

**IBN HALDUN UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

MASTER THESIS



**CONCEPTUALIZATION OF ROMANTIC LOVE IN
GHANA: A PROBE WITHIN THE ZONGO SOCIETIES**

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**THESIS SUPERVISOR
PROF. RAMAZAN ARAS**

İSTANBUL, 2023

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by

YAKUBU ALI

**A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in
Sociology**

**THESIS SUPERVISOR
PROF. RAMAZAN ARAS**

İSTANBUL, 2023

APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that, in our opinion, it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of master of Sociology.

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I hereby declare that all the information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conducts, I have fully cited and referenced all materials and results that are not original to this work.

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ÖZ

GANNA'DA ROMANTİK AŞKIN KAVRAMSALLAŞTIRILMASI: ZONGO TOPLUMLARINDA BİR SORUŞTURMA

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Romantik aşk, psikoloji, sosyoloji, antropoloji ve felsefe de dahil olmak üzere çeşitli alanlardan akademisyenler tarafından incelenen ve tartışılan karmaşık ve çok yönlü bir olgudur. Romantik aşka ilişkin evrimsel bakış açısı, bunun doğal seçilimin bir sonucu olduğunu ve sağlıklı çocuklar doğurma olasılığı en yüksek olan uyumlu bir eş bulma arzusuyla motive edildiğini iddia eder. Buna karşılık, romantik aşka ilişkin kültürel görüş, romantik aşkın kültürler ve dönemler arasında farklılık gösteren sosyal bir yapı olduğunu iddia eder. Bu tezin amacı, Gana'nın Hausa dili konuşan Zongo toplulukları ve kültürlerinde romantik aşkın nasıl kavramsallaştırıldığını analiz etmeye çalışmaktır. Bu tez, Zongo kültürünü, Zongo'daki etnik grupları, küreselleşmeyi ve bunun insanların romantik aşkın ne olduğu anlayışı üzerindeki etkisini araştırıyor. Bu çalışma aşk, romantik aşk ve kültür arasındaki ilişkiyi ele alıyor ve ardından Zongo topluluklarının oluşumunun ayrıntılı bir tarihini ve Zongo'ya yerleşen farklı kabilelerden ve etnik gruplardan insanlar arasındaki kültürler arası ilişkileri veriyor. Bu etnografik araştırma, görüşülen insanlarla çeşitli karşılaşmaları ve etkileşimleri belgeliyor ve insanların aşka ve romantik aşka yüklediği anlamı duymamızı sağlıyor. Bu çalışma, bu insanların aşkı ve romantik aşkı nasıl tanımladıklarını açığa çıkarmakta; Zongo'da bu romantik aşkın bu topluluklar içinde nasıl ifade edildiği ve dinin insanların romantik aşk anlayışı üzerindeki temsilinin nasıl olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Aşk, Gana, Haus, Kültür, Romantik Aşk, Zongo.

ABSTRACT

CONCEPTUALIZATION OF ROMANTIC LOVE IN GHANA: A PROBE WITHIN THE ZONGO SOCIETIES

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Romantic love is a complicated and multifaceted phenomenon that has been examined and disputed by academics from various fields, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy. The evolutionary perspective on romantic love contends that it results from natural selection and is motivated by the desire to find a compatible spouse with the highest possibility of generating healthy children. In contrast, the cultural view of romantic love contends that romantic love is a social construct that differs between cultures and time periods. This thesis aims to try to analyze how romantic love is conceptualized in Ghana's Hausa-speaking Zongo communities and cultures. This thesis probes into the Zongo culture, the ethnic groups in Zongo, globalization, and its effect on the people's understanding of romantic love. This work examines the relationship between love, romantic love, and culture. Then, it gives a detailed history of the formation of the Zongo communities and the inter-cultural relations between people from different tribes and ethnic groups settling in Zongo. This ethnographic research documents diverse encounters and interactions with the people interviewed and allows us to hear the meaning people give to love and romantic love. It reveals how they define love and romantic love, how it is expressed within these communities, and the agency of religion on people's conception of romantic love in Zongo.

Keywords: Culture, Ghana, Hausa, Love, Romantic Love, Zongo.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Romantic love can be expressed in various ways, including verbal messages, displays of affection, and displays of benevolence or sacrifice. It may also be shown through the creation of moments or experiences and through presents like flowers or jewelry. The most crucial part of showing romantic love is that it is genuine and sincere. The way one person shows love may differ from the way another does, but what matters is that the sentiments are reciprocal and that both parties feel loved and respected. Being loved is a marvelous, profound, compassionate, and gratifying condition (Harlow 1958, 673). Harville Hendrix, an American writer on love and romance, agreed that individuals have an innate and intense need to be in a meaningful love and romantic union with each other to have feelings of entirety and satisfaction. Whenever people are in love and bonded, they feel content, vibrant, at ease, and comfortable with the world (Hendrix 1992, 275).

Individuals who do not have a loving bond or romantic relationship experience a sense of alienation, worthlessness, despondency, weakness, frozen, and exiled (Aronson, Wilson, and Akert, 2005; Hendrix, 1992). This need for love and closeness with others positions deep and romantic relationships at the heart of human beings' reality and at the essence of our existence (Brehm et al., 2002; Freud, 1930; Hendrix, 1992; Myers, 2002). According to Ellen Berscheid and Harry Reis, the major factor why people go for counseling has more to do with troubled relationships, which are often family or marital (Berscheid and Reis 1998, 197-202).

Researchers on personal satisfaction and happiness have discovered that individuals see intimate and romantic unions and connections as being of main significance, relevant, and crucial to their cognitive and emotional well-being (Berscheid 1999, 260-266). According to research, love and romantic love, for that matter, are strong indicators of pleasant feelings, contentment, and fulfillment (Diener and Lucas, 2000;

Myers, 2002). As a result, by increasing our comprehension of the expression of love and romantic and intimate relationships, we increase the possibility of enhancing relational effectiveness and, as a result, the individual's cognitive and emotional well-being. According to Ada Lampert in her book *The Evolution of Love*, "Love is amongst the most profound, exciting, and compelling feelings known to humans" (Lampert 1997, 8). Humans appear to have an intrinsic desire to seek out and engage in love and devotion with a partner. This searching, merging, and unity takes place in various forms.

The ways and forms in which these intense emotions and sentiments are expressed differ in terms of geographical locations, cultures, traditions, and religions. This was clear in my ethnographic interviews when people demonstrated how and why they prefer to express themselves romantically in a different way. According to many scholars and thinkers, romantic and passionate love is a fairly widespread feeling (Buss 2000; Freud 1930; Jankowiak 1995; Jankowiak and Fischer 1992) and indeed global. Although love and romance are regarded as global sensations, Wenchun Cho and Susan Cross warn that "the manner in which these sensations are defined and constructed differ greatly between societies and cultures" (Cho and Cross 1995, 309).

Around the world, there are differences in how love is conceived, experienced, and expressed and the means of determining and choosing a romantic mate (Aronson et al. 2005, 44). Considerable study has lately been undertaken to decipher the subtle complexities of romantic intimacy throughout different societies and cultures. Such endeavors have increased our understanding while providing diverse viewpoints throughout societies on the essence, kinds, purposes, and expressions of romantic love and love (Mellen 1981, 312). Considering the increasing volume of global studies on love, further work on love and romantic intimacy is needed, particularly in communities like the Zongos in Ghana, where scientific data in this regard is somewhat lacking.

In many African societies, romantic love is often expressed through poetry and song. Many traditional African cultures have a rich oral tradition, and poetry and song are used to convey emotions and feelings. The work of Victor Uchendu on passionate love in southern Nigeria indicates that these forms of expression are often used to express

love for a partner and often used in courtship rituals (Uchendu 1965, 187). Many African cultures also express love through traditional dances and ceremonies. These ceremonies are often used to celebrate engagements and weddings. They are a way for couples to express their love and commitment to one another in a public and ceremonial setting (Riesman 1973, 27). It is essential to clarify that my emphasis on how love, especially romantic love, is expressed in Africa is not meant to generalize the whole continent as a monolithic and homogeneous entity where different and diverse people within the continent feel and experience love the same way. However, the goal is to bring forth the overlapping ways and familiarities in the tools and objects and how feelings of love and romance manifest within different groups. However, the importance ascribed to the idealization of the object of love differs significantly among African societies, which is not unexpected considering the continent's expansiveness and diversity. For example, it is expected to see poem and songwriting as a form or way of expressing romance and love in the Zongos in Ghana, as well as in West Africa, and this is a direct influence of the Arab Muslims from the northern part of Africa through Northern Nigeria. Also, the use of beads to send romantic messages can be seen in South, North, and West Africa, even though the ways and means of expressing these feelings differ (Oppong, 1980; Riesman, 1973; Uchendu, 1965).

Another way that romantic love is expressed in many African countries is through gift-giving. In many cultures, it is customary for a man to give gifts to a woman he is courting to show his love and commitment. Christine Oppong wrote extensively on this in the article 'From Love to Institution', explaining that these gifts can be anything from small trinkets to large, extravagant presents, and they are often given as a symbol of the man's love and affection (Oppong 1980, 197). Cecile McHardy, in her interview with a Ghanaian woman in her work 'Love in Africa,' demonstrated how many women in many African countries, precisely Ghana, express their love via acts of service and devotion. Cooking delicious dishes, taking care of the family, or assisting loved ones with their everyday chores are all examples of this. Nonverbal communication, like body language, eye contact, and facial expressions, can convey love and affection. These signals can transmit strong feelings and bonds. The giving of presents is a reciprocal and popular method of communicating affection. These presents might be symbolic and might consist of traditional objects, homemade crafts, or objects with personal significance (McHardy 1968, 52-60). Overall, romantic love in many African

societies is often expressed through a combination of poetry, song, dance, commitment, ceremony, and gift-giving. These forms of expression reflect Africa's rich cultural traditions and customs, and they are an essential part of the courtship and marriage rituals in many African cultures.

Like in many other African nations, love is firmly established in Ghanaian culture. Max Assimeng, a Ghanaian sociologist, in his book 'Social Structure of Ghana,' defines love and romantic relationships as something that is seen as a sacred and holy connection between two people and is frequently regarded as a lifetime commitment. He continues to say that love is viewed as the cornerstone for a robust and healthy family in Ghanaian culture, and it is cherished and acknowledged in a variety of ways (Assimeng 2007, 101-105). Nevertheless, there are foundations and elements that keep people in such a union. Assimeng said respect, commitment, support, and communication are Ghanaian culture's most fundamental components of love. He further asserted that couples are supposed to communicate openly and honestly with one another and constantly demonstrate respect and concern for one another (Assimeng 2007, 106). This means that couples are supposed to be loyal and trustworthy to one another and constantly put their partner's needs ahead of their own. It is also worth noting that the significance and value of family is another significant part of love in Ghanaian culture. This signifies what Assimeng meant when he spoke about support as part of the meaning of love. Couples are supposed to support each other's families and collaborate to create a solid and loving household. The significance of being committed to each other comes from working together to raise children and support each other's occupations and aspirations, which is very common.

Finally, Oppong further intimated that love is frequently commemorated in Ghanaian culture through traditional rites and celebrations (Oppong 1980, 199). This is very apparent because many Ghanaian couples, for example, partake in traditional wedding rites rich in symbolism and history. Oppong said, "The exchanging of presents, the sharing of traditional meals and drinks, and the exchange of vows in front of family and friends are all common features of these rites and rituals" (Oppong 1980, 201). Generally, as it has been alluded to already, as it can be observed in other parts of the world, love in various Ghanaian traditions is regarded as a unique and sacred tie between two people that is acknowledged and honored in various ways. It is based on

respect, communication, family, and tradition and is regarded as the bedrock of a robust and healthy existence. However, the understanding and definition of love and romantic love within the Zongo communities take another shape due to the influence of culture and the dictates of Islamic law. Even though commitment, support, respect, family, and culture are embedded within the concept of love and romance in the Zongos, all of these are under the love for Allah. People love their partners and express that love because Allah says they should do so. Thus, people believe that withholding love and romance from your partner and not expressing it is against the teachings of Islam. However, all these have to happen within the framework of marriage.

When it comes to romantic love and how it is expressed, it is in line with love's sentiments. Ghanaians – either Muslim, Christian, or traditionalist - believe that one must first and foremost fall in love before creating that romantic connection with his or her partner. Jim Bell stated, "Romantic love is seen as a sacred and significant aspect of life in Ghana. Many Ghanaians feel that choosing a spouse who would be their life companion and who will support them in all parts of their lives is critical" (Bell 1995, 152). As stated, Ghanaian culture places a significant focus on family and community. Thus, many Ghanaians think choosing a romantic partner is about finding someone who would be an excellent addition to their family and community and someone to love. This is preceded by the moments of getting to know each other before one fully commits to the other.

In Ghana, courtship often begins with a period of getting to know each other, which might involve spending time together in public areas, chatting on the phone, and texting. When the couple is ready, they can begin to show their love for one another, exchange presents, and participate in other displays of affection. Assimeng makes another vital observation as to how marriage, being an essential signal of expression of love and romance, is a "significant rite of passage in Ghana, and many couples will prepare a traditional wedding ceremony that includes both families and members of the community" (Assimeng 2007, 108). Typically, the couple may exchange vows in front of a clergy person or other spiritual authority and partake in traditional dances and ceremonies. Romantic love is seen as a vital component of life in Ghana, and many Ghanaians try to experience and appreciate it.

This thesis focuses on the Zongo communities in Ghana, which brings a different perspective to our research because of the peculiarities of these communities in Ghana. Zongo is a name for neighborhoods or communities populated mainly by Muslim immigrants or their descendants in different parts of different towns and cities in Ghana (Sarfoh 1986, 71). The term “Zongo” originates from the Hausa word “Zongo,” which signifies a “temporary settlement,” a “brief stay,” or a “resting place for travelers” (Casentini 2018, 454). Initially, it described the areas on the outskirts of towns in southern Ghana and other regions in West Africa. These areas served as stopovers for northern traders, predominantly Hausa-speaking individuals from what is today Northern Nigeria, who engaged in trade with residents and other traveling merchants from different parts of Ghana and beyond. Nowadays, Zongos can be found in Ghana’s northern and southern regions. Some notable, prominent, and famous Zongos in Ghana include those in cities like Kumasi (for example, Moshi Zongo) and Accra (for example, Sabon Zongo) in the southern part of the country (Mensah and Teye 2021, 72).

However, no matter where Zongo is found, its historical origins are linked to migration, trade, transitory living, ethnic hybridization, and transitional circumstances. It is no surprise that merchants, strangers, migrants, interpreters, and other temporary workers continue to make up existence in the Zongo. Individuals whose ancestors have been anchored in the Zongo for eons can be best characterized as permanent inhabitants. Renowned Ghanaian historian Kwame Arhin was completely accurate in his assessment of the contribution of the Zongo on the political and social life of Atebubu Zongo a while ago, highlighting the fact that “a Zongo was not merely an inhabited place, even more importantly an economic structure [...a place where] inhabitants operated as brokers for traders....as recipients of new intermittent merchants, as translators, and essentially as connections among the various multi-lingual merchants” (Arhin 1971, 80). These communities typically have a strong sense of identity and community, and they are generally distinguished by a lively Muslim culture, which includes religious festivals and rites, as well as a significant focus on education and community development. Many Zongo settlements have mosques, Islamic schools, and community centers that serve as vital social and cultural hubs for the community. Despite problems such as poverty and prejudice, many Zongo areas prosper and contribute significantly to the larger society in which they reside. Zongo

has traditionally been home to different Muslim ethnic groups such as the Hausa, Fulani, and many others. These communities have a varied combination of traditional customs, dialects (language), and religious activities, resulting in a rich cultural history. Residents of Zongo areas commonly originate from various regions of West Africa and have a diverse ethnic and linguistic heritage. These areas' lively and colorful markets, music, and festivals reflect this cultural richness (Casentini 2018, 457).

According to the 2021 official population census, 20 percent of Ghana's 33.1 million population, which is 6.62 million people, are Muslim,¹ even though various non-governmental groups are protesting this figure. According to the Coalition of Muslim Organizations, the final estimates issued since 2002 "included significant errors and, as a result, did not qualify as trustworthy information for establishing and evaluating the nation's socioeconomic goals."² At the same time, groups from the North appealed to the government to retract the findings, citing worries that specific ethnic communities had been neglected in the population census and that the service's methodology should be made public. The vast Muslim population is most concentrated and prevalent in northern Ghana and Zongo villages distributed throughout the country. Even though these communities consist of many different ethnic groups, the religion of Islam and the Hausa language have always been the most decisive factors that tie these communities together. This is why examining and researching how people with different traditions and cultures intermarry and express their love toward each other is essential and quite exciting. How do people within these communities understand romantic love? How do they establish mutual understanding, interconnectedness, respect, and compassion? How do the overriding factor (Islam) and the Hausa language dictate how these emotions and feelings are expressed?

Romantic relationships are distinguished by a higher level of understanding, compassion, interconnectedness, reciprocity, confidence, and loyalty to the beloved when contrasted to other forms of relationships (Brehm et al. 2002, 14). Even though not all of these traits are essential for the manifestation of romantic love, the happiest, gratifying, and successful relationships often feature all of these qualities (Fletcher,

¹ Ghana Statistical Service. "2021 PHC General Report Vol 3C, Background Characteristics"

² Amos Safo (2002). "Muslims cry foul over population figures." Ghana. NewsFromAfrica.

Simpson, and Thomas, 2000: 342). Individuals develop closeness, affiliation, and relationships with one another in a multitude of situations, and love encompasses a wide range of relationships, including friend/friend, brother/sister, and parent/child. As a result, it is critical to emphasize that the purpose of this thesis will be solely on adult romantic relationships and the ways and means they are expressed. Furthermore, there are different phases in a romantic and passionate love affair. This research is largely focused on the early phases of romantic love and the various ways that people in Ghana, especially in Zongo societies, express it, and at the same time, the way they use it to identify and pick a love mate.

The first chapter, which discusses the rationale and research aim of the research, begins with the introduction of the central theme and the initial observation of the researcher throughout the ethnographic research. It talks about the importance of research on love and romantic love. In this chapter, I explain and define the meaning of love and romantic love to people living in different locations with different ethnic and tribal backgrounds. How these intense emotions, feelings, and commitment bind and connect people. Not forgetting how these feelings and sentiments are expressed. Finally, I outline the chapters and what they entailed according to their chapter numbers. Chapters one and two provide an overview of the research's objective, structure, and historical background of the community. At the same time, the other parts are ethnographic chapters that deal specifically with the research's specific topic by analyzing the collected data.

The second chapter reviews the literature and a thorough assessment of prior anthropological and sociological research on love and romantic love. Then, we look at theories on love and romantic love. I also provide a brief history of love and the evolution of romantic love. This chapter also presents the theoretical framework for analyzing Ghana's and Zongo's sociocultural contexts. This chapter also probes into the culture, Zongo culture, the ethnic groups in Zongo, and the religion of Islam in Zongo and its effects on the people. I will then give a detailed history of the formation of the Zongo communities and the inter-cultural relations between people from different tribes and ethnic groups settling in Zongo. I will examine the relationship between love, romantic love, and culture.

The third chapter discusses the research methods that were applied during the ethnographic work, which begins with an explanation of how the research was started, organized, and carried out. During the ethnographic research, I was faced with both problems and opportunities. Most importantly, in this chapter, I explain my perspective as an outsider who has lived long and far away from these communities. On the other hand, being born and raised in this community makes me an insider in researching the life experiences and emotions of the people of Zongo. My perspective as an insider/outsider was advantageous and problematic in giving meaning and understanding to their experiences. There will be a brief discussion of my initial encounter with my interlocutors, their initial denials, and their acceptance to be interviewed. In this chapter, I also discussed the methods I employed, a multifaceted approach combining participant observation, field notes, narrative analysis, and in-depth interviews to explore the expressions of romantic love within Zongo societies comprehensively. Each method uniquely captured the rich cultural nuances and individual experiences inherent in this context.

The fourth chapter of the research explores the findings related to using the Hausa language to express romantic love. We will see the way the Hausa language became the lingua franca, spoken and understood by almost all the inhabitants of Zongo. It is also a means of connection that brought different families and people of different tribes within various Zongos to live together in harmony and as families. Chapter four delves into the cultural context where 'Jigida,' a traditional waist bead, serves as an invitation to romance. Additionally, the chapter highlights how social events and gatherings have become commonplace for individuals seeking potential romantic partners within the Hausa community. Overall, it provides insights into the linguistic and cultural aspects of romantic expression and courtship within this specific cultural context.

The fifth chapter will document the study's broader discussions of those findings. The ethnographic interaction with the people interviewed will be discussed. We will hear the meaning people give to love and romantic love. How do they define love and romantic love? Furthermore, how is this romantic love expressed within these communities? The effect of religion on how people express romantic love in Zongo. This chapter will examine and philosophically analyze these and other concerns and provide testimony and love stories from individuals in Zongo. In that regard, we will

see how these expressions differ from the broader understanding of love and romantic love in academic literature. Also, this chapter gives us the idea of the influence of globalization and how it can be managed or, better still, go hand in hand with the cultural practices of the people of Zongo.

In the concluding chapter, I summarized a nuanced understanding of how romantic love is defined and expressed within Zongo societies. Exploring cultural dynamics has revealed that romantic love is intricately interwoven with linguistic nuances and traditional practices. The significance of the term 'Kunya' in shaping the expression of romantic love highlights the rich cultural tapestry that influences interpersonal relationships in these communities. I showed how it has become evident that the Zongo societies employ unique ways of expressing romantic love, using the Hausa language, and symbolic elements play crucial roles. These cultural elements serve as mediums for romantic expression and contribute to creating a distinct romantic ethos within the community. I also hope future research will build upon these findings, fostering a more inclusive and nuanced discourse on romantic love in diverse cultural contexts.



Figure 1.1. Administrative Map of Ghana

(Sources: Ghana Mission to the UN)

CHAPTER II

A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND A CONTEMPORARY HISTORY OF ZONGO COMMUNITIES

2.1. Introduction

This chapter, as indicated before, will be dedicated to reviewing the literature and what has been done in regard to love and romantic love, especially from the sociological, cultural, and social-psychological perspectives. We shall look at theories on love and romantic love by providing a brief history of love and the evolution of romantic love. In this chapter, I also present a theoretical framework for analyzing Ghana's and Zongo's sociocultural contexts. This chapter also probes into the Zongo culture, the ethnic groups in Zongo, and the religion of Islam in Zongo and its effects on the people. I will then give a detailed history of the formation of the Zongo communities and the inter-cultural relations between people from different tribes and ethnic groups settling in Zongo. Even though the focus of this thesis is on the sociological perspective, importance and relevance are given to another field of study that sheds more light on our understanding of love and how people feel and express it. Sociologists who are concerned with marriage and family have typically seen love as a heterosexual, passionate, romantic, and conjugal phenomenon. They treated it from a micro-level standpoint, seeking to conceptualize it in psychological terminology. Love has seldom been dealt with as a fundamental notion in sociology (Owens 2007, 28).

Romantic love is a complicated and multifaceted phenomenon that has been examined and disputed by academics from a variety of fields, including psychology, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy. The literature on romantic love has concentrated on different perspectives, from a sociological perspective, theories like the wheel theory, filter theory, and social exchange theory. The social psychological perspectives include evolutionary theory, attachment theory, and triangular love theory. According

to the wheel theory proposed by the sociologist Ira Reiss, love and romantic relationships evolve in four stages that build on one another over time. These phases involve mutual satisfaction of intimate needs, dependency, rapport, and self-revelation. The expectations that are connected with distinct phases of this theory in society are referred to as role theory (Owens 2007, 16). Other sociologists like Alan Kerckhoff and Keith Davis posited filter theory, where partners decide the person they want to be in a romantic relationship will go through a series of selection processes. This selection is dependent on partners navigating effectively through a number of filters, such as social features, moral resemblance, and desire for mutual complementarity (Kerckhoff and Davis 1962, 95). Gary Becker also proposed the now-famous social exchange theory model of love. In a nutshell, individuals get involved with each other when they believe that the advantages of a particular pair relationship surpass the actual cost of their being together (Beker 1974, 129). The understanding of love and romantic love from the sociological perspective indicates the necessary steps needed to build and initiate love and romantic relationships.

When we shift our attention to the social psychological aspect of love and romantic relationships, the emphasis is rather on the individual experience of the phenomenon in a social context. Evolutionists like David Buss, taking into consideration the evolutionary perspective on romantic love, intimated that the human brain is designed to experience romantic love in order to encourage reproduction and the survival of the species (Buss 1988, 2000). We can infer that romantic love, according to this viewpoint, is the result of natural selection and is motivated by the desire to find a compatible spouse who would give the highest possibility of generating healthy children.

In contrast, the cultural view on romantic love contends that romantic love is a social construct that differs between cultures and time periods. Romantic love, according to this viewpoint, is formed by cultural norms, values, and beliefs and is, hence, not a universal human experience (Jankowiak and Fischer 1992, 149-155). In other research, romantic love is closely related to other psychological processes, such as attachment and bonding. This will lead us to the attachment theory proposed by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, which says humans have a basic desire to develop intimate relationships with others, and romantic love is one way that this need is met

(Ainsworth et al. 1978; Bowlby 1973). From this theory, we understand that romantic love is a process of emotional and physiological connection that happens between two people.

Another major feature of romantic love that has been researched is its connection to mental health. According to research, romantic love is linked to favorable mental health outcomes such as enhanced happiness, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. It has, however, been associated with detrimental mental health effects like sadness, anxiety, and addiction (Ainsworth et al. 1978; Hazan and Shaver 1987). Overall, the literature on romantic love emphasizes the phenomenon's intricacy and multifaceted character. It implies that romantic love is impacted by sociological, biological, and cultural influences and that it is strongly related to other psychological processes like attachment and bonding. It also emphasizes the significance of romantic love for mental health and well-being. We will now discuss at some length the historical and theoretical underpinnings of love and romance, mostly from sociological and social-psychological perspectives. These will give us a broader understanding and context around how people in Zongo frame and reframe the meaning of the phenomenon and the understanding they give to love, especially romantic love.

