

VIOLENCE AGAINST AFGHAN IMMIGRANT WOMEN IN CANADA:

CULTURAL INFLUENCES IN HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOURS

by

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ABSTRACT

There have been studies on abuse against immigrant women, in spousal relationships. There is also literature on state violence against women in Afghanistan. Research to date has shown that there are various structural and cultural barriers affecting the help-seeking behaviours of many immigrant women subjected to spousal abuse. If Afghan culture is preserved in Canada, then, along with potential barriers that exist as immigrants, many of these women are constrained to seek help because of cultural barriers. This issue is important to address in order to make awareness of the phenomenon. My research question is: How does culture influence abused Afghan immigrant women's help-seeking behaviours in Canada? Interviews with service providers in the Afghan community were conducted to explore explanations for the victims' behaviours. Much of the findings were in keeping with past research related to immigrant women's lives. However, this study is unique given the group in question. I conclude that patriarchal practices rather than cultural essentialism explain the phenomenon of violence and help-seeking behaviours.

Key words: Violence, Culture, Help-Seeking, Patriarchy, Immigrant, Women

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Theoretical Perspectives.....	3
Islamic Feminism	9
Islamic Feminists’ view of culture	11
Afghanistan	12
The Status of Women and Cultural Influences on Women Abuse in Afghanistan	13
Violence Against Women.....	17
Help-Seeking Behaviours of Abused Women	18
General Help-Seeking Behaviours.....	18
Immigrant Women’s Help-Seeking Behaviours	19
Time in Canada and age at immigration	20
Cultural Influences on Help-Seeking Behaviours	21
Cultural Influences on Help-Seeking Behaviours in Canada.....	22
The Study: Afghan Immigrant Women’s Help-Seeking Behaviours.....	24
Approach	24
Strategy	25
Sample.....	26
Data Collection Tools	27
Limitations	28
Data Organization	30
Findings.....	32
Abuse	32
Help-Seeking.....	33
Influences for Help-Seeking	33
What Women Look For When Seeking Help	35
Barriers to Seeking Help.....	35
Patriarchal Practice	39
Family Orientation	43
Religion.....	45
Conclusions.....	46
Policy Implications.....	49
Appendices.....	51
Appendix A: Interview Questions.....	52
Appendix B: Conceptual Map.....	54
Appendix C: Conceptual Pattern	58
References	60

LIST OF FIGURES

Appendix B: Conceptual Map	54
Figure 1: Theme Abuse.....	54
Figure 2: Theme Help-Seeking	55
Figure 3: Theme Patriarchal Practice.....	56
Figure 4: Theme Family Orientation	57

LIST OF TABLES

Appendix C: Conceptual Patterns.....	58
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Introduction

Research on abuse against women has increased tremendously over the last two decades. Many scholars have focused on the difficulties in addressing this phenomenon among various ethnic groups. Immigrant women are more vulnerable as victims of abuse because of their immigration status. This is not to underestimate the difficulties faced by other abused women, however, immigrant women face additional barriers in addressing their struggles as victims of abuse. These additional barriers include, but are not limited to, language barriers, immigration status and cultural norms (Rana, 2012, as cited in Canadian Women's Foundation, 2013). Scholars have found that immigrant status and cultural norms influence many abused women's help-seeking behaviours (Lee & Hadeed, 2009; Ahmad, 2009; Zakar et al., 2012; Raj & Silverman, 2002). Abuse against immigrant women from developing countries is found to be more prevalent compared to immigrants from developed nations (Brownridge & Shive, 2002). For example, living in a patriarchal society, many women in Afghanistan are constrained from seeking help from spousal abuse because of limited services and societal norms. However, in Canada, where violence against women is criminalized and services are available, women and families can be expected to be aware and take advantage of support services to strengthen their relationships and/or find other solutions. The prevalence and severity of abuse against women from developed and developing countries however, is argued to be similar in terms of type and reasons for violence. My research shows that violence against Afghan immigrant women in Canada does exist.

There is support for the idea that many immigrants tend to retain certain aspects of their cultures, including oppression toward women (Brownridge & Shive, 2002). Immigrant women

from Afghanistan experience violence against them by their spouses, but do not report it or seek help because of existing barriers. It can be argued that this is because of their cultural background where violence against women in spousal relations is seen as common and is not addressed.

The terms violence and abuse will be used interchangeably when referring to this type of oppression against women. Victims, potential victims and the Afghan community in general should be aware of this issue, to support and assist victims of violence. Violence in the home is generally hidden from the wider community. However, in order to address it, it must be acknowledged, not only through research but through public awareness. In the instance that the issue is recognized, it is important to consider the existing help and prevention strategies, and consider their strengths and limitations to improve them. This unfortunate activity will prevail if no action is taken. Abused women are a vulnerable group and the situation of violence is such that it affects not only the individual and her health physically and psychologically, but violence can also affect the people around her, including family members.

In this paper, I am taking on the complex concepts of culture, religion and patriarchy, and it is my intent to show the relationship of these ideologies as they pertain to violence against women, with a focus on culture as an underlying concept. Culture is an underlying influence that many may not be aware of, and one I hope to uncover with this research project. In order to explore and discover this issue from a new lens and focus on the Afghan community for the first time, I hope to answer this question: How does culture influence abused Afghan immigrant women's help-seeking behaviours in Canada? Exploring this question can reveal potential approaches that have not been taken to address the abuse, as well as limitations in existing strategies.

Theoretical Perspectives

In this discussion of theoretical perspectives, I am conducting a literature review as a debate between different perspectives, gradually showing my interpretation of patriarchy and its position in the discussion of culture and how these concepts correlate. In conducting the literature review, it is my intent to present the debates between theorists to whose work I offer reaction to in parts of the literature review, my analysis of data, and in my conclusions.

According to Statistics Canada (2001; as cited in Brownridge & Halli, 2002), more than three quarters of immigrants are from developing countries. Since 1959, the number of immigrants from Asia has been increasing to 153, 308 people in the year 2009/2010 (Statistics Canada, 2011). This population is the largest group of immigrants in Canada. According to this Census, Asia includes developing countries like India, Philippines and other parts of Asia that were not specified, and they make up the majority of the immigrant population (Statistics Canada, 2011). Africa is the second largest immigrant population group in 2009/2010, not including Europe.

African and Asian nations are classified as developing countries. Brownridge and Halli (2001) mentioned that the presumed patriarchy that exists within many of these immigrants' cultures is the norm. This is also taken to imply that abuse against women is normative within these communities. Brownridge and Halli (2001) argue that, "despite living in Canada, these women have a different experience of violence than their counterparts from developed countries and the average Canadian victim" (p. 457). For one, it is assumed that many women from developed countries are uneducated and poor (Shankar, 2009). Thus their view of abuse against

them may be different in that they may accept it. The ideologies embedded in these assumptions will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

Dasgupta (1998, in Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005) argues that it is a common Western practice that an immigrant's culture is blamed for domestic violence. In particular, in Western societies, it is assumed that minority ethnic communities, or 'other cultures' accept women abuse more than the Western culture does (Dasgupta, 1998; as cited in Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). Likewise Volpp (2005) argues that since immigrant groups are devalued, their behaviour is perceived as more culturally determined than the dominant culture's (as cited in Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). In particular, "the powerful are depicted as having no culture, other than the universal culture of civilization" (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005, p. 46-47). Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) suggest that the belief that 'the others' engage in oppressive cultural practices goes as far as to ignore the existing oppressive acts of violence against women in Western societies.

Domestic violence scholars stress that culture should not be confused with patriarchy (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). According to Almeida and Dolan-Delvecchio (1999, as cited in Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005), oppressive behaviour against women including abuse is not culture; they are traditional patriarchal customs men practice and women accept or go along with. Brownmiller (1975, as cited in Hunnicutt, 2009) brings in patriarchy as the key theoretical concept in her radical feminist work. Patriarchy is: "social arrangements that privilege males, where men as a group dominate women as a group, both structurally and ideologically—hierarchical arrangements that manifest in varieties across history and social space" (p. 557). In other words, patriarchy can be considered as economic, social and/or political oppression of women by men (Shankar, 2009).

Specifically, “[r]adical feminists contend that the most important set of social relations in any society is found in patriarchy” (DeKeserdy, Ellis, & Alvi, 2005). In terms of violence against women, radical feminist theory argues that men engage in this behaviour because they need or desire to control women (Daly & Chesney-Lind, 1988, as cited in DeKeseredy et al., 2005). From a critical perspective, Hunnicutt (2009) argues that radical feminism’s theory of men’s use of violence against women as a form of control fails to consider that patriarchal systems can exist without abuse. More specifically, violence against women is argued as a consequence rather than a cause of patriarchies (Hunnicutt, 2009). Specifically, Hunnicutt (2009) argues that men’s hegemonic ways are not conscious acts which are also consensual among women. Whether it is their socialization or something else, “women can be said to be enslaved by ideas that cast their subordination as normal, ensuring quiescence. Violence against women is a manifestation of patriarchal systems and may indeed reinforce those systems” (Hunnicutt, 2009, 561). This contradicts radical feminists’ argument that men need or desire to control women as mentioned above.

Furthermore, adding to the criticism of western-based feminist ideas in general, Herr (2014) argues that white feminists perceive women’s oppression in third world cultures as worse than the oppression of white women in the West. This involves the view that third world cultures are backward and patriarchal (Mohanty, 1991, as cited in Herr, 2014). Women from developing countries or third-world women are often considered as worse victims of patriarchal structures of dominance than women in the west (Shankar, 2009). Reflecting a lack of insight on the historical and political contexts, third-world women are considered ignorant, poor, and uneducated (Mohanty, 1991, as cited in Herr, 2014).

Meanwhile, scholars such as Tjaden and Thoennes (2000, as cited in Du Mont, Hyman, O'Brien, White, Odette, & Tyyskä, 2012) indicate several factors associated with intimate partner abuse; "geographic region of residence, ethnicity, country of birth, young age, common-law relationships, lower socioeconomic status, lower levels of education, activity limitations, and the presence of children in the household" (p. 772). It is perceived that women's dislocation from developing countries, to more developed western regions, like North America give women the means to escape the patriarchal structure, through economic independence (Shankar, 2009). This implies that only developing countries abide by traditional patriarchal norms, when in reality patriarchy is present in all households, including those in western society. Unfortunately, abuse against women is widespread throughout all countries, cultures, and across all ages, and diverse backgrounds (Menjivar & Salcido, 2002).

In keeping with the presumed negative impact of "other" cultures, it is often denied that cultural beliefs may serve as protective factors for abused women (Dasgupta & Warrior, 1996, et al., as cited in Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). This will be further explained during my analysis. Experiences during resettlement in a new country including limited social networks and support, changes in gender roles, and de-skilling, are found to contribute to stress, marital issues and intimate partner violence (Du Mont et al., 2012). Further, Du Mont et al. (2012) found that younger women and women with low-income were likely to experience intimate partner abuse.

