape their cognitive, socioemotional, and biological development. She has done extensive work involving advanced child assessments and neuroimaging to low resource settings including Bangladesh, Rwanda, and Ethiopia and has worked on the Sugira Muryango project since 2018.

✉ jensenj@bc.edu





► *Savroop Shergill*

I am presently the Manager of Programs and Services at Embrace: Agency to End Gender-Based Violence in the Peel Region of Ontario. I have recently completed my Masters in Social Work at the University of Toronto, with a specialization in the Equity and Diversity program stream. My professional and academic experiences grant me - and are a consequence of - a collection of social privileges that I hold within a number of institutions and spaces. My social location as a second-generation South Asian settler in what is colonially known as Canada places me in a unique position, in which parts of my identity and self are encouraged and assimilated into the colonial project of Canada, while others are rejected and marked for erasure. I am committed to sitting with the complexity, discomfort and responsibility of these realities within my own work and practice in the academic institution and social services field.

► *Selamawit Reta*

Selamawit Reta is a young theology and philosophy devotee with an upcoming Master's degree in Theology at Agora University, School of Holy Transfiguration. She believes that understanding the past is essential to comprehending the present and the future. She has a deep interest in both Eastern and Western Philosophy and its implications for understanding the state of being and its social implications. She holds a Bachelor's Degree in Theology from the Holy Trinity Theological College in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She specializes in software project management by profession and holds a Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering and a Master's in Business Administration.

► *Solomon Girma*

Solomon Girma is a lecturer in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of Gondar. He received his BA in English Language and Literature from the University of Gondar in 2007 and his MA in English Literature from Addis Ababa University in 2011. Having joined Debre Berhan University as a graduate assistant in 2007, Mr. Solomon worked there until he transferred to the University of Gondar in 2014. Beside his teaching duties, he has been engaged in delivering English Language training and community service. Currently, he is doing his PhD in English Literature at the University of Gondar.

✉ fassol86g@gmail.com

► *Stephanie Bazubagira Magali*

Stephanie Bazubagira Magali is the Program Coordinator for Sugira Muryango, an Early Childhood Development (ECD) program using implementation Science, at FXB-Rwanda. She has





over 9 years of experience in leading and managing small to large-scale interventions and research projects and has observed cross-sectional studies in the fields of education, health, nutrition, agriculture, sexual reproductive health in Rwanda. She is skilled in leading and coordinating data collection activities, research study design, data quality management, and report writing. Previously, she served as Research Coordinator at Partners in Health (PIH), and as Research Assistant at Swiss Tropical Institute of Public Health. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences from Kigali Independent University and an Advanced Diploma in Information Systems and Technology from Kenya College of Communication and Technology. She is interested in women's empowerment and equity.

✉ smbazubagira@fxbrwanda.org

► *Tadesse A. Zerfu*

Dr. Tadesse is a Public Health researcher, currently serving at the University of Edinburgh's Global Academy of Agriculture and Food Systems (GAAFS), UK. He has completed two post-doctoral fellowships at a US based University and a research center in Kenya. In the past, he has served as a clinician, academician, consultant, and government advisor - senior advisor at Federal Ministry of Health in Ethiopia. Tadesse is the winner of the 16th Tore Godal annual research Prize and a member of the Ethiopian young academy of sciences (EtYAS). He has authored and co-authored more than 82 research products (articles (62), book chapters, technical reports and data).

► *Theresa Betancourt*

Dr Theresa Betancourt, ScD, MA, is the inaugural Salem Professor in Global Practice at the Boston College School of Social Work and Director of the Research Program on Children and Adversity (RPCA). Her primary research interest is to understand the protective processes that contribute to risk and resilience in the mental health and development of children and adolescents facing adversity in a variety of cultures and settings. Dr Betancourt has led initiatives to adapt and test evidence-based behavioural and parenting interventions for children and families facing adversity; she additionally focuses on strategies for scaling out these interventions using implementation science approaches. She is Principal Investigator of an intergenerational study of war/prospective longitudinal study of war-affected youth in Sierra Leone, a scale-up Family Strengthening Intervention for children and families in Rwanda, and community-based participatory research on prevention of emotional and behavioural problems in refugee children and adolescents resettled in the U.S.

✉ theresa.betancourt@bc.edu



► *Tirsit Sahledengil*

Tirsit Sahledengil is a female assistant professor in the Social Anthropology Department of Addis Ababa University. She has been a researcher in the Institute of Ethiopian Studies of Addis Ababa University since February 2013. Tirsit's publications and research have focused on gender, migration and forced displacement. She has conducted research in relation to women and gender roles. She conducted her PhD research in one of the refugee camps in Benishangul Gumuz region. Her recent research work in relation to labour migration was on female domestic workers in Addis Ababa and their challenges. She has more than four journal articles in international journals and also book chapters.

