

Community Notions of Honour Concerning Honour Killings of Women and Girls

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Reconceptualising the community notion of honour in relation to "honour killings" of women and girls

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Prime Minister agreed with Nusrat Ghani MP that so-called “honour-based” violence should be re-categorised as an act of terror in the UK (2016).

- ▶ Politically charged topic

- ▶ Laws have been tightened
 - implementation is questionable

		(Source: HRCP)
India (5 states)	HK	2016 – 77 2015 – 251 2014 – 28 2010 – 900 (3 states) (Source: Time of India)

News > UK > Crime

Muslim girl 'who had throat slit in honour killing' thanked god for 'everything' days before her death

Celine Dookhran, who was 'kidnapped, raped and murdered' in suspected honour killing, posted thankful tweet shortly before she died

Current academic theorisation

Is "honour killing" part of Pakistani/Asian/South Asian/Middle Eastern culture?

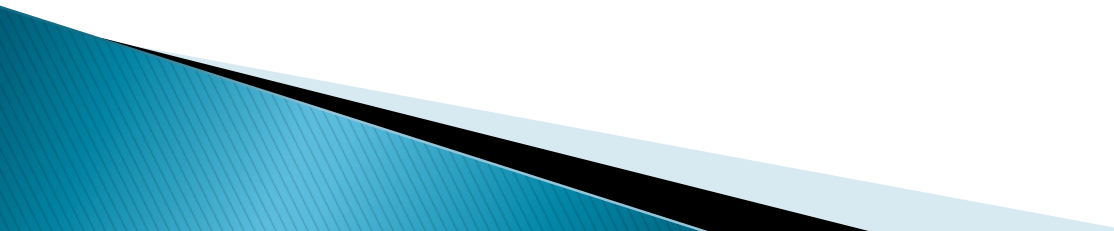
Is "honour killing" an Islamic/Muslim culture/tradition?

Is "honour killing" clash of two cultures?

▶ Theorisation mainly in two camps:

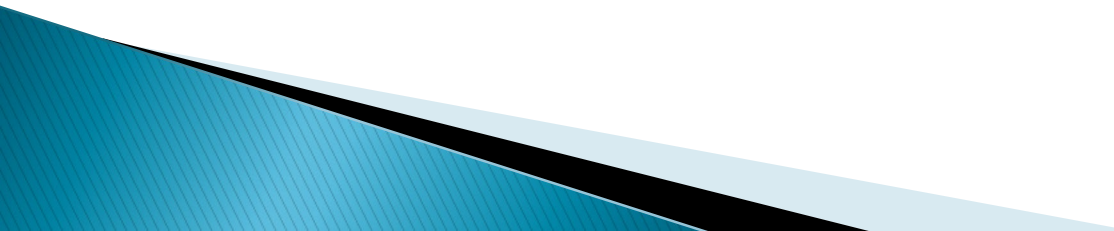
- Cultural relativism
 - Values are cultural specific
- Post-structuralism
 - *Difference* (us vs them, west vs east, developed vs underdeveloped etc.)
 - Reduces HK to a 'cultural practice' that puts burden on individual behaviour rather patriarchal system, in which it is rooted.

Existing explanations

- ▶ Three main features:
 - 'honour' related violence and killings are the products of certain 'cultures' – labelled as honour based cultures.
 - these cultures are mainly non-western, distant, static and insular.
 - the culture behind the HBV & killings is characterised – as a fixed and homogenous entity.
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Research question:

What is the community notion of honour and how it is implicated in 'honour killings' of women and girls in Pakistan and within the Pakistani community in the UK?



Methods and participants

Methods

- ▶ Informal conversations
- ▶ In-depth interviews
- ▶ Focus groups
- ▶ Observations
- ▶ Archives

Participants

- ▶ Male (n=50)
- ▶ Female (n= 35)
- ▶ Events (n=4)
- ▶ Archives (Since 1757, South Asia in general India and Pakistan in particular)

Honour: Definition

Honour

is a social asset (highly valued & fiercely protected)

of social standing
to an individual/family

within their reference network

Reference network (RN)

a group/set of individuals
who matter to people when
they make choices/decisions

Main features of RN

- Mainly consists of kith and kin
- Distance doesn't matter
- Members don't have equal importance or influence

Honour

Greek – tîmê
Urdu/Hindi/Sindhi –
Ghairat/izzat
Arabic – Sharaf
Turkish – namus
Italian – onore

- It exists in many societies.
- It varies from region to region and class to class.
- Its meanings and structures are particular to a given reference network (community and/or culture).
- It functions in relation to a reference network (community/group).

"Honour Killing"

- ▶ "Honour killing" is a social norm to maintain and protect the valuable social asset (honour).

Social Norm

A rule of behaviour such that individuals prefer to conform to it on conditions that believe that:

- (a) most people in their RN conform to it (empirical expectations),
and
- (b) that most people in their RN believe they ought to conform to it
(normative expectations)

Thanks for listening

Comments and Questions