Shankar (2009) points out that patriarchal structures vary with context, as people move through space and time. Thus, for example Hunnicutt (2009) has critiqued the term patriarchy, arguing that many use it as a fixed and timeless structure, with limited variations. This means that many perceive patriarchy as parallel across all contexts which Bunch (1987) calls "universal patriarchy" (Hunnicutt, 2009; Herr, 2014). Hunnicutt (2009) argues that abuse against women

varies across time and space. For example, abuse against women is accepted in many patriarchal states, including western developed and non-western developing countries but they take different expressions.

In a patriarchal household, the male figure is the head of the home, followed by the women. Male domination in households is common, and many cultures outside of Canada hold the notion that men are the rulers of the home which in turn give them more rights than women (Barnett, 2001). These traditional patriarchal roles are prevalent in many homes today regardless of culture, religion, or nationality. It is relevant to consider Ayyub's (2000) focus on Muslim South Asians, because of the similarity in religious affiliation and patriarchal norms. Women are considered the honour bearers of the family which is maintained with the preservation of their traditional roles (Ayyub, 2000). In a Western country like the United States of America, immigrant men who are accustomed to a patriarchal family system find it difficult to share power with their wife (ibid.). Abused women's help-seeking strategies are constrained due to intertwined factors of immigration and socio-cultural norms like patriarchy (Ahmad, 2009). Ahmad's (2009) study on abused South Asian immigrant women found that family and community members expect the participants to be silent about abuse and remain in an abusive relationship, not contesting their subordinate role to men. Ahmad (2009) argues that the participants' socially prescribed gender roles through their cultural context are linked to women's low social status and education in the South Asian community. This notion is contradicted by Ayyub (2000) who contends that even educated and employed women are found conforming to these patriarchal roles and imposing them on their children.

Erez et al., (2009) conducted interviews with 137 immigrant women from 17 social service agencies in diverse cities in the United States to analyze domestic violence among

immigrant women. They found that immigrant women raised in a male dominated household consider abuse and the subordination of women, a norm in the relationship. Likewise, Raj and Silverman (2002) contend that immigrant women who get accustomed to Western culture and deviate from their cultural roles are more vulnerable to abuse. However, as Hunnicutt (2009) points out, there are patriarchal systems that exist without abuse.

Building on these critiques of western feminists' articulation of patriarchy, Mohanty (1991, as cited in Herr, 2014) argues that third world feminists should consider intersectional approaches regarding women's oppression and resistance. The intersectionality approach to violence against women seeks to consider structural differences, manifested in the lives of women of colour, immigrant women, poor women, women with disabilities, and other women whose gender is part of their marginalized status (Kanuha, 1994, as cited in Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). In my study, the discussion of Muslim immigrant women from developing countries applies to an intersectional approach. Herr (2014) discussed the concepts of third-world feminism and transnational feminism as oppositions to mainstream second-wave feminism. Second-wave feminism generally presents the idea that all women face the same oppression.

The ideologies Herr (2014) presents, coincide with Hunnicutt's (2009) argument that patriarchy varies with time and space. Considering Hunnicutt's (2009) work regarding patriarchy, third world feminism and transnational feminism both reject false universalism. For insight on variations in oppression against women, third-world feminism is on and by third world women (Herr, 2014). Apart from transnational feminism, third-world feminism targets local/national contexts (Herr, 2014), thus building on transnationalism. Transnational feminism, meanwhile, focuses on movements outside the home country (Grewal & Kaplan, 2001, as cited in Herr, 2014), i.e. on the lives of immigrant women. In this way, a combination of transnational

and third world feminism is required for a fuller understanding of the lives of immigrant racialized women from the third world, who live in the western context.

In sum, while culture is targeted as the culprit for the oppression and violence against women that occurs in many immigrant communities, Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) argue that culture alone should not be considered a rationale for domestic violence. Rather, and in keeping with the intersectional, transnational and global feminist arguments, the structural forms of oppression within the culture, such as racism, colonialism, and economic exploitation should be considered. Based on these arguments, I contend that many women from developing countries do not necessarily face any more or less spousal abuse than women in western developed countries. The main point is that the forms of violence may vary, and that these third world immigrant women's help-seeking strategies may differ. Therefore, the approaches needed to tackle abuse should also vary.

Islamic Feminism

Many features of culture are informed through religion, so it is difficult to separate the two. Sedaat's (2013) argument corresponds with Hunnicutt's (2009) critique of universal feminism. Sedaat (2013) uses Barlas' (2007) question of whether to embrace the intersection of Islam and Feminism, to argue that feminism should be extended to other women. However, the existing "us versus them" ideology emphasizes the existence of the "other" (Sedaat, 2013). The convergence of Islam and feminism is denied by many scholars (as cited in Sedaat, 2013), in part due to the assumption that feminism is strictly a Western approach opposing Islamic views (Sedaat, 2013). "Feminism is the primary mode for theorizing female subjectivities in the framework of political modernity...in that feminism deploys against patriarchy, it may mean that

all struggles for sex equality in Islam will inevitably be named feminist” (Sedaat, 2013, p. 37).

Accepting the notion that feminism claims the work against patriarchy as its own, I can presume that the scholars who deny the intersection of Islam and feminism, contravene Hunnicutt’s (2009) and Herr’s (2014) argument that patriarchy varies in context.

Many western feminists claim that Islamic culture is oppressive to women, particularly through the assertion that the religion of Islam promotes the inferiority of women (Fetzer and Soper, 2008, as cited in King, 2009). In addition, Western feminists assert that such oppressive and patriarchal assumptions force Muslim women in the West, into traditional gender roles (King, 2009). For example, many Muslim families from Pakistan came to London and have brought with them specific notions of family honour that female family members are required to preserve (King, 2009).

In contrast to this common western feminist claim, Islamic feminists have argued that women’s conditions improved with the arrival of Islam (King, 2009). Developed in the late twentieth century, Islamic feminism was the work of Muslim diasporic feminists in the West (King, 2009). Islamic feminists’ work emphasizes the creation of a new civil society worldwide, based on the teachings of the Qur’an, including gender equality (King, 2009). Over time, however, (for reasons that are too complex to outline here) many Muslim groups moved away from Qur’an’s view of gender equality, to women’s silence and seclusion in light of the customs of the society at the time (King, 2009).

According to Qur’an translator, Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall (1925, as cited in King, 2009), “the historical truth is that the Prophet of Islam is the greatest feminist the world has ever known...[He] is believed to bring to humanity the final message of freedom and

equality, substituting a spiritual community for groupings based upon kinship, race, nation or gender”(p. 308). Jameelah (2005, as cited in King, 2009) discusses the equality of men and women in Islam, stating that neither women are equal to men, nor men equal to women. Instead, Jameelah (2005, as cited in King, 2009) specifies that Islam sees men and women’s roles as complimentary, not competing. According to the Qur’an, husbands and wives are for protection and mutual support (Elsaidi, 2011). Islam’s view of spousal abuse against women is forbidden according to the Qur’an (Elsaidi, 2011). Specifically, verse 4:34, a husband’s authority over their wife is restricted and any form of abuse against them is prohibited by this and many other verses and the Prophet himself. Verses of the Qur’an are sometimes misinterpreted to justify spousal abuse against women (Elsaidi, 2011), something that happens in many other religions and cultures. The ideals expressed in the Qur’an and in Islam do not justify abuse and oppression against anyone, let alone women. Abuse and oppression are cultural practices in countries premised on patriarchy and unfortunately many use the Qur’an and Islam to justify such practices.

Islamic feminists’ view of culture. Geaves (2005, as cited in King, 2009) notes that there can be no agreement of what culture or religion is, in Islam. Many view cultural practices against women as both religious and/or cultural. In contrast, Islamic feminists reject the use of Islam to justify female oppression (King, 2009). Islam is a religion that offers women rights, including the right to their marriage partner, to divorce, and to inheritance (Mernissi, 1987, as cited in Ayyub, 2000). King (2009) and Ayyub (2000) suggest that Islam is exploited to justify the oppression of women, which Islamic extremists translated into legal practices and bureaucratic rules. Western feminists mistakenly use this to attack culture and religion and blame

Islam for women's abuse. Islamic feminists make a distinction between culture, as what actually happens to women, and religion as the pure word of God (King, 2009).

Culture can be defined in many ways based on professional discipline and perspective (Raj & Silverman, 2002). According to Raj (2001), "a review of meanings across disciplines defines culture as social doctrines taken on by a group, and this group is based on any of the following unifying social phenomena: race/ethnicity, gender, class, religion, sexual orientation, region, national origin, age, and so forth (as cited in Raj & Silverman, 2002, 369). It may be assumed that culture plays an intensifying role in spousal abuse. However, Dasgupta (1998) suggests that too often, an immigrant's culture is to blame for domestic abuse (as cited in Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). "Many White Americans presume that 'other' cultures, especially minority ones, are far more accepting of woman abuse than the U.S. culture" (Dasgupta, 1998, as cited in Sokoloff & Dupont, p. 45-46).

Afghanistan

The focus of my research is specifically on Afghanistan and Afghan immigrant women. Thus, in Afghanistan, religious and political influences created a cultural practise impeding women's rights. Many people including extremist groups use the positive treatment of women at the time of the Prophet to justify their views and attack the 'Islamic' cultures that oppress women (King, 2009). Despite these distinctions, members of many Islamist groups practice strict oppressions against people deemed to have breached Islamic law, including women (King, 2009). For example, this is the case with existing extremist groups in Afghanistan. According to United Kingdom's political and religious leaders, the true Islam of peace and equality is distorted by Islamic extremists (King, 2009). "Over time, religion and states have absorbed much

patriarchal authority once monopolized by male heads of families” (Hunnicut, 2009). Hunnicutt (2009) indicates that, “most mainstream religions and the state are institutions of dominance that are secured with common patriarchal moral underpinnings” (p. 564).

The status of women and cultural influences on woman abuse in Afghanistan. A

beautiful country with an estimated population of 29,928,987 (in 2005), Afghanistan is an Islamic republic as indicated by the country’s full name, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and its citizens and residents are predominantly Muslim (Rosenberg, 2005; Rippenburg, 2004).

According to Rosenberg (2005), Afghanistan’s legal system is dependent on Islamic laws as “no laws should be contrary to Islam” (Rosenberg, 2005). This interpretation of Afghan nationalism upholds a specific interpretation of Islam: “Third World nationalists have consistently subscribed to essentialist and masculinist conceptions of nation and nationalism, predicated on the subjugation of women” (Herr, 2014, p. 7). The defined religious culture is validated through state laws and political systems. This machination shows that culture and religion are not static, rather politically contingent and informed by power structures (Drumbl, 2004).

