

Critical Ethnographic Analysis of Honour-Related Violence and Killings in Pakistan

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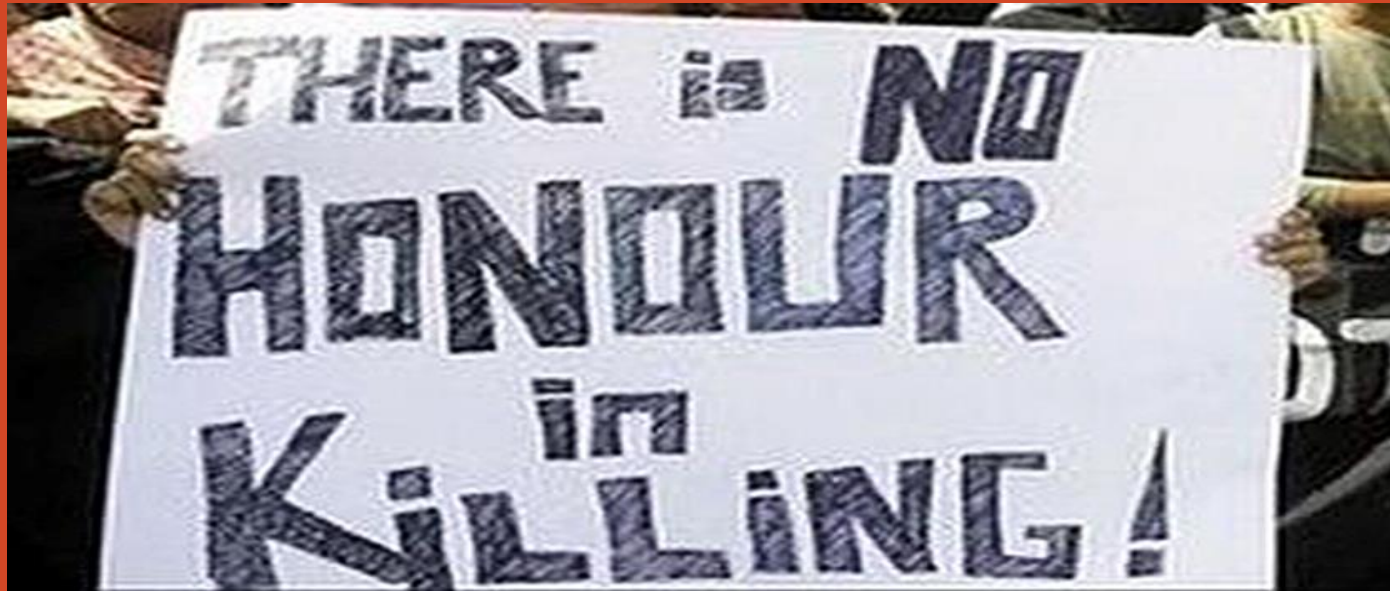
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Critical ethnographic analysis of honour-related violence and killings in Pakistan



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Honour

Three key aspects:

- › It has positive connotations
- › Its connection to crime, violence and killings makes it contentious.
- › Widely used definition: “a person’s value in his own and others’ eyes”.

The appraisal of the conduct by others refers to the reception and evaluation of the conduct by others (Pitt-Rivers 1968, p. 503).

Honour as *sentiment* means it is a matter of feelings;

Manifestation of the feelings in conduct refers to tangible behaviours as the expression of the feelings;

Umbrella terms: honour Crimes, honour-based abuse, honour-based violence

Umbrella term includes:

Force marriage
FGM
Forced suicide
Assault
Honour Killing
Psychological abuse
Economic abuse

Child marriages
Acid attacks
Forced abortion
Blackmailing
Death threats

Predominantly perpetrators of honour crimes are male family members, but in some cases, female members can also participate as instigators, collaborators, and abettors.

Honour crime may affect men, boys, lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender people, but honour-related violence is more prevalent against women and girls.

Prevalence

Global

- UN identifies HBV occurs in 25+ countries
- UK estimates 5000 HKs every year worldwide
- HBV incidents apart from HK are not documented in many countries
- Over 2000 HKs are reported from India & Pakistan annually.
- My analysis shows that between 2004 & 2016, 15,222 HKs were reported in Pakistan – which means 1,170 every year, 22 per week.

England & Wales

- 2,887 HBA offences recorded by police forces in England & Wales by the end of March 2022.
- 6% increase as compared to March 2021 (2,725).
- 12 HKs are estimated each year in the UK.
- 110 women were killed by men in 2020 (Femicide Census, 2020)

Predominant explanations

Cultural explanation

- Honour culture - authorises its members, mainly males, to resort to violence and murders to save the family's honour.
- Particularises to specific culture with specific characteristics:
 - Collective & tribal
 - Patriarchal & regressive
 - Non-western, distant, and insular.
 - Fixed and homogenous
 - “Pseudo-biological property of communal life” (Gilroy, 1993).