✉ tirst.sahledengil@aau.edu.et

► *Vincent Sezibera*

Dr Vincent Sezibera is a professor of psychology and the Director of the Centre for Mental Health at University of Rwanda. He specializes in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and child and adolescent traumatic grief. Dr Sezibera has conducted research on trauma and bereavement among young survivors of the 1994 genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda. In addition, he has studied the impact of HIV/AIDS on the mental health of children and families. As a professor, Dr Sezibera's teaching workload includes psychopathology, cognitive and behavioural approaches to psychotherapy, and grief and mourning. He has also contributed to social service workforce development in Rwanda, Benin, Republic of Central Africa, Ivory Coast and Cameroon. He is the local Principal Investigator for the Sugira Muryango studies in Rwanda.

✉ vsezibera@gmail.com

► *Zayid Douglas*

Zayid is the Senior Technical Advisor for Gender Equality and Social Inclusion at World Vision US. In her role, she provides gender and inclusion technical support to program design, quality improvement, and research, monitoring, and evaluation efforts while representing World Vision in various fora including the INEE Gender Task Team and the USAID CARE-GBV Foundational Elements Technical Advisory Group. She has over 15 years' experience as a social science researcher and implementer working on topics such as girls' education, GBV including child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM), women's land and property rights, refugees & immigrants, and persons with disabilities. Her past professional experience includes the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and Abt Associates, and consultancies with Chemonics International and Johns Hopkins University. She has a BA in Psychology from Wellesley College and a MPP in International and Health Policy from the University of Chicago.



Workshops

Abstracts sorted by the order they were delivered

Invisible Chains: From Domestic Violence to Coercive Control

Lisa Fontes

We can better address and eliminate intimate partner violence if we see the problem as an ongoing crime of control—more like a long-term hostage situation than a series of physical assaults. This presentation explores the tactics of coercive control including isolation, intimidation, monitoring, gaslighting, stalking and sexual and physical violence.

► *Born and raised in New York City, Lisa Aronson Fontes, PhD, has travelled the globe lecturing on topics ranging from the sexual abuse of children to intimate partner violence. Working in the field as a psychotherapist, researcher, and activist, Dr Fontes discovered that many agencies fail to comprehensively address the needs of their immigrant and cultural minority clients. She has dedicated her career to filling this gap: helping the mental health, social service, criminal justice, and legal systems provide better services in communities of colour—especially for victims of violence. She provides keynotes and workshops for medical and mental health professionals, police, social workers, and community members. Dr Fontes also works as an expert witness in legal cases related to child abuse and intimate partner violence (or coercive control). Dr Fontes earned her Ph.D. in Counselling Psychology from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She also has a Master's in Psychology from New York University, a Master's from Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, and a Bachelor's from Cornell University in Romance Languages and Literatures. Dr Fontes has conducted short and long-term training in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, England, Guyana, Peru, Puerto Rico, Kenya, and Spain, as well as in more than forty U.S. states. Fontes is the author of the books: *Invisible Chains: Overcoming Coercive Control in Your Intimate Relationship*, *Interviewing Clients Across Cultures*, and *Child Abuse and Culture*. Her books have sold over 60,000 copies, and been translated into Spanish, Korean, Japanese, and two forms of Chinese. You can read some of her works at:*

<https://www.domesticshelters.org/about/contributing-writers/lisa-aronson-fontes-phd>



Visual methods for activist research

Erminia Colucci

We live in a world where technologies and audio-visual tools are central medium for communication. The presenter has integrated the use of a range of visual methods into cultural and global mental health research. Using experiences in ethnographic documentary and participatory video research about human rights issues and mental health/illness in various LMICs and among people from migrant and refugee backgrounds, the workshop participants will reflect on the benefits and challenges in using these tools for exploring sensitive and often misrepresented issues as well as using creative forms of engagement to ignite social and system changes.