The civil war period of 1992-1995 in Afghanistan was a brutal time for all Afghans, and especially Afghan women (Cheshmak, 2007). This period was a starting point leading into the extremist regime in 1996 (ibid.). Women’s advancement in Afghanistan had always been challenged since the 1920s, and further in the 1960s and 1970s, particularly due to the fact that the country was primarily empowered by patriarchal attitudes (ibid.). Once in power, the Islamic extremists enforced strict conservative Shariah laws that threatened women’s autonomy, human rights and legal standing (Cheshmak, 2007; Rippenburg, 2004). Elsaidi (2011) notes that Shariah is divine law, including law, moral and religious guidance. It is built on the Qur’an and the Sunnah (the way) and hadith (sayings) of the Prophet (King, 2009). The definition of Shariah

law is unknown to human beings given its divinity. Shariah laws are Islamic laws, used to justify violence and suppression to the extent where death was a common punishment in preserving the newly formed Islamist culture (Young, 1997). With the extremists' invasion, women lost their previously enjoyed rights to education, employment, healthcare, and other basic human rights (Cheshmak, 1997). The abuse against Afghan women was primarily a result of the restrictions the extremists imposed on them (Renzetti, 2010). Moghadam's (2004) research (explained more fully below) on the crisis of Middle Eastern patriarchy, informs us of patriarchy in Muslim countries, regarding gender roles, imposed through religion.

Manganaro and Alozie (2011) conducted a quantitative study to find out whether Afghan men and women differ in their perceptions of gender roles. Results showed that men were less likely to approve of women's political participation and empowerment. The very low support given to women in Afghanistan is not surprising given the male dominated government administration associated with the extremist groups (Manganaro & Alozie, 2011). According to Moghadam's (1992) research comparing the politicisation of gender in Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan in the late 1970s and 1980s, women had little to no public power as that was left to the men, as authority figures in these patriarchal societies. When using the term patriarchal, Moghadam (1992) referred to the subordination of women. Moghadam (1992) argued that the politics of gender is strong in patriarchal societies like Afghanistan. Islamic movements discouraged any improvements in women's position as seen during the civil war in Afghanistan (ibid.). With a more recent analysis, Moghadam (1999) compared Iran and Afghanistan's social revolution and the effect on women's status. Women's behaviour and way of dress are defined by political and/or cultural movements, in patriarchal or religious-based societies (Moghadam,

1999). In sum, the revolutions and conflicts in Afghanistan intensified gender issues and divisions.

Reforms during the revolution in the 1970s, seeking to grant women freedom and rights, threatened male authority and were challenged (Moghadam, 1999). The beginning of a reform program for women's rights was defeated by what Moghadam (1999) described as a tribal-patriarchal social structure, and a well-armed religiopolitical movement. In the time of the Mujahideen, who were considered freedom fighters in response to the civil war, efforts towards creating women's rights were overruled with strict regulations that were then intensified with violence by extremists a few years later (Moghadam, 1992). Fundamentalist views that were enforced, preferred veiling and restrictions on women who are seen as the bearers of culture and tradition (Moghadam, 1992; Dupree, 2002). For instance, in rural Afghanistan among the Pashtun tribe, women and children are considered the property of men. Moghadam (1999) cited Centlivres-Demont's (1994) work demonstrating that the role and status of Afghan women is first and foremost physical and social reproduction. It was predominantly the Pashtun tribal group who disapproved of the new revolution in the early 1970s when Afghanistan's government was controlled by Marxist-inspired men and women (Moghadam, 1999). They were intimidated by the women's movement in Afghanistan.

An opposition army against these reformist forces was formed by religious students who were raised in the Afghan refugee camps of Peshawar during the 1980s; they were labelled extremist groups. "[Their] only education came from poorly equipped religious schools in Peshawar espousing a conservative doctrine partly inspired by the extremist ideology of Saudi Arabia. They had no conception of modern governance, democratic or participatory rule, human rights, or women's rights" (Moghadam, 1999, p. 183). Their interpretation of Islam justified their

strict regulations (Moghadam, 1999; Wing & Nadimi 2011; Bolka, 2005). For example, Young (1997) discussed the international human rights principles in contrast with different local domestic laws that reflect cultural practices. Young (1997) noted that the extremist groups' exercise of punishment was argued to be a provision of the Shariah law. This extremist belief formed a culture that leaves international law little room to intervene (Young, 1997). This raises legal and human rights concerns. According the United Nations, 87% of women in Afghanistan are victims of abuse inside the home and in public (Wing & Nadimi, 2011). Although the extremist groups are no longer in power, many Afghans remain committed to the version of Islam they experienced during the extremist years (Wing & Nadimi, 2011; Bolka, 2005).

Renzetti's (2010) commentary gives some insight to the history of the war in Afghanistan and its effect on Afghan women. Women and girls were not permitted to attend school or work, or even leave their house for that matter, without the supervision of a close male family escort (Renzetti 2010; Cheshmak, 2007). It was mandatory for women to wear burqas (a one piece dress covering the head, face and body), without their ankles showing, and not singing or raising their voices in public (ibid.). These strict regulations were imposed under the stated intent to protect the honour and female virtue in the household (Moghadam, 1992; Cheshmak, 2007; Benard et al., 2008). Any rebellious acts resulted in public abuse and humiliation (ibid.). Many women are still seen to obey these regulations set more than 10 years ago (Cheshmak, 2007).

Stabile and Kumar (2005) conducted a media analysis, describing the lives of Afghan women before and after the extremists' regime. They found that the extremists restricted the lives of Afghan women, socially and politically. Inequality among men and women in Afghanistan still exists despite Afghan women's amplified rights and access to institutions and increased political participation (Maranaro & Alozie, 2011). Dupree (2002) described the

Afghan society as it shifted to an atmosphere of intolerance within the past two decades. This shift was demonstrated in the extremist beliefs which have overwhelmed Afghanistan's culture (Dupree, 2002). Today, power structures in Afghanistan are patriarchal, exclusionary, and totalitarian (Drumbl, 2004). Overall, gender, ethnicity, politics, social class and religion in Afghanistan have an influence in women's ongoing subjection to abuse (Drumbl, 2004). This is the cultural heritage that is considered in this discussion.

Violence Against Women

Generally referred to as domestic violence, intimate partner violence, or spousal abuse, violence against women is defined by Health Canada as "an attempt to control the behavior of a wife, common-law partner or girlfriend. It is a misuse of power which uses the bond of intimacy, trust and dependency to make the woman unequal, powerless and unsafe" (Neufeld, 2009, 182). This behaviour contains "any act of gender-based violence that results in...physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life" (Canadian Women's Foundation, 2013, 2). Noting the importance of context and cultural forms of violence, The Research And Development (RAND) organization (2008) which focuses on the women of Afghanistan, states that:

Violence against women by family members is widespread and includes deprivation of education and economic opportunities, verbal and psychological violence, beatings, sexual violence, and murder. Many acts of violence are the result of traditional practices, including the betrothal of young girls in infancy, early marriage, forced marriage, and

crimes of “honor” [in which a female is punished for having purportedly offended custom, tradition, or honor]. (p. 23)

Help-Seeking Behaviours of Abused Women. Researchers present different theories of violence against women, including radical feminism, as discussed above (Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). As detailed earlier, for the purpose of this research, patriarchy is seen as a contributing factor not only in the existence of spousal violence, but also an influence on help-seeking behaviours. I am exploring how culture influences the help-seeking behaviours of Afghan immigrant women seeking protection from spousal abuse. I will first discuss the help-seeking strategies of abused women in general, then dig deeper and specify the help-seeking strategies of immigrant women.

General help-seeking behaviours. Kaukinen (2013) conducted a quantitative study to examine the help-seeking behaviours of female victims of spousal abuse. Kaukinen (2013) considered the role of income, education, and employment status as influences for their victim’s help-seeking behaviours. Regardless of the availability of social support services, the abused women tended toward informal sources of help, including family and friends compared to formal sources, including health, social, and legal services (Kaukinen, 2013; Ansara, 2010). However, those with higher education and knowledge of the role of support services, more frequently sought formal help. Women dependent on their male partners for economic stability were less likely to seek formal help or to leave the violent relationship (Kaukinen, 2013). Barrett’s (2011) study examining variations in women’s help-seeking strategies found that victims were less likely to contact police or court services, or other formal support sources. Abused women, who feared for their lives, were more likely to use informal and formal sources (Barrett, 2011).

Ansara’s (2010) study regarding formal and informal help-seeking strategies, found that

women were more likely to seek help as the severity and perceived danger of the violence increased. In their quantitative study of reasons why abused women do not seek help, Fugate, Landis, Riordan, Naureckas, and Engel (2005) found that many participants did not consider the situation serious enough to seek help from agencies. These participants would counsel themselves or talk to someone else. The reason why many did not talk to someone else about their situation was because they did not have anyone to talk to (Fugate et al., 2005). Isolation, shame, embarrassment, and fear of being judged were some obstacles these participants faced. Some participants indicated barriers such as no money, or no time for not seeking help. Others reported constraints for not seeking formal help included, protecting their abusive partner and preserving their relationship (ibid.).

Immigrant women's help-seeking behaviours. Abused immigrant women are less likely than abused non-immigrant women to seek formal and informal help (Raj & Silverman, 2002). The additional barriers in immigrant women's access to services include cultural norms, language barriers, restricted mobility, lack of information about help, immigration status, absence of culturally/linguistically sensitive services fear of and lack of trust in the criminal justice system, maintaining family honour, fear of isolation, religious and cultural constraints, social pressure, fear of losing their children, stigmatization, and more (CIC, 2012; Nyers, 2005; Guruge & Humphreys, 2009; Raj & Silverman, 2002; Abraham, 2000). Abused immigrant women are also often isolated from family and friends because of their immigration experience (Bauer et al., 2000 and others, as cited in Raj & Silverman, 2002).

Further, immigrant women's legal status is correlated with their vulnerability in a violent relationship (Raj & Silverman, 2002). In cases of in-land and out-land sponsorships and refugee cases, women's vulnerability may be used by the abuser to threaten the victim and prevent her

from seeking help (Neufeld, 2009). Her abusive husband may also forbid English classes and communication outside the home to prevent insight other than what her husband has told her, or prohibits her from working and earning an independent wage, to prevent autonomy. This leaves her at home, more dependent on her sponsor and isolated from society. Lack of resources or knowledge and presence of threats leaves women in a vulnerable position to seek assistance. Many authors (e.g. Neufeld, 2009; Raj & Silverman, 2002) identify fear of authorities as a barrier to help-seeking. This is particularly notable for undocumented women (Neufeld, 2009) and for those coming from countries where police are corrupt (Raj & Silverman, 2002).

Many abusers take advantage of their wife's precarious status, if they are not legal residents in the country, and threaten to take custody of their children. This is reflective of Ptacek's (1999) social entrapment concept that control tactics by abusers and social and institutional barriers prevent women from seeking help (Moe, 2007). The standards set forth by immigration policy create vulnerability among immigrant women with precarious status. Immigrant women with precarious status have limited rights in accessing services, and little knowledge of the few rights they do have. Women are often left with little option but to remain in the abusive relationship to avoid deportation and possible stigmatization in their home country.