Patriarchal explanation


- Honour crimes having little or nothing or little to do with any particular culture, but rather that the root cause of the problem lies with universal patriarchal structures that oppress women worldwide.
- Universalises
 - Socio-economic and political structures
 - Essentially patriarchal in nature
 - Universally oppressive for women

What does cultural framing do?

- Makes it a hypersensitive & politically charged issue
- Specifies to almost a single group
- Not only stigmatises and stereotypes certain acts of violence but entire communities and cultures.
- Police and Crown Prosecution Services are reluctant to tackle the issue.
- Ignores:
 - the gendered nature of the violence
 - wider social, political and economic factors and processes.
- Creates the dichotomy between us and them.
- Less attention paid to:
 - engage the communities and groups.
 - Primary research

My study:

What are the community notions of honour, and how are they implicated in honour killings of women and girls in Pakistan and within the Pakistani community in the UK?



Research design

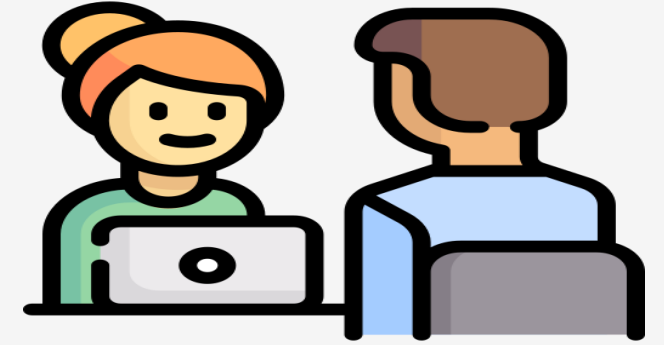
Critical ethnographic principles:

- the reality lying beneath surface appearances.
- attentiveness to the realistic representation.
- sensitivity to "positionality" and "reflexivity".
- not only describing the social forces and structures of domination, inequality and exploitation but...
 - to examine them critically
 - to generate knowledge about them
 - to inform social and political action for social justice.



Data collection methods

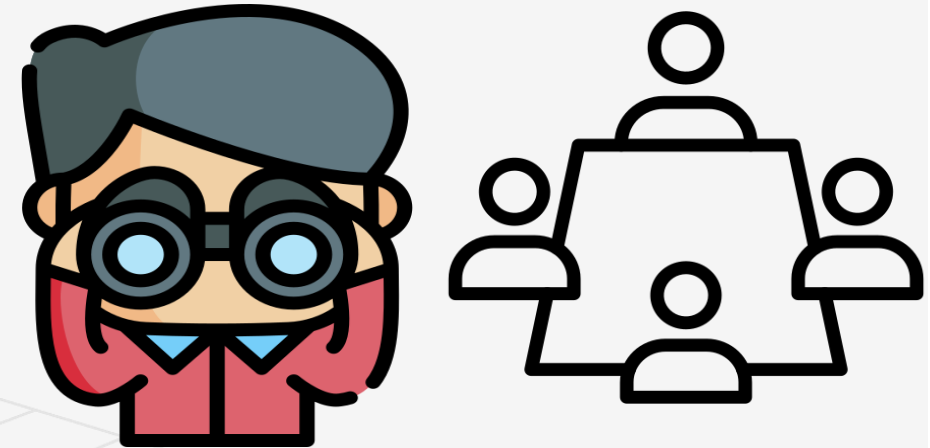
Small talks (informal conversations) = 100+ (majority of them were men)



In-depth-individual interviews = 24 (n= 12 men & 12 women)

Group interviews = 6 (n = 36 men)

Observations = various social events (*Jirga*, *biradri*/clan meetings, the court proceedings)



Archival Research = Since 1757, South Asia in general, India and Pakistan in particular.

Reasons (pretext) behind HBV

Sexual

- Pre-marital sex
- Extra-marital sex
- A woman or girl being raped
- Getting pregnant from the sexual relationship
- Having a boyfriend