2.2. History of Love and the Evolution of Romantic Love

Maybe love has had its own stormy past record because it has the ability to provoke immense pleasure and ecstasy but also severe despair and pain. Romantic and passionate love has clearly been in existence for ages and throughout different societies and traditions, as evidenced by love poetry from Egyptian antiquities, love stories, ballads, and dramas from ancient China, the ancient Indian Mahabharata, and indeed the Jewish "Song of Solomon," to mention just some (Shaver, Morgan, and Wu 1996, 81-96). Nevertheless, the conception, comprehension, and significance of romantic love have evolved over the years. Both classical Greeks and their Western contemporaries considered feeling intensely drawn to another to be a form of lunacy, and therefore, it was indecent to love an individual's spouse very deeply. Plato actually felt that platonic love, or the non-sexual affection of one person for another, was always the best type of love (Brehm et al. 2002; Coontz 2005).

From the Islamic perspective, regardless of whether the knowledge and understanding of love are concerned with the individual, societal, or global context, the wide definition of love is insignificant without the primary and essential motivating factor for love being considered. In Islam, Allah is the source of love, and adoring Allah is contained in the definition of piety, which is described as "fear, hope, and love towards Allah" (Syaidatun and Maznah 2009, 35). An analysis of early Islamic history indicates the spiritual devotion, love, and dedication to the Quran and Sunnah of early Muslim intellectuals. Their love for God, the Quran, and the Prophet most likely spurred their intellectual curiosity, resulting in amazing scientific, mathematical, and medicinal breakthroughs (Syaidatun 2004, 15). So, before any individual subjects themselves to the love and devotion of another person, the love of Allah comes first. This understanding of love can be in contrast to the comprehension of love from the widespread notion of love in the West.

By the middle of the 1990s, African love writings were challenging the dominant and colonial concept that romantic love was not present in pre-colonial Africa (Bell 1995; Plotnicov 1995; Regis 1995). Under the era of colonialism, European officials and preachers frequently thought that the social structures of African marriages, like arranged marriages, polygamy, and the payment of a bride price, prevented romantic relationships and love from existing. Even among the more orthodox Islamic societies that regularly conducted arranged marriages, Africans frequently demonstrated a high degree of autonomy in making choices centered around personal attraction. The creation of 'philters,'³ for instance, demonstrates the degree to which individuals sought to influence their relationships and romantic options via magic (Cole 2009; Graeber 1996; Parle and Scorgie 2012; Wilson 2012). Simultaneously, studies such as 'Love in Africa' by Jennifer Cole and Lynn Thomas called into question the universal nature of some conceptions of romantic relationships and love (Cole and Thomas 2009, 116). In addition to other circumstances, the advent of Western cultural values concerning love and marriage led to novel ways of expression and interaction over the course of the nineteenth century, although they were not just replicas of European customs. During colonization, the youths in Africa proved particularly successful at combining family responsibilities with their own "modern" aims and wants. In the

³ A drink is supposed to arouse love and desire for a particular person in the drinker: a love potion.

years between the 1950s and 1960s, for instance, young couples in Zanzibar integrated the metaphors of famous Hindi romantic films into their courting stories (Fair 2009, 57). A deeper rethinking of African heritage in the light of postcolonial globalization has opened up a wealth of possibilities for evaluating and exhibiting love and commitment.

The Arabic expression 'Ishq,' which is commonly employed in Islamic literature throughout Africa, expresses concepts of love, desire, and an urge to acquire the object of affection. Numerous Islamic academics and Sufi philosophers, particularly after the eleventh century, began to link 'Ishq' to the love for God. It signifies an even more intense, passionate love and affection compared with the Quranic term 'Mahabba,' which is the most common expression for love in current writings in Arabic. However, both may be used to represent love for God and romantic love (Abrahamov 2003; Lewisohn 2008; Kennedy-Day 2003). The idea of both heavenly and sexual love may be represented in a phrase that can mean anything from broad devotion and dedication to sexual passion, and passion underlines to us the fact that in many African Muslim communities, love for or from another human being is regarded as a mirror of love and affection for God. Quranic verses, for instance, are essential elements of love amulets and charms in various West African cultures (Mommersteeg 1988, 514).

On the other hand, love was reserved for clandestine, morally repugnant partnerships in ancient China. Likewise, in twelfth-century France, the greatest expression of love was limited to illicit partnerships. Over that same time period, knights and warriors dedicated themselves to a married elite lady in a worthy goal of unreciprocated love (Brehm et al. 2002, 167). In India, in the past, love was regarded as a disturbing, sociopathic behavior, and today, romantic love is frequently regarded as a danger to the family system (Coontz 2007, 11). Marriage was purposely an economic and political structure during the Medieval Era (Brehm et al. 2002, 156). The Christian church of the 16th century considered that adoring an individual's other half was only mildly higher than unmarried promiscuity (Coontz 2005, 56). It really was unfathomable among most previous societies for young individuals to pick their mate based on an inconsistent emotion like love (Coontz 2005, 58).

Following the Medieval Era, humans began to assume that while passionate and romantic love was desired, it was typically condemned and cursed (Brehm et al. 2002, 156). Only in the 17th and 18th centuries did people in the West tend to realize that romantic and passionate love might have a happy ending. Even still, romantic, passionate love and adoration of one's own partner would not be a common or desirable concept — it was more the exception than the norm or rule (Brehm et al. 2002, 154). In Western society, love did not become the bedrock for long-term partnerships until the late 1800s (Coontz 2005; Gergen and Gergen 1988). Around this historical moment, individuals began to think that love and romantic desire might make people happier and that it may be gratifying and worthwhile (Brehm et al. 2002, 122). According to Linda-Anne Rebhun, the shift in love and marriage throughout time was due to differences in the narrative of the lover's function instead of individuals lacking the ability or inclination for passion and love (Rebhun 1995, 239). The concept that individuals marry and remain married for love is universally recognized in the Western world today. According to Brehm et al., economic progress and a propensity toward an individualistic lifestyle have enabled the prospect of love as a justification for marriage (Brehm et al. 2002, 142). Such an idea that romantic and passionate love is the foundation for marriage really was not and is still not uniform in non-Western societies throughout the world (Xiaohe and Whyte 1990, 711).

Even though cross-cultural academics agree that romantic and passionate love is a fairly near-global experience, researchers equally emphasize how love is perceived, comprehended, lived, and the aspirations of romantic love vary greatly among societies. Therefore, culture and traditions deepen the intricacy and multiple perspectives of love - love and romantic love change according to cultural and traditional context (Landis and O'Shea 2000, 752). Researchers have discovered that in collectivist cultures and communities, the interests of the community and family frequently play a critical function in the selection of a lifelong mate, but in individualist cultures, romantic and passionate love is the most important component in the selection of a lifelong mate (Dion and Dion 1988, 1993b; Levine et al. 1995, 555). Robin Goodwin stated that in most Western cultures, love is viewed as intense, romantic, passionate, and irrational (Goodwin 1999, 61). In comparison to other parts of the world, love is viewed as a powerful unifying theme that pulls people together, especially in the African or Eastern perspective (Goodwin 1999, 62). For example, the

brothers of Purity⁴ came to the conclusion in their work on love that the simplest and most appropriate way to describe love is 'intense longing for unification,' including that unification (Ittihad) relates particularly to the spirit and the soul, and thus are unable to effectively be associated with tangible objects (Chittick 2013, 280-283). The objective of love, in the more explicit language chosen by Sufi masters and poets, is 'union' (wisal), an Arabic term that was additionally employed for sexual attraction (Chittick 2013, 280-287). The cross-culture understanding of the meaning of love and romantic love, together with its effect on different cultures, traditions, and religions, provides us with the foundations and tools to examine how people within certain denominations express it.

John Alan Lee, a Canadian academic and writer who researched both the sociological and psychological aspects of love and his theoretical framework of love is not just a noteworthy and multifaceted method to the examination of love and romantic love, but it is also based on scientific research – both Western and cross-cultural study (Lee 1976, 57). Lee used the idea of colors to demonstrate the various facets of love. Even though he did believe that there are as many colors of love as there are different possibilities and varieties of various colors, he provided a love-style personality type composed of six fundamental love styles: (1) eros, romantic, passionate love; (2) Ludus, game-playing love; (3) storge, friendship love; (4) mania, possessive, dependent love; (5) pragma, logical, "shopping list" love; and (6) agape, all-giving, sacrificial love (Lee 1976, 76).

⁴ **Ikhwan al-Safa:** A group of Muslim philosophers who lived in Basra, Iraq, between the 9th and 10th centuries CE. Al-Fārūq, I. R. (1960), "On the Ethics of the Brethren of Purity," *The Muslim World* 50, 109–121.

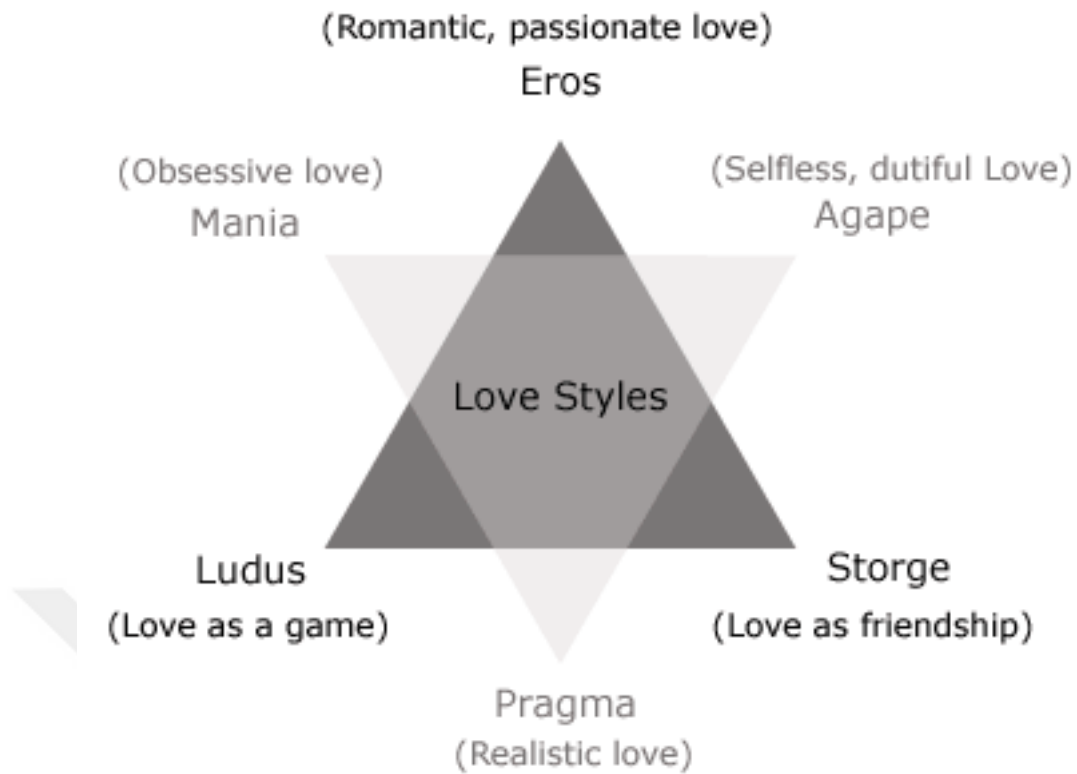


Figure 2.1. Lee's Love Style from "Colors of Love"⁵

Wenchun Cho and Susan Cross provide several compelling grounds as to why Lee's love styles might be a useful beginning point for cross-cultural study on romantic and passionate love. For starters, it not only integrates several concepts of love, but it also explains various love experiences. Furthermore, other researchers have confirmed, improved, and enhanced Lee's paradigm of love, which has shown to be a useful tool in assessing love in various cultures and societies around the world (Cho and Cross 1995; Contreras, Hendrick, and Hendrick 1996; Dion and Dion 1993a; Hendrick and Hendrick 1993; Kanemasa et al. 2004; Murstein, Merighi and Vyse 1991; Neto 1994; Neto et al. 2000; Pavlou 2005; Rudnick 1997; Sprecher et al. 1994; Sprecher and Toro-Morn 2002). Lee's concept of colors of love is not just a useful beginning position for cross-cultural study on romantic and passionate love, but it also appears to include fewer comprehensive views of love. Possibly, Elaine Walster and William Walster would recognize Lee's eros and storge as their romantic and companionate love (Walster and Walster 1978, 241). Social exchange theorists might recognize pragma as their idea of love, whereas Margaret Clark and Judson Mills may identify agape as

⁵ Lee, J. A. (1976). *The colors of love*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

exemplifying their shared love (Clark and Mills 1979, 16-17). Attachment theorists could consider *eros* to represent a stable relationship, *ludus* to represent an aversive or dismissive attachment pattern, and *mania* to represent a nervous-uncertain or obsessed attachment pattern. Lee's concept of the paradigm of love is therefore crucial to this research and will be examined in further depth (Lee 1976, 81). The chosen term for love in the Persianate world was generally the non-Qur'anic 'Ishq,' a term that also played an important part in Arabic poems about love and was employed by academics to interpret *eros*. When the intellectual brotherhood known as the Brothers of Purity authored an Arabic book on love⁶, they adopted the term 'Ishq' in the book's title and discussed how it might be discovered in everything. However, they additionally utilized the word *hubb* when discussing God and man's reciprocal love (Chittick 2013, 280-291). The historical background of the concept of love and romantic love from different societies and beliefs lays the foundation for us to transition into the theories that underpin and frame the conceptualization of love and romantic love.

2.3. Theories on Love and Romantic Love

Sociologists mostly do not appear to settle on an umbrella term, while there are a number of contending but complimentary categorizations that seek to define the emotional, feeling, and behavioral processes that contribute to romantic "love." Dating and courtship are crucial in the formation of love and romantic relationships as well as marriages. The discussion below starts by offering several useful conceptual frameworks from a sociological perspective and then follows with a social-psychological perspective for investigating the establishment of relationships in a romantic way. Sociologically, we will look at theories like the social exchange theory, wheel theory, and filter theory. From the social-psychological angle, we shall be exploring the evolutionary theory, attachment theory, psychoanalysis, and dialectical humanist viewpoints.

⁶ Rasa'il Ikhwan as-Safa (Epistles of the Brothers of Purity) contains fifty-two expositions from the natural to the social sciences. https://web.archive.org/web/20141015193713/http://www.iis.ac.uk/view_article.asp?ContentID=105218. Retrieved 2023-09-12.

Social exchange theory provides a comprehensive structure and framework for analyzing the formation and growth of partner interactions and relationships. It implies that these romantic connections take place within a social marketplace in which individuals have the greatest attraction to each other and seek partnerships and connections with individuals who are capable of maximizing their advantages (e.g., charm, attractiveness, status, power, wealth, and love) while minimizing their costs (e.g., uncertainty, exploitation, inequalities, lack of social acceptance) (Beker 1974, 120). So, we understand from the theory that human beings, being logical creatures driven by self-interest, tend to make decisions that maximize their own self-interest while also acknowledging that their partner must find the partnership worthwhile for them to stay dedicated and devoted to it. Proponents of this theory feel that humans analyze their communication and relationships by considering benefits, expenses, consequences, and comparative stages and that the strength of different options to relationships defines the person's dedication, which ultimately decides the relationship's reliability (Rusbult 1980; Kelley and Thibaut 1978).

With regard to this marketplace approach, the primary distinctions across societies and cultures are who undertakes marriage discourses and negotiations, how clear the negotiating is, and what criterion is used. Irrespective of the choice of mate methods used, factors for determining whether possible mates are more or less appealing are always present. The characteristics most wanted in a partner might have remarkable cross-cultural consistency (Beker 1974, 121). This means that whenever cultural disparities in partner choice requirements are discovered, they frequently pertain to the level of independence in mate selection. Overall, arranged marriages prioritize the history of the family, public image, credibility, and genealogy, whereas free-choice marriages prioritize individual characteristics such as attraction between people, personality traits, and love in a romantic way. Margaret Clark and Judson Mills explore the exchange theory and distinguish between communal and exchange relationships (Clark and Mills 1979, 18). Clark and Mills proposed that communitarian partnerships, which are characterized by being able to respond to another's interests and wants, usually regulate protracted, intense, romantic, and intimate partnerships (Clark 1984, 1986; Mills and Clark 1979).

Sociologist Ira Reiss's wheel theory, on the other hand, proposes a normal sequence of romantic relationships that promotes the development of love and romantic love while in the courting period. Every satisfactory fulfillment of a stage leads to the following phase within the courting stage. Initially, partners develop trust and connection (*rapport*) or a sense of comfort toward each other (Reiss 1960, 217). This is frequently the outcome of similarities in values and cultures, which supports homosexuality (the inclination of individuals to marry those who have similar histories and experiences to themselves). Communication and interaction are easy, and the next level of disclosure (*self-revelation*) is promoted after two individuals develop chemistry and rapport (Reiss 1960, 218). During this phase, each individual reveals "who I am" to their partner; couples will divulge details concerning themselves to the other person under the parameters of their socioeconomic status and cultural backgrounds, allowing them to establish intimacy (Owens 2007, 17).

The emotion of reciprocal reliance builds as couples discover more concerning each other and come to feel more connected. At this point, each partner comes to count on the other's support and sees themselves as a component of an interconnected entity. If this phase is entirely achieved and the connection is maintained, both parties will begin to take on special meaning for each other. One does not just have "a girlfriend" who can be readily substituted by another female of comparable status and appeal. This individual provides distinctive advantages that are not readily available to other people and hence has exceptional prestige (Reiss 1960, 219). Once both partners reach the last level of intimate need satisfaction, in which each individual decides that the connection meets his or her requirements for intimacy and transparency, the relationship will almost always culminate in a formal partnership.

Alan Kerckhoff and Keith. E. Davis proposed a filter theory of choosing a partner centered around partners traversing an array of filters, encompassing social features, value resemblance, and necessity compatibility. A further significant paradigm for gaining insight into the manner in which individuals select amongst an abundance of eligible possible mates is filter theory. Individuals either deliberately or inadvertently filter prospective partners via a variety of filters to restrict the pool of candidates (Kerckhoff and Davis 1962, 96). Initially, close proximity, or geographical closeness, influences who individuals are most inclined to come into touch with. Considering the

growing usage of online platforms to find mates, physical distance renders relationships more difficult. Thus, individuals are more inclined to team up with someone who resides, works, or socializes in the same location as them (Owens 2007, 20).

The filter theory shows us that the social context filter promotes homogamy by implying that people with comparable education levels, religious views, socioeconomic standing, age, racial and ethnic background, and beliefs and principles are more attractive spouses. Endogamous demands and expectations, for example, may require a Muslim to marry another Muslim. Cultural standards also dictate who should be kept out of the pool. Exogamy, or the need to get married away from a specific community, would also be applicable. In certain societies, for example, it is forbidden to marry close relatives. Being physically appealing may serve as an additional filter, mirroring socially taught beauty ideals. The last screenings include congruence or suitable personality, as well as the filter, which establishes fairness in partnership exchanges. Dedication and loyalty are more probable if cooperation and reciprocity exist (Davis 1985, 27).

Now that we have explored literature that explains the processes and what entails in the formulation of love and romantic love, it is prudent to look at the phenomenon from the social-psychological perspective. Normally, theories and studies in the social psychology of love and romantic love have frequently assumed that multiple "fundamental" processes, among which are biological, cognitive, or evolutionary mechanisms, underpin this complicated experience that humans have. The social environment in which these mechanisms develop is important, but it is not the primary emphasis. Another point to remember is that the psychological aspects of love and romance can solely be comprehended by looking at the societal framework through which interpersonal and romantic interaction behaviors emerge. The social environment is crucial from this point of view (Dion and Dion 2006, 298).

According to evolutionists such as David Buss, love is not a complicated and enigmatic phenomenon but rather an evolutionarily formed adaptable psychological process, method, and skill that assures the most suitable partner (Buss 1988, 2000). According to Buss, both sexes consider love to be by far the most significant factor in

choosing a spouse. However, he additionally says that it is only because love is an essential and worldwide trigger for dedication - and investment of familial means aimed at ensuring the partner's offspring's best reproductive potential (Buss 2000, 121). According to Mellen, the majority of individuals are born with a genetic capability for connection and love in order to guarantee life (Mellen 1981, 313).

Attachment theory's pioneers, John Bowlby, and Mary Ainsworth, contend that the manner in which adults and individuals love romantically is influenced by one's formative experiences and early attachment interactions with one's caretakers. Formative attachment theorists proposed three basic attachment styles that originated from multiple kinds of caregiving: stable, agitated, and untrusting (Bowlby 1973; Ainsworth et al. 1978; Hazan and Shaver 1987), whilst modern attachment theorists think there are four basic attachment styles: stable, obsessed, refusing, and terrified (Ainsworth et al. 1978; Hazan and Shaver 1987; Bartholomew 1990; Griffin and Bartholomew 1994, 1994). Nonetheless, they all concur that all attachment style defines how a person will love romantically through inbuilt conceptual frameworks founded in early life (Ainsworth et al., 1978; Bartholomew 1990; Bartholomew, Kwong, and Hart 2001; Bowlby 1973, 1980, 1988; Griffin and Bartholomew 1994b; Hazan and Shaver 1994).

Robert Sternberg proposed that love was made up of three parts: affection, desire, and conscious choice/loyalty. Subsequently, Sternberg and his peer Anne E. Beall proposed that the essence of love is socially conditioned, implying that love and the overwhelming feeling of love are culturally and normatively described, established, and constrained (Sternberg 1986, 1988; Beall and Sternberg 1995, 419). Sternberg simplified his idea of love from becoming mainly socialized to love as a narrative and story - that love is individually built inside the individual's personal cultural context. Sternberg's love stories gain depth and dimension from a different vantage point (Sternberg 1995, 2000). Cognition, sentiments, conceptualizations, and interpretations of love, according to postmodern and critical theorists, are conceived via socialization and influenced via discourse (McNamee and Gergen 1992, 26-28). Hence, a person's view and sense of love - an individual's love story - alters with a change in approach and is renewed in discourse (Anderson and Goolishian 1992; Hoffman 1992).

Love and loving, according to Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalytic theory, are the most profound, pleasant, enjoyable, and important human experiences. Even though love and loving happen naturally to individuals, attaining joyful, romantic, and passionate love was beset with impediments such as settling the immature psychosocial development phases, disentangling from the old (parental) love entity, resolving egotistical love, and establishing respect and understanding for one's feelings of affection and love, resent, and ambiguity (Freud 1930, 57-59).

Erich Fromm, from a dialectical humanist perspective, said love is founded on two things: first, an individual's ability to love, and second, knowing about the actual trait of love and its related, interconnected elements of compassion, commitment, tolerance, comprehension, and wisdom. He claims that loving somebody is more than simply a deep sensation — it is a choice, a conviction, and a commitment (Fromm 1956, 51). Like Freud, Fromm distinguishes between developed or healthful love and underdeveloped or dysfunctional love formation. Fromm is one of the earliest to emphasize the connection between cultures and love. He contends that individualism, the capitalist West, and consumptive lifestyles could obstruct the growth of romance, loving connections, and developed love (Fromm 1956, 56). He contends that the overwhelming concentration on consumerism and materialism in Western capitalist society and its individualistic equivalent fosters the growth of underdeveloped love.

All the discussions above center around the formation of love and romantic love and also the steps and processes individuals and partners take to solidify their affection toward each other. The processes of getting to the meaning of romantic love vary, and that also influences the variation and diversities in terms of how people experience romance when they finally believe that they are experiencing one.

Romantic love, according to William Jankowiak, is "any passionate attraction including the idealization of the other within an erotic environment" (Jankowiak 1995, 4). He goes on to say that romantic love is characterized by three principal psychological mechanisms: emotional commitment, which involves the urge for unconditional acceptance by the other; personal idealization and optimistic mirages; and arousing stimulus, which contains sexual interest and physical relation and connection (Jankowiak 1995, 5). According to Jeff Levin, romantic love is an artificial

construct that signifies various things to various individuals. He claims that, while scholars have yet to agree on a single meaning of romantic love, he believes it may be conceived as an emotion, a disposition, conduct, or a decision or a conscious choice (Levin 2000, 119).

To summarize, romantic love and love in general are widely defined by a mix of behavioral, intellectual, and affective elements, with various theorists and frameworks highlighting various elements of those modules. These differences in theories and opinions demonstrate in a certain way that people from different parts of the universe will most likely relate to the concept and meaning of love and romantic love in diverse ways. Certainly, the people of Zongo have their unique ways of expressing themselves, which in one way or another may signal the different dimensions intimated by the various theorists or could be the amalgamation of all. Now, we turn our attention to the make-up of the Ghanaian society and Zongo in particular.

2.4. Is Romantic Love Universal or Western?

According to a number of studies, courtship served as a prelude to romantic love and the idea of romantic love as a whole, as the collection of ardent feelings emerged quite a while ago in the affluent classes with the development of contemporary industrial society and the Romantic movement of the early modern period in Europe (Stones 1986, 379-382). Additional researchers have found it in numerous traditional beliefs, religious and cultural concepts of ancient times, a wide range of socioeconomic classes, and scattered locations at all times in the history of humanity (MacFarlane 1987, 254). Throughout the course of history, many people have claimed that love has had various, complicated, and conflicting descriptions. Our contemporary era only saw a change in the meaning of love (Gillis 1988, 89). In the last two centuries, Western cultures have been fascinated with romantic love as the idealized form of love. The protagonist of a British and French novel or the main character of an American film has historically been a passionate lover. How about other cultures? As we see in this thesis, certain researchers thought romantic love to be a Western creation and conceptualized love to be a uniquely Western phenomenon. According to Goode, a common misconception is that love as a norm can be identified solely in America and nations whose traditions are drawn from Western European

heritage, and romantic love is a very modern and confined cultural construct (Goode 1959, 43).