Time in Canada and age at immigration. Brownridge and Halli (2002) consider the length an immigrant has resided in Canada and their age during immigration, to be linked to the cultural influence in abusive spousal relationships. They argue that those with longer period of residence in Canada and those who immigrated at a younger age have had more time to acculturate to Canadian views and values (Brownridge and Halli, 2002). Du Mont et al. (2012) found that recent immigrant women who had been living in Canada 0-19 years reported

experiencing less intimate partner violence than immigrant women in Canada for 20 or more years and Canadian born women. However, Hyman et al. (2006, as cited in Du Mont et al., 2012) suggested that increased time in Canada probably increased the victims' comfort in reporting spousal abuse. Du Mont et al. (2012) found that younger age was a strong predictor of spousal abuse. However, they hypothesized that younger women are more likely to report it.

Cultural Influences on Help-Seeking Behaviours

In my research, the Afghan culture will be discussed based on patriarchal traditions that influence Afghan immigrant women's help-seeking behaviour that come from the country of origin (Afghanistan) and that exist within Canada. For this particular research, patriarchal traditions comprise of religious and political traditions prevalent in Afghanistan, as described above.

Culture is not static, it changes based on context. The Afghan cultures in Afghanistan and outside of Afghanistan are different. In light of this proposed research, the Afghan culture in Afghanistan is determined by state laws that are created through religious reforms. The culture is bound by patriarchal traditions, reflective of the political situation in Afghanistan. Fromm (1955, as cited in Hunnicutt, 2009) argues that "family is the cultural apparatus that supports other systems of domination... The state and criminal justice system emulate the patriarchal structure of the bourgeois family" (564). In a western context, like Canada, the Afghan culture that was formed through that state, is subject to change. The culture may still be intact within the household, but challenged due to differences in Western laws and customs. Many third-world men subscribe to patriarchal customs as a national culture (Herr, 2014; Hunnicutt, 2009). Thus, Dobash and Dobash (1979, as cited in Hunnicutt, 2009) point out that men who abuse their wives

are argued to be living up to cultural standards. However, not all men who identify with that culture abuse their wives (Hunnicut, 2009).

Cultural Influences on Help-Seeking Behaviours in Canada

As previously mentioned, immigrant women who are victims of intimate partner violence are less likely to use formal services due to cultural barriers like shame, fear or retaliation, separation from children and more (Lee & Hadeed, 2009; Ahmad, 2009; Guruge & Humphreys, 2009; Raj & Silverman, 2002; Abraham, 2000). A qualitative study by Zakar, Zakar, Faist and Kreamer (2012) involved 32 interviews with married Pakistani immigrant women in small cities in the North of Germany to explore the dynamics of intimate partner violence and the influence of the process of migration. The strategies many victims used to resist or protect themselves from the violence, included the silent treatment, and by no means did participants report seeking help from the public (Zakar et al., 2012). The women wanted to avoid stigma and criticism of their culture or country or origin (Dasgupta, 2000 and others, as cited in Raj & Silverman, 2002). Although many abused immigrant women do not leave their relationship for many similar reasons as non-immigrant abused women, like fear of their or their child's life, financial dependency, love for their abuser, immigrant women are constrained because of the stigma of divorce, in addition to these factors (Raj & Silverman, 2002; Ahmad, 2009). It should not be presumed that abuse among immigrants exists because of cultural acceptance, rather help-seeking behaviour is influenced by cultural norms.

With little emphasis on spousal violence against Afghan immigrant women in Canada, I want to address an issue prevalent in my community. The existing gap in the literature leads to

my research question of how culture influences Afghan immigrant women's help-seeking behaviour in Canada.

The Study: Afghan Immigrant Women's Help-Seeking Behaviours

Approach

I am not focusing on cultural influences on reasons for abuse, rather I am focusing on the Afghan culture's influence on help-seeking behaviours in Canada. In Afghanistan, during the extremist invasion, oppression of women was normalized, and there was little to no formal help that women could get, if they were able to (see, Drumbl, 2004, Moghadam, 1992; 1999, Cheshmak, 2007). In Canada, if that culture is preserved in the home, then, along with social barriers and other potential barriers that exist for immigrants (discussed above), women may be constrained to seek help because of cultural barriers. I will argue that these cultural barriers are also what stand in the way of Afghan women seeking protection from spousal abuse in Canada.

The existing theories and studies explored throughout the literature review have strengthened the need for further research into women's help-seeking behaviours, particularly among Afghan immigrant women, and the influence of culture. The main questions are: What does the Afghan immigrant culture consist of? Is religion to blame? How is patriarchy involved? The research scope is open to consider women of all immigration categories, including refugees, sponsored women and women with precarious status, regardless of their age or length of stay in Canada.

I am taking a qualitative approach because it allows for an in-depth analysis of the data. My topic of interest is a sensitive area as it involves people's personal issues. Thereby, each issue shall be explored individually, and shall not be generalized. The qualitative approach allows me to explore a topic thoroughly, through interviews, focus groups or observations of real-world participants, and is grounded in the experience of the participants rather than the

interviewer's interpretations (Archer & Berdahl, 2011; Adler & Clark, 2008). A qualitative approach is less standardized compared to quantitative (Neuman, 2004). Qualitative researchers look for patterns or relationships from data that are in the form of words, which can have more than one meaning (ibid.). Qualitative data analysis is more inductive in nature than quantitative research, because the process of analysis can begin as the data is being collected rather than only after data collection (Stake, 1995, as cited in Check & Schutt, 2012). Although the results of a qualitative research cannot be generalized because it is usually based on a few cases, these results have value as they focus on meanings, rather than quantifiable phenomena (Check & Schutt, 2012). A goal of qualitative study is that it generates results and theory that are understandable and consistent with the people being studied and can help improve existing practice (Maxwell, 2009), as well as generate ideas for future studies.

Strategy

Developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967), Grounded Theory is a research strategy that involves using the data collected, to generate themes, develop theory, and test and support general ideas (Corbin and Strauss, 2008; Maxwell, 2009). My research is limited in developing an idea of the experiences and help-seeking behaviours of Afghan female victims of spousal abuse, given that I am not interviewing them but rather the service workers who have encountered them. I will gain insight from the perspective of the service workers regarding the phenomenon of spousal abuse and the victims' help-seeking strategies. According to Charmaz and Belgrave (2012) a grounded theorist inductively constructs a theoretical analysis from the data and realities they encounter through the interviews. This is what I have done: I explored the phenomena through the interviews and developed an understanding from what I collected and formulated an analysis.

I have taken a constructivist approach in this research study. The constructivist paradigm considers personal knowledge based on experiences as the truth. This subjective worldview has led me to initiate this research regarding help-seeking behaviours of Afghan female victims of spousal abuse. I associate myself as an Afghan woman and as a member of this community, which has spurred my need to explore this social phenomenon. Charmaz and Belgrave (2012) discuss constructivist grounded theorists, whose “methods do not ensure knowing; they may only provide more or less useful tools for learning” (p. 349). The full truth will not be known, but something new will be learned. I am discovering the experiences of the victims from the service workers’ perspectives. Their perspective will give more insight on the phenomenon as well as how they construct meanings and actions from their positions (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012). “In this perspective, we view data analysis as constructions that not only locate our data in time, place, culture, and context but also reflect our social, epistemological, and research locations. Thus our standpoint, starting point and end points influence our data analysis” (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012, p. 349).

Sample

Due to limited time, data was gathered from a small sample of four front-line service workers of the Afghan Women’s Organization in Scarborough through e-mail interviews. The Afghan Women’s Organization’s mandate is “to provide settlement services to all newcomers, with a special focus on women, their families, refugees and people who have experienced war and persecution.” (AWO, 2010). It was crucial to obtain informed consent from the organization. This organization is the only organization whose mission is to serve Afghan women in Ontario. This sample group consists of four Afghan female support workers who have interacted with Afghan female victims of spousal abuse, within the organization. All four participants indicated

themselves as settlement counsellors. Two of the four participants' ages ranged between 26-35 to 36-45 years and the other two participants did not indicate their age.

Data Collection Tools

The Settlement Manager helped with the recruiting process by distributing the recruitment flyer. The interested participants contacted me, ensuring that the Director does not know the identity of any person whom I interviewed. Upon receipt of their signed consent form, I sent the interview questions document. An informed consent form was one of many ways to enhance my trust with the participants.

There is a possible employment risk if participants are identifiable and thought to be acting unprofessionally or breaching confidentiality. In addition, the workers' participation could make their clients feel unsafe, since their own stories may become part of the research. In order to protect the privacy of the participants, and the privacy of the women we speak of, I clarified that no names be used in their answers. As I am Afghan myself, the participants may not feel comfortable disclosing stories of victims, even if their names are not used, for the concern that I may know that individual. The participants were assigned pseudonyms to further protect their anonymity (Adler & Clark, 2008).

The interview questions (See Appendix A) were organized to resemble semi-structured interviews given that it is the most widely used interviewing format in qualitative research (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Unlike structured and unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews are open for the researcher's comfort as well as the participants'. In particular, they contain predetermined open-ended questions, with as much pre-probe questions as possible (ibid.).

Limitations

There are several approaches I could have taken in this research that would have potentially made it a better research paper. I conducted only four e-mail interviews, so the data and findings presented cannot be generalized. The interviews were completed through e-mail conversations which can be beneficial, but my research lacked details. I had prepared some interview questions and directed them to the participants through e-mail, and they answered them and got back to me. The most I could have done, and did for a few, was email them back for clarification or a bit more detail in some questions. However, I was not able to directly probe them or provide follow-up questions to their answers. Direct probes in interviews are used for elaboration to help obtain additional information (Meho, 2006). Thus, not having direct probing in e-mail interviews could have, in this case, resulted in missing important data (ibid.). As Meho (2006) suggests, I did not follow the best practice of probes, since not all participants responded or answered the follow-up questions I requested.

However, I will not underestimate the research done and the data collected, because according to Denscombe (2003; as cited in Meho, 2006), the quality of the responses from e-mail interviews is considered similar to traditional, face-to-face interviews in many cases. This is due to some benefits of e-mail interviews. For one, participants' responses are considered more thought out before they are sent (Meho, 2006). Participants can answer the interview questions in the convenience of their own time, and not feel rushed. However in some cases, it took weeks until participants responded. Some participants provided short and precise responses, while others responded at length and with details. One of my participants had sent me the interview questions back stating that she was in a rush and answered them to the best of her ability. I understand that settlement workers are busy, and so I did some further follow-up with her.

For some, e-mail interviews may be more comforting because they can say what they want, how they want it with no visual identity of them. Although face-to-face interviews provide facial reactions, tone of voices and pauses for analysis, this is not possible during e-mail interviews. This method of interview also eliminates interviewer/interviewee effect, which Meho (2006) mentions, results from visual or non-verbal cues or the status difference like, race, age, voice tone, dress, and/or disabilities, between the parties. There was no cost of travel using this method of interviewing, and I was able to reach out to the participants regardless of their location.