Bodily

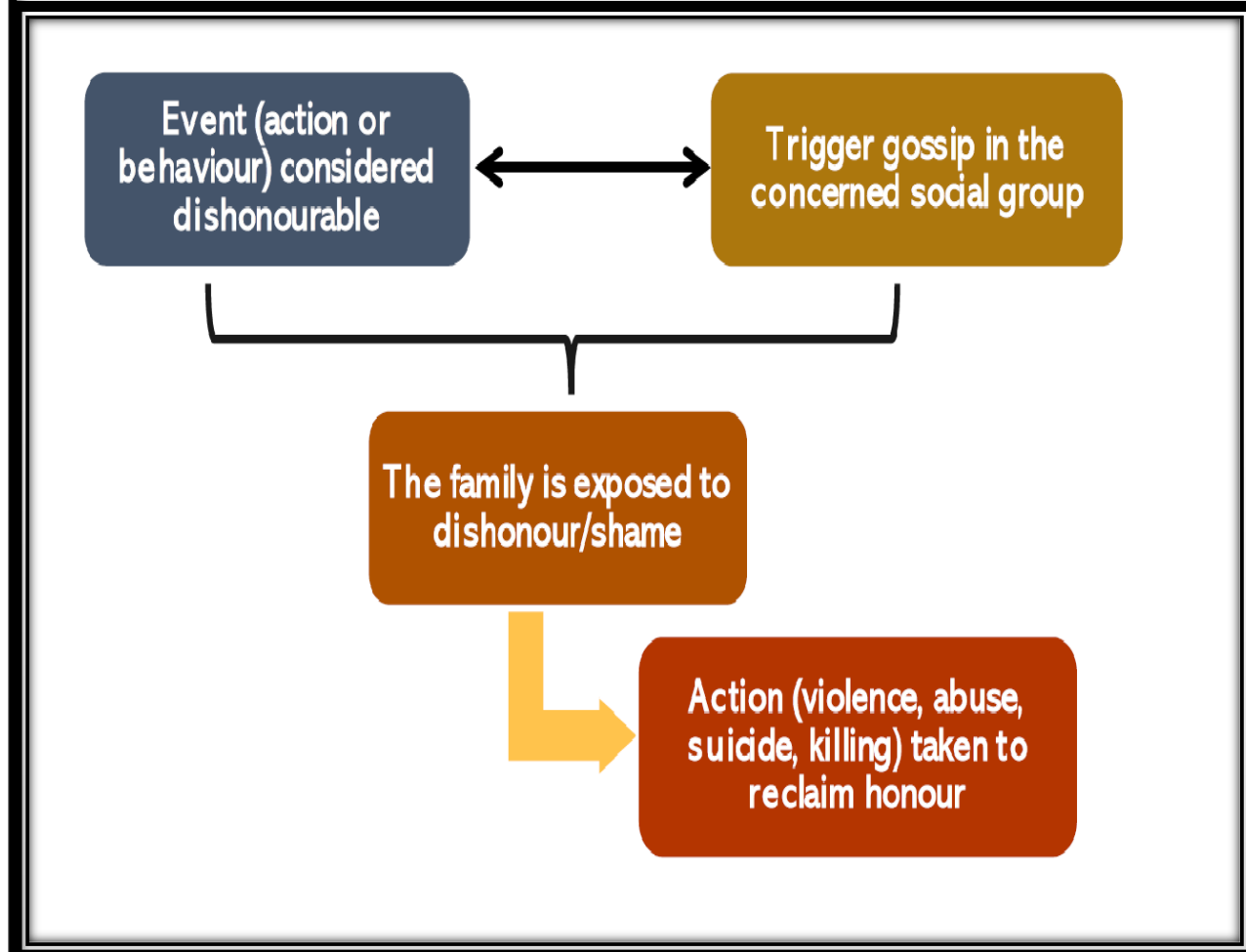
- Wearing revealing/tight clothes
- No proper purdah
- Adopting a western lifestyle by migrant women and girls living in the Western countries

Social

- Asking for a share in the inheritance
- Disobedience to parents and/or family men
- Working outside of the home
- Moving away from their family house before marriage
- Going out without the permission of parents or other male members of a family
- Talking to an unrelated man
- Using mobile phone
- Using social media

Social predominantly related to marriage

- Marriage:
 - without consent of family
 - outside one's social group (concerned norm circles)
 - by eloping with a man of her own or another social group
 - with a man from a lower caste
 - with a non-Muslim man
- Asking for a divorce
- Saying no to cousin marriage
- Complaint to relevant authorities against parents who tried to arrange a forced marriage



Analysis:

- Honour is a universal concept
- However, its conception, configuration, use, and consequence are both historically & culturally variable.
- Not a single community, culture, or class has the monopoly on defending one's honour through violence.
- Family honour is not only an abstract concept but a highly valued and fiercely protected currency.
- On many cultures consider women and girls the objects of the currency.

My research proposes:

Culture → **Social practice** (problematise the issue but avoids stigmatising and stereotyping cultures)

Entire communities → **Norm circle** (specifies the social groups that observe the practice of honour killings & avoids blaming the entire communities)

Duality → **Spectrum & intersectionality** (offers the possibility to consider the subtle complexities and wider factors in political and economic perspectives rather than brushing them away with dichotomy).

Finally, it emphasises engaging the social groups (norm circles) to bring change from within.



Conclusion

This interdisciplinary, transnational study introduces a shift from an essentialised cultural view and the binary division of cultures based on the conception of honour to the novel concept of the **honour system**.

This is a 'real' and a 'complex' social system of **power and control** underpinned by the notions of honour.

This conception enables a change in narratives, power structures and behaviour regarding honour-related violence and honour killings.

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Thanks for listening

Questions and comments are welcome