Until recently, anthropological documents and research findings on love were dispersed, unplanned, and spotty in terms of both accuracy and substance. Previous research upheld the Western culturally biased viewpoint, claiming that romantic love originated as a European gift to other civilizations. Christopher Stone proposed, in particular, that romantic love is not a reality in nations that are not Western, only maybe among the wealthy individuals of such nations who have the leisure to develop romantic love (Stones 1986, 383). According to certain researchers, romantic love is practically unheard of in other civilizations, such as Japan and China (Doi 1973; Hsu 1985). Writers, intellectuals, and a number of social science researchers, on the contrary, suggested that romantic love is a universal or a common human capacity realized substantially in all communities. This debate will be thoroughly explored within this study. Numerous experts in anthropology discovered proof of romantic love—or a minimum of intense love—in numerous civilizations. Romantic love is a feeling shared by numerous individuals around the globe (Fischer, Shaver, and Carnochan 1990, 85). According to evolutionary psychologists, intense love is intrinsic in the nature of humans and is founded on universal biological functions that apply to individuals in every society. Fisher examined the incidence of love in multiple societies from a natural history standpoint (Fisher 1992, 20). Fisher equated love with lust, defining the emotion as "awash in bliss or anxiety... enchanted, yearning for a subsequent meeting... vaporized by ecstasy" (Fisher 1992, 37). She said that "beyond everything, one experienced a sensation of feeling powerless, a belief that the aforementioned emotion was irrational, unintentional, spontaneous, and unregulated" (Fisher 1992, 40). Barriers to the union appear to intensify the feelings. She came to the conclusion that this emotion must be shared by every living being.

Numerous researchers have sought to resolve the topic of the universal nature of romantic love in the past few decades, presenting multiple evidence in favor. Nevertheless, the query has become too broad to receive a full answer. Romantic love can be a fictional occurrence, a historical truth, a mental sensation, or a social phenomenon. As a result, we must address this research issue in relation to these

particular spheres of human experience. This chapter and the subsequent one should contain an abundance of supporting data from various domains. As we shall discover, romantic love has been prevalent in various societies across humanity. Nevertheless, romantic love began to become a widespread phenomenon in contemporary Western countries and certain other societies in the last few centuries.

A further stumbling block in resolving the debate concerning the universal appeal of romantic love remained the absence of a clear, widely agreed description of romantic love. William Jankowiak and Edward Fischer made a significant breakthrough in the research they conducted by employing a straightforward functioning description of romantic love that takes into account the main elements that comprise romantic love (idealization, lust, and commitment): "any kind of overwhelming attraction which includes an idealized image of another person, especially in a sexual context, alongside a hope of persistent for an extended period into the future" (Jankowiak and Fischer 1992, 52). This description was quite restrictive. Jankowiak provided an increasingly thorough summary of romantic love traits utilizing prior scholarly signifiers: (1) physical as well as emotional longing for connection or integration, (2) visualization of the loved one, (3) uniqueness of the loved one, (4) invasive thoughts with regard to the loved one, (5) emotional reliance, (6) profound compassion towards the loved one, and (7) restructuring of inspirational and goals in life (Jankowiak 1995, 95-127).

The above descriptive guidelines will direct and assist us in searching for either the existence or lack of romantic love indicators in history and the present generation. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight the reality that there is no uniform or conventional description of romantic love that applies to everyone in the world. As explained in this chapter, the concept of love has evolved throughout the evolution of humanity. People develop the notion of love in their thoughts, lives, sentiments, and conduct. It is a subjective concept, a classification in society, and an accepted norm. Unfortunately, there is no single definition of love that applies to everyone (Beall and Sternberg 1995; Berscheid and Meyers 1996). Rubin stated especially that the concept's interpretation changes individually with individuals and hypothetically questions if it pertains to "a behavior, a feeling, a collection of actions... a unique inclination or a collaborative connection?" (Rubin 1970, 267). Sternberg saw love as

an especially specific sort of social design, as a narrative that a person develops by experiencing it, from a social constructivist perspective (Sternberg 1998, 119).

Societies and individuals from distinct ethnic backgrounds might possess different conceptions of love and describe it in the context of a variety of elements and qualities. The abundance of complexity and nuanced subtleties of love must be comprehended in the framework of culture (Dion and Dion 1993b, 55). Throughout history, cultures have expressed love in a variety of ways. The relationships between love, sexual conduct, and marriage, for instance, have been understood in numerous ways. Originally distinct worlds of connections, they were interwoven over the course of history.

Throughout this chapter, I will attempt to explain that many societies and ethnic groups have developed their own traditional or common conceptions of love that have proven valuable for individuals interacting inside their society. Even though specific universal conceptions of love appear to exist among traditions, the collection of connections, clarifications, meanings, and emphasis on particular notions vary widely throughout different periods and places. Individuals develop their sense of love via socialization in infancy, adolescence, and later in life, with tradition serving as an anchor in their manner of expressing themselves and thinking. Love concepts and customs can be assimilated overtly, via discussion with parents, peers, and instructors, or subconsciously, by incidental discoveries that constitute instinct. People utilize the fundamental concept of love as a framework to analyze events, actions, and reactions once it has been formed.

Historians and normal individuals in Western societies frequently think that their concept of "love," romantic love, constitutes the finest while assuming that all other types of love involving couples are dull and unimportant in contrast (Smith 2001, 125). However, it is necessary to state openly that the Western method of romantic love does not always work effectively, and different civilizations can bring significant alternate perspectives. Individuals have an active role in shaping a community's love culture, determining what they consider to be right and wrong, what is accepted versus what is not, and what is ethical and unethical. Different societies have varied perspectives regarding different love sensations and manifestations, as well as what they deem

appropriate or even perfect. Societies might additionally consider specific types of sentiments that individuals have for one another as acceptable. In a restrictive society, such as Early Christian culture, strong sexual desires may be perceived as normal but sinful. Intense erotic sentiments, conversely, may be cherished and fostered in a lenient society, such as medieval Rome. In the next chapters, several examples of cultural effects on the perception of love within Zongo will be discussed.

Given the new amount of evidence, the assertion that love is a contemporary European creation with no historical precedent outside of the West is wrong. Anthropologists studying other cultures and communities all across the world have discovered and respected "extensive cultures of romantic love" (Smith 2001, 130), which may be identified and treasured across numerous cultures via tales, music, poems, and movies. The rising body of literary works has proven that romantic love is not strange in non-Euro-American situations. Anthropologists have studied traditional love notions in a variety of societies and cultures, including the People's Republic of China (Bingyao 2017); Indonesia (Sorokowski and Sorokowska 2012); Turkey (Hart 2007); Nigeria (Plotnicov 1995); Trinidad (Nehring and Kerrigan 2019); Morocco (Therrien and Phipps 2023); the Fulbe of North Cameroon (Regis 1995); the Mangrove (Jankowiak 1995); the Mangaia in the Cook Islands (de Munck, Korotayev, and McGreevey 2016); Palau in Micronesia (Hatfield and Sprecher 1985), and the Taita of Kenya (Jankowiak 1995a, 169). Individuals' perceptions of intense love tend to be remarkably consistent in every one of these researches. As a result, numerous anthropologists and psychological researchers maintain that sexual attraction and intense love are universal themes in culture.

Jankowiak and Fischer found that romantic love represents a "near-universal" aspect of the countries they surveyed during their cross-cultural investigation of romantic love in 166 cultures. They characterized romantic love, according to their research, as "a sort of overwhelming desire involving a romanticized view of the other person, in a sexual context, with a hope of sustaining for an extended period in the future" (Jankowiak and Fischer 1992, 150). They separated romantic love from the friendship stage of love (also known as bonding). The second type is distinguished by an increasingly tranquil, pleasant, and rewarding connection, as well as a powerful and persistent attachment based on long-term interaction (Jankowiak and Fischer

1992, 152). They looked at (1) young people expressing their intense love, (2) narrating love stories, (3) singing songs about love, and (4) talking in regard to the desires and misery of obsession. Their study discovered romantic love in 147 of 166 societies (88.5%). There were no obvious indicators that individuals experienced romantic love in any of the other 19 societies. The findings revealed that romantic love is practically universal throughout the world (Jankowiak and Fischer 1992, 158). The related literature has also proved the universality of passionate love themes in literary works across numerous different cultural settings. Robert Wagoner, especially, examined various stories and tales on human emotions from global literature and found that "romantic union" may be a universal common model (Wagoner 1999, 43).

Even though the concept is universal, social beliefs regarding romantic love vary greatly, with some societies completely dismissing romantic love "as a demonic and dangerously intense phenomenon." In others as well, romantic love is allowed, however not recognized, or expressed, while in yet others, it is hailed as an essential and valued societal value" (Jankowiak 1995, 17). Romantic love could be governed by cultural factors such as societal order and beliefs, and as a result, individuals may be more or less open to love experiences, sensations, and displays (Jankowiak and Fischer 1992, 20). For example, if their culture rejects romantic love, people might find themselves in love less frequently. Sexual orientation and societal and personal disparities may exist in this context. Individuals in higher socioeconomic groups read more literature and may be more impacted by passionate love notions conveyed in fiction, novels, and visual and plastic art. They depict the social sphere and romanticize with other people, and they have more free time to nurture romantic connections than individuals from lower-level classes.

Additionally, there is clear proof showing that culture and society at large exert a significant influence on individuals' notions of romantic love as well as how they behave, react, and think in romantic situations (Sprecher and Toro-Morn 2002, 138). Culture, in my view, serves as what converts passionate love into romantic love. Emotion is universal and is founded on biological sexual preference rules, but romance is culturally particular and dependent on cultural and historical customs. Common characteristics of passionate love are essentially related to the evolutionary underpinnings of choosing a partner that is critical for the continued existence of

humans, whereas romantic love is an amenity that certain civilizations develop, clarify, and beautify.

2.5. The Socio-cultural Context of the Zongos Communities in Ghana

Ghana is a blended country of many intertwining ethnic groups that are composed of diverse tribes. Ghana also has a wide spectrum of religious groups, and although English is the official language, considerably more diverse languages are spoken, including Hausa, which is predominant in the Zongo communities. The issue of the Hausa language and the nature of Zongo will be dealt with in detail in the subsequent sections when we place the Zongo phenomenon from a wider historical perspective. Whilst Muslims constitute the majority of people living in the Zongos, they are neither culturally, ethnically, nor linguistically uniform. Dwellers in the Zongos, however, share a lot in terms of heritage, experience, tradition, and ancestry, and the research will largely concentrate on an entire Zongo viewpoint (Schildkroudt 1976; Adjei-Baruwah and Rose 1972). Figure 3 below shows networks of Zongo communities across different capitals of the regions in Ghana. Figure 4 also shows cities with densely populated Zongo communities. It shows how the people of Zongo live with people in different parts of Ghana with different ethnic groups, cultures, and traditions. Despite the fact that Ghana is a blended country of different traditions and cultures, these ethnic and cultural barriers are merging as a result of assimilation, especially in the Zongos. The diversity and understanding of meaning among many tribal groupings in terms of the conceptualization of romantic love has been addressed by many researchers in this field (Berry et al. 1992; Matsumoto 2000; Viljoen 2002a, 2002b; Segall et al. 1999). This research intends to make further contributions to this field by bringing forward the lives and experiences of people living within Zongos societies.

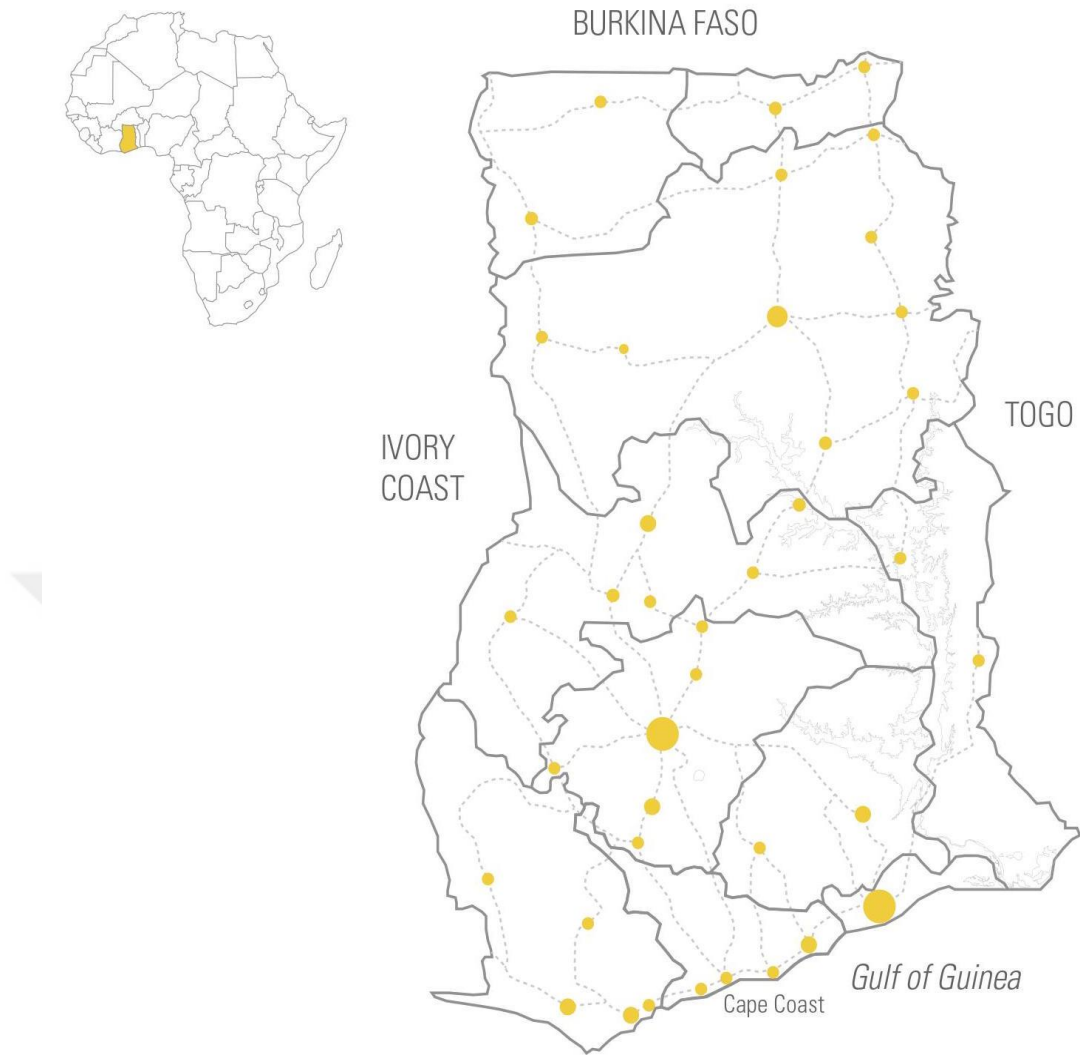


Figure 2.2. Different Networks of Zongo Communities in Ghana⁷

⁷ Drawing by Emily Williamson (2017).

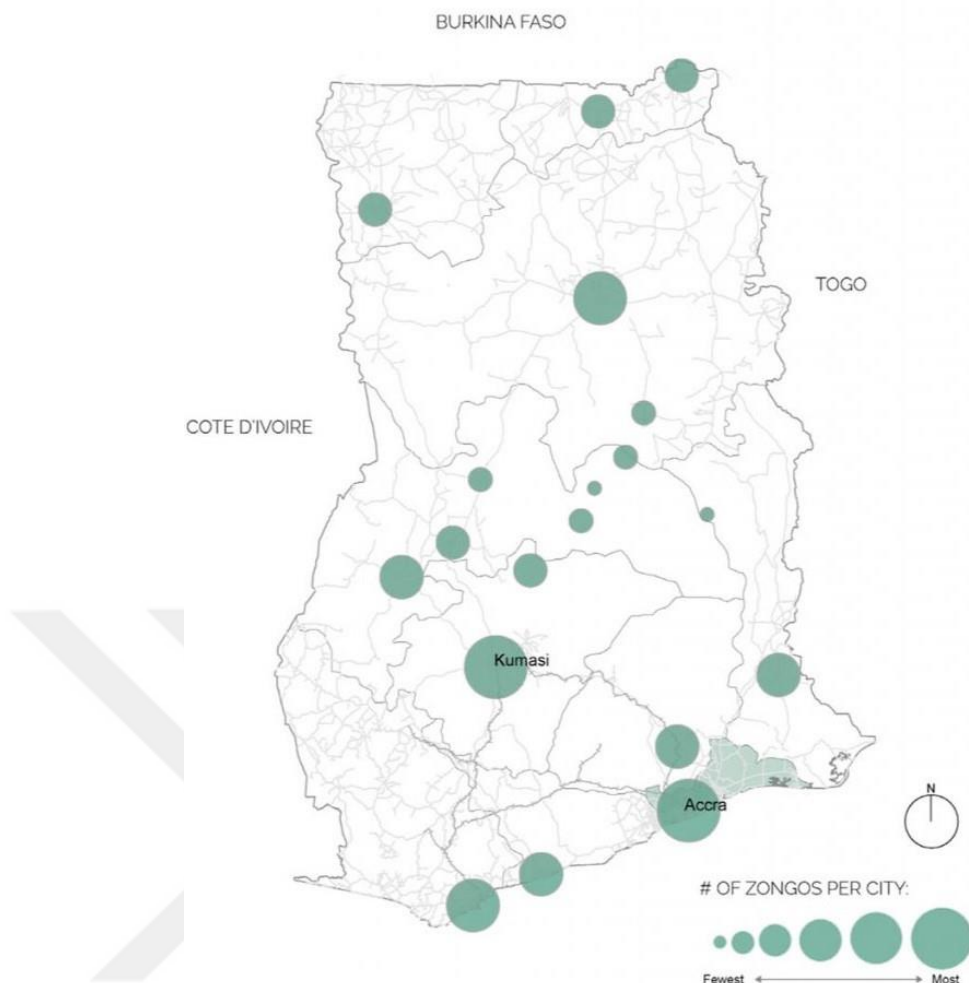


Figure 2.3. Densely Populated Zongo Communities in Ghana⁸

It is critical to recognize that culture is marked by continuous change and amorphous and blurry phenomena (Hofstede 2002, 146). Different tribes and their distinct cultures are influenced by the fact that they assimilate and mix with other tribes. The changing nature of culture does have the power to undermine the power of the already existing culture to dictate the character and behavior of people belonging to certain tribes in Zongos. In other words, the interactions and changes brought about by globalization may pose a threat to the distinct identity and independence of the tribal groups within the Zongo communities. Even though the research is not oblivious to all these intricacies, the Zongos' various cultural and tribal groupings are a great beginning point for exploring and identifying how much these integrated societies love in a

⁸ Source: Ghana Statistical Service (<https://www.statsghana.gov.gh/populationcensus>) Retrieved 2023-12-21.

romantic way and if people's distinct traditions and cultures influence their ways of loving in a romantic manner.

According to Jankowiak and Fisher, romantic, passionate love is a worldwide concept. Nevertheless, as previously said, how a person perceives, communicates, recalls, and the way an individual desires love is regulated and a product of culture and society (Jankowiak and Fisher 1992; Levinger 1994). Culture is made up of the behavioral outcomes of those who have passed earlier, as well as the principles, customs, and mode of living that will be emulated by the majority of people in that community (Segall et al. 1999, 217). Therefore, culture influences people's worldviews along with their notions and demonstrations of companionship, love, and affection (Smith 1970, 222). According to cross-cultural scholars, love has an ethnic and cultural character and is influenced by traditional norms and beliefs, environmental characteristics, and outside forces (Cho and Cross 1995; Goodwin 1999; Jankowiak 1995; Jankowiak and Fisher 1992; Smith 2001). Harry C. Triandis recognized this notion of universal vs culturally different love, stating that "any conceptual framework of considerable universality in social psychology is expected to include both etic [i.e., global] and emic [i.e., culturally] elements" (Triandis 1994, 72) As a result, to be able to obtain a better knowledge of love in its different forms, culture, and tradition must be investigated.

Hofstede's conceptual model, which elucidates four characteristics of culture: Individualism/Collectivism, Power Distance, Masculinity/Femininity, and Uncertainty Avoidance, is a very important and effective method for the research of culture and tradition. The study of Hofstede and Bond generated a fifth cultural component: Short-term Orientation vs. Long-term Orientation (Hofstede 1980; Hofstede and Bond 1988). As a theoretical model, these five cultural aspects are relevant. Individualism against collectivism has shown to be highly helpful in the study of both sociological and psychological concepts, according to scholars.

Individualism is defined by Triandis as a particular social system consisting of tenuously connected people who perceive themselves as separate from groupings; are driven purely by their individual wants, liberty, and the contractual arrangements and contact they have developed with everyone; promote their individual objectives over the objectives of everyone else; and underscore logical evaluations of the benefits and

drawbacks of aligning with those around them (Triandis 1995, 2). Individuals from individualistic cultures are preoccupied with the 'I' and 'me,' and they perceive their individuality to be independent (Triandis 1995, 6). Triandis defines collectivism as a particular social system comprised of strongly connected people who see themselves as a component of one or many groupings; are driven purely by the social rules of and conditions set by those groups; are prepared to give preference to the aspirations of such groupings over their own individual ambitions; and underscore their feeling of belonging to such groupings (Triandis 1995, 2). Consequently, in opposition to the individualistic focus on 'I' and 'me,' individuals from collectivist cultures place a strong focus on 'we,' whereby duties and responsibilities to the collective may take precedence over individual aims and interests.

2.6. Zongo: Historical Context

This section reveals the intrinsic agency of migrants' recollections using an investigation of migrant communities in Ghanaian urban regions. Migrants' memories, in addition to the fond memories of the many populations that occupy these locations, do not just recreate the real historical experience of movement and relocation endured by migrants but consciously include both the political and social significance of 'being a migrant' (Schildkrout 1976, 20). In truth, these recollections suggest something. In today's Ghanaian social and political context, the cultural value generated and lived by these past migrant populations is of critical importance. In fact, Zongo inhabitants frequently serve as links connecting various socioeconomic and territorial truths, as well as a potential liaison for the Ghana authorities.

Zongos represent particular parts of modern West African cities that grew as a consequence of commerce. They largely existed prior to colonial rule in Ghana. The term "Zongo" is derived from the Hausa phrase "Zongo," meaning "temporary settlement." There are many other meanings to the word Zongo, which will be discussed in detail within this chapter. Originally, this term was employed to denote the countryside or outskirts of cities where tradesmen - predominantly Hausa from contemporary northern Nigeria - stopped to relax and conduct their business (Schildkrout 1976; Abraham 1962). These towns may still be found throughout several current West African countries, where they are considered as areas occupied by

'strangers' who frequently have a connection with the religion of Islam, which is practiced by a huge number of Hausa tradesmen. Mohammed Yusuf claims the following:

Zongo often spelled Zango, originated as an old [Hausa] name for a traveler's relaxation stop located immediately outside the walls of a city. Kanuri and Arab traders were historically present in Zango settlements in Daura in addition to other Hausa cities in the North. Hausa travelers were the major inhabitants of Zango urban areas in many countries like Dahomey, Niger, and Ghana (Yusuf 1974, 214).

The term “*Zongo*” came to be applied in a wider context beyond the Hausa area to encompass numerous cultural communities. Nowadays, the term refers to a historical migrant population. In his study of the social and political significance of the Zongo of Atebubu (Ghana), Kwame Arhin writes, “A Zongo was not merely a housing place, but furthermore a trading area... Zongo inhabitants functioned as brokers for merchants in the more northerly market communities, as recipients for arriving annual merchants, as translators, and mainly as links among the various linguistically diverse traders” (Arhin 1971, 73). Zongo thus becomes unquestionably a site having its own distinct urban characteristics despite the fact that it encompasses social conceptions that extend outside its geographical meanings.

Modern Zongos are frequently defined by congestion and poor sanitation, and they symbolize, both metaphorically and essentially, a state of discrimination and acceptance. The system is an endeavor to acknowledge and control the existence of migrants in the communities where they reside, in which everyone involved is continually contesting their individual social and political status and rights as citizens. Simultaneously, the Zongos are frequently barred from direct land ownership and from engaging in the conventional political sphere (Schildkrout 1976, 124). All Zongos are occupied by a diverse population, and while this necessitates varied socioeconomic and cultural categories, these individuals may be considered as contributing to the formation of a shared identity. Their freedom to maintain their international identities generates a unique dialogue and has a distinct sociopolitical significance. I examine the stories carefully in order to examine the residents’ inventive self-formation. My interest is in the uniqueness of the Zongo society with the sense of togetherness created

by years of living together, as articulated by sociologist David Pellow in his study on Sabon Zongo (Accra). He defines Zongo as a place with a communal identification that results from experiencing and expressing a sense of commitment to life in Zongo (Abraham 1962, 967).

‘Zongo’ is an uncertain sociological categorization currently. It has undergone multiple transformations over the years and today symbolizes a system of society that is both flexible and durable. Traditionally, it has been seen as a critical hub in the West African migratory patterns, not just for the Hausa population but also for a number of other types of migrants (Fulani, Frafra, Mossi, and Yoruba, to name a few). Moreover, the Zongo is still a lasting representation in Ghanaian culture, where severe infrastructural and environmental issues, as well as high rates of crime, are frequently connected to the existence of these “strangers.” Conversely, in numerous instances, these ‘strangers’ have resided in the community for a number of generations, calling into question both the concept of ‘stranger’ and the local debate on migration.