Regardless of the method of interview, my study may have been limited in terms of the participants' responses; many could have refrained from saying negative things about their culture. However, in this study many participants openly criticized their culture and explained why. Also, it is important to recall that the participants were not the victims of abuse, rather they were settlement counsellors who work with victims of spousal abuse. Their perspective may be limited in that they are not aware fully of the experiences of their clients. However, their perspective can also be beneficial in that they are able to provide information that victims may not feel comfortable providing to a researcher. The sample was limited to this Afghan women's organization, and it is possible that many do not go to that organization for help due to reasons opposing those discussed in the analysis. For example, some Afghan women may not want to seek help from an ethno-specific organization for fear of shame or revealing their identity.

Data Organization

Qualitative data analysis occurs simultaneously with data collection so researchers can generate emerging understanding about research questions (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Qualitative data is analyzed by organizing it into categories based on themes, concepts and similar features (Neuman, 2004). The analysis process is iterative, meaning it is cyclical (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Braun and Clarke (2006) discuss Thematic Analysis as a flexible research tool which can provide detailed account of data. “Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It minimally organizes and describes the data set in (rich) detail (Braun and Clarke, 2006, 79). Thematic analysis is compatible with constructionist paradigms, in that meanings and experiences are socially developed and reproduced, rather than inherited (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Further, thematic analysis conducted within a constructionist view theorizes structural conditions (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis begins with the search for patterns of meanings and issues of potential interests (Braun and Clarke, 2006). An insight on the research issue before data collection can narrow one’s focus in analysis (ibid.). However, this can be beneficial in that the researcher focuses in detail on the sensitized features of the data (ibid.). Those codes are sorted into potential themes according to relevance and importance (ibid.). Braun and Clarke (2006) mention that prevalence of emerged themes do not indicate importance as many themes are not explicit (semantic) and have to be interpreted (latent). These themes are organized in a thematic map, visually laying out the themes emerged from the data (ibid.). It eventually leads to a point where no new categories or themes emerge, known as saturation, signalling that data collection is

complete (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). In this case, the saturation point does not apply because I could have continued collecting data, but was limited due to time constraints. During the iterative process I refined, and linked concepts to each other as I gained experience in the setting (Check & Shutt, 2012; Neuman, 2004). I used a matrix chart (See Appendix B) to organize the concepts identified during data collection for easier coding process (Check & Shutt, 2012). I also refined my definitions and concepts through grounded theory. Grounded theory is developed inductively, through observations during data collection that are summarized into conceptual categories (Check & Shutt, 2012). It is important to consider that researchers cannot disregard preconceptions of their knowledge of the research (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Most qualitative research is inductive with the intention of generating understandings from the data being collected (Creswell, 2003). Since I do have a sense of direction in this research, my research was not purely inductive.

Ryan and Bernard (2000; as cited in Braun and Clarke, 2006) consider thematic coding relative to the grounded theory strategy. The coding process begins once all the data is collected (Neuman, 2004). Open coding is the initial step, when I locate themes and assigns codes and begin writing preliminary concepts (ibid.). I printed out the interview answers and used coloured highlighters to assign codes. For example, the term "family reputation" was constantly being mentioned, so I coded that term in my analysis. The second coding process is Axial coding, in which I focused more on the codes rather than the data (ibid.). Connections were made between the codes and categories and/or subcategories were created (ibid.). As depicted in Appendix B subcategories were created for certain categories like Help-Seeking and codes were connected under each subcategory. The final process is selective coding in which I used the codes and themes and went back to my data and focused specifically on those and entered them into my

final report (ibid.). I discussed each theme as a separate category in the analysis and linked it back to the literature review and theories previously discussed.

Findings

There were a number of themes that stood out during the data analysis process: Abuse, Help-Seeking, Patriarchal Practice and Family Orientation.

Abuse. Although, my study is not focused on the reasons for abuse, it is important to consider it as important for providing contextual information. One of the first questions that the participants were asked was to identify general issues that their clients had in the abusive relationship that they were in. Types of abuse and reasons for abuse are subcategories under this abuse theme. The types of abuse that participants indicated were verbal, physical, emotional and sexual abuse. The term physical abuse was mentioned more often in many participants' responses. However, many emphasized verbal abuse as the most common type of abuse that their clients face. I had predicted that these types of abuse would be indicated, as they exist in many abusive relationships.

Raj and Silverman's (2002) argument that immigrant women who deviated from their cultural roles toward the western culture were more vulnerable to abuse, was not supported in my study. I did not discuss the assimilation or integration of Afghan immigrant women in Canada as an indicator of abuse. However, a woman who is accustomed to the western society could be regarded as being educated, involved in the workplace and/or having the knowledge and ability to seek help. In this case, many clients did not seem to be more vulnerable given the emphasis placed by the participants on the existing legal consequences that stood in the way of the abuse. Then again, this situation can be based on the abusers' knowledge of legal regulations or just the

service providers' knowledge of the system. Participants mostly seemed to be speaking on their own behalf as service providers, than reporting what the victims' views were. Participants mentioned that sometimes abuse resulted from family interference. One respondent, Magi, had noted that a typical abusive relationship consists of a male partner cursing at his spouse on a regular basis over small things. She mentioned that children are sometimes considered a part of the abusive relationship, as many of the arguments arise regarding how to raise children. Similarly, Flower had dealt with a case wherein the wife was physically abused by her husband because she refused to give him the child tax benefit money. Flower and Nada referred to power and control as the sole grounds for abusive relationships: Flower indicated that "mostly the struggle for the power in the family and lose of authority cause those abusive relationship[s]".

Many of these trends were anticipated and thus are a part of deductive analysis. Based on the definition of patriarchy discussed in the literature review, it appears that patriarchy does exist in many of these Afghan households. The reasons for and types of abuse are important to understand especially when these women finally seek help. The strategies and influences for seeking help will be discussed in the next section.

Help-Seeking. Throughout the coding process of my analysis, I had three subthemes under the help-seeking theme: The influences for seeking help, what the women look for when they seek help and the barriers in seeking help.

Influences for seeking help. There are a few common reasons why the women sought help from Afghan Women's Organization. For one, it is a female dominated organization. Many counsellors in the organization are women and it was emphasized by most participants that women sought help because they felt comfortable approaching another woman. Oz mentioned,

“They come to our office because of the name of our organization, they feel comfortable working with women and talking about their issues”. Aside from the common gender, the clients and counsellors share the same language which assures the victims to better express themselves. Flower mentioned that, “Most of these women come to us because they heard from other women who received help and support from the agency. Also because our services are culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate, moreover, we speak the same language”.

Based on my study as well as previous literature, many of these women are able to seek help because they were educated and aware of their rights, responsibilities and legal consequences. Nada specified that second-generation victims of spousal abuse are aware of Canadian law and thus more able to talk about their issues. When asked whether they think the clients’ help-seeking strategies is influenced by their length of stay in Canada, nearly all the participants were confident that the longer the women stayed in the country, the more able they are to seek help. This is in part due to what they learn from others. This finding supports Hyman’s et al. (2006) suggestion that a longer time in Canada increases victims' comfort in reporting spousal abuse. This finding also supports Brownridge and Halli’s (2002) argument that the younger an immigrant was at arrival, and/or longer an immigrant has resided in Canada, the more time they had to acculturate to Canadian views and values, and as suggested by Hyman et al. (2006), this increased their comfort in reporting spousal abuse. Oz gave an example of one of her clients:

I actually have a case right now that I am dealing with. The husband has been abusing his wife verbally and physically for the last 15 years. They have been in Toronto for almost three years and now the wife is standing up for herself...She learned from others that women have more rights here.

What women look for when seeking help. Many women are referred to the organization by other women, for example, women from Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) classes. Many clients seek counselling, divorce information, shelter, financial help, and/or food banks. Counselling is a common service that clients seek when approaching the participants. According to Fugate et al. (2005), many victims of spousal abuse would counsel themselves or talk to someone else. My participants mentioned that discussing their issues seemed like a common strategy of help-seeking among many clients. All the participants mentioned that their clients would be able to talk about their issues. Many were referred to the organization by other women. “Most of [the clients] deal with their situation alone and some of them have help from others”.

Barriers to help-seeking. The barriers to seeking help among these women are similar to the barriers experienced by any abused women, specifically immigrant or other racialized women. The terms “lack of knowledge” and “lack of education” were used interchangeably. As the terms awareness and knowledge were mentioned quite a bit, I will refer to them as lack of knowledge. Similar to Kaukinen’s (2013) findings considering the role of education, all participants emphasized that lack of education is a barrier for many Afghan women seeking help. This supports the research by Ahmad (2009) who indicated that abused women’s socially prescribed gender roles through their cultural context are due to their low social status and education in the community. According to my study, those who do seek help have been in Canada for a longer time and are aware of laws and consequences and community support centres like the Afghan Women’s Organization. When they are aware that they do have rights in Canada, they are more confident and comfortable seeking help. Oz mentioned that this scares their abuser as counsellors contact them as well. However, this statement can be critiqued.

Violence does not stop simply because the abuser is afraid of the consequences, given that abuse still exists in Western countries like Canada, regardless of explicit consequences. We need to recall Sokoloff and Dupont's (2005) statement that the belief that only 'others' engage in oppressive cultural practices, ignores the reality of existing oppressive acts of violence against women in western societies. We cannot assume that abuse only exists in patriarchal households in non-western societies or that women's oppression in third world cultures are worse than white women in the West (Herr, 2014). Considering Hunnicutt's analysis, violence against women varies across time and space. There may not be strict consequences for spousal abuse in Afghanistan, but that does not indicate that abuse does not exist where penalties are in place for such oppressive acts. Similar claims can be made based on Shankar's (2009) analysis of the perception that women's dislocation from developing countries to more developed western countries gives them the opportunity to escape patriarchy through economic dependence. It is not reasonable as Shankar (2009) hints, to assume that women from developing countries are trapped in patriarchal norms because patriarchy exists everywhere, in different ways. We can assume that 'civilized' households do exist in non-western societies like Afghanistan. I presume that women's ability to seek help is not merely based on their location or their knowledge, rather more on the resources available to them.

Some participants referred to their clients' lack sufficient education. The term "sufficient" was not specified or probed, so given their answers to previous questions, I assume sufficient education refers to enough education to be able to seek help and understand one's rights. When discussing lack of knowledge/education, we cannot assume that knowledgeable or educated individuals are not abused. When we discuss immigrant women's ability to seek help, we see that with knowledge/education they may be better able to seek help given their awareness not

only of their rights but of the services and actions taken in response to their needs. Magi had referred to a woman's mentality of accepting abuse. She noted that some newcomers to Canada maintain a mentality that woman should accept abuse. I cannot presume whether one's mentality of submitting or accepting abuse is necessarily influenced by their level of education or knowledge.