► *Dr. Erminia Colucci is Associate Professor in Visual and Cultural Psychology in the Department of Psychology at Middlesex University London (UK) and a registered Clinical and Community Psychologist (Italy). She is also a Visiting Professor at Gadjah Mada University (Indonesia). Her main area of research and training is in Cultural and Global Mental Health (PhD in Cultural Psychiatry), and Applied Cross-Cultural Psychology and Visual Anthropology (MPhil in Ethnographic Documentary), with a focus on low-middle income countries and immigrant and refugee populations. Erminia is passionate about using arts-based and visual methods in her research, teaching and advocacy activities. Erminia is the founder of Movie-ment and Chair of the World Association of Cultural Psychiatry SIG on Arts, Mental Health and Human Rights.*

Evaluating domestic abuse programmes: choosing a research design

Gene Feder

I will start the session by posing key questions we have to answer in choosing an appropriate design: (i) Who wants to know and what forms of evaluation would they find acceptable? (ii) What are the outcomes the programme aims to achieve or improve? (iii) Can these outcomes be measured? If so, how does one choose the appropriate measurement? (iv) Can these outcomes be captured from narratives? If so, whose narratives? (v) What comparisons can be made to evaluate the effect of the programme? Are there outcome measurements or narratives that predate the programme? (vi) What resources are available for the evaluation? This will be followed by small group



discussion, with each group taking an actual, planned, or hypothetical programme in a specific context and apply the questions to that programme. We will then reconvene, initially hearing some of the responses to the questions. I will then conclude with a presentation of some of the choices I have made in evaluating domestic abuse programmes in health care contexts, highlighting strengths and weakness of those choices.

► *Gene Feder is Professor of Primary Health Care, Bristol Medical School, University of Bristol, UK. Gene trained as a family physician in England and has worked in general practices for 36 years. His research started with the health and healthcare of Traveller Gypsies, followed by studies on the development and implementation of clinical guidelines, management of chronic respiratory and cardiovascular conditions in primary care and the health impact of domestic violence. His current research focuses on healthcare responses to domestic violence globally. Gene's methodological expertise is in randomised controlled trials and systematic reviews, collaborating with epidemiologists and social scientists on cohort and qualitative studies respectively. He leads a domestic violence and health group in Bristol medical school and a gender violence global health research group. He is interim director of VISION, a consortium that aims to reduce the harms to health caused by violence by improving the data that underpins theory, policy and professional practice. He chaired the WHO intimate partner and sexual violence guidelines.*

Incorporating evaluation when designing effective domestic violence prevention programmes

Parveen Ali

Domestic abuse has been identified as a pressing public health issue, but one with a very weak evidence base to inform intervention design and delivery. While domestic violence intersects cultural, social and geographic boundaries, it shows a strong social gradient. Emergency hospital admission rates linked to violence are around five times higher in deprived communities than in the most affluent. Risk factors for intimate partner and sexual violence include: female gender, young age, lower household income, living in areas of high physical disorder, alcohol consumption, and gender inequality, as well as social and cultural norms that tolerate violence. Effective interventions, if implemented well with good uptake in deprived areas and population groups, would have an important effect on reducing the related inequalities in physical and mental ill-health.



Effective interventions would also have an important social and economic impact as the overall costs associated with domestic abuse. Recently, there have been some attempt to evaluate perpetrator programmes for voluntary participants in the UK, but much more needs to be done to understand the mechanism through which such preventive and support programme work especially when delivered to people from social-economically deprived areas. There is a need for more rigorous and theory-driven evaluations of community-based interventions for perpetrators to enable greater understanding of how such interventions operate to effect change, the optimal components of such interventions, and how they can be successfully implemented in practice. However, not all interventions regardless of their usefulness, can be assessed properly as the aspect of evaluation is hardly considered at the time of developing interventions. In the current economic environment where resources are limited and services and organisations are asked to demonstrate their effectiveness and usefulness, designing and delivering interventions that can be evaluated is extremely important. Domestic violence interventions designed to help perpetrators explore their behaviour or victim's services aiming to support victims or survivors of domestic abuse also face these challenges.

Commissioners as well as those delivering these services need to think about evaluability of the services very clearly. However, much more needs to be done to understand this aspect. The proposed workshop aims to explore how to develop appropriate preventive and support interventions for victims/survivors, and /or perpetrators that not only deliver effective services but can also be evaluated effectively to understand the mechanism and processes. This methodological paper aims to explore factors that should be considered when developing domestic violence prevention interventions for perpetrators. It will also suggest how to develop interventions that are not only effective but can also be evaluated.

► *Professor Parveen Ali has a joint position at the University and Doncaster & Bassetlaw Teaching Hospitals (DBTH). She is a Registered Nurse, Registered Nurse Teacher and Senior Fellow of Higher Education Academy and Fellow of Faculty of Public Health. Prof Ali leads MMedSci Advanced Nursing Studies and is a Deputy Director of Research and Innovation in the Health Sciences School. Prof Ali is Editor-in Chief of International Nursing Review and editorial board member of Journal of Advanced Nursing and Journal of Interpersonal Violence.*