2.7. The Establishment of Zongo

Northern Ghanaians and non-Ghanaian immigrants whose lineage are now called members of the Zongo community can be found almost everywhere in Ghana. They began settling in Kumasi⁹ around 1896. We are using the Zongos in Kumasi because Kumasi has a greater number of Zongos. Many of my interviews were done in the Zongos in Kumasi. Some of the early developments of these Zongos began in Kumasi, and it is only appropriate to use it as a prototype example of the development of other Zongos across Ghana. Zongo, in Hausa, means caravan campsite or overnight stop for travelers, which was used by the British to denote the part of the city inhabited by Muslim merchants (Abraham 1962, 967). It was used conversely with ‘Hausa settlement,’ ‘Muslim settlement,’ and ‘foreign quarter.’ The Hausa language itself was a “commonly used term” to define all Inland traders (Annual Report 1906, 1907). This chapter describes the origins of the Zongo community and clarifies various contemporary uses of the name Zongo.

⁹ Kumasi is the capital town of the Ashanti region in the southern part of Ghana. It is home to one of the most respected and old kingdoms in Africa, namely, the Ashanti Kingdom. Kumasi is home to many inhabitants of Zongo communities.

The rise of Kumasi Zongo may be seen as a result of the two separate influxes of northern migration: first of Muslim traders, then of labor migrants. Despite the fact that both forms of migration proceeded concurrently, the majority of the town's initial residents, the merchants, settled themselves indefinitely, purchased assets, and constructed residences. They quickly ruled the Zongo, both politically and economically, and frequently oversaw the destiny of incoming newcomers (Rattray 1929, 413). It is important because they came mostly from historically centralized governments not located on the Gold Coast (now Ghana), such as the Hausa, Yoruba, and Mossi kingdoms. Occupational migrants, on the contrary, primarily arrived from the Northern Territories' noncentralized villages and others. Fewer of the aforementioned migrants were Muslims prior to coming to Kumasi, yet plenty of the merchants had a lengthy Islamic history, which provided them a competitive edge in the Muslim community in Kumasi, where Islamic comprehension and conservatism bestowed esteem.

Numerous features helped to bridge the gap between these two sorts of migrants: part of the troops conscripted by the British arrived from non-Muslim groups that subsequently produced workers; many immigrant groups had sub-groupings, most of which were off while some were historically traders and Muslims, labor migrants; all these forms of migration persisted concurrently; and freedom of movement was allowed in the stranger society. So, regardless of his background, a person may become a Muslim, a merchant, or a *maigida* (landlord). Moreover, numerous Muslims' ethnic identities were in doubt and would occasionally shift once they arrived in Kumasi (Rattray 1929, 416).

The emergent appearance of the strange area mirrored an increasing desire for migrants to stay in the city, economic growth, and the political decision of the British. During the time of colonization, the first area in Kumasi, described as a Zongo, comprised of Muslim traders and camp-followers who arrived in Kumasi alongside the British army about 1896. In my conversation with 86 years old Mallam Awudu, whom I was introduced to as someone with vast knowledge of the Zongos in Kumasi, he told me that:

During the moment the Asante (a great kingdom in Kumasi) revolted against the British in the year 1900, there had been a substantial Zongo settlement immediately north of the city, in a location known as Mmoromu, or Zongo Tuni, which is named after a Malam Tuni who is supposed to have actually considered the first inhabitant, and today named as Mbrom. Following the year 1900 uprising, the Asantes burnt this Zongo, but it was quickly reconstructed in the same location by Muslims.¹⁰

In the year 1905, the British authorities relocated the Muslims from Mmoromu into the city to what is now referred to as Old Zongo, or Yelwa (a Hausa name denoting wealth or abundance), to gain from collecting rent. According to the Annual Report of 1905, "the deconstruction and reorganization of the Hausa Zongo.... Land was carved up into plots that are rented to prospective migrants at £4 to £1 per year, depending on size. By the end of the year, almost 150 plots had already been occupied" (Annual Report 1905). The British authorities benefitted from the foreigners as well by using their services. The Zongo chiefs, whose position will be covered more later on, were capable of providing the government with free service due to the fact that they frequently housed jobless and freshly arrived migrants. The chiefs offered migrants work, housing, and nourishment, and as the migrants waited for employment opportunities, the chiefs were able to offer their helping hands to the authorities. In exchange, the leaders gained political backing from the British, despite the fact that they were not formally chiefs because status as a chief required acknowledgment by the head of state of the Gold Coast Colony during the time of colonization (Thomas 1973, 73-76).

After a few years, new buildings were erected in what is currently referred to as Sabon Zongo, or New Zongo, modeled after the houses of the Old Zongo. The Public Health Authority hired rooms for people and their households on monthly schedules, initially for just six shillings every month and then for fifteen shillings in 1966. Asawasi,¹¹ the subsequent government housing initiative, began in 1948. The two locations are now primarily populated by northern people. As Kumasi's population grows, the limits of the regions occupied mostly, but not solely, by northern immigrants have extended. Suburbs, whereby Asante¹² and immigrant landowners erected residences for housing

¹⁰ Interview with one of my interlocutors, Awudu, 2022.

¹¹ It is a town in Kumasi that many Zongo residents inhabit.

¹² Asante is a tribe of the Ashanti Kingdom; people from this tribe are referred to as Asantes.

or hire, were progressively absorbed into the town, such that Kumasi now comprises places - such as Ayiga (named YateYate by Muslims), Aboabo, Nhiaso, Ahinsan, and others - that were previously once townships outside the city (Schildkrout 1976, 142).

Even though no legislation required a division between Asante and foreigners or Europeans and Africans, the British strategy of designating separate spaces for foreigners promoted crowding on this premise. Many northerners live in a handful of areas, including Amakom and Dichemso, which were mostly inhabited after 1930 and have a mostly Asante and southern Ghanaian majority. Most Asante have also purchased residences as assets, particularly in unfamiliar districts. Even though the majority of these individuals are nonresident homeowners, some dwell in their homes and rent out part of the rooms to other people. In addition, around the turn of the century, as accommodation in Kumasi was limited and northerly landowners were scarce, many Asante leaders and businesspeople hired rooms in their own homes to migrants, often profiting from their tenants' labor skills (Thomas 1973, 84).

2.8. The Definition of the Word "Zongo"

It ought to be obvious that the word Zongo, as employed in Kumasi, has varied connotations depending on the situation and the persona of the person speaking. Around the turn of the century, the phrase was employed to define an area and, by implication, the residents of that region (and thereafter, similar locations) who were considered part of Zongo society. According to the Asante and European perspectives, the Zongo group comprised all northern residents who were considered new migrants and, hence, outsiders to the Asante. It excluded northerners who were assimilated into the Asante Nkramo (Asanti Muslim) society or former slaves of northern ancestry, all of whom were considered Asante for different causes. It also did not cover migrants from southern Ghana.

For a foreigner, whether an Asante, a Southerner, or a European, the Zongo population seems culturally cohesive, if not homogenous. On certain fronts, this solidarity is genuine, and a shared immigrant culture is growing amongst second and third-generation immigrants. The usage of Hausa as a lingua franca, the devotion of most immigrants to Islam, housing grouping in communities and houses mostly occupied

by people from the north, the identical Muslim attire and conduct exhibited by numerous migrants, and their mutual participation in transactions and low-skilled employment all help contribute to this solidarity and unity. It should be noted that Asantes and other southern Ghanaians view all northerners and immigrants as outsiders, contributing to their seeming togetherness and unity (Sanjek 1972, 221). Nonetheless, currently, as the Zongo contains first-, second-, and third-generation immigrants, both long- and short-term inhabitants, as well as members of numerous categories who have different levels of integration into the lifestyles of the immigrant community, there exists no single set of features which define all individuals who may be pointed out and consider themselves as members of the Zongo (Rattray 1929, 412). Traditional features, like the location of residence, do not serve as definite indicators that a person is a member of the Zongo group; rather, all of these variables can serve as significant aspects of a person's personality at different times. Membership in the Zongo, like cultural identity, is contextually determined.

All are forms of identity, but ethnic identity is related to a shared place of birth as well as the concept of a family relationship that binds the members together. Because all of them identified themselves as people from the north, only the first could apply to the Zongo. A Frafra¹³ may be considered Zongo in the eyes of an Asante, yet not by a Hausa¹⁴ - the former because he is a northern migrant, the latter because he is most likely not a Muslim. Furthermore, a group might be affiliated with the Zongo society in some circumstances but not at other times. In the year 1968, during the disagreement over who would be the successor to the Imamate of the central mosque (Schildkrout 1976, 121), the vast majority of Dagombas (one of the tribes in Zongo) argued that, as Ghanaian citizens, they did not constitute part of the Zongo, which they described in this context as a neighborhood of non-Ghanaian foreigners pursuant to the sporadic customary leadership of the Hausa. The Hausa had traditionally furnished the Imam of the central mosque. The Dagomba nominee for the *Na'ib*, the Imam's assistant's office, tried to connect himself with a national Ghanaian Muslim community and tried to eliminate the Hausa nominee on the basis of citizenship, arguing that the Hausa were undoubtedly aliens because their place of

¹³ One of the tribal groups residing in Zongo.

¹⁴ Hausa is a tribe, and they also speak Hausa as a language. With time and due to its dominance, the Hausa language became a lingua franca within the Zongo communities.

origin was located outside Ghana (Rouch 1956, 73). One of my interlocutors, Mallam Awudu, in relation to what happened then he said:

Only a few weeks before, the Dagomba society's leader had written to the authorities on a different issue as a member of the Zongo, along with the Hausa and other people who were considered outsiders. Nonetheless, during one stage of the conflict over the mosque, he felt it expedient to abandon this identity and view himself just as a Ghanaian. He was then acting in a national, rather than a local, setting as a northern Ghanaian, not a foreigner in Asante.¹⁵

The Zongo society is not a defined entity. Many Asante and southern Ghanaians regard it as a collection of northern foreigners originating from northern Ghana and the neighboring savannah regions. They presume it is a Muslim society because the majority of the immigrant leaders are Muslims, yet they frequently refer to non-Muslim northerners as Zongo members. Non-Muslim northerners may be foreigners in Kumasi from the perspective of conservative Muslim immigrants. However, they do not generally constitute a part of the Zongo since the Asante Nkramo, Ahmadiyya, and Lebanese and Pakistani (mainly Ahmadiyya)¹⁶ Muslims are not represented.

The adoption of a shared language (Hausa language) likewise does not adequately define Zongo community borders. Whereas the vast majority of immigrants from the north or from outside Ghana communicate using Hausa, most just do so in certain settings when talking to people from different ethnic communities. First-generation immigrants from the same area nearly always communicate in their native language. Despite the fact that they believe and are considered to be members of the Zongo, most community leaders administer informal courts and deal with members of their own groups in their own language. Second-generation immigrants frequently speak only Hausa; however, they occasionally organize clubs to study their parents' language. Employment practices do not differentiate the Zongo from other Kumasi populations either (Hodgkin 1966, 448). Despite the fact that Zongo is known as a trading village, a lot of the strangers do not trade. Additionally, there are many untrained and semiskilled salaried employees, craftspeople, and jobless people. Furthermore, most

¹⁵ Interview with Awudu, 2022.

¹⁶ The Ahmadiyya Muslim societies in Ghana trace their history to 1921 when the Muslims in Ghana invited Abdul Rahim Najjar to visit the then Gold Coast. The Ahmadiyya Muslims are the second largest in number after the Sunnis, and their members since their early days include people from Lebanon and Pakistan.

significant merchants are Asante or Muslim Lebanese rather than immigrants. That is evident even within historically northern-dominated industries like livestock trading and long-distance transportation. The Zongo, on the other hand, is distinguished by the fact that only a handful of professionals are literate in English. As a result, Zongo people must depend on Asantes and people from the south who are employed as government officials, attorneys, Western-trained physicians, corporate managers, and so on (Hodgkin 1966, 451).

Therefore, one thing that every one of the Zongo residents has in common is the fact that they are neither Asante, southern Ghanaian, European, Lebanese, or Indian, as the other main ethnic groups in the city are (Rouch 1956, 77). The Zongo emerges conceptually in contrast to these different groups. Its survival is dependent on the preservation of divisions between foreigners and indigenous peoples, foreigners and citizens, Asante and non-Asante, and those in the north and the people of the south. These divisions present themselves culturally, socially, economically, and politically, and they operate at both the local and national levels. Foreigners are not readily integrated into the Asante¹⁷ cultural society on a local level, while laws hinder the substantial integration of foreign aliens into state institutions on a nationwide basis. Because the classification of the stranger, like other ethnic classifications, is established in situations, no solid limits can be formed for describing the Zongo society; yet the existence of the classification enables the discovery of social communities founded on it an endless potential.

2.9. Religion, Culture, and Tradition in Zongo

Evidently, the embrace of Islam leads to absorption into the Zongo political group for immigrants of every generation. Islam, however, in a Hausa variant, supports social cohesion in the Zongo by offering shared value principles and ideals and providing similar ways of interacting. Though many immigrants from historical people of other faith communities must study and intentionally accept it, Islam provides a shared foundation that allows foreigners with historically diverse cultures and political

¹⁷ The Asantes are the dominant tribe in the Ashanti region. They represent two-thirds of the population in that region. Most of the Asante population adheres to Christianity and a somewhat traditional religion (the belief in higher spirits, different from the idea of God in Christianity or Islam).

frameworks to join together at one level, an integrated society (Last 1967, 190). There is little question about the fact that one of the explanations for the Hausa's prominent position in the Zongo is that Islamic and Hausa cultures are occasionally viewed as one cohesive system of cultural norms. Individuals are frequently incapable of discerning "pure" Islam (a concept depending on the context) from Hausa tradition or whatever they believe to be Hausa tradition. For instance, the communities with the longest history of leaders and landowners and those with the greatest rate of Islamization have conferred some Hausa names and titles to a lot of their leaders and elders. Many of those titles, for instance, Waziri, are believed to be derived from Arabic. The installation of a Waziri is seen as a symbol of Islamic conservatism rather than 'Hausaization,' but both meanings are possible. Because Islam is conveyed via the Hausa tradition in Kumasi, the former quickly gets associated with the latter (Last 1967, 198).

The position of chief constitutes just one example of a structure that has been both 'Islamized' and 'Hausaized.' A similar procedure may be seen in a number of other fields, such as how burials and funerals, naming rituals, and weddings or marriages are conducted. In almost every official social transition or life-crisis ritual, the Hausa tradition serves as a precedent and progressively sets standards. The Mossi, for instance, routinely circumcised boys soon before adolescence in big circumcision ceremonies where several boys had their circumcisions and were introduced into adulthood at the same time. It is currently being performed at the naming ceremony, as customary amongst Kumasi Hausas, one week after birth. Hausa traditions also influence marriages (Hodgkin 1966, 443).

Many of the most devout Mossi (a tribe in Zongo) Muslims in Kumasi have agreed to embrace patrilineal parallel-cousin weddings, which were previously outlawed. The Hausa practice of offering a person's daughter as *sadaka*, or alms, is widely adopted among the richer inhabitants of all communities (Last 1967, 200). In this sort of marriage, referred to as *Auren sadaka* (marriage by alms) in Hausa, an individual exhibits his rank and kindness by offering his daughter to an acquaintance, a customer, or, on rare occasions, a family member. He also let go of the traditional marriage dowry (also known as *sadaki*) provided by the groom to the bride. The father of the bride additionally gives the *sadaki*, the ceremonial marriage money that is given to the

girl's parent, or Wali, by the groom, and he generally offers a dowry in addition. Around the big Muslim festive that concludes Ramadan, known as *Tukuru* in Hausa, several of these sadaka marriage agreements are openly declared in the mosque. Rich Muslims, particularly the ones born in Kumasi, use giving gifts to obtain reverence, power, and reputation. The practice is religiously permitted because a *sadaka* is an offer of charity, an honest offering that is pleasing to Allah (Hodgkin 1966, 445).

In Kumasi, receivers are often not impoverished unless they happen to be the customers of the giver. These are typically powerful persons whose support is sought. Second-generation immigrants and other individuals prove their socioeconomic standing in all marriages, whether the price of the bride is given or not, by offering an enormous sadaka, which includes a lot of garments, veil coverings, shoes, gold ornaments, and enamel pots for their daughters in the event of an *Auren sadaka* or for their own and their son's partners in various marriages. Throughout the celebration of marriage, a lot of people exhibit these presents in the mosque to be calculated alongside the money presented as *sadaka* and the formal payment, the *sadaki*. Previously, the Mossi Imam decreed that these presents should not be shown since they gave the impoverished the impression that they could not marry. "None other than the Mossi have attempted this because everybody has started to look excessively similar to the Hausa,"¹⁸ as I was told by Mallam Awudu.

Whilst bride prices were originally quite low in certain tribes, they are occasionally rather high in Kumasi. In certain tribal groups, the husband and his companions travel to the bride's residence and seal the marriage by putting a homespun fabric over the bride's shoulders, following which she is transported to the spouse's residence. The groom does not travel to "take" his wife in Kumasi, despite the fact that the Muslim ceremony is done either in the girl's residence, assuming there is a mosque nearby, or in a mosque near the residence of the leader of her community. The typical rite is nearly totally Hausa, involving a number of gifts sent to the girl's relatives, the traditional practice of applying henna (in Hausa, it is called *Lalle*) to the girl's feet and hands, washing the bride, and other elements. Whereas first-generation immigrants who are not Hausa retain some of their customary rituals, such as the act of dancing,

¹⁸ Interviewed Awudu, 2023.

drumming, and teasing following the Muslim ceremony, these customs were rapidly vanishing amongst second-generation immigrants.

For a period in Kumasi, an assembly of town-born '*ulama*' (Muslim scholars) from different ethnic communities enacted a set of laws known as the "Kumasi constitution." They established, in the name of the religion of Islam, a restriction on marriage fees, a ban on the bride-washing ritual, and an outlaw of dancing and laughing at funerals. To the extent that these regulations are implemented and followed, they become part of the Zongo tradition. They serve as a paradigm for the cultural adjustments that immigrants from other ethnic backgrounds must undertake in the community. The problem is not whether the presence of the Kumasi legislation proves that the Kumasi Zongo has a unique tradition; many feel the contrary and believe it differs in various ways compared to other Zongos or from the customs and traditions of specific ethnic groups within the Zongo. This feeling of shared heritage serves as the foundation for what I refer to as Zongo society. According to Fred Nadel, "There is not a single society but a complicated structure of societies. A unified culture's awareness identifies the broadest, loosest element in the structure of societies - perspective - as opposed to 'actual' shared existence. One soon becomes the other" (Nadel 1942, 17).

Looking at a different viewpoint, the Zongo could possibly be defined as a social entity by employing the network notion, in the understanding that people who identify as people of the Zongo possess a multitude of interpersonal connections with one another compared to other people, with whom they generally communicate solely commercially and occasionally politically. Familial ties, closeness, companionship, and similar heritage are examples of Zongo relations that exceed the limits of specific areas and can be casual or official, as in the situation of certain racial organizations. These also encompass various local ties, such as ones created among co-residents in residence, individuals who pray together at neighborhood mosques, children who go to the same area with an Arabic educational institution, and patrons and patronesses (Goody 1966, 29).

Additionally, there are also a number of significant established expressions of the Zongo truth, such as the Central Mosque, where all Muslims converge on Fridays and

important Islamic celebration times, and Islamic organizations, which bring together immigrant Muslims from every ethnic background and community. There are several such organizations that are often founded based on age, generation, era, and area. Every passing generation of teenagers establishes new affiliations, which eventually grow into what we refer to as '*ulama*' organizations. Both official ethnically diverse groups and ethnic organizations, which exist alongside one another, establish standards of conduct for members and sanction violations of these norms. With the exception of a few first-generation migrant organizations that seek to implement the conventional customs of particular ethnic groups, these laws are manifestations of fundamental Islamic norms that regulate everyday life in the growing Zongo neighborhood and are specifically meant to go beyond customary, culturally specific rules of conduct.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND FIELDWORK

3.1. Introduction

In this section, I will talk about the methods and research resources that I used to conduct ethnographic fieldwork in several neighborhoods of Ghana, notably Zongos, that have a significant presence of Muslims and multi-cultural and multi-tribal populations. My goal is to provide a conceptual and theoretical assessment of my approach to methodology and strategies, as well as explain why I chose particular research techniques. Furthermore, I will provide theoretical arguments for why I chose certain methods and their viewpoints, as well as what hurdles and barriers I experienced during the fieldwork stage. In addition, in this section, I will draw the attention of the readers to a comprehensive overview of the ethnographic fieldwork I undertook, as well as the minute details of my encounters with my interlocutors.

Getting to the end of August 2022, I had conducted a total of twenty-five (25) in-person both semi-structured and unstructured interview sessions - omitted from this are meetings abandoned due to religious and family issues, as well as others rejected by my interlocutors after I quickly outlined the objective of the research. Nevertheless, only fifteen (15) of these interviews were employed in this sociological and anthropological research. Furthermore, I was involved in two other marriage sessions, both of which were led by a female Islamic instructor known as "Malama," and all of which took place in Kumasi-Aboabo and Sabon Zongo (New Zongo) in the Ashanti region. Participants in these biweekly marriage sessions range in age from 13-year-old girls to 50-year-old women. It is the combination of both married and unmarried participants. My participation was only due to the research I was conducting. There were no rules of participation, but it is very uncommon for men in communities like Zongos to participate in programs that were meant for women due to the Islamic nature of these communities. My participation was from a distance far enough for me to see

what was being said, and I could see the participants, but it was hard for them to notice me. However, getting to the end of my time of visiting the place, participants in the session began to notice my presence later.

My study exposed me to family settings and meetings, interacting with both married and unmarried individuals who were ready to express their views on the subject of this study. For the purpose of participant observation, I made some uninvited visits to critical places within the Zongos. Places like the mosques – where people mostly meet as it is the focal point of Muslim-dominated communities like the Zongos, barbering shops – where men meet to discuss both personal and family issues and marketplaces which are dominated by women, both young and old. “Based” is a term that refers to a gathering place for men after work where they gather to talk about work and mostly debate social issues while they drink tea called “*Ataya*”¹⁹ in most parts of West Africa. I used to frequent these places when I was an active member of the Zongo community. I left my country, Ghana, at an early age to pursue education in Türkiye. I spent the ten years of my life in Türkiye pursuing higher education, and even though within those ten years, I traveled back to Ghana on a few occasions. However, still, the sense of being another in my own community was immense. I had always wanted to come back while studying in Türkiye, but the time and space I got were to come back home and conduct this research. Now, coming back after many years of being away from these communities as a researcher was both exciting and eye-opening for me.

In the following sections, I will explain the methods I used in conducting the fieldwork necessary for this research. The methods involved participant observation, and engaging in participant observation allowed me to immerse myself in the daily lives and social interactions of the Zongo community. By being an active participant, I gained a firsthand understanding of the cultural practices, linguistic expressions, and symbolic rituals associated with romantic love. This means taking field notes, which served as a critical tool for documenting observations, impressions, and reflections during participant observation. These notes provided a detailed record of my

¹⁹ Ataya is a kind of tea that is very popular in Senegal and most parts of West Africa. It is common in Mali, Mauritania, Gambia, Ghana, and Guinea. The name Ataya comes from the Wolof language spoken in Senegal. <https://www.teniandtayo.com/post/how-to-drink-tea-like-an-african-senegalese-ataya>. Retrieved 2023-02-25.

experiences, ensuring that subtle nuances and cultural intricacies were captured. My use of narrative analysis helped unearth the stories and personal accounts related to romantic love. Examining the narratives shared by individuals within the community allowed for the identification of recurring themes, cultural motifs, and the emotional dimensions associated with romantic experiences. This method enabled a more nuanced exploration of how individuals conceptualized and expressed romantic love within their cultural and linguistic frameworks. Finally, conducting in-depth interviews provided a structured platform to gather individual perspectives on romantic love. These interviews allowed for a focused exploration of participants' thoughts, emotions, and cultural interpretations of romantic experiences. Through open-ended questions, I was able to elicit detailed responses, enriching the qualitative data with individual insights and personal narratives.

3.2. Proceeding with the Research and Ethnographic Fieldwork

The scope of my research was initially large since it involves love and the expression of romantic love. It covers a large aspect of the concept of love, which includes romantic love, courtship, marriage, family relations, relative relations, friendship, etc. It needed to be narrowed down to one aspect of love with references and contexts – even though not too much – from other aspects of love. After many deliberations and considerations, as well as many presentations, my supervisor and I finally settled on the expression of romantic love within the Zongo communities. The topic had its own complexities and difficulties, but as my thesis proposal was approved, I was elated to start the work.

The structure of my inquiries into the subject is to analyze the cultural expressions of love as well as the historical roots of the Zongo communities' survival analytically and critically. I have three questions: First, how do Zongo people describe love and romantic love? Second, what impacts and governs their perception of love and romantic love? The fundamental focus of this thesis is the last question: how do individuals in Zongo express love and romantic love? In response to these constant aspirations to understand this concept, I decided to conduct this ethnographic study centered on concepts and comprehension of love. I have lived almost all my life in one of the vibrant Zongos, and I have seen how people communicate and express their

emotions and concerns. The way people in such communities manage to connect and live in harmony is of great interest to me. I do this study to provide relevance, voice, precedence, and power to the countless people who live and strive to improve their lives in Zongo.

Furthermore, the population of Zongos has grown at an exponential rate throughout the years. As a result, it is critical and necessary to perform this research in order to analyze and understand the Zongo phenomenon as well as the notion of emotions and how they are portrayed inside such settings. In addition, the research on Zongos is quite sparse, and contributing to this subject is an obligation I bear as a member of one of Ghana's Zongos. This research is the first of its kind: a sociological inquiry of Zongo conducted by a Zongo member and student who has spent most of his life in Zongo. Despite this, there were several problems encountered when working on this project as an insider - being known within such settings might end up being an obstacle.

Even though I had already established contact with three people whom I consider my interlocutors, these interlocutors are supposed to be interviewed, and then they will lead me to some potential interlocutors I would later interview. But, due to the sensitivity of the research topic to a society like the Zongo, where the majority of the population are Muslims, my initial interactions were impeded. Initially, there was no problem finding people who could be interviewed, but after informing and introducing the scope of the research as was suggested by the Principle of Professional Responsibility in Spradley's 1980 book *Participant Observation*, "The aims of the investigation should be communicated as well as possible to the informant" (Spradley 1980, 22). Regardless of the information, the interlocutors who requested their identity to be hidden declined to be interviewed after initially agreeing to do so. After some time, it was hard to find anyone to interview.