A further barrier in seeking help was that the clients had children. Scholars consider shame, stigma and fear of separation from children and support systems as cultural barriers in seeking help for spousal abuse among immigrant women (Lee & Hadeed, 2009; Ahmad, 2009; Guruge & Humphreys, 2009; Nyers, 2005). Similarly, my participants mentioned that many women worried for their children, had they sought help. Oz indicated that "...some are so lost that they don't know what to do because they have children and they cannot make up their minds". It was not stated that these women were unaware of the influence of their help-seeking strategy upon their children, but that they could not make up their minds. Flower mentioned that clients fear because of their children. I assume they do not want their children to be negatively influenced by the abuse. This left me wondering if having children has influenced some women to seek help. Two participants mentioned that some clients were abused over how to spend child tax money or how to raise their children. Given these circumstances where it is clear that children are indirectly involved in the abuse, I wonder if these women would seek help, for fear of direct influence on their children one day, not only in witnessing but being victims of direct abuse by their father.

Other fears were another barrier in seeking help. Magi and Oz mentioned that some clients are scared of their husband, probably for further abuse. Flower noted that most clients fear being independent. It was not clarified whether this participant meant financial

independence or simply being alone. These women's economic well-being could be influenced based on their immigration status or their status in the labour market, or their length of stay in Canada.

My overall findings relevant to this theme so far are supportive of research done in the past. For one, according to Abraham's (2000) study, women's isolation to seek or access help is due in part to their legal status, economic dependence, lack of English proficiency, and lack of information for help. Immigrant women's legal status is correlated to their vulnerability in an abusive relationship (Raj & Silverman, 2002).

When asked about cultural influences in abused women's help-seeking behaviour, Nada discussed stigma as a barrier in help-seeking strategies. Some abused women are refrained from seeking help for fear of stigmatization of being a victim of abuse, for seeking help, and for potential divorcee. Scholars including Ahmad (2009), Raj and Silverman (2002), Guruge and Humphreys (2009), Lee and Hadeed (2009) and Nyers (2005) referred to stigma as a cultural constraint among many abused immigrant women. Stigma was emphasized by Nada as a significant feature that prevents some of her clients from seeking help and many choose to refrain from potential stigmatization and maintain their family reputation. Family reputation was an important feature in barriers of help-seeking behaviour. Many participants discussed family reputation and honour as a barrier. Magi noted that, "The most significant feature of their family life that would prevent [women] from seeking help is that they don't want to bring their family name down".

Patriarchal Practice. Family reputation is a major subtheme in this analysis as it exists in both help-seeking theme and patriarchal practice theme. It is important to consider my above discussion of patriarchy as a fluid ideology. Patriarchy is present in many abusive relationships in many households around the world. Many Afghan households in Afghanistan as well as in Canada hold family reputation an important feature of family life. Terms including family reputation, conservative, male-dominated, pride, stigma, strict, power/authority, inferiority, control and *gherat* (a dari term meaning someone who is not a coward), were coded under this theme.

Question 4 in the interview protocol (Appendix A) asked how culture influences women's help-seeking strategies. Participants mentioned that male domination exists in the majority of their clients' households. Men are bread winners in the households and women are usually homemakers. This style is a patriarchal household in which the male figure is the head of the home. Similarly, Barnett (2001) indicated that male domination in households is common in many cultures outside of Canada that privilege men as rulers of the home which in turn gives them more rights than women. This lifestyle is similar in many Afghan homes in Afghanistan and in Canada. Oz indicated how culture influences her clients' help-seeking behaviour because of the pride in their family's values. Many would not seek help because of the pride of their family or more specifically, their husband's *gherat*. Oz stated that many husbands' behaviours is controlling because they have *gherat*. "The way men are raised...they have pride...men think women are inferior and they control them...they have *gherat*". Women's fear of putting their family name down by reporting abuse was a common subtheme that arose during data collection.

This patriarchal practice can be summed up as an existing cultural pattern. Participants indicated these subthemes in response to the question about how their clients' family life is. Oz

mentioned that “[T]heir culture has lots of influences in their help-seeking behaviours, because they have so much pride in their families’ values”. As it was mentioned in the help-seeking theme, some newcomers maintain a patriarchal mentality that women should accept abuse. It surprised me that this statement was made only once and not emphasized by other participants. In Afghanistan and Canada, many Afghan families tend to be ruled by the male in the household. Oz mentioned that, “male makes big decisions”.

Importantly, what was mentioned a few times by three participants was that the mentality of the abusers changed the longer they lived in Canada. Magi indicated: “[M]ost families have changed [...] adopting new ways of [life] in Canada. [There is a] positive change in male’s behaviour and their mentality. For example, helping women with kids or helping around the house”. Surprisingly, it was indicated that men later have a different opinion of women. Oz provided the example that usually men do not help their wife around the house because it is seen as a shame to do household or nurturing tasks such as cooking or changing diapers. However, many Afghan men learn over time that it is not “shameful” to help their wife. However, the length of stay does not determine whether Afghan men’s mentality or patriarchal attitudes change, given differences in outcomes. Many families who have lived in Canada for many years have maintained a male-dominant lifestyle. For example, many have been here for more than 20 years, Oz pointed out, but their male dominant household has not changed. This participant used the term male dominate and authority figure of a household interchangeably.

Second-wave feminists' perspective that all women face the same oppression has been critiqued, and with further research I also argue that women’s oppression varies. The treatment of women varies and is influenced by time, location and context, but nonetheless it does exist everywhere. As mentioned by participants, many Afghan immigrant men’s perception of women

change given legal, financial and social circumstances discussed. Immigrant women and men's mentality and perception of the opposite gender may change. In some cases, mentioned in this study, many husbands bring their conservative strict lifestyle with them to Canada, while others' perception of women's status changes with the struggle of immigration including financial restrictions, forcing them into a different lifestyle that leaves no room for inequality and patriarchal actions.

It is important to recall Almeida and Dolan-Delvecchio's (1999; as cited in Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005) argument that violence against women is not culture, but rather traditional patriarchal practices that men practice and women accept. I disagree with Almeida and Dolan-Delvecchio's argument distinguishing between culture and traditional patriarchal practices (1999). I argue that violence against women is traditional patriarchal practices that men practice and women accept, however I do not disregard culture. According to Erez et al. (2009), immigrant women raised in a male dominated household consider abuse and the subordination of women as a norm. As it was mentioned before, many women do accept it because they believe that is how they should be treated. The Afghan culture, as mentioned by participants, is to blame when they compare this to religious influences. This theme is then emphasized when it is assumed that religion supports abuse against women. Patriarchy that exists in all households, regardless of religion is a form of culture, because it is a certain practice by a particular group (see Sokoloff & Dupont, 2005). Culture and patriarchal customs are therefore, no different. Can we assume now that patriarchy is a culture? Nonetheless, this along with Almeida and Dolan-Delvecchio's (1999) statement can be argued.

Men whose personalities and ways have changed were noted to have a beneficial impact on violence against women. In particular, three participants pointed out that many men are aware

of the consequences for abuse and refrain from such acts. This statement suggests a similar notion discussed under the help-seeking theme. This may not be the single factor deterring abuse. As discussed earlier, men's mentality and lifestyles have changed. Along with the awareness of existing consequences for abuse, they may also be aware of the struggles of maintaining a household in Canada, financially and socially. Thus some may be willing to set their ego and pride aside and help around the house, for instance.

So far, culture seems to be organized by lifestyle and attitudes. Religion is commonly interconnected with culture, so I had asked participants their opinion on how religion influences women's help-seeking strategies. All the participants stressed that Islam is not an obstacle for women because, "Islam promotes equality, peace, love and strong bonds between husband and wife" noted Flower. Also, Nada mentioned that, "In Islam [,] abuse does not exist". With these statements, it is reasonable to note that with Islam not endorsing abuse, there is no religious influence to deter women from seeking help. However, culture can be a positive influence on women's ability to seek help if religion is considered a part of one's culture. If religion promotes equality and peace, so does culture. This thought is supportive of Dasgupta and Warrior's et al. (1996; as cited in Sokoloff and Dupont, 2005) statement that cultural beliefs may serve as protective factors for abused women. What is contravening is the idea that culture and religion is created by men, in a patriarchal power structure. This argument will be discussed in the final theme to follow.

Familial Orientation. Throughout the analysis, certain codes hinted at a code of familial or familistic orientation. I categorized participants' discussion of children, family reputation, stigma, religion, culture and mentality as a family orientation theme. Many of these, including the mind-set of the abusers and the abused, importance of children, family reputation, and stigma were used in all three previously discussed themes. Throughout the interview, family was mentioned as a central life factor. When asked about the types of abuse, nearly all participants gave examples that involved children. The influences for abuse as well as help-seeking behaviour involved children and family involvement, as well as the mentality of the abuser and the victim. All of these centers on the idea that family is an important element of abuse. These findings are supportive of Barnett's (2001) argument that family maintenance is more important than individual issues, which is why many do not seek help. Many religious leaders of churches, temples, mosques or synagogues, do not give the support that many victims look for, rather they suggest that a simple push or shove and male dominating acts as such do not constitute sufficient reason for leaving one's family. Barnett (2001) suggested that patriarchy is advocated by many religious leaders including Judeo-Christians. "An emphasis on the sanctity of marriage regardless of the cost to individual family members appears to be a tenet of many conservative religious and political groups espousing their version of family values" (Barnett, 2001, p. 7).

According to Tyyskä (2008) traditional family relationships tend to be hierarchical in gender and age. The type of family as discussed in the previous section creates a foundation of lifestyle that can be reflective of these abusive relationships. Unlike western individualism, the Afghan families that were discussed in this study seemed to be family oriented. As indicated by the respondents, many Afghan women seem to accept the abuse as a wife figure. According to Dasgupta et al. (2000, as cited in Raj & Silverman, 2002) many abused immigrant women refrain

from formal help to avoid criticism of their culture or country of origin. Similarly, participants noted that many of their clients want to avoid potential stigma and maintain family pride and reputation, so many do not seek assistance. It was argued by Ayyub (2000) that many Muslim women are considered the honour bearers of the family which is maintained with the preservation of their traditional roles. This mentality goes toward maintaining the abuse.

In my interviews, Oz discussed culture as a created lifestyle by Afghan men in Afghanistan. This participant had regarded the culture of patriarchal practice in Afghanistan to be the influence of villagers who migrated to the city of Kabul and brought with them strict conservative views. In contrast, it was discussed in the literature review that culture of patriarchal oppressive behaviour against women by the state and individuals were a result of extremist groups. The extremist groups had been in Afghanistan for just a few years and may have had an effect, but according to what Oz indicated, it is the ideologies and beliefs of villagers that have ingrained a strict conservative mentality toward women. Although extremist groups were in Afghanistan for a few years, oppressive behaviour that was once publicized, remains in many Afghan homes. Oz's statement is restricted in context. The people of the city may differ from the people of the suburbs as Oz indicated, but that does not explain the strict conservative mentality and actions that many Afghans from throughout Afghanistan have. With the consideration of the influence of Afghan villagers who migrated to the city of Kabul as well as the influence of the extremist group who were once in the country, it seems that this patriarchal culture is created by the people, more specifically by the men. Oz pointed out that, "It's mostly culture that they have created for themselves... The way men are raised there, with pride". Based on Ayyub's (2000) analysis as well as the discussed theoretical perspectives, the abusers use Islam to justify their actions. This mentality and this way of life have migrated to

Canada with many Afghans, and for some it has remained with them regardless of their length of stay in Canada. Hunnicutt (2009) stated that men who abuse their wives are argued to live up to cultural standards. However, not all men who identify with that culture abuse their wives. According to my study, Afghan men created this culture of oppression they live by. However, as indicated by my study, not all of them endorse it equally, and education and changed life circumstances through immigration, can be an influence in abandoning the oppressive cultural standards.