I thought maybe because I was born, lived, and spent a lot of my life in Zongo, it would be pretty easy to walk to anyone and ask for an interview. That didn't turn out to be the case. In most instances, I was received well as a guest, and people were excited about my project, but after discussing my project and its goal, most of them politely declined to participate. I had to find the reason for these hesitations, and I realized that it was coming from the shyness and sensitivity of talking about the subject in question;

thus, speaking on such topics that have to do with love, romance, sex, etc., was an internally accepted taboo. These declines and unwillingness to talk highlight Zongos' worries, distrust, and skepticism of those they are not comfortable with – regardless of the social position of the researcher, as well as the researcher's difficulties in getting crucial data in the fieldwork (Driessen and Jansen 2013; Ogain 2013; Van der Geest 2017).

After the initial disappointment of not getting the opportunity to interview my first contact, I decided to move immediately to Kumasi to meet with my second contact, Abubakar, before it was too late. When I arrived in Kumasi, before I even called Abubakar to arrange for an interview, I received a call that he was already waiting for me at the Central Mosque, the biggest Mosque in Kumasi. I had to move quickly before I lost this chance. As I was approaching the venue, I saw Abubakar and three other men waiting to meet. My level of excitement was all over my face as I greeted them and began to talk with Abubakar. At that moment, I noticed a certain change of mood in the other three men as I was re-introducing my topic to Abubakar and how I intended to go on with my interview. These three men – who later introduced themselves to me as Musah, Ali, and Fadlu - were waiting to have a chat with me.

Abubakar told me that he brought them with him so that they could also help me with my research, which is fine with me. I couldn't hide my excitement as I thought this was the right moment for me to delve right into my work. But after introducing my topic to them and stating my intention of how I wanted to carry out the work, I got the strangest look from these men, and that made me feel totally like an outsider. I was trying my very best to let them understand the importance of the study and how helpful they would be if they opened up. I was looking at Abubakar, who was standing not too far away from us and was the only secured contact I had at that time.

After about half an hour of talking with these men about unrelated social issues facing our communities, Ali began to open up by asking me whether the interview was going to be on the radio. He asked: "Is this a news report or just a conversation you want to have with us?" I told him this is a different study altogether and has nothing to do with radio or television. I believe in the beginning, they thought I was a radio or TV reporter. There and then, I realized how difficult it was to conduct fieldwork even at a

place you call “home.” Also, it is important to understand that fieldwork of this nature is rare in such communities, hence the hesitance, especially considering the nature of the topic at hand. I was thinking and truly feeling like an insider as I embarked on this journey, but as I went deeper, I repeatedly understood Kirin Narayan’s challenge of how debatable it is for anyone to claim he or she is a real insider or native (Narayan 1993, 671). Despite the thought of myself being an insider, I had to deal with issues of nervousness, reliability, and doubt during ethnographic research. In these cases, the researcher must confront them and engage with them properly in a way that is moral and ethical (Grieser 2016; Ingridsdotter and Kallenberg 2018).

As I had to deal with the pain of finding more people to interview, I arranged an interview with my trusted interlocutor, Abubakar. As the days were approaching, I received the news that Abubakar had traveled outside the country. This was a huge disappointment and heartbreaking for me as I missed another chance to get my first face-to-face interview. Now, my quest is to try and find the other three men I was introduced to by Abubakar. As I was trying to get in touch with them, I prepared myself to promise to keep their secrets and identity hidden if, indeed, that’s what is making it hard for them to talk. James Spradley argues that “Where research involves the acquisition of material and information transferred on the assumption of trust between persons, it is axiomatic that the rights, interests, and sensitivities of those studied must be safeguarded” (Spradley 1980, 21). I managed to get in touch with the men Ali and Fadlu, who asked about the scope of the study again. I explained to them the aim and goal of the academic study, which is totally different from any radio or TV report. I assured them that they could trust me with their personal details and that I was going to safeguard that information. They agreed to meet me again for an interview, but unfortunately, after a week, I got another decline to any interview from them. I had to start all over again. I believe religious, gender, and cultural factors sometimes impede our ability to have interpersonal interactions.

3.3. Organizing and Planning the Ethnographic Fieldwork

The material required for the study is acquired using qualitative research methodologies such as participant observations, field notes, and in-depth interviews conducted during fieldwork in several Zongos communities within Ghana. My

positionality during the whole fieldwork was important, and I had to use close ethnography to be close and intimate with my interlocutors. Anthony Giddens extrapolated that "Fieldwork usually produces more comprehensive and detailed data compared to other methods of research, and ethnography can help us comprehend social processes more broadly" (Giddens 2006, 86). According to Russell Bernard, "Participant observation in fieldwork is the cornerstone of cultural anthropology. It entails approaching individuals and helping them feel sufficiently at ease in having you around to watch and capture information about their lifestyle" (Bernard 2006, 342). Participant observation was not difficult due to the structure of the communities researched for this study. I agree with the idea that a researcher must take a position of engagement, as the amount of engagement in the participant observation procedure may vary from study to study.

Since roughly 1900, researchers in social sciences have used participant observation as part of their arsenal of methodological strategies, particularly in the subject of anthropology (Malinowski 2014; Boaz 1904). Participant observation entails the researcher actively engaging with members of the community that he or she desires to examine, generally as a respected member of the collective. This approach belongs to the broad category of fieldwork. It is critical to recognize that several forms of 'fieldwork' are available: a spectrum of options that this chapter will discuss. Contrary to how qualitative study has typically been performed in anthropology, most ethnography in sociology is founded on the idea that the researcher is, at a minimum, ostensibly a member of the community being researched. However, the distinction between participant observation and other modes of ethnographic research is fuzzy, and some researchers use the phrases interchangeably.

Spradley created a framework to depict a continuum in researchers' "level of engagement" (Spradley 1980, 58-62). Spradley's categories, in my opinion, confuse the level of involvement with the extent to which a researcher feels strongly associated with a community. According to Spradley, there are different forms of participation or engagement when it comes to participant observation. Any research study of participant observers would indicate significant disparities in their research techniques. A major distinction is their level of participation regarding individuals and the things they see. We may investigate this diversity by looking at five categories of

involvement that fall along a spectrum of participation (Spradley 1980, 58). There are Non-participation, Passive Participation, Moderate Participation, Active Participation, and Complete Participation (Spradley 1980, 58-62). These levels of participation also correspond with the researcher's membership within the community or people he or she is studying.

Patricia Adler and Peter Adler created a slightly distinct classification approach based on the level of engagement. Their plan emphasizes the variety of responsibilities available to people who wish to serve as members (respondents) in the groups in which they are studying. They employ three main classifications: No Membership, Peripheral Membership, Active Membership, and Full Membership (Adler and Adler 1987, 46). Looking at the nature of my fieldwork, I alternate between Spradley's passive participation and active participation, as well as Adler and Adler's no membership role and active membership role. As a passive participant, I attended marriage sessions made for women, madrasas (schools) for women, and counseling for couples where I did not participate in any of the events. Spradley defines passive participation in these instances as a type of participation or observation where the researcher engaging in passive participation occupies a position at the place of the event but does not actively participate or communicate with other individuals. All you have to do is locate an "observation post" where you are able to watch and capture what happens. If the passive participant plays any part in the social setting, it will be as a "bystander," "spectator," or "loiterer" (Spradley 1980, 71).

Kathleen DeWalt and Billie DeWalt went on to say that at this stage of observation, people being observed may not even be aware that they are being watched. However, the researcher will later take on a more active role, questioning other people who are regular at these events (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, 23). After going to places and occasions where I assumed passive participation for some time, people began to notice my presence. They began to be curious about why I was there; this curiosity opened the door to questions. They asked me: "Why are you here?" "what do you want?". For me, this was an opportunity to recruit people for my interview. Richard Nelson describes the passive participation in Spradley's book *Participant Observation* by stating that:

The primary method of data collection throughout this study is based on observation, but observation of a special nature. This is not "participant observation" in the sense that most anthropologists have used the term. It involves much more than living in a community and participating in its daily life only to the extent that one is always there to watch what is going on. This kind of observation without actually becoming involved as a part of the activity or interaction might be termed passive participation (Spradley 1980, 60).

During other occasions like marriage ceremonies, eid celebrations, and other festive programs, my position as a researcher changed from a passive participant to an active participant. On these occasions, the people I was studying sometimes invited me to take part in the celebrations, and sometimes I went to these events uninvited. This provided me with the opportunity to observe the people while I was also part of the event. Spradley defines an active participant as a researcher who tries to imitate what those around him do, not just to obtain acceptability but also to gain insight into the social norms related to behavior more thoroughly. Active participation starts with observations, and as information about what people do develops, the ethnographer attempts to master similar behavior. Many researchers will discover places in their studies where active participation is possible, and even minimal application of this method could lead to deeper insight (Spradley 1980, 61).

Participant observations, as a critical and necessary anthropological method, have proved instrumental in my ethnographic research (Agar 1980; Sanjek 1990). Participating in celebrations through dancing with my potential interlocutors or sometimes being asked to give advice on relationships and love gave me access to how they feel about love and romantic love. Sometimes, these things happen before I get the chance to sit and have an interview with them. Most of the people I interviewed were people I met either during my visits to public events where I assumed the position of an active participant or in private sessions where my position changed to the passive participant. I developed familiarity with my interlocutors through participant observation. Later, people invited me to their houses for interviews, and sometimes, too, right after an event, I got the chance to interact with people. This is where I used my phone to record some instructed or unplanned interviews. At times, right after meeting with my interlocutor, I had to find a place where I could sit and record or write down all my observations for future use. The act of gathering notes from the field and sometimes through my partial participation in events was one of the methods I used.

Field notes are an extremely useful tool that allows us to capture and arrange the information we have gathered. They are particularly beneficial after observing cultural and traditional behaviors or practices and occurrences over a span of time and/or in multiple situations (Sanjek 1990, 57). More on field notes as a method of my research will be explained in detail in subsequent sections. Generally, Participant observation "provides researchers possibilities to obtain concrete information about ways of life that are often 'hidden' beyond an outsider's sight" (Reeves et al. 2008, 513). In fact, in terms of perspective and knowledge, I believe that my participant observation trips were just as essential as the in-depth interviews I performed.

It is important to note that as I was doing the participant observation, I tried as much as possible to control my level of participation. There is a risk of falling into what many sociologists refer to as "Pure Participation" (Adler and Adler 1994), as I see myself in most instances as an insider. Bernard makes the critical distinction between participant observation and pure observation and involvement. This aims to isolate the researcher as much as possible from the activities and behaviors so that they cannot affect them. There are several instances of pure observation being used in social science research. These involve instances in which researchers record ordinary interactions or behavior for subsequent examination or instances in which researchers view some form of activity via a single direction (Bernard 2006, 347). Pure participation is frequently defined as "becoming the phenomenon" and "going native" (Jorgensen 1989, 102).

"Going native" is whereby an ethnographer abandons the identification of a researcher and embraces the persona of an active participant in the community, is often connected with an absence of critical focus and frequently leads to the researcher's incapacity of making available his/her findings. In the case of the study, in order not to fall into the position of pure participation, which could eventually lead to going native, I had my small notebook with which I took notes of my observations. But then I had to be careful with that at times because, as a researcher, I didn't want to draw too much attention to myself or in order to avoid making individuals appear to be under investigation, as DeWalt and DeWalt advised, "from time to time writing down notes openly may act as an indicator to people that research is happening during unstructured encounters" (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011, 164).

3.4. Conducting in-depth Interview

Interviews are frequently employed to collect data from those participating in research. According to the author Bruce L. Berg, there are three sorts of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Berg 2009, 105). Berg additionally describes conducting an interview as "a dialogue that serves a goal" (Berg 2009, 101). There are numerous components to an interview, and while there certainly is no one perfect way of carrying out one, many researchers would concur that the process is a mix of a technique and a talent that requires time to develop. According to research, "catharsis, self-acknowledgment, sense of purpose, awareness of oneself, self-determination, recuperation, and offering a voice for the marginalized" are all "unanticipated advantages" of interviews (Hutchinson, Wilson, and Wilson 1994, 161).

The initial phase of the research's methodology comprised fifteen (15) unstructured face-to-face interviews. I went with the unstructured method at this stage because unstructured interviews are distinguished by their adaptability and the availability of an informal atmosphere. There is no predefined list of inquiries or questions, and the interviewer and interlocutor's discourse remains flexible and inquisitive. I also allow the dialogue to run without interruption so that I will explore anything that comes up throughout the course of the interview. Also, it is important to note that during this stage of the study, I had no idea ahead of time which questions to ask or which to reject. I was seeking to build an "interview guide"-- a collection of pertinent and significant questions that would aid me in concentrating on later face-to-face interviews --through the semi-structured interviewing approach. The second phase was when I prepared some questions to help me conduct the second part of my semi-structured interviews. I went with the semi-structured method at this stage because it offered me the freedom to explore deeper and ask additional inquiries depending on the interlocutor's replies. It additionally enabled me to establish a more spontaneous, natural, and conversational pace while continuing to discuss important themes.

I conducted ten (10) more semi-structured interviews, which made it a total of twenty-five (25) of both semi-structured and unstructured interviews. I ended up using only fifteen (15) of the twenty-five (25) interviews for my analytical purposes because some

of the interviews were not complete due to family and religious concerns. A broad explanation of why I conducted the interviews in person is now required. Why was this chosen as the major research method? When a researcher is looking for details regarding an individual's private life--when the study results of a specific study task are to be the highly subjective firsthand descriptions of a group of people's private and intimate lives (in this case, their sexual/romantic lives) -- there is really no more effective research method than an interview. The explanations for this can be discovered in the social norms associated with the term "interview." I chose to conduct an interview because this is part of the qualitative research method that entails submerging oneself in a specific societal and cultural milieu in order to obtain a thorough grasp of the individuals, their actions, and their opinions. It helped me to have conversations with members of the wider community and society that I am studying. This allows me to obtain direct knowledge about their opinions, beliefs, experiences, and perspectives. These insider viewpoints are useful for establishing a more sophisticated knowledge of the group of people being examined. It allowed me to gather interlocutors' personal tales, stories, and narratives. These tales can contain rich, framework-specific data that helps to create a more comprehensive grasp of the historical or social setting in question.

In their book *Qualitative Research*, Howard Schwartz and Jerry Jacobs clearly indicate that:

There are certain kinds of personal information that are ordinarily unavailable to almost everyone. There are things that strangers do not have a right to know, while intimates (who do have this right) frequently cannot be told because of the practical consequences that may ensue from telling them. A husband would ordinarily not tell a stranger that, in addition to a wife, he had a mistress on the side, and certainly, he would not tell his wife. However, the "interviewer" constitutes a special kind of stranger in our society, one who can ask about many personal matters without being perceived as breaching another's right to privacy. This is especially true if a person perceives the interviewer to be someone who is socially unconnected to the information that he or she is seeking. In such cases, personal information can be given for two reasons. As an interviewer, he or she has the right to ask, and because the interviewer is a socially irrelevant person, the interviewee does not face the personal consequences of telling this information to a significant other. As a result, the interviewer, at least in some contexts, can ask almost anything and, in turn, can be told almost anything he or she wants to know.

Face-to-face interviewing would, therefore, seem to be the perfect medium to use if one hoped to elicit personal accounts. It allows access to private information and gives the researcher some nominal control over the kind and amount of information he gets (Schwartz and Jacobs 1979, 63).

After doing the initial round of face-to-face interviews, during which I used a phone recorder, I transcribed all of these conversations. Besides, I was able to do some basic data coding and classifying. For the time being, suffice it to say that the interviews were organized around prevailing emotional topics. Considering it is an adaptable approach, thematic analysis was used to analyze the data. It is a particularly beneficial form of evaluation for studies targeting understudied areas or issues that lack participants' perspectives (Braun and Clarke 2006, 88). Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke's theme analysis standards were adhered to for the analysis of data. The six processes for analyzing are as follows: acquainting oneself with the data, developing the very first codes, looking for concepts and themes, analyzing themes, describing and labeling themes, and presenting the report (Braun and Clarke 2006, 93).

Prior to data analysis, the fifteen (15) audio recordings of both the semi-structured and unstructured interviews and sessions were meticulously listened to and transcribed. The notes were read several times to become acquainted with the data's substance. After gaining an adequate routine, both scripts were read extremely energetically and meticulously for data coding. During the first coding operation, a large number of codes were generated, which were then re-evaluated, and codes displaying the same idea or similar information were grouped together to form primary topics and themes. Data on each topic has been reanalyzed using sociologist Michael Patton's guidelines to guarantee that key themes are internally homogeneous and outwardly diverse. As a consequence, related topics within each topic emerged (Patton 1990, 144). The substance of the aggregated codes in each theme and sub-theme was read through and reconsidered to evaluate and enhance themes and sub-themes, and required improvements and changes were made. Finally, the primary themes and sub-themes were identified succinctly and clearly based on their substance.

I also use storytelling and narrative analysis to report my findings. Researchers may collect substantial, private, qualitative information through narratives and stories.

Storytelling and narrative analysis serve numerous purposes within any particular civilization and cultural context, and these activities could vary in both written and oral communities and cultures. In societies that are advanced in proficiency and reading, tales or stories are frequently read from or related to a piece of writing. There is no recorded material to learn from in oral traditions; therefore, recollection and memory act as the repository for these narratives for retelling: "Of all oral genres of literature, storytelling possesses the closest and most obvious and direct connection to recollection and memory" (Ong 1982, 12). Walter Ong points out that "Oral story is not much focused on precisely ordered analogy, which becomes an objective of the cognitive abilities held by proficiency" (Ong 1982, 19).

In the words of Tina Koch, "Tales may be rehabilitative.... narratives can influence public policy.... stories can enable transformation in institutions.... stories can empower underprivileged people to have a voice" (Koch 1998, 1183). Narratives are tales that consist of events, happenings, or occurrences, and they may be beneficial instruments for comprehending cultural backgrounds, social interactions, and individual opinions in a given setting. The methodical gathering and interpretation of ethnographic stories are used to acquire knowledge regarding the cultural and social conditions under investigation. Ethnographic narrative analysis is especially effective for studying how members of a cultural or social community develop and communicate their lived experiences and perspectives via storytelling. It is a useful instrument for recording real-life experiences as well as the significance that people attribute to those experiences in their unique situations.

3.5. Collecting Field Notes

Field notes are extensive, methodical, documented, or recorded reports of researchers' inquiries, experiences, and encounters throughout ethnographic or similar research. Notes such as these are crucial aspects of the procedure for research for a number of reasons. Field notes are the most common way for researchers to capture what they see in the field during research. People's conduct, relationships, physical settings, and cultural customs are examples of details that may be observed. This is well observed by Robin Smith and Sara Delamont when they said:

Ethnographic field notes are notes produced by an observer while doing participant observation, fieldwork, or ethnography. They are frequently written in person when human interaction and action are taking place. These are the fundamental facts that ethnography generates, which are then enlarged, enhanced, and analyzed by the one conducting the study. The person who is observing notes what they see, hear, taste, smell, and touch. Field notes are the raw facts of ethnography, and they are interpreted and modified as they are placed into a sequence of frameworks that are increasingly removed from the circumstances of the field site. The frameworks obtained from the literature, concept, theory, and early evaluations of data are integrated into the research efforts of ethnographers on other writing projects, including dissertations and the production of articles, monographs, and confessional or autobiographical works (Smith and Delamont 2019, 12-13).

Researchers construct a complete and extensive dataset by documenting these facts. They may include verbatim quotes, explanations, and other material necessary for comprehending the setting and the viewpoints of the participants. The field notes can then be analyzed by researchers to create thoughts that reinforce their study conclusions. John Van Maanen also makes an excellent point concerning field notes. He said,

Fieldnotes are gnomonic, brief reproductions of occurrences, discoveries, and dialogues that occurred in the field. They are written long after the event as unclear notes to oneself and reflect only one of several degrees of textualization triggered by memory. To say the least, it is difficult to untangle the interpretative techniques at work when one advances between layers...It's no surprise that field notes are considered the "secret papers" of social science (Van Maanen 1988, 223-224).

In its initial form, creating field notes appears to be a simple task. Explore a study location, observe what takes place, and then record it. However, this basic statement poses a significant concern: what precisely does the researcher opt to underline while putting up written notes? Actions taken at this point in the study phase might have a significant influence on the end result of the ethnographic result. There are three operational concerns that frequently influence the path of note-taking. In the beginning, an observer may be allowed to take notes while out in the field conducting research. Numerous fieldwork manuals recommend this approach (Lofland and Lofland 1984; Schatzman and Strauss 1973; Emerson et al. 1995; Goffman 1989). Whenever the researcher comes back at the close of the day to write comprehensive notes, these early notes usually create a framework. Furthermore, the scope

of ethnographic research tends to decrease over time (Spradley 1980; Hammersley and Atkinson 1983), which certainly influences what the researcher decides to report. Finally, the idea of an audience may impact note-taking (Emerson et al. 1995, 86). Nevertheless, under these general restrictions, an ethnographer must still select what should be highlighted or noted.

Taking field notes assisted me in identifying trends, concepts, and interconnections among the information collected, which can aid in establishing a thorough and nuanced picture of the studied environment. It also gave me a place to ponder on their fieldwork observations, concepts, and emotions. This introspective approach can assist researchers in better understanding their personal prejudices and assumptions, which is critical for preserving empirical integrity. The field notes enabled me to adjust to shifting conditions in the field. If new subjects or domains of curiosity develop, the notes can be updated to reflect the changing study concentration. Field notes proved quite useful for me in keeping track of developments over time and doing comparison analyses between various periods of the research. There is no doubt that ethnographers, on the other hand, were already conscious of the difficulties associated with recording their observations and recording the data they collect (Sanjek 1990; Walford 2009b, 58). When participants recognize that they are being monitored and studied or that field notes are being collected, their conduct changes. They feel uncomfortable or alter their activities, which might have an impact on the reliability of the observations. During the fieldwork, I occasionally come across highly sensitive or private material. As a result, selecting what to capture and what to leave out of field notes while preserving moral obligations became problematic. Furthermore, due to the fact that I am a member of the community, preserving impartiality and limiting my own prejudices is a constant issue. Finally, striking an appropriate equilibrium between gathering sufficient information for a thorough evaluation and being able to handle and interpret that data became highly difficult for me.

3.6. Close Ethnographer: Social Position in the Fieldwork

There are different critical issues that an ethnographer might be challenged with during the fieldwork. These are the positions of the ethnographer with the question of gender, age, class, ethnicity, religion, and ideology. In the context of the positionality of the

ethnographer, anthropologist Sidney W. Mintz argued that "The ethnographer attempts to establish his or her position among the source of information and the reader" (Mintz 1979, 23) over the span of the study of ethnography. It is an unavoidable fact of the study. The field researcher adopts a topic stance, deliberately or inadvertently, and engages with participants who have differing topic perspectives during the investigation. As a result, the ethnographic endeavor becomes an extremely fluid inter-subjective engagement. Consequently, the "loci through which we connect with or set aside from those whom we observe are numerous and in transition" (Narayan 1993, 672). There is nothing permanent - ethnographic contact is marked by dynamic, tacit, nuanced bargaining and fluidity, whether the researcher is cognizant or oblivious of these difficulties.

According to Adrianna Kezer and Jaime Lester, "comparable to post-structural concepts of subjective nature, positionality concept argues people occupy a stance that influences how they create the world" (Kezer and Lester 2010, 167). As a result, "the standpoint of a person is determined by various personalities (such as ethnic background, sexual orientation, and status) that concurrently generate and strengthen personal positions" (Kezer and Lester 2010, 169). Thus, personal stance implies that the ethnographer creates, sees, examines, and analyzes the social setting via publicly obtained principles and beliefs accumulated as a result of their racial or ethnic background, age, training, faith, sexuality, goal, socioeconomic status, or political opinions, rather than by means of innate aims on his or her side.

In addition, Sarah Moser contends that your position is important in the establishment and development of the entire ethnographic project: "Occupying specific roles as well as being conscious of them might, for instance, urge researchers to embark on tasks that will put them at the forefront to serve as an insider" (Moser 2008, 386). In fact, positionality influences what ethnographic topic the researcher selects and why. As a result, positionality emphasizes the goals and intent of ethnographic development, as well as its planned influence and implications on the social environment. Recognizing this is critical because the researcher is aware of his or her objectives, constraints, and expected outcomes; this aids in the production of subtle, clean, practical, and carefully crafted and documented ethnographic work.

In my work, I chose to go with the positionality of “close ethnographer” or what Crystal T. Laura referred to as “Intimate Inquiry.” Intimate inquiry is based upon the premise that the quickest method to gain access to the “fact,” that is, the true picture that someone establishes, is to explore deeply into the origin of the dilemma—to ask the most fundamental queries and pay particular attention to what the individual believes he or she is up to—and to translate (to the best of our aptitude) what these interpretations convey to us in relation to the individual's context. Simultaneously, “intimate” alludes to the private and sentimental parts of life that occur on the “inside” (Laura 2016, 217). Never to be confused with the remote and intrusive stereotype regarding the “self as instrument” of the study, “intimate” here refers to the care, devotion, and subjective desire to perform that propels active and meaningful involvement in all activity.

Because of the emotion involved in this type of research, the intimate inquirer close ethnographer assumes that the method and output of his or her studies have actual effects on the daily existence of three-dimensional human individuals, including the researcher, rather than for imaginary “others” elsewhere far away. Bell Hooks describes that eloquently,

In large and small ways, we make choices based on a belief that honesty, openness, and personal integrity need to be expressed in public and private decisions...[and] we learn to value loyalty and a commitment to sustained bonds over material advancement. While careers and making money remain important agendas, they never take precedence over valuing and nurturing human life and well-being (Hooks 2000, 88).