Religion. Religion was coded as a subtheme under this familial orientation theme, given that religion is interconnected with culture, and is grounded within many families, as I have shown here. The relationship between the Afghan culture and its relation to religion as a code in this theme will be discussed. Considering King's (2009) analysis of Western feminists' claim of Islamic culture forcing Muslim women in the West into traditional gender roles, it seems that religion is regarded as culture. I do not regard religion as a culture, but it seems that many immigrant women maintain or are forced into their traditional roles, with the cultural interpretations of religion. This assumption that many newcomers do abide by traditional subordinate roles, supports our participants' discussion of women's acceptance of abuse as well as the maintenance of traditional family culture regardless of their length of stay in Canada. In extension of the above discussion, many Muslim communities condemn abused women from taking legal actions toward their abuse, as that is considered disloyalty to her family (Ayyub, 2000). The intertwined culture and religion create difficulties for divorced women because they are seen as wrongdoers and at fault for the divorce, assuming something is wrong with them (ibid.). Participants of my study regard religion as a protector against abuse, in keeping with many scholars' analysis that Islam does not promote abuse in spousal relationships (King, 2009;

Elsaidi, 2011). In support of Islamic feminism, participants also make a distinction between the religion of Islam and culture in terms of violence against women.

Conclusions

In sum, the findings in this research analysis have answered my research question: How does the cultural heritage of Afghan immigrant women influence their help-seeking behaviours related to spousal abuse? During the analysis I found that these women's ability to seek help for abuse is not merely based on culture, but also on the resources available to them, like the case is with many other women facing abuse. The culture that is argued to have been created by abusers, can be tackled with existing resources and services, like the Afghan Women's Organization, regardless of the victims' knowledge, length of stay in Canada, or other influences in help-seeking behaviour. This is so, considering the data presented here, about the lives of women who finally do seek help once they are aware of the resources available to them. No amount of patriarchy can restrain them, other than the barriers discussed such as financial restrictions and lack of knowledge.

Culture's influence on these women's help-seeking behaviours is found to be based specifically on the patriarchy in the household. There is a pattern of patriarchy that exists in these types of Afghan families. This is prevalent in a home through male domination, control, authority, and power. However, this is not to say that violence exists in all homes. There are homes with male authority, power, and hierarchal relationships. However, there is also respect and appreciation in that home, not violence. Many of the families discussed in this research had this type of appreciative patriarchy; many participants indicated that not all Afghan men were abusive. The reasons for this were indicated in the analysis above. The components of abuse in

many Afghan immigrant spousal relationships are quite similar to other abusive immigrant spousal relationships. For example, the barriers and influences of help-seeking discussed above are similar to those barriers and influences found in previous literature.

An important finding of this research is that it suggests that the Afghan culture that exists and is created in Afghanistan, has immigrated to Canada with many Afghan families. Men's mentality and women's mentality in many Afghan homes are similar to that of many Afghans in Afghanistan. Many Afghan women have grown up to accept their particular lifestyle and many immigrants struggle to detach from it regardless of resources and abuse. Culture, whether created by the people of Afghanistan or extremist groups who invaded Afghanistan, has been ingrained among many Afghan immigrants. Although resources are an important aspect in help-seeking behaviours, there are many women who have not sought help yet, whose stories have not been heard yet, and this may be one of the reasons why.

The research question was: how does the cultural heritage of Afghan immigrant women influence their help-seeking responses to spousal abuse? The culture that is argued to influence Afghan immigrant women's help-seeking behaviours is not the religion, the country, the education or other aspects discussed; rather it is rooted in the patriarchal practice. As argued, patriarchy does exist everywhere but is different in expression, not necessarily prevalence or severity. Many victims of spousal abuse, regardless of the length of time in Canada, refrain from any help-seeking behaviour initially. Patriarchal practices are deeply ingrained in the behaviours of both women and men. It is seen as shameful or degrading to seek help, in many cases, due to consequences such as divorce, shame, or fear of further abuse. Many who do not consider any help-seeking behaviour, believe that their role as a woman is to accept the oppression inflicted upon them. This mentality is a part of the cultural pattern of patriarchy. Mentality, or a mind-set,

is the way one thinks, and this is affected by the traits and practices known as culture. It is important to reiterate that not all Afghans follow this strict conservative regime that originated in the home country, but it is reflected in the lives of women who are subjected to abuse. Patriarchy existed in Afghanistan but women were not oppressed to such a great degree until extremist groups invaded the country and inflicted strict oppressive laws they justified as Islamic. It is these practices that are carried on by some Afghan immigrants in Canada.

The religion of Islam discourages violence against women. If it wasn't for the extremists' interpretation of Islam, the Afghan culture might encourage ways to strengthen the spousal relationship and find solutions. However, the patriarchal practice in the extremist interpretation of Islam discourages help-seeking. I would like to take on Almeida and Dolan-Delvecchio's (1999) argument that culture should not be confused with patriarchy. Considering culture as a certain practice by a particular ethnic group, as indicated by Sokoloff and Dupont (2005) and present in my participants' answers, abuse and help-seeking behaviour are cultural. However, it is also argued that culture should not be blamed for the abuse. How then does culture influence abused Afghan Immigrant women's help-seeking behaviour?

I disagree with Almeida and Dolan-Delvecchio's (1999) argument. I argue that patriarchy can be considered culture. Patriarchy can exist and does exist in most if not all homes, but abuse does not exist in all homes of patriarchal practice. If we consider male power and gender hierarchy, it can be regarded as controlling and in many cases is manifested in abuse. However, male power and gender hierarchy can also be interpreted as a form of respect and appreciation for many, where there is no abuse whatsoever. Gender relations can be seen as complementary, as also indicated in the Islamic feminists' interpretation of the Qur'an, discussed earlier. This line

of reasoning is supported by Hunnicutt (2009) who criticized radical feminism, pointing out that patriarchal systems can exist without abuse.

Policy Implications

Culture does not exist at one time; it varies. Culture in Afghanistan is different from the culture of Afghans in Canada. As predicted and supported in my study, many women who have brought with them the created culture of Afghanistan, after the invasion of extremist groups, seem to refrain, for the most part from seeking help. This may be the case because many who do abide by the strict conservative ways that the extremists groups in Afghanistan had inflicted, do not see it as rightful to do so, or are simply restricted from any sort of help-seeking due to barriers and lack of resources. However, in cases where those strict cultural ways are changed, many Afghan women in Canada are courageous enough to seek help when they are abused. The only barriers in the way of many of these women are those indicated at the very beginning of this study and found by many other scholars. For example, many are barred by immigration status, language barriers, and insufficient knowledge or existing services. However, many others are aware of legislation and resources, and in many cases they are able to seek help.

The Afghan Women's Organization is a gateway for these women. They are open, free of charge, trustworthy, and culturally and linguistically sensitive to these women's needs. However, this is the only organization in Ontario funded by the Citizenship and Immigration Canada, and specific to Afghan women. There are no other Afghan associations with similar missions and goals readily available for such women. This is where policy implications come in. For one, Canada should have more ethno-specific services available. Counsellors working specifically with victims of spousal abuse or any kind of abuse must follow-up with their clients' cases. In

many instances, counsellors should consider the reasons why their clients would not seek help initially, to improve their services and their outreach programs. Campaigns and outreach programs should specify the help opportunities offered aside from counselling. If it is not done already, referrals should be made to help clients financially and socially to tackle the structural barriers in leaving an abusive relationship. Divorce is not always the answer that clients want to hear, so counsellors can provide counselling to abusers and meet the needs of the couple together.

As mentioned in Du Mont et al. (2012), creating culturally specific educational campaigns can help inform community leaders and members about spousal abuse after immigrating to Canada. Upon entrance to the country, no matter in what status, many women including women able to access the Afghan Women's Organization as well as those with no access to such services, should be aware of the prevalence of abuse and be informed of services and resources. This tackles the lack of knowledge about abuse among immigrants. However, the issue is ignorance. The government does not give importance to this issue. The attention it gets, offers few to no solutions. Afghan women as well as every other woman in Canada face abuse daily. This is not because it is culturally normative, but because of existing patriarchy in their households and the lack of initiative from the government to help prevent it. I cannot stress enough that patriarchy, power hierarchy and control exist in most if not all cultures and nations, including developed countries in the West. Many can argue that banishing patriarchy (if that were possible) would not eliminate abuse. If so, we are then assuming that (with regards to this study) that patriarchy exists among men only, that only men are abusive, and that all male authoritative households are abusive. These are not shown to be accurate, based on my study and those by many other researchers.

Appendices

Appendix A – Interview Questions

Demographic Questionnaire

Pseudonym substituting your name:

Age Range:

- ☐ 18-25
- ☐ 26-35
- ☐ 36-45
- ☐ 46+

Gender:

Interview Questions

Thank you very much for participating in this study on help-seeking behaviours of Afghan women who have been subjected to domestic violence. You are asked to complete these series of questions. Please provide examples. However, please remember not to disclose any names. Also, please try to alter details of individual clients' situations to avoid risks of identification.

- 1) Can you please tell me about yourself and the kind of work that you do? How much does your job have to do with dealing with women in abusive relationships?
- 2) Can you please identify the general issues that the women have in the abusive relationships? Please describe for me, a typical abusive relationship? What are the types of abuse that the women experience? What are the most common types of abuse they face?
- 3) As you know, I am interested in knowing the help-seeking strategies of female Afghan victims of spousal abuse. Based on your experience with these victims, what are the kinds of factors that would explain why these women come to you?
 - a) Were they dealing with it alone or did they have someone's help?
 - b) What do they look for when they come to you? How long does it take them to turn to help?
 - c) Are these women mostly newcomers or have they been in Canada for a long time? Are any of them second generation? Do you think their help-seeking strategies have something to do with their length of stay in Canada?
- 4) What sense do you get of the family lives of these women coming to you? Do you think there is something about culture that influences their help-seeking behaviours? Does the religion of Islam play a role? If so, how big a role would Islam play?
 - a) What is the most significant feature of their family life that would prevent women from, or allow them to look for help?
 - b) Is the Afghan community in general receptive or helpful to these women who are seeking help?
- 5) Do you think the families here have changed as they lived in Canada? If so, How? Do you think living in Canada influences these women in help-seeking behaviours?
 - a) Do you think the changes have had an impact on violence against women? How?
- 6) Do you have anything else to add to the answers you have given, that would help shed light on the help-seeking behaviours of abused Afghan women?