As the phrase implies, the intimate inquiry is inevitably private, that is, intimate, person-focused, and perspective-based, an essential attribute that attracts numerous academics into its web regardless of active demands for disconnected research that strengthens conventional ideas of real academic study. This method of intimate inquiry helped me break the barrier of trust and reliability between my interlocutors. In the beginning, there was enormous hesitation in opening up about their romantic life. But as I created a certain kind of connection through the intimate inquiry method, people were comfortable sharing their love experience with me. I remember one of my visits to couples that I usually do. There were couples, Zainab and Faruk, with their little

two-year-old daughter Mimi, they called her. They told me how happy they've been since the time I started interacting with them. 35 years-old Zainab said to me:

Talking to us about romantic love and love has made us realize that we have taken a lot of things for granted. Don't get me wrong. We get along very well. We have a child, and we have been married for five years. There are some petty things about our intimacy that we think we are too old to do. But those are what make the marriage exciting and fun.²⁰

They are one of the most open couples I have interviewed. But this openness was not in a vacuum; it was a price of how I made them feel about the work I was doing. Sometimes, when people talk to them during the interviews, they become emotional, and so do I. It comes from a genuine place of care, concern, and the desire to give them a voice, even if it comes in the form of an internal love confession to couples or individuals. The connection I had with Faruk and his wife cuts across the whole interview I conducted. That is because of the intimate inquiry approach I used.

Intimate inquiry is centered around three actions: witnessing, engaging, and laboring on behalf of the people whose lives we hope to alter via our research work (Laura 2016, 219). Beth Brant tells us that "who we are is inscribed on our bodies, our hearts, and our souls" and that we all want to be recognized and appreciated. Being noticed and accepted, as well as having our history confirmed—being seen for "what has been and what is to be" (Brant 1994, 74). As a demonstration of love, witnessing is paying attention to individuals, observing, and noting what they believe is important. Worries and wishes are anchored in the past and future, and experiences become woven into the web of time and space. To bear testimony is to confirm the truth of narratives and to safeguard their positions in the wider community. According to Becky Ropers-Huilman, "We are functioning as eyewitnesses when we get involved in discovering and gaining knowledge about others, participate within conceptions of reality, and express what we have experienced to others" (Ropers-Huilman 1999, 23). Witnessing, according to Ropers-Huilman, is not the same as monitoring people as a research approach.

²⁰ Interview with Zainab, 2022.

In most of my interviews about romantic love, I announce my presence by just sitting and witnessing how people express their romantic experiences. This has proven to be very effective because, as a researcher, I got the chance to pick up their body language, the expression on their face, and the happiness of relishing those memories. We are implicated in proactive and partially generating significance regarding those experiences as we demonstrate our affection for others by watching their everyday lives, bringing us up in proximity to the phenomena of communal engagement. Although it is hard to truly comprehend or fathom other people or their experiences, the process of witnessing is an opportunity to pay attention to detail, think, study real people's lives, and seek justifications for what others have experienced. We achieve this by paying close attention to the specific settings in which our people attempt to make associations with everything. We pay close attention and give our full attention to vital observations on the difficult issues of culpability and accountability. Dori Laud advises that “the absence of an empathic listener, or more radically the absence of an addressable other, an ‘other’ who can hear the anguish...and thus affirm and recognize their realness, annihilates the story” (Laud 1991, 68). Listening is essential for the development and joint ownership of people's realities and truths, according to Laud, and I agree with this idea. The duty to engage in the discourse, however, is crucial to this method of intimate inquiry.

Another method of intimate inquiry is to engage. Engaging draws our attention to the presenting of challenges and brings to light inconsistencies that are characteristic of all human encounters. To engage is to bring people together in purposeful conversation about the every day, the taken-for-granted, the murmured, and the whispered. As we interact, we openly acknowledge what we have seen and rely on numerous perspectives, which include the inquirer's own, to gain an improved and intricate comprehension of people's difficulties. We hope to create an atmosphere for personal development by interacting (Laura 2016, 219). According to Patti Lather, this entails making room for “analyzing ideas about the causes of powerlessness, recognizing systemic oppressive forces, and acting both individually and collectively to change the conditions of our lives” (Lather 1991, 4). Certainly, giving individuals a chance to talk for themselves and with others might not eventually result in them doing so, but any researcher who watches and interacts in the lives of loved ones is obligated to take a step forward. I have given my interlocutors the opportunity to talk about the experience

and expression of romantic love, but I sometimes engage them by chipping in some questions to help them elaborate themselves well.

Finally, the last component of intimate inquiry is laboring. Writing as evidence is an important aspect of completing this duty. The story provides an avenue by means of which we learn about other individuals and, by extension, ourselves; it mirrors not just a faraway stranger but also the interpersonal relationships in our immediate surroundings (Laura 2016, 220). The desire to write lives out of love is a type of receptivity that incorporates compassion and obligation to reflect profoundly about the world, which Megan Boler refers to as "testimonial reading" (Boler 1999, 157). It is a labor of love to create a language that could encourage this kind of thoughtfulness and contemplation. Laboring includes not just the mental effort of writing but also the actual effort of distributing the resources at your disposal. This is what I did throughout the period of interviewing. I had to sit and transcribe everything I picked from participant observation, interviews, and the moment of intimate inquiry. Ultimately, the final project is meant to be made available for people to learn about other people's feelings in diverse places and spaces.

This chapter encapsulates the methods I employed throughout my fieldwork, and it will be used for further discussions in the next and final chapters to come. Being able to get closer to and intimate with my interlocutors gave me a wider insight into how the Zongo communities operate and how people in Zongo internalize different kinds of emotions, including romantic love. In the chapters that follow, I will analyze and discuss my findings on how people in Zongo express their romantic feelings in different forms and ways.

CHAPTER IV

AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF INTIMATE RELATION: LOVE AND ROMANTIC LOVE

4.1. Introduction

The sociological and anthropological importance of studying emotions is that they explore how these emotions are expressed and experienced in everyday life. This is important in underlining the extent to which expressions of these emotions impact the dynamics of society, concentrating on the manner through which individuals exhibit (or choose to exhibit) a certain emotional behavior determined by the cultural, religious, and historical circumstances under which they function. The research on the nature of emotions - in this case, romantic love - among humans pays emphasis to the cultural and interactional foundations of the emotion under study. The environment in which these feelings are taught and experienced frames emotions and emotional sets (Turner and Stets 2005, 18).

Sociologist Thomas J. Scheff contends that human characters function in a continual condition of self-feeling, relying on the American sociologist Charles Horton Cooley's concept of the looking-glass self. As individuals in society engage face-to-face, they have the capacity to adopt the position of the other and strive to perceive themselves as other people perceive them (Scheff 2000, 87). Thus, emotions like love, feelings of shame, and pride are inextricably linked to the social self - our desire to perceive ourselves as other people perceive us and to attach emotional aspects to the manner in which we perceive ourselves relative to how we believe others view us. According to Stephanie A. Shields, the emotional experience of daily existence includes the incredibly genuine sensation of compassion, intimate connection, suffering, grieving, and celebrating. All need the individual to undertake an introspective, emotional shift onto the self and attribute particular significance to an encounter pattern or consequence (Shields 2002, 150). An understanding of the sociology and

anthropology of emotion urges individuals to pay more attention to the degree to which an individual's emotional existence is formed and perpetuated in a relational and social environment.

In that regard, the study of the expression of love and romantic love in minority communities like Zongo is extremely important to the field of sociology and anthropology of emotions. Mostly, the study of a group or a nation as a whole takes more precedence than zeroing in on particular subsets of that group or nation. It is important to give more space to studies like these, which narrow on particular communities' tribal, religious, and cultural intricacies and how individuals within such communities overcome collective emotional and physical challenges. Because various tribes in communities like Zongo frequently have different cultural standards and behaviors about romantic love. Researching these manifestations can give comprehension of the diverse ways in which romantic love is perceived and exhibited, helping to a more complete knowledge of human emotion. Romantic relationships can arise beyond tribal borders when various tribes cohabit as minority populations. Studies like this are capable of helping us comprehend the complexities that surround these intertribal interactions and relationships, such as how love crosses cultural and tribal barriers and the difficulties that couples from diverse backgrounds confront. Romantic relationships are an important part of a person's being and may have a substantial influence on a person's sense of belonging in a community like Zongo. The study of romantic love expression can indicate how these connections and relationships impact people's sense of belonging and their connection to both their own tribe and the greater minority group as a whole.

From an academic perspective, this study gives essential knowledge regarding the various manners in which romantic love is expressed and experienced among tribal and ethnic communities. This will foster a better awareness of cultural variety and advance cross-cultural knowledge within the sub-disciplines of sociology and anthropology of emotions. This research frequently necessitates cooperation between sociology and anthropology, emphasizing the multidisciplinary aspect of studying emotions in diversified groups of people. It invites academics to rely on both domains in order to develop a holistic understanding of emotional experiences. The research on the intersectionality of elements of identities, such as affiliation to a tribe, ethnic

background, religion, and romantic preference, facilitates an examination of the intersectionality of tribal love among various tribes. This helps to a more comprehensive understanding of how different aspects of identity connect. There is frequent discovery of indications in regard to cultural interchange and hybridity in love interactions between tribes. This notion is critical in the anthropology of emotion because it demonstrates how cultural interactions and adaptations impact feelings. In sociology, comprehending the function of romantic love in social integration and inclusion is critical. It may also help in the formation of ideas and notions about the societal interactions of minority populations and the emotional implications of belonging.

At this juncture, we need to understand that the word "love" may signify a variety of things; what someone is referring to when employing it is sometimes ambiguous. As a result, in order to clearly comprehend the content of the love concept, we need to focus our attention on the context of interactions. It could refer to love for God, parental affection toward children, or a kid's affection for parents, among other things. Love additionally is frequently used as a euphemism for sexual relations. So, at some time in history, individuals coined the term "romantic love" to describe a unique set of feelings, thought processes, and conducts. They mistook that for real love. Was that, indeed, correct? Humans struggled for ages and throughout their own lives to find a solution to the problem concerning what honest and genuine love is. Every day, individuals want real love, and cinematic figures are no exception. Researchers from different fields also attempt to articulate love and disagree with one another (Fisher 1992, 223).

Considering love may imply a number of distinct things, people frequently add the term romantic to differentiate the form of love that contains an element of sexuality from every other form of love. In the entire history of humanity and in current societies across the world, the concept of romantic love has undergone many different interpretations (Coontz 2007, 13). The goal of this thesis is to decipher its many interpretations and represent the numerous romantic characteristics in different cultural settings. The term romantic love is commonly employed to differentiate heterosexual love among men and women from various other sorts of love such as friendship, conjugal, maternal, and numerous other forms of intimate relationship

sentiments. A romantic connection, in this definition, is simply an attachment involving a man and a woman that implies a sexual attraction and desire.

Aside from its purely suggestive role, the concept of romantic love carries a prolonged history of defining a particular feeling and a variety of romantic sensations shared by men and women. Romantic love is differentiated from intercourse and sexual devotion in this sense, despite having been distantly tied to fundamental sexual drive. In broad terms, the term romantic has a particular connotation of a romanticized and sublimed vision of truth. In this context, the word romantic refers to a non-routine interpretation of real-life occurrences and sentiments, such as in a fairy tale, a poem, a work of literature, or a film (Dion and Dion 1988, 271). Romantic refers to a point elevating from a normal and everyday routine of life as opposed to something earthly. In this view, romantic love is not required to be intense; it may simply be loving. The extent of affection or attachment may be determined by a lover's disposition as opposed to the person whom they desire. Romantic love, on the other hand, is an erotic sense of attraction and connection to an individual of a different gender, marked by visualization and appreciation of this individual and connection (Dion and Dion 1988, 281). This refers to love in the sense of intimacy, a romantic tale, a work of literature, or any other romanticized picture of desire. It represents an inspiring, devoted, or loving sexual desire conveyed through a variety of acts, sensations, and thoughts that demonstrate its exquisite character. In this thesis, the notion of romantic love is addressed in a more precise sense rather than simply as a passionate bond of affection.

That level of emotion, in my opinion, is not synonymous with romantic love but rather a volatile lover's state. They become a universal emblem of romantic love after being often featured in fiction and films. A serene, compassionate lover, on the other hand, maybe equally romantic but more reserved than heated, furious lovers. To be completely unambiguous, whenever I say romantic love in the framework of my thesis, I truly imply romantic love with regard to its romanticized and acknowledged form. Throughout numerous cultures and societies, love has proven to be a fundamental component of the evolution of humanity. Romantic love has been extensively studied for ages by authors, intellectuals, creative people, and singers who have defined its varied elements and disclosed numerous sensations, sentiments, and actions associated with this form of love. From ancient times through the present

period, numerous thinkers, scholars of history, writers of fiction, artists, media professionals, sociologists, and various other scholars have composed works on love.

The 20th century saw the beginning of deliberate attempts by social scientists to grasp the idea of romantic love. From the 1950s through the 1990s, academics from several nations began to investigate the notion of love from biological and cultural viewpoints (Wagoner 1999, 51). Numerous works provided insight into our knowledge of romantic love as a cultural occurrence; historians, authors, anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists significantly broadened the image of love's cross-cultural variety throughout the world. In the past few decades, the concept has evolved into an extremely prominent area of academic research and scientific inquiry. Historians and theorists, authors and literary academics, anthropologists, and sociologists of the 20th century have substantially increased our knowledge of love and characterized its characteristic manifestations, rituals, and sentiments. As a result, this thesis thoroughly explores how cultures influence social norms, conventions, and customs, in addition to the relationship between love, sex, and marriage, as well as how individuals perceive and express love.

This chapter demonstrates that love is a universal feeling shared by the vast majority of individuals throughout history. Nevertheless, as culture has a significant effect on individuals' notions of love and the manner in which they experience, perceive, and act in romantic relationships, love manifests itself in a variety of ways. Here, we will discuss how culture and other institutions within a given context influence the perception and experience of romantic love. We will also see the manifestation of romantic love from the testimonies of the interlocutors as they share their various experiences with regard to this intense feeling and how they conceptualize it within their own space and place.

Research approaches that yield diverse and comprehensive insights are essential in the quest for a more comprehensive understanding of intricate social interactions. This chapter digs into the wealth of information gathered through interviews, participant observation, field notes, and close ethnography. These strategies, when combined, provide a holistic way to integrate oneself into the lives, experiences, and cultures of those participating in the study. The pages that follow will provide a thorough

examination of the study outcomes and findings that have resulted from these rigorously planned and implemented methodologies. Interviews allowed me to interact with individuals' voices and narratives, revealing personal narratives, stories, and opinions. Participant observation transported me into the social arena, where personal experiences are documented in real-time via field notes.

Finally, close ethnography allowed me to have a better knowledge of the cultural framework in which these stories, narratives, and experiences take place. When used in unison, these methodological pillars give a multidimensional and integrative approach to the study of human emotions (in this case, romantic love), cultural processes, and social interactions. The findings provided here will throw light on the wealth of data that can be accessed using these approaches, providing a window into the interlocutors' actual experiences and the insights garnered from their narratives and stories.

4.2. Hausa Language as a Medium of Expressing Romantic Love

Zongo, being the amalgamation of different tribal groups with different languages, necessitated the adoption of the Hausa language to facilitate communication within such settings. Hausa is seen as both an ethnic and contact language. There are ethnic groups that refer to themselves as Hausa and numerous others understand them to be such. Hausa also serves as the name of the indigenous language (Adamu 2004, 1). Hausa is the language of communication in northern Nigeria and some portions of southern Nigeria; speakers are either Hausa tribal group members or speak it as a second or an additional language. This also became the case in Zongos in Ghana after years of migration of the Hausa people from Nigeria to Ghana. Because of the long-standing connection that exists between the ethnic groups in terms of belief systems (Islam), inter-marriages, as well as other interactions with others, which has caused some ethnic and tribal groups in Zongos to lose their first language, the majority of ethnic groups in Zongo use Hausa as their first language. So, Hausa has become a Lingua Franca for settlers in the Zongos.

Many people in Zongo make use of their mother tongue as a second language since they are unable to express themselves successfully in particular situations. Many of

the other languages in Zongo are losing their practical significance due to increasing demand for Hausa, whilst English, which is the official medium of communication throughout the nation, is gradually replacing native languages in other parts of Ghana (Adamu 2004, 17). Because of this social and linguistic scenario, Hausa is a language of daily interactions everywhere in Zongo, as well as an intermediary for selected specific sectors throughout the country. The Hausa ethnic language dominates several commercial operations, such as currency exchange, farmed animal business, truck transportation, and the sale of used vehicles. In Zongo, the Hausa dialect is also considered the language of the Muslim population. This association continues along with several other markers of Hausa community membership, such as clothes, expression of feelings, especially love, marriage, and even the sorts of films performed when I asked 65-year-old Jabiru Ahmed (popularly known as Baba) – who is a Gonja himself - about the influence of the Hausa language in the everyday life of a Zongo person.

He told me that nowadays, it's hard to find a person who does not speak the Hausa language. It has dominated all aspects of our lives. I can communicate with you, points at me, because of the Hausa language. Without it would have been extremely hard to speak with you. Even though he continues, I still speak my mother tongue. Some group of children passed by us, greeting us in Hausa; he pointed to them and said children nowadays cannot speak in their mother tongues. At this point, I did not know whether he was proud of the Hausa language or just lamenting its dominance. So, I had to free my mind of those thoughts. I went on to ask him whether the Hausa language is a destruction to the Zongo setting. No, he quickly responded. And he continues:

I am grateful for the Hausa language. It gives us a different identity apart from our native identity. It is because of the Hausa language that I got to marry my wife. Imagine a Gonja man married to a Dagomba woman; how could this happen? Without the Hausa language, ha? We can express ourselves to each other more easily in the Hausa language than in our own mother tongue. There is no competition with the Hausa language because the people who settled here earlier were Hausa-speaking people. Now, we eat like them, wear like them, love like them, and speak Hausa as well, Alhamdulillah.²¹

²¹ Interview with Baba, 2022.

This sentiment was echoed when I visited a porridge seller, 32-year-old Habiba Kassim; her tribe is Mossi.²² I frequent her place because porridge is a standard food for breakfast, especially within the Zongos. Going there also gave me a chance to interact with her, and after some time, she began to refer to me as Borga (used to refer to someone from abroad). The porridge is referred to as *Hausa kooko* (Hausa porridge). It is popular with Zongos across Ghana, and the popularity goes beyond the Zongos. Even the affluent areas in Ghana have Hausa *Kooko* joints, which people patronize for their breakfast. Habiba's place is popular and can be very congested, so sometimes it is hard for her to sit. She is always on her feet serving her customers. She starts selling very early in the morning because many people buy the *Kooko* when going to work. But when the place was quiet around 11 o'clock in the morning, she narrated:

People automatically assume that I am a Hausa person by tribe just for the mere fact that I sell *Hausa kooko*. Some call me *Amarya*²³ because of how I dress with my veil. I am not Hausa by tribe, but I speak the language, and it has also provided me with a job. I learned how to cook this porridge from my mother, who herself does not speak the language as much as I do. People started speaking Hausa to me, and they did not even know whether I spoke it or not. The language is our standard language here. It connects us easily.²⁴

Hamdiya Bala is a 27-year-old schoolteacher who teaches children 7-15 years old English language at Hambariyya Islamic School in one of the Zongos I visited. She agreed for me to join her class on two or three occasions where I observed the students' reactions towards the English language. Hamdiya herself is a Hausa by tribe, and she does speak the Hausa language even though she told me, "I am not as fluent as I would have wished."²⁵ Her great-grandparents were among the first-generation Hausa people to have migrated to Ghana. Her students thought I was a new teacher when I attended on three separate occasions. They like their English lessons, but whenever they want to complain or ask for permission, they frequently speak Hausa instead of English. When I asked her about the importance of languages like the Hausa language, she stated:

²² Another tribe found in the Zongos.

²³ Means bride, but it is used mainly by people who do not live in Zongo and married women from Zongo.

²⁴ Interview with Habiba, 2022

²⁵ Interview with Hamdiya, 2023

Language itself is a treasure. Whatever language you learn, we serve a purpose for you as a human being. These children you hear are all from different backgrounds in terms of their tribes, but they all speak Hausa, and some of them even speak better than me. It is important for us to preserve the Hausa language. Of course, there is always space and opportunities to learn new languages, but the Hausa is a connector for us in Zongo. It brings us together. The language, I mean Hausa, is so strong in our various Zongos that it hides our differences and makes it easy to peacefully coexist with your neighbor.²⁶

Haruna Ali, who is 50 years old and a long-time BBQ seller referred to as “Rambo” by his customers, was always happy to see him because, by all means, I would buy some BBQ from him. He is one of the happiest and most conversational people I have had throughout my fieldwork. He is not a Hausa by tribe, but as the norm goes, he too speaks Hausa by virtue of living and selling in Zongo for a very long time. I started a conversation about the power of the Hausa language. He said: “In as much as I feel comfortable speaking Hausa to even my children, knowing that we are Kusasi,²⁷ I feel pained that my children cannot speak their mother tongue.”²⁸ I proceeded to ask him why. He continued: “If the Hausa language is going to prevent children from learning their mother tongue, then it is a problem.” He went on to say, “I agree that the circumstances here and the environment are making it hard for the new generations to stick to their mother tongue, but we, the elderly, are relaxed.”²⁹

The Hausa language is, without a doubt, the standard lingua franca as it was put across by both Habiba and Baba. It is easier to connect and navigate within the Zongo if one speaks the Hausa language. But it is also important to understand that acquiring a language comes with its nuance and culture. Many people in various Zongos speak Hausa as a language that connects and brings people living in these communities together, but the language also imposes its culture on the people as well. These can be seen in the way people dress, what they eat, and how they profess their emotions, including love, romance, and romantic love. But how do people communicate or express their love using this language?

²⁶ Interview with Hamdiya, 2023.

²⁷ Another tribe in Zongo.

²⁸ Interview with Haruna, 2022.

²⁹ Interview with Haruna, 2022.

Love is expressed differently in the Zongo communities than in societies elsewhere. It could be related to the Hausa literary term of *kunya*, which shapes people's attitudes. *Kunya* is a social phrase that communicates core Hausa cultural principles; the significance thereof is often determined by the circumstances surrounding it (Chamo 2011, 124). It is related to concepts including guilt, being shy, humility, bashfulness, and a feeling of appropriateness (Bargery 1951, 88). Due to the aforementioned cultural reservation, there has been a scarcity of writing by Hausa intellectuals on the critical examination of love in Hausa society.

The fundamental noun and verb comparable to the expression (love) is *so*. The phrase *so* is employed in a variety of contexts in Hausa. For example, *abin da ransa ya so* (what he wished), *in ya so komai ake yi a yi* (Let him do his worst!), *so yana ko ba ya so* (willy-nilly), *im muna so ba wata wuya* (if we want to, there is no problem), *wanda ya so ka da abinsa kai ya so* (if a person offers you anything, he likes you), *son kudi gare shi* (he is yearning for money), *ina son kudi* (I need some money). The examples above are various ways of using the phrase *so* which means love to express yourself in Hausa. However, in a romantic context, it is commonly used as *yana son ta* (he loves her). *Son ma so wani qoshin wahala* (Loving someone who loves a different person indicates you're in danger). Furthermore, love in Hausa has various analogs that are convertible in the framework of the affair, which is as follows: *So*, is that which is referred to as love. *Soyayya* is when a man and a woman have a common attraction toward each other. *Qauna* is affection, desire, and a favorable sensation toward someone. *Bege* means yearning, extended absence of an old companion, or missing as in the sense of belonging. *Sha'awa* means passion and desire (Abraham 1962, 91-95).

So, on the other hand, means that it is not employed to refer to people of similar sexes. For example, a guy cannot express his love by saying *ina sonka* (I love you) to his fellow, but he may say *ina qaunarka* (I like you). Consequently, sex is connected to *so* in Hausa when it is directed to parents, and someone might say *ina son uwata* (I love my mother) since one cannot engage in a sexual encounter with his mother. However, outside of this, there is a gender difference when it comes to *So*. Furthermore, Zongo traditions and customs forbid contact between persons of the opposing sex except indispensable, as evidenced by a Hausa proverb: *Mai wasa da maza karya* (she who toys with men is a bitch) (Bargery 1951, 98-100). Young people

in the Zongo community generally gather in a public location to play, although females and males play independently. Women employed song and physical expression to communicate their feelings to the one they love without breaching the boundaries of society. Some of the expressions used were *ran ban kwananmu* (the day that marked our departure) and *tafo yaro* (come young man). Below are two different forms of songs composed by a woman that portrays the longing for her loved one and, in the other one, saying goodbye to the person she loves.

Song 1

Tafo Yaro

Tafo yaro tafo maza!

Tafo yaro tafo maza!

Aradu bege zai kashe ni

Aradu bege zai kashe ni

Kadan ba ka zo ba zan mutu.

Wasa da wani ba ni iyawa

Kadan ban ganka ba zan shiga dawo

Kadan ba ka zo ba zan kashe kaina

Zan shaqe kaina da rawani.

Ba ni so ubana

Ba ni so uwata

Ban san kowa ba sai kai, mata

Kadan na ganka da safe

Bani kama hankalina.

Kan ka tafi yaqi

Da kai nake mafarki

Kan ka tafi yaqi

Bani qaunar kowa sai kai.

Translation

Come, young boy.

Come, young man, come quick!

Come, young man, come quick!

By thunder, longing will destroy me!

By thunder, longing will destroy me!
If you do not come, I will surely die.
Amuse me with another I can no longer
If I did not see you, I will run into the bush
If you do not come, I will kill myself
I will hang myself with my turban.
My father, I love no more.
My mother I love no more.
I love no one save you, as a woman
I cannot keep hold of myself.
Before you went off to war
It was only you that I dreamt
Before you want off to war
I love no one save you (Awde 1997, 39-41).