Appendix B – Conceptual Map

Figure 1 – Theme Abuse

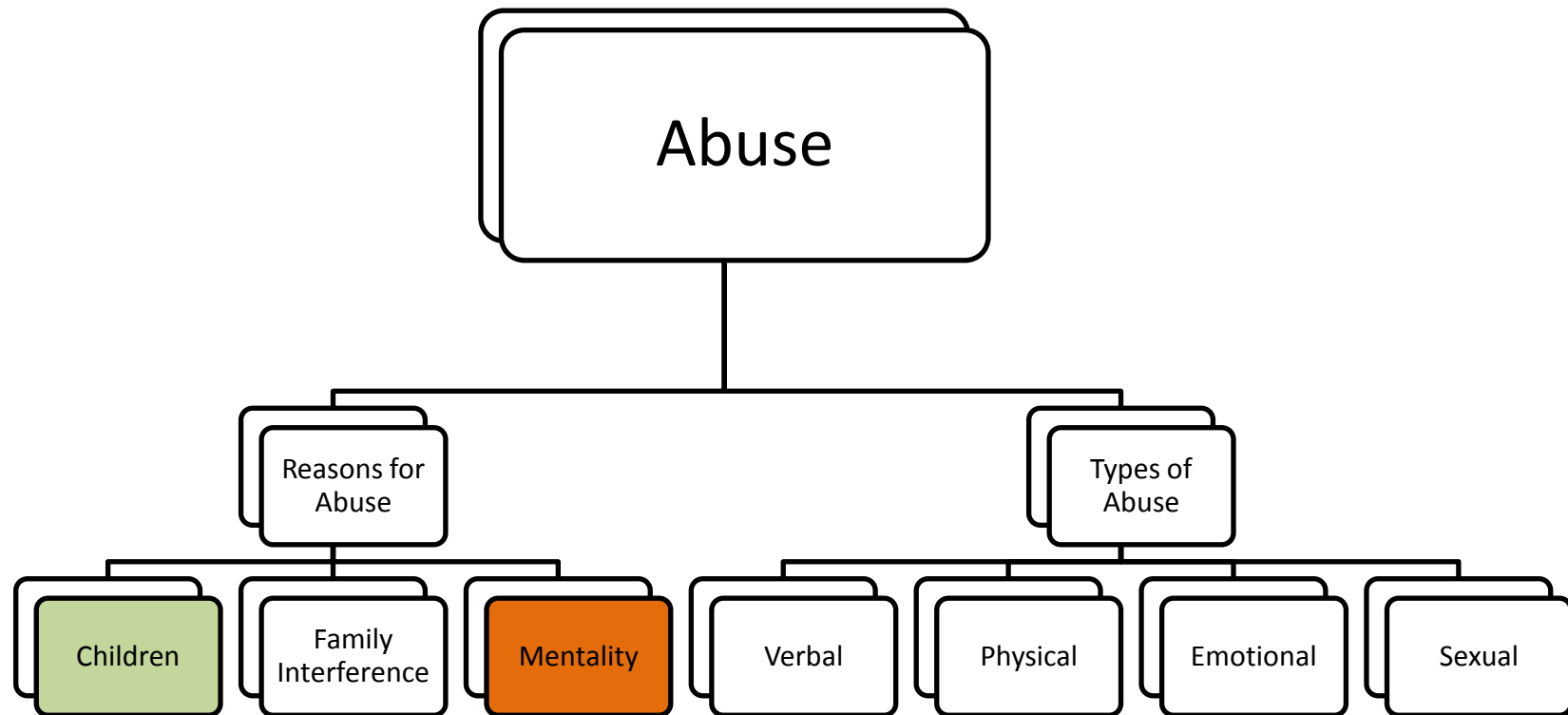


Figure 2 – Theme Help-Seeking

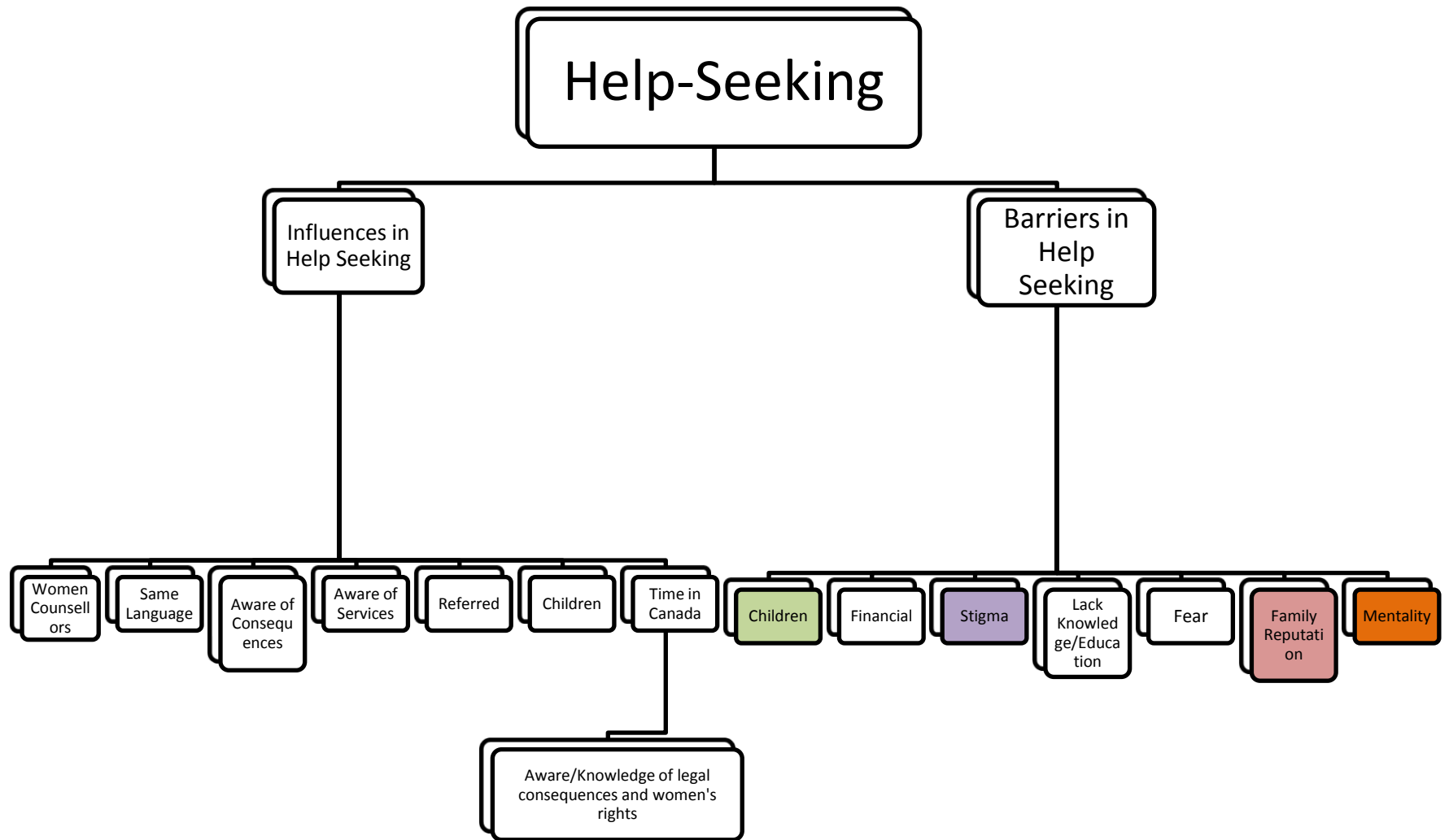


Figure 3 – Theme Patriarchal Practice

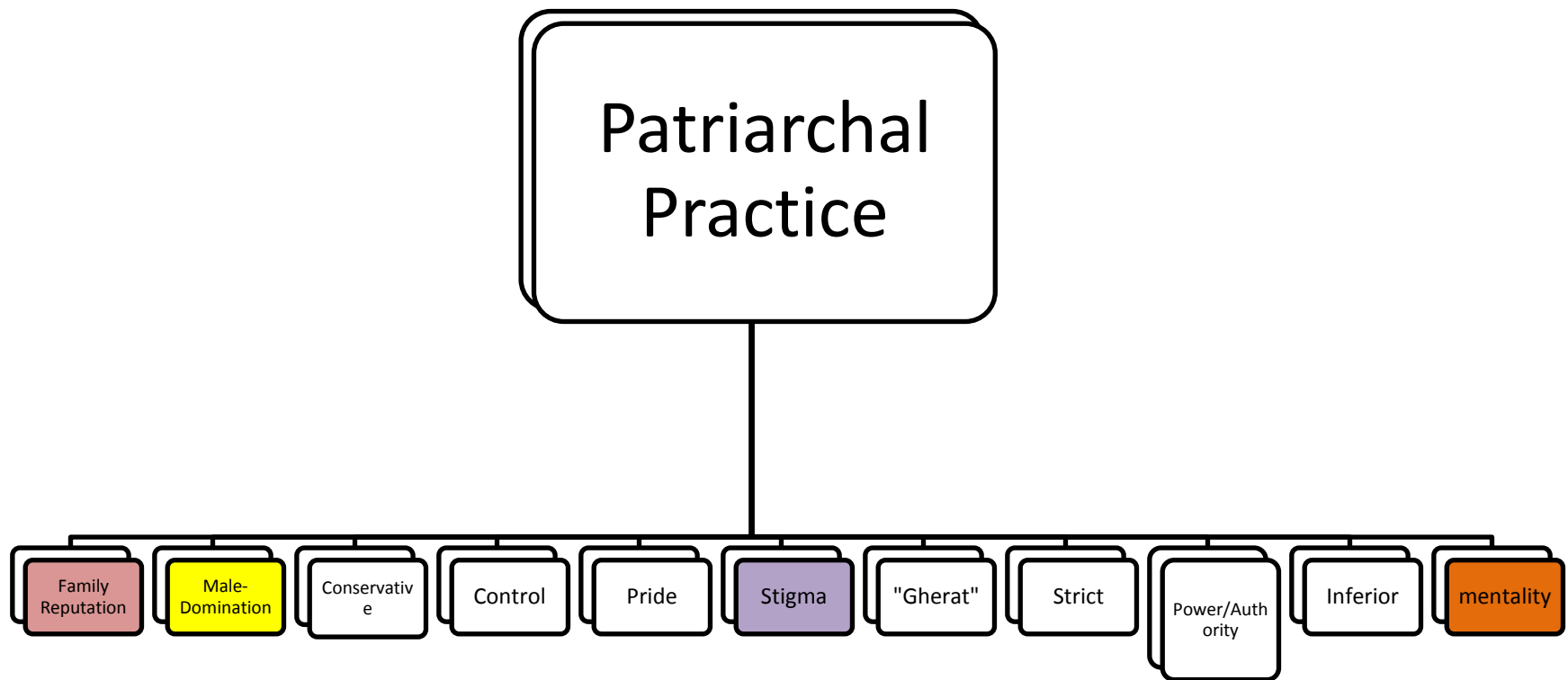