The song above expresses her need for a loved one and the void that his absence produces in her life. The words express an intense longing to be reunited with a loved one, highlighting the need or hope for their comeback. The song delves into previous recollections, expressing a yearning for times spent with a loved one. The expression depicts the emotional agony and sadness that occurs with separation, portraying the sense of incompleteness or grief that comes with the loved one's absence. The song stresses the intense desire for emotional, physical, or spiritual connection with a loved one.

Song 2

Ran ban kwananmu
Na tuna ran bankwana
A dandali gun wasanmu
Habibu dan makaranta...
Farin wata kal, kal, kal,
Farin wata kwana goma.
Habibu mun ban kwana
Kwana bakwai ban barci ba
Ina tunanin soyayya

Habibu dan makaranta...
An ba ni tuwo na ce a'a
An ba ni fura na ce a'a
An ba ni ruwa na ce a'a
Duba jikina na rame
Nai kwatakwal duk na bushe
Ina tunanin soyayya
Habibu dan makaranta...

Translation

The day of our farewell
I remember the day of our farewell
In the open space where we used to play,
Habibu, the schoolboy...
The moon was clear and bright,
Ten days old.
Habibu and I bade farewell to each other,
And for seven days, I have not slept,
I have been thinking of love,
Habibu, the schoolboy...
They gave me mash food to eat and said no,
They gave me gruel to eat, and I said no,
They gave me water to drink, and I said no.
See how thin I have become,
All skin and bone and all dried up,
Thinking of love,
Habibu, the schoolboy (Awde 1997, 41-42).

The second song above expresses the great pain and grief that accompany the loss of a loved one. It considers the sensation of loss and the agony of separation. It also invokes recollections of time spent together, stressing nostalgia for experiences that were shared and the desire to keep those recollections alive. In this situation, the song offers optimism for an eventual reunion, implying that the separation is not always everlasting and that love will persist regardless of the emotional divide and agony. In

that Hausa language and culture, these are normally the ways that love and affection - among other emotions - are expressed.

In addition, women's facial expressions include *Fara'a* (joy), *sakin fuska* (smiling), *annurin fuska* (relaxing a person's face), *murmushi* (relaxing a person's face), *fari* - a sensual expression displayed by women, generally by rolling the balls of their eyes to ensure that just the white part is exposed (Awde 1997, 44). On this issue, one of my interlocutors 40 years-old Aishatu Issa narrated:

The lady may perform *fari* from afar or when chatting to a guy; such facial gestures demonstrate the woman's approval of someone while establishing a feeling of jollity between the two. Women's *shan-kunu*, *kaure fuska*, *murtuke fuska*, and *turvune fuska* (all the words translate to frowning) expressions convey unpleasant emotions against someone.³⁰

Izabela Will uses instances from modern Hausa books in which the main heroine, an energetic, attractive lady, was coerced by her parents to get married to an elderly wealthy man to explain how facial expressions were utilized to indicate love or wrath. On every occasion that the lady encounters her soon-to-be husband, she attempts to demonstrate to him her dislike and disdain by employing a variety of expressions on her face, *fuskartar a kaure take tamau kamar wadda aka aika wa sakon mutuwa* (she grinned like someone informed her about of a death), *da ta fito fuska a murtake* (she emerged out with a grimace on her face) (Will 2009, 257).

One of my interlocutors, a 50-year-old Tanko Bawa, explained to me ways in which men express their affection towards the women they love. He narrated:

In a comparable manner in standard society, males show their love for women discreetly; a guy confesses his love for a female via an acquaintance or someone related to the girl. So, in standard Zongo society as a whole, both girls and boys show love discreetly, as stressed by a Hausa adage: *Soyayya qaunar zuci* (love is in the heart), which suggests that sentiments ought to be kept deep inside instead of being displayed. In truth, individuals do not talk when standing.³¹

³⁰ Interview with Aishatu, 2022

³¹ Interview with Tanko, 2022

Furthermore, as 46-year-old Hajia Barkisu, who is referred to as Malama, meaning a teacher who gives seminars on marriage underlines, exhibiting love and intense feelings are forbidden in Hausa society like the Zongos. She continues:

In Zongo culture, displaying passion and love is frowned upon, particularly in the eyes of the public. This limitation pertains to male-female relationships. Even married women are prohibited from touching their spouses in public (as well as in their own homes), not to mention not married or engaged ones. Tolerance and refraining actions, the concealment of identities, and modesty in open displays of attachment characterize family relationships.³²

In the following, she also narrated that:

In standard Zongo society, marriage was planned and arranged by families. Boys and girls did not have the opportunity to pick their mates throughout the 1970s and 1980s. As a result, the courting has not progressed. Previously, courting was seen as not forthright, and discussing love was regarded as a taboo *rashin kunya* (lack of manners or refinement). Because *kunya* stipulates those sentiments ought not to be communicated vocally, a public display of affection is not grounded in the Zongo narrative.³³

Nevertheless, Hausa's exposure to Islam motivated individuals to study Arab writings and books, and that impacted and launched modifications regarding their ideas and understanding of love. Arabs write poems that address their romantic partners, a genre of procedure the Hausa also embrace, but *kunya* causes them to withhold these poems from the girls they wrote for (Buba 2021, 1681).

By now, it is very clear that love represents a sense of emotion that influences and is influenced by thought processes and appears in particular conduct. There are other methods to show and express romantic love other than stating *ina sonka* (I love you), no matter how they are overstated. Individuals show their affection both directly and indirectly. Romantic phrases, soft sounds of the voice, cheerful gazes, and unique behaviors are straightforward and clear means of expressing love for someone you love. Because American popular culture emphasizes the value of vocal communication

³² Interview with Hajia Barkisu, 2022

³³ Interview with Hajia Barkisu, 2022

of affection for one another, Americans frequently convey their feelings to one another. "I love you" is a pretty common phrase for them to utter on a regular basis.

Nevertheless, individuals are not always required to be direct in their communications because certain things may be indirectly received and comprehended without the need for words. Activities such as offering something kind to a spouse are both subtle and hidden ways of expressing love. In most families in Zongo, for example, 47 years-old Dawuda AbdulMalik explained:

The vocal expressions of affection are kept for particular events. They are not obligated to express their emotions for one another openly since their emotions and feelings are widely recognized and acknowledged. People in Zongos do not believe it is necessary to show love openly since it might be perceived as extravagant, ostentatious, or excessively Western. However, they express their *soyyaya* (love) in subtle means. People communicate their affection in a roundabout way via performing. Romantic spouses can show their affection by telling a joke or listening to each other's issues in an empathetic way or by battling through difficulties and staying by one other's sides.³⁴

Subsequently, for people in Zongo and other cultures with comparable cultural norms, love is shown via acts. It may be necessary to pay attention more intently occasionally to detect it. The affection they feel is not little or unseen; rather, it is everywhere and recognized, which means there is no reason to show it off.

There are other methods to convey romantic love sentiments among both of these primary approaches—direct and indirect (Aron and Aron 1986). Beads or other presents, writing songs or other particular sorts of communicating, special glances and phrases, special motions and lovely physical contact, embracing and snuggling, or a request to have some quality time together could all serve as examples. Such could entail many displays of hospitality and assistance, as well as appearing courteous and responsive. Other partners in love are exceptionally creative. The expression romantic often connotes anything outside of the ordinary and unpractical, yet lovely, as in fairy tales, fiction, films, and music. Individuals adopt romantic phrases from every one of the aforementioned sources.

³⁴ Interview with Dawuda 12th September 2022

4.3. Jigida – An Invitation to Romance

In Zongo, words and adages do not serve as their sole means of conveying love. Whenever a woman desires to express her readiness and attraction to potential male partners, she puts on extremely noticeable waist beads, referred to as *jigida*, used in the Hausa language, and seductively plays with them whilst communicating with the person who is the subject of her affection in dialogue as well as other forms of communication. Growing up as a young boy, I have seen women, both young and old, wear *jigida*, but I did not know its significance goes beyond adornments. Hajia Barkisu educated me on the importance of waist beads as an expression of love in Zongos. She says:

Waist beads continue to be donned by women in our Zongo societies and, as far as I know, in many other regions of Africa as a form of flirting. Beads are said to possess the ability to evoke or inspire passion. Many African and Zongo women are said to tie their beads with scents that are enticing to the other sex. Women in several regions of Africa, just like we have it here, don various forms of beads at the time of sexual interaction to heighten and intensify erotic excitement for themselves and their lovers. African love beads are analogous to women in the Global North donning seductive undergarments. Furthermore, in Africa, ladies utilized the rumbling of their waist beads to convey fertile periods to their passionately loved ones.³⁵

What she told me pushed me to look through the importance of waist beads in terms of expressing love and romance. I came to the realization that South African Zulus, Xhosa, Sotho, Venda, and Ndebele have used vibrant, finely made beads for millennia to convey their love through embroidered "love messages." Aside from pieces intended for religious purposes, every indigenous Zulu beading was employed in a manner that attempted to transmit expressions of romantic love, courting, and engagement. These embroidered romantic messages are letters sent to partners by young southern African women as representations of their affection and passion.

Ukuqoma is an isiZulu³⁶ term meaning "to date." When a Zulu lady is prepared to begin a relationship, she creates an embroidered love letter, which is a brief beaded love narrative that shows her admiration for and dedication to her beloved. This

³⁵ Interview with Hajia Barkisu, 2022

³⁶ It is a language spoken by 12 million Zulu people in South Africa.

customary, white-beaded letter or necklace, known as *ucu*, is presented to a lover, who then shows it to his father as proof that he is currently seeing a woman. When the father of the young man receives the *ucu*, he dispatches people from his larger family to fetch the young woman to him, where she spends a full week with the family of her partner. When the young woman arrives at her boyfriend's house, she lifts a white drape, which she keeps raised throughout the rest of her visit. The father of the young man travels to the house of the young woman, escorted by people from his larger family, to inform them that they should not be concerned regarding their daughter's whereabouts because she is well and secure with them, as well as that she is formally courting their young son. The entire dating or courting period can last many months and is just the initial step into dating, which could result in or not lead to marriage. The usage of beads as romantic letters additionally serves as a kind of identification record that marks a certain man as an expected one for the maiden, so warding away other men; by donning the romantic letter, these young men announce that they are inaccessible to other ladies (Berry 1991, 45-53).

In a Zulu romantic letter, every bead hue sends a distinct meaning. White, for example, represents optimism, purity, and real love. Just like love that is not reciprocated, Black represents despair and isolation. Yellow is used to represent money or the lack thereof: it embodies the concept that everything will turn out well with love, even when there is no money. Green is a sign of pinning and envy: it represents "growing thinner like a blade of grass from longing." Blue is a symbol of loyalty. It communicates to a possible romantic fascination that the individual is prepared to sail across the blue sky in order to impress them. Turquoise represents eager love. Red is associated with extreme love and desire, as in "my soul aches of affection for you." Pink draws emphasis on a possible partner's impoverishment and tells him that in the event he neglects to begin accumulating funds, he could find himself unable to fulfill the cost of marrying her or the bride price. Brown is the hue of Mother Earth; it conveys the maiden's desire that, like the earth itself, she hopes to bear new life. Finally, if a young lady writes her love letter with multicolored beads, she is conveying mistrust in her potential love's loyalty. She is essentially comparing him to the multicolored grasshopper, which jumps from one place to another (Dube 2009, 64-68).

It is also important to note that social, economic, environmental, and cultural settings all have an impact on the manner in which prospective partners encounter and establish relationships. These surroundings have altered over time due to the evolution of communities, mobility in society, equality of opportunity, and roles based on gender. Common ways to meet include social occasions and gatherings, traditional courting, dating, and relationships. The social interactions and gatherings of individuals (during marriage ceremonies, Eid celebrations, seminars, and other social events) that live in proximity to one another provide a chance to connect with a potential person to be a wife or a husband. The act of singing and dancing, as well as listening to music, are examples of such activities. Dancing, for instance, is a group action as opposed to a solo endeavor. Following the rhythmic motions in groups, in trios, or performing collectively fosters sentiments of togetherness, interaction, and synchronicity among individuals in the community. Even though these are done in a gender-separated way, people notice each other and make their intentions known.

Participation in various events, celebrations, and gatherings, such as weddings and women's seminar classes, has provided me with an exceptional and enlightening viewpoint on the subtle complexities of relationships, cultural customs, and the hunt for suitable life mates. I've watched the wonderful convergence of culture, custom, and the search for love during weddings. These events are frequently used as a venue for both men and women to mingle and, in some situations, discreetly look into the prospect of meeting a life companion. It's a place where the lines between friendship, courting, and potential marriage fade, producing an aura of excitement and closeness. The pursuit of love clearly surpasses the normal confines of dating applications or traditional matching in these contexts. Participants may participate in casual flirting and humorous discussions and enjoy the festivities while maintaining a lookout for possible mates. The meaning of such ceremonies, entrenched in traditional rites and symbols, emphasizes the value of love and teamwork within the community.

Women's seminar sessions I participated in as an observer, on the other hand, provide a distinct but similarly interesting viewpoint. These occasions and gatherings are not only instructive, but they additionally function as a platform for young women to learn about and prepare for their responsibilities as brides in the future. While the major focus is on providing important knowledge and expertise, these programs also

provide chances to get noticed by the instructor in case you want to settle down with a partner. The significance of cultural context, community, and shared values in the desire for love is obvious in both kinds of gatherings. The manner in which these events promote contacts and prospective matching exemplifies the broad and multidimensional nature of interpersonal relationships. Observing these interactions has given me a greater understanding of the intricacies of love and relationships within cultural contexts, as well as the importance of mutually beneficial experiences in creating genuine relationships and connections.

People living in the Zongos have different ways of expressing their feelings when it comes to love and romance. This has been evidenced throughout this chapter. But on the flip side of the situation, the globalization shifts, just like in many other societies across the globe, brought forth numerous modifications and developments in Zongo society, affecting every facet of the lives of individuals, especially in cinema, movies, and music discussion. Currently, Zongo societies have evolved into contemporary societies with novel standards of conduct that vary in comparison to what was previously known. The issue of globalization and how it changed the perception and expression of romantic love will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

GLOBALIZATION AND CHANGING CONCEPTION OF LOVE AND EXPRESSION OF ROMANTIC LOVE

5.1. Introduction

Globalization has had a significant influence on many elements of human existence, including the way people think about love and romantic love. William I. Robinson, a sociologist, defines globalization as a complex and multifaceted process characterized by the interpenetration of national and regional economies, societies, and cultures (Robinson 2001, 161). In his work, Robinson emphasizes the role of transnational capital, technological advancements, and the emergence of a globalized political economy. He argues that globalization is not just about economic integration but involves a broader restructuring of social relations at the global level (Robinson 2001, 166-168). Robinson's perspective highlights the power dynamics and inequalities inherent in the global system, particularly the ways in which global economic forces impact different regions and social groups. As people and cultures from all over the world interact more, the notion of love has grown and altered in a variety of ways. The interchange of ideas, beliefs, and cultural norms has been enhanced by globalization.

Roland Robertson, in his work *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, highlighted the importance of The Global Culture theory, commonly referred to as cultural globalization, which examines how cultural practices, goods, and beliefs are transmitted and consumed on a worldwide scale. This idea highlights the connectivity of cultures across boundaries and the growing impact caused by worldwide trends on local cultures (Robertson 1992, 154-159). One part of this notion is the exposure to transnational culture, in which people all around the world participate and embrace cultural aspects that have crossed national boundaries. Global Culture theory acknowledges the movement of cultural components across borders. This encompasses the transfer of concepts, images, symbols, beliefs, and behaviors from

one cultural setting to another. These movements are aided by a variety of factors, including the media, technological advances, migration, and international travel. The media, specifically online media and the internet, in particular, serve a significant part in spreading globalized culture. Films, shows on TV, music, and internet platforms all help promote worldwide cultural exchange. Technology allows for quick connection and access to a wide range of cultural manifestations.

Different communities have different perspectives on love and romance, and these perspectives have merged and impacted one another. Through media, movies, songs, travel, and cross-cultural interactions, people are exposed to a broader range of cultural viewpoints on love. Interethnic and cross-cultural partnerships have grown as a result of globalization. When people from diverse cultural backgrounds form romantic connections, they frequently bring their own perspectives on love, courting, and relationships. This cultural mingling results in the development of hybridization or multicultural approaches to romantic love (Jankowiak 1995, 72).

People may now communicate across countries and continents thanks to the digital era, which has been fueled by globalization. People meet and create love connections in new ways thanks to online dating, social media, and other digital channels. This virtual realm of love and romance has a unique set of rules and regulations. Transnational marriages, in which people from other nations marry and raise children together, have become more common as a result of globalization (Coupland 2010, 15). These unions may need to overcome legal and cultural barriers, which may influence how love and commitment are regarded in foreign partnerships. Traditional gender norms and expectations in romantic relationships have altered as cultures and communities become more linked. Women, in particular, have gained more agency and independence in selecting partners and defining the characteristics of their relationships.

Long-distance relationships, in which partners reside in separate nations or regions, have become more common as a result of globalization. Long-distance love's emotional complexities and problems are becoming more widespread, and they change the definition of romantic commitment. Although globalization has increased the number of opportunities for romantic love, it has also presented new problems, such

as coping with cultural misunderstandings and long-distance relationships (Sen 2004, 19). In a worldwide community, individuals have to navigate these intricacies while they seek love and relationships. Of course, globalization has not just altered the conception of love and romance but also significantly altered how individuals express love and romantic love in a variety of ways. These developments reflect the more linked and multicultural world that has resulted from globalization. The Zongo communities are not immune from the effects of globalization on the understanding of romantic love and how it is expressed. In this chapter, we will discuss the effects of globalization in shaping the comprehension and understanding of love, especially romantic love, among the inhabitants of Zongo. We will look at the influence of the Hausa language in the ways Zongo people use the language to express themselves and then conclude with the most influential foreign tools on the changing meaning of love in the Zongos, namely, drama series or movies and social media and internet.

5.2. The Effects of Globalization on Romantic Love in Zongo

Vinita Vaish argues that, as a consequence of the influence of globalization, gender parity and passionate love appear to be becoming increasingly significant in romantic relationships throughout the world, particularly as a criterion for marriage (Vaish 2010, 14). When people accept Western customs, they acquire autonomy and independence from relatives as emerging business possibilities motivate these individuals to move out, walls of power fall apart, limitations disappear, and romantic love prospers within this exciting feeling of individualism (Sen 2004, 16). With globalization, an increasing number of young people from traditionally communal societies are choosing their own marital companions. Jeffrey J. Arnett finds that the aforementioned pattern is mirrored in nations including Egypt, Turkey, Japan, and China (Arnett 2001, 121).

According to Jennifer Hirsch and Holly Wardlow, once the economy industrializes, modernizes, and individuals grow more prosperous, old communal ideals deteriorate and are replaced by Western individualized ones. As a result of the breakdown of parental control, young people mobilize their strengths and abilities to seek employment of their own, build houses of their own, pursue and select spouses of their own, and form independent opinions. Romantic love is desired in interpersonal

relationships as well as marriage alongside the opportunity to pick their preferred spouse as they embrace Western principles (Hirsch and Wardlow 2006, 102).

Despite the fact that globalization has heightened the significance of romantic love in relationships between individuals, Eric Fromm is cautioning that capitalistic and materialistic Western cultural norms are establishing an atmosphere in which many modern men and women are now incapable of competent love (Fromm 1956, 44). Anthony Giddens might disapprove of Fromm, stating that globalization, through a de-traditionalized societal structure, is setting romantic love behind and substituting it with what he terms unadulterated or convergent love in highly Western societies. The unadulterated love partnership strives for a deep awareness of the other individuals' distinct and real selves via frequent conversation (Giddens 1992, 97).

I brought up the issues of globalization as I was in a lengthy conversation with Hajia Barkisu, who is a teacher, and our interview, after some time, turned into a casual conversation. She talked about globalization and the youths in Zongo and narrated:

The moment we started to get in contact with heavy Western ideas about love, responsibilities, commitment, and so on, we began to lose most of our old ways of doing things. Everything began with the movies, music, and telenovelas, and the effects of these begin on one generation, then go to another, and there is nothing stopping it. It is hard for a society to go away completely from its cultures and traditions as we can still see people adhere to some of our traditions, but you ask yourself, how long can these norms and traditions stand against the Western ideas and ways of doing things? People do not marry early, and they do not stay married any longer. Men and women used to be shy and ashamed of their actions. Now, everywhere you go, the only thing you see are mothers without fathers.³⁷

Shaifali Sandhya summarizes the 11 trends in demographics that characterize the increasing middle class in India and highlights the influence of modernity and globalization: 1) marriage happens at older ages, 2) there are greater numbers of mothers who are single, 3) there are far more nuclear families, 4) there are a lot of teens and mothers who are not married, 5) there are a lot of lovers living together, 6) there is greater sex prior to marriage and illicit relationships, 7) there are more romantic weddings, 8) there are a greater number of separations, 9) fertility in marriage changes,

³⁷ Interview with Hajia Barkisu, 2022

10) there are a greater number of individuals speaking English, and 11) women are receiving greater education and conducting business (Sandhya 2009, 75-77).

Sharon Stephens Brehm et al. study sociocultural population trends in the United States that are remarkably identical: 1) fewer individuals marry, 2) wedding occurs at more advanced ages, 3) a rise in the number of single moms, 4) a greater percentage of intimate relationships, 5) greater numbers of divorces, 6) a growth in the percentage kids residing in homes with one parent, and 7) a rise in the percentage of kids in preschool who have employed mothers (Brehm et al. 2002, 148–150). While Sandhya attributes the shifts in the Indian population to globalization (Sandhya 2009, 81), Brehm et al. credit these shifts in the American populace to economic growth, increased autonomy, and innovation (Brehm et al. 2002, 142). These explanations of shifts in population may indicate the fact that globalization effects have been experienced worldwide - not just across increasingly communal societies and nations, but also in highly Western and individualized nations and societies - as well as that the consequences of globalization are experienced at various degrees and frequencies in nations across the globe.

When I asked individuals in Zongos, particularly the young, about their conceptions of love, it was immediately evident that they had acquired a romantic love concept. The widely watched drama series on television appeared to rule over their notion of love. These appeared to be essential components of identity, which contributed to young ones' ideas about romantic love (Vaish 2007, 219). When I asked some of my interlocutors exactly what romantic love is and how it should be expressed, I got different responses that point to the direction of the changing nature of love and romantic love as it is known in communities like Zongos to one that has been influenced by the non-stop global trends. One of my interlocutors 19 years old Farida Yussuf said:

For me, love is hard to define because everyone feels it differently. And I don't think I can define it until I am in one. But when you say romantic love, I know the kind of romantic love I want. It is thinking about me alone; I mean, I have to be the only one in your life. I have a

fantasy of traveling to somewhere beautiful in the world. So, for anyone to express love to me, they should take me to Dubai.³⁸

From my conversation with Farida, I realized her desire to be the only wife in the life of her potential partner, undermining the fact that part of the common ways of expressing love is being close to each other's family. In Zongo, being in a romantic relationship and probably marrying the person means adding a new member to the family. However, the imposition of the idea of independence and individualism through globalization means young girls like Farida would rather live independently away from the community. Another one of my interlocutors, 21 years-old Musah Zakaria, who is a student at the University of Ghana and living on campus, stated:

I have been in two different relationships, but I couldn't continue with them because they were all long-distance relationships. And I only get to meet them when they visit here or I go to visit them, which means going all the way to a different city. I believe when you are in love with someone, you should be closer to each other. Otherwise, how can you show them when you are not closer? Even though my parents will never approve of me being in a relationship because I am still schooling, it's against Islam. So, everything happens behind their backs.³⁹

Musah is alluding to another aspect of the implication of globalization in terms of distance and family belief. Even though he is well aware that his parents' belief system and cultural norms do not approve of his choice of being in a relationship, regardless, he still goes on with it and complains about the distance affecting his ability to express love to his partners. In a place like the Zongo, adherence to religious teachings and norms is of utmost importance, but young men and women are beginning to defy those conditions. This can be connected to how globalization has exposed the new generation to movies, shows, and drama series, and they also want to explore. Yasmin Garba, a 20-year-old medical student who abandoned her education, had a very interesting story. She is now living with one of her schoolmates after her parents denounced her. She has a three-year-old daughter. She looks dejected as she answers my questions. She said:

³⁸ Interview with Farida, 2023.

³⁹ Interview with Musah, 2023.

My parents actually denounced me because of this (she points to her little daughter, who is asleep). I didn't listen to them. I followed my heart. Love is freedom, and I wanted to show my man how much I love him, so I gave myself to him. He broke my heart when he denied and refused to accept the pregnancy. Now, I have lost both him and my parents. But that's what love does to a person, yeah. I didn't regret my decision, but I miss my parents, and now I can't even go to them. Love, love, love, a mystery, yeah?⁴⁰

She actually told me how her parents never allowed her to go out and how they were very protective of her and her siblings. But in pursuit of love, she got impregnated by her boyfriend, who refused to accept the pregnancy, and that forced her to drop out of school. In defying her parents, she wanted to pursue the idea of freedom. In Zongo, parents are really concerned about what their children are doing, especially girls. But in the age of globalization and media, it is hard to keep pace with what children are watching and seeing and what they want to do. The narratives above are only a few of the many with the Zongo communities.

There is a battle between upholding the norms and cultures of the community with fast and improving global changes in the way people understand and express themselves, especially when it comes to emotions like romantic love. Now, it's time for us to consider the influence of some modern trends and technologies that influence the current changes we see in communities like the Zongos.

5.3. Drama Series or Love Movies

A drama series, sometimes known commonly as a "drama," is a television show or digital series that mainly concentrates on fictional storytelling via a number of episodes or installments. Within the fields of scripted television and internet streaming services, it is a popular genre. Narrative storytelling is fundamental to drama series. They have an ongoing and changing plot that spans numerous episodes or seasons. These stories frequently focus on complicated individuals, their relationships, and their experiences in a variety of settings. Drama shows usually include made-up characters and situations. These characters may be similar to real-life individuals, but they were wholly invented for the show's benefit. The settings might vary from regular life to

⁴⁰ Interview with Yasmin, 2022.

historical eras, future realms, and even alternative universes (Berg 2017; Bhutto 2019; Toul 2020).

The serial framework of a drama series is one of its distinguishing features. The tale progresses from episode to episode, and viewers are recommended to watch the series in chronological sequence in order to properly comprehend character growth and plot advancement. Characters evolve when they confront problems, make decisions, and undergo personal growth or change. As spectators get concerned about the destiny of the characters, these character arcs are crucial to the attractiveness of drama series. Love and romance drama, crime drama, medical drama, legal drama, family drama, historical drama, and other subgenres are all represented in drama programs. Each subgenre concentrates on a distinct topic or environment while keeping the essential aspects of narrative storytelling and character development intact (Zillmann 2000, 57).

Even though these series have their own benefits in their own ways, they set some unrealistic notions of the world for the viewers. Love dramas may show love, beauty, and relationships in romanticized or idealistic ways. Viewers may form unfounded fantasies or become unsatisfied with their own romantic life. Some elements of love stories from these drama series may be incompatible with traditional and cultural standards and values, especially in the Zongos. This can lead to societal and interpersonal disputes and misunderstandings. Overexposure to love dramas can cause detachment from real-life relationships and an excessive preoccupation with imaginary storylines. Excessive consumption of these dramas may lead to consumers adopting some ideals and conventions, thereby undermining local traditions and cultural practices. Viewers of these dramas may feel forced to adapt to different notions of beauty, love, and relationships, which might lead to cultural identity erosion. In the context of morality and religion, studies have repeatedly shown that drama series portrays moral decay, marital infidelity, consuming alcohol, and forbidden relationships, which are all considered to be detrimental (Alardawi, Bajnaid, and Brereton 2022, 49).

Other research has revealed that drama series, particularly Turkish dramas, have a stronger beneficial effect on viewer sentiments. Furthermore, Turkish dramas are frequently portrayed in a favorable way with regard to the fulfillment that viewers

obtain from acquiring new information and knowledge, the feeling of thrills and communal satisfaction involved, the depiction of feelings and emotions, beauty, and entertainment, the appealing appearance of actors; and Turkish dramas' fictitious capacity to enable individuals to disengage from the real world (Hamasaee 2018; Megdad 2015; Yanardagolu and Karam 2013). In their research of Turkish drama's influence on Saudi women, Merfat Alardawi, Ayman Bajnaid, and Pat Brereton reported that "many participants admire Turkish dramas because, in various ways, they provide a positive image of Turkish men, who are ready to sacrifice for love and put himself in a risky situation. Turkish man represents someone who is ready to fight for love" (Alardawi, Bajnaid, and Brereton 2022, 49). This can also be said regarding many drama series that are produced from one part of the world and distributed to other parts of the world, which inspires various kinds of emotions in their viewers, especially in places like the Zongo.

However, Muslims in Zongos appear to discover plenty in Hindi romantic movies that reflect their intimate lives and sexual worries. Today, Hausa filmmakers are motivated by Hindi filmmaking principles, and they portray love in visuals and songs in the same way that Bollywood movies do. Abdalla Uba Adamu refers to these impacts as trans-global media circulation (Adamu 2007, 27), and Larkin characterizes it via parallel modernity theory, discovering that Hausa favored Indian movies due to the fact that they raised concerns and framed topics in manners that proved socially consistent in terms of their cultural paradigm (Lutz and Geoffrey 1986). Bollywood movies hit home more strongly with community issues regarding larger family concerns against individual ambitions than movies from Hollywood (Larkin 2007; Fair 2009). Furthermore, the movies supplied compelling narratives and visuals for imagining the conflicts between relative and individual desires (Cole and Thomas 2009, 19).

On the other hand, Hausa movie makers took use of the educational environments created by the existence of Hindi dramas and other Western movies or media to launch fresh revolutions in love and connection, as demonstrated in Manoj Tyagi's (2007) Bollywood movie *Mumbai Salsa*, where couples exhibit their affection through words and actions openly within themselves. The plot revolves around a banker, Maya Chandok, who is rejected by her lover, Sanjay. A few days subsequently, she encounters Rajeev Sharma, who is distraught after his bride-to-be Pooja deserted him

and fled to the United States, and they both fall for each other. According to Adamu's description, filmmakers employ songs about love and sexual dance routines reminiscent of Hindi ones. Adamu says:

The love triangle—with or without the forced marriage motif—is the second distinguishing feature of Hausa video films. In this structure, a story about a dispute demonstrating competition between a pair of potential partners (irrespective of whether a pair of guys following the exact same girl or two girls after the same boy) is developed whereby the disputants are allowed to wax melodious concerning their dying love for one another and the lengths they are keen to endure in order to overcome the boundary that splits their love is created. The heated competition is best represented via extensive song and dance procedures, which frequently describe the plot more thoroughly than the drama's character conversations (Adamu 2007, 32).

In order to convey this "modernization" framework, Hausa video producers depend upon non-ethnic Hausa female stars to make an appearance in sexually triggering Western dresses of tight exposing pants and tops throughout song and dance processes, particularly the younger newcomers into the industry who emerged on the set in the year 2003. Even if the primary plot contains "ma'ana" (meaning), implying that it may have a meaningful message, the directors must exploit romance to market the film by clothing the female actors in exposing Western costumes (Adamu 2007, 52). In light of the foregoing, it is inevitable that Hausa movie makers replicate various Western and Eastern methods of functioning when it comes to love in their movies, which violate previously recognized laws of public decency.

The new generation of young girls in my research project, like a great number of those living in Zongo, committed 60 minutes of their time every day of the week to the Indian drama "Kumkum Bhagya (Vermillion in My Fate)."⁴¹ Each evening at 8 p.m., individuals crowded around screens in homes to see a love tale about Pragma and Abhi, who are meant to be together against all odds, which is full of drama, intrigues, catastrophes, and, most importantly, love. When I arrived in Ghana, the drama

⁴¹ Kumkum Bhagya is a popular Indian television drama series. It is emblematic of the theatrical and emotionally charged nature of Indian television dramas, offering a blend of romance, family dynamics, and societal commentary. The show revolves around the lives of the two female protagonists, Pragma and Bulbul, and their intertwined destinies (Adia 2014, 13). It was trendy while I was conducting my fieldwork.

series had already been going on five days every week for over a year, yet no one seemed tired of it. I was surprised by the scenes I saw. Before the drama started, people were rushing to finish their chores so that they wouldn't miss anything. It surprised me because I expected people to be concerned about happenings across the country on the national channel, which usually prioritizes the coverage of political issues and customary the act of dancing, but another broadcasting network presents an alternative to its audiences by opting to show an Indian family drama as regularly prime-time television; particularly since the Indian drama series occurred in an upper-middle-class setting and its customs and beliefs do not fit in with the morality of everyday life in Zongo. Nonetheless, all of these individuals congregated around their screens every evening to see what might have been considered a contemporary rendition of Romeo and Juliet: Pragma and Abhi, two lovers with contrasting personalities from opposing backgrounds, struggle against a seemingly unending number of difficulties and obstacles till they ultimately find one other.

Linda-Anne Rebhun found a type of romantic love in Brazil she subsequently describes as 'soap opera love' (Rebhun 1995, 255), which is a blend of several types of love that matches urban lives. This concept of drama series love is readily adaptable to an urban Ghanaian culture, which could potentially describe the reason a romantic love notion is common among that nation's youthful population. Soap opera love, according to Rebhun, is distinguished by:

Collective economic and emotional interdependent relationships are demonstrated through oral compassion and proclamations of love; it is a combining of hearts as well as bodies... it stresses the significance of the couple as a collective entity, the utmost significance of personal emotional well-being, and women's dependence on men (Rebhun 1999, 228).

Therefore, the romantic pair as a collective entity represents the core of soap opera love. Incorporating such a view of love into a Ghanaian setting must indicate an inclination for monogamous relationships over polygamous relationships, which was seen within the young generation. Fati Lamin, an 18-year-old interlocutor, explained:

That [polygamous marriage] is not something I desire. I want him to be in love with me. That he adores me and that I adore him in return. If someone says to me, 'Fati, this man wants to marry you,' I will refuse if I do not love him.⁴²

Another of my interlocutors, Yasin Abdelkarim, who is 23 years old, referencing how men dress in these dramas as we watched an episode together, said while smiling:

I love to buy new clothes; I love to look great and smart. To impress a lady, I have to keep myself clean. I believe nowadays, ladies go for men who can clean and help at home. Just look at these men (referring to the drama); they are strong, and I really love the Indian dresses. Maybe I should buy one for this coming Eid, and who knows, I might find 'the one' on that day.⁴³

Echoing Yasin's similar sentiment 20 years-old Faruza Ahmed said that:

I enjoy watching these television dramas since the actors and actresses dress well and embellish lavishly. It's simple, and it might be obscene at times, yet it's all so appealing and wonderful.⁴⁴

Majid Suala, a 25-year-old tailor, another one of my interlocutors, was so much into the drama that he had to lock his shop just to watch it. He narrated:

Even though I am married with two children, I have memorized two Indian songs from the movie, and whenever I sing it, I feel some sensation. I just can't describe it. Sometimes I do sing to my wife too, but she used not to like it, but now we sing together. We watch movies together; that's why I always have to close my shop so that I can go home for us to watch together.⁴⁵

Fati, Yasin, and Majid's assertion is consistent with anthropologist Saskia Brand's observations coming from Bamako, which demonstrate that intimate relationships are evolving among teenagers in urban areas, where the widespread adoption of a romantic love idea, inspired by different media sources, coincides with a downsizing of marriages that are arranged (Brand 2000, 115). Currently, the young generation in

⁴² Interview with young Fati, 2023

⁴³ Interview with Yasin, 2022.

⁴⁴ Interview with Faruza, 2023.

⁴⁵ Interview with Majid, 2022.

Zongo demands a voice in who they marry, and this shift in marriage norms may have been influenced by the picture of love shown in drama series such as *Kumkum Bhagya*.

The Zongo youth had very strong beliefs about what attributes a good possible future partner should have. According to 20 years-old Aisha Sule:

A decent spouse is someone who respects his wife. Someone who looks after his wife. Someone who abstains from violence towards women. This shows that he loves and cares about me. That is what love is.⁴⁶

But for 21 years-old Malik Yahaya, quite different from Aisha's widely held desire, said to me:

I want someone with whom I can build my future and career. Love to me goes beyond saying just I love you. The person has to be educated and stable. Because if you say you love me, you can only show it to me by helping me emotionally and financially when I need it. That's why the person has to be educated so that we can all work and help the family.⁴⁷

Sharifa Adam, a 26-year-old law student, did not mince her words when I posed the question of love and romantic love. She has huge expectations from her potential partner. She stated that:

Romantic love is a shared responsibility. It's you and me in the struggle to navigate the terrible world. Life is hard here, so I have a lot of expectations for the potential man. I dream of having a big wedding because I am the only girl in my family, and I deserve to be noticed. Most of my friends had big weddings, and I saw how people were commenting and liking their photos on social media. That's all I dream of for myself.⁴⁸

On the other hand, the elderly interlocutors I spoke with recognized sexual discussions in these foreign dramas as a serious moral and ethical concern that contradicted their cultural, societal, and religious beliefs. They thought that people in these dramas relied on 'improper' explicit language, such as those heard on the street. When angered, certain individuals in the dramas who appeared to come from wealthy families utter such 'undesirable or obscene' remarks. Furthermore, dramas may include verbal or

⁴⁶ Interview with Aisha, 2023

⁴⁷ Interview with Malik, 2022.

⁴⁸ Interview with Sharifa, 2022.

explicit romantic exchanges between men and women, which many may regard as a bold and courageous action. One of my interlocutors raising this concern was 50 years-old Abdulrahman Sofu, who said:

These television shows and movies feature dangerous scenes, particularly images of romance and lovemaking, and the actors occasionally employ highly unpleasant terms, which often have greater consequences than the sexual action itself.⁴⁹

In the same manner, 43 years-old Mma Mariam also claimed that:

The connections and relationships displayed throughout these dramas are very contrary to what we are used to seeing. Men's and women's relationships ought to result in marriage. We are Muslims, and our attachment and relationship are required to take place inside the framework of marriage, as dictated by Islamic law.⁵⁰

These concerns were part of discussions with Hajia Barkisu after one of her seminars, and I put forward the question of the drama series within the Zongo communities. And she had this to say:

One disadvantage of such shows and programs, in my opinion, is that they encourage having children without being married. These movies occasionally depict a young lady's relationship with her partner as a combination of intense feelings, emotions, and love, and it is considered that a female may be courageous and rebellious by battling for love and rejecting societal standards. Once the love and romantic relationship dissolve, she will have had a kid without marrying. The consequences of this affect all of us in the community.⁵¹

Obviously, there is a sharp contrast between the young and the elderly people within the Zongos in regard to the effect of the drama series. These differences can also be seen in the types of foreign movies and Hausa movies in terms of the display of obscene images and sceneries. These things influence the kind of choices in partners or persons a boy, and a girl will want to be in love with.

⁴⁹ Interview with Abdulrahman, 2023.

⁵⁰ Interview with Mma, 2023.

⁵¹ Interview with Hajia Barkisu, 2022.

However, if a young lady falls in love with a man who appears to meet the requirements of an ideal partner and who appears to sincerely love her, there is no assurance of a happy ending. As a result, romantic love appears to be a desirable goal as opposed to reality in many circumstances. All of the young generation wished to marry someone who genuinely loved them, but plenty of them realized that this goal was improbable to come true, particularly if they engaged in any behaviors that the Zongo society frowned upon. It is critical to remember that the moral world shown in drama series is not comparable and is unable to substitute the moral world of local society.

The drama series plays a huge part in disseminating global content that directly or indirectly affects and influences the way young men and women redefine love and romantic relationships. However, there are other Western technologies and media that are crucial to the maintenance and continuation of the current situation in various Zongo communities. Some of which are discussed briefly below.

5.4. Influence of the Internet and Social Media on Zongo Communities

Contemporary debates of love and romantic love in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, especially in many countries and localities in Africa, have frequently revolved around borrowed Western technology and media (LeFebvre 2018, 1215). Recent advances in technology and media have played such an important role in love differences due to how they spatially disseminate competing ideals of affection and enable new places for those views to be examined and lived. All of this is due to globalization, which Vaish defines as "the circulation of thoughts, visuals, individuals, technological advances, and capital that could be simultaneously outward and central and, ultimately, extremely unanticipated" (Vaish 2010, 3).

In our contemporary world, online and social media dating services have dramatically enlarged the terrain of relationships and finding love and also created new chances for searching for and connecting with possible companions. Singles can find a variety of possible companions through online and dating services. Prior to meeting face-to-face with a possible partner, computer and mobile phone-mediated conversation via the Internet makes it possible to make a first impression, discover basic personal details,

and gain an early experience of the engagement (Finke et al. 2012; Rosenfeld and Thomas 2012; Smith and Duggan 2013). Online interaction and connection created through a mobile phone or a computer can boost initial interactions between individuals and promote the positive development of love connections and relationships (Cooper and Sportolari 1997, 9).

Throughout my fieldwork, I noticed that Zongo people's notions of love, relationships, and beauty standards have been influenced by their encounters with media and Internet information via social media. Many people have an ambition for Westernized ideals of love as a result of this. Technology and social media have given some Zongo youth more liberty in selecting their spouses, thus disrupting customary arranged marriage customs. Individuals may obtain love and relationship support and assistance on numerous internet platforms and social media groups, which create venues for conversation on these subjects. People in Zongos are increasingly adopting technology to form intertribal and cross-border interactions that surpass traditional and cultural borders. This promotes worldwide comprehension and a wide range of opinions on the meaning and conception of love and romantic love.

Young people in the Zongos are excited about social media, but parents are concerned about the extent to which too much exposure to social media and the internet would break the social fabric of the communities. Many young people use social media and the internet to meet their potential partners. Without a doubt, so many marriages and romantic relationships have been built due to interactions that started on the internet and social media platforms. I got a chance to attend a wedding where the bride and the groom met on a social media platform, Facebook. Their narrative was a tribute to the strength of internet ties in a society where online connections and relationships are now becoming commonplace. Two strangers and completely different individuals from different tribes met on social media, brought together by similarities in hobbies and ambitions. What started off as an ordinary "hello" in a conversation window quickly grew into an intimate and profound bond. Bintu Zakari and Mohammed Salifu narrated their story of how they met to my attention. She narrated:

We learned that we shared not just our opinions but also our feelings as the days evolved into months, and virtual talks transformed into midnight conversations. Regardless of the cultural

norms that may have divided us, our shared bond surpassed the constraints of our differences. Finally, after several video conversations, text messages, and back and forth, we found ourselves standing face to face, nervousness and excitement interwoven, ready to take the next step. It is a crucial period, the pinnacle of trust created via pixels and words (pointing to her phone). And when our hands came together, the connection was unmistakable, a sense of intimacy that was only possible to describe as fate. We realized we had discovered the missing piece of our life when we looked at each other with a loving glance and made a genuine vow.⁵²

Bintu and Mohammed are not the only ones whose utilization of the internet and social media have led them to commit themselves to each other. The use of social media platforms is generating different conceptualizations of romantic love and how it is expressed within the Zongo communities, especially among the youth. This is, in fact, a challenging notion of what romantic love is within the context of the Zongo communities, as well as challenging decades of communally established definitions that are in line with the Islamic religious beliefs practiced in the Zongos. One of my interlocutors, who is 20 years old, Jabir Ahmed said:

I agree that it allows you to establish a partnership and connection, considering even if you encounter an individual in person, you don't have the opportunity to see them all every day or chat with them throughout the day to become acquainted with them; therefore, you call and or message and text them in order to get the chance to learn more about them well. It is only after knowing them better that you are able to develop a sense of love and romance with them.⁵³

Sharifa, the law student who hopes to get a big wedding when she finally meets 'the one,' told me about her experience of using social media. She narrated:

I already have some potential guys that I am talking to on Instagram. They are all interested in me, but I am taking my time to find and choose the one that best suits my dreams and ambitions. I am now going to school, so marriage can wait even though my mother will be heartbroken to hear me say this. I am just someone that I came to fulfill my fantasies with, even if not all of my fantasies, but at least half of them. Love can be painful, but I need someone who will genuinely love me. That's the option that social media provides us, right?⁵⁴

⁵² Interview Bintu and Mohammed, 2023.

⁵³ Interview with Jabir, 2023.

⁵⁴ Interview with Sharifa, 2022.

Without a doubt, there are generational changes happening within various Zongos in Ghana with the influence of the internet and social media in how people frame and reframe their understanding of the concept of romantic love and what it entails. Finally, the emergence of the internet and social media has resulted in both transformation and difficulties for Zongo peoples' traditional and religious conceptualizations of love and romantic love. The benefits of the digital age brought about an entirely novel period of influence, overcoming tribal barriers and boosting communication between cultures. Love tales that cross multiple customs and belief systems are becoming more popular on online platforms, enhancing the social structure of these communities. Nevertheless, it is critical to recognize the intricacies and possible risks that come with this digital transformation. The very instruments that are meant to connect and unify might unwittingly destroy the customary practices and principles that define Zongo cultures.

Globalized ideas, which are frequently propagated via social media, could come into conflict with existing religious and cultural conventions, resulting in friction and obstacles. In negotiating a world that is shifting, Zongo communities must find the right equilibrium between welcoming possibilities for cross-cultural love and preserving the underlying values and identities that have historically distinguished their distinct cultures. An inclusive discussion that spans generations, as well as the intelligent use of technological devices in traditional structures, will be critical to conserving the diversity of religious and cultural conceptions of love while simultaneously welcoming the advantages of modern technology. The foreseeable future of love and romantic love in Zongo communities will be determined by the shifting forces of the internet world at the crossroads of tradition and modernity.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The aim of this research is to analyze how romantic love is conceptualized in Ghana's Hausa-speaking Zongo communities and cultures. Mystical and elusive traits that steadfastly avoid measurement are ingrained in the research's two core conceptions: romantic love and culture. In Zongo communities, the notion of *kunya* (shyness) governs young people's love habits. To convey love, girls employ songs and facial expressions, whereas guys use third-person discourse. Nevertheless, globalization and Zongo's interaction with other foreign materials such as drama series or movies and the combination of social media and the internet have radically transformed the notion of love (romantic love in particular) expression among Zongo youth. Trans-global media circulations are crucial in this approach, as Western and Eastern media content becomes more accessible to Zongo youngsters. These performances instill the Western and Eastern spirit into Hausa as a language when it comes to expressions of love. Given that culture is certainly not a constant phenomenon, one's concept and definition of romantic love transform as a person's culture develops and progresses. Romantic love is consequently learned, molded, and perceived via a person's cultural prism.

Whenever researchers compare the ways in which individualized cultures and collective cultures understand love, they find striking discrepancies (Levine et al. 1995, 119). According to Dion and Dion, the Western (individualized) idea of romantic love entails unique and deep emotional engagement, awareness, and devotion to the loved one, in addition to a strong physical attraction to him or her (Lutz and Geoffrey, 1986). But in the context of the people living in Zongo communities, the conception of romantic love is engulfed in building an individual into a wider community. Love is dictated by the religious (Islam) teachings and cultural norms. So, the people in Zongo are in constant negotiation between the religious ways of expressing love and affection and the Western form. To some extent, in some communal communities (like Zongos), romantic love is frequently considered harmful

and a danger to family and communal structure (Coontz 2005; Levine et al. 1995; Sandhya 2009) since there is a belief that romantic love might lead to an individualistic way of life. Partner choice sometimes, as we saw in the case of Zongo before the advances of globalization, is often not based on romantic love as it may be in a Western country; instead, arranged marriages are in many instances welcomed, and the relationship is often considered as a social and economic partnership between two families.

Despite significant distinctions in how individualized and communal cultures perceive love, current studies demonstrate that, as a result of the widespread and relentless impact caused by globalization and modernization, communal cultures are shifting into an increasingly Western and individualized conception of love, whereas choosing a partner is starting to be influenced by one's own preferences and romantic love (Hart 2007; Meekers 1995; Sandhya 2009). These academics also claim that whenever an imported habit is embraced by an indigenous society, it gets transformed into a hybridized version of the local society's principles, religious convictions, and behaviors. In simple terms, accepting modern cultural principles and standards might be used to substitute the initially established customs, standards, and rules, or instead, they may be championed alongside the initially established societal standards, habits, and rules. As a result, traditional love principles, features, and conceptualizations are being preserved, incorporated, and blended with current Western love beliefs, features, and conceptualizations (Meekers 1995).

Other researchers stress the problem of young people, especially university students, being perceived as Westernizing and developing hybridized, bicultural in nature, and diverse personalities. Numerous teenagers in today's globalized society acquire a local identity formed by local norms, along with a worldwide sense of self-established media exposure to an international (typically Western) lifestyle. It consequently has to be anticipated that every single one of the ethnic groups within the Zongos will have their own distinct take on, and personal articulation of, Western romantic love; however, the aforementioned will additionally be regulated by whether the individual is acting in accordance with their specific a sense of self according to their native custom, or as a consequence of their universal persona.

Finally, the study of emotions, particularly within minority cultures, remains an understudied issue within sociology and anthropology. Although research on emotions has advanced significantly in recent years, there remains a striking lack of thorough studies that dive into the distinct emotional terrain and lived experiences of minority groups like Zongo communities. The absence of coverage highlights a critical gap in our knowledge of how culture, ethnicity, and social circumstances connect with human emotional experience. Additional research in this area is urgently needed. Emotions are at the heart of human existence, influencing every aspect of society, especially individual well-being, social connections, and the functioning of communities. It has become critical that minority cultures' emotional experiences be properly researched and comprehended since such understandings may shape policy, foster inclusion, and give a more comprehensive knowledge of human behavior.

Additionally, there is an urgent need to research the influence of foreign media resources, such as music, movies, social media, and the internet, on the cultures and traditions of minority populations. Outside influences may have an important effect on cultural identities, religion, customs, and morals in an increasingly linked world where entertainment and knowledge transcend boundaries. Considering the effects of such media on minority populations is essential for preserving cultural integrity while reaping the advantages of globalization. Researchers have to concentrate on the job of bridging these essential gaps and loopholes in the study of emotions and the effect of foreign media on minority populations in the future years. By doing so, we may promote greater regard for the range of human experiences, help promote minority group empowerment, and improve our knowledge of the intricate interaction between emotions and culture in our fast-changing world.

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Teaching Experience:

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Teaching Assistant Courses: Introduction to Sociology, Social-Cultural Anthropology, Anthropology of Religion, Thinking Sociologically.

Research Experience:

Thesis

- Conceptualization of romantic love in Ghana: A probe within the Zongo societies and Ghanaian families (working paper).

Research papers:

- On the Concept of Justice: A Comparative Study of the Political Ideas of St. Augustine (354 - 430) and Al-Mawardi (972 - 1058).
- Reconstruction of Education through the Traditional Values and Understanding in Ghana 63 years after Independence.
- International “Imam Hatip” High Schools and the Creation of New “Habitus” in Turkey.
- Muslim Men's Perception of Sex and Sexuality.

Conferences And Public Speaking Experience:

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Ghana-Turkey Business Forum - Accra, Ghana June 2022

- Acted as a translator, translating speeches of Turkish officials to English.
- <https://www.ghanachamber.org/index.php/frontpage-news1/168-ghana-turkey-business-forum-held>

Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum - Istanbul, Turkey October 2021

- Acted as a translator, translating speeches of Turkish officials to English.
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Conference Speaking & Presentations:

Notable African Leaders in History Conference July 2021

- Presented on the biography of Kwame Nkrumah (in Turkish) - Konya, Turkey

Turkey-Africa Relations from Historical Perspective

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- Black Africans in the History of Turkey - Mersin, Turkey

Leadership in Governance and Education - Kayseri, Turkey

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- Presented ideas on how to include leadership training in education.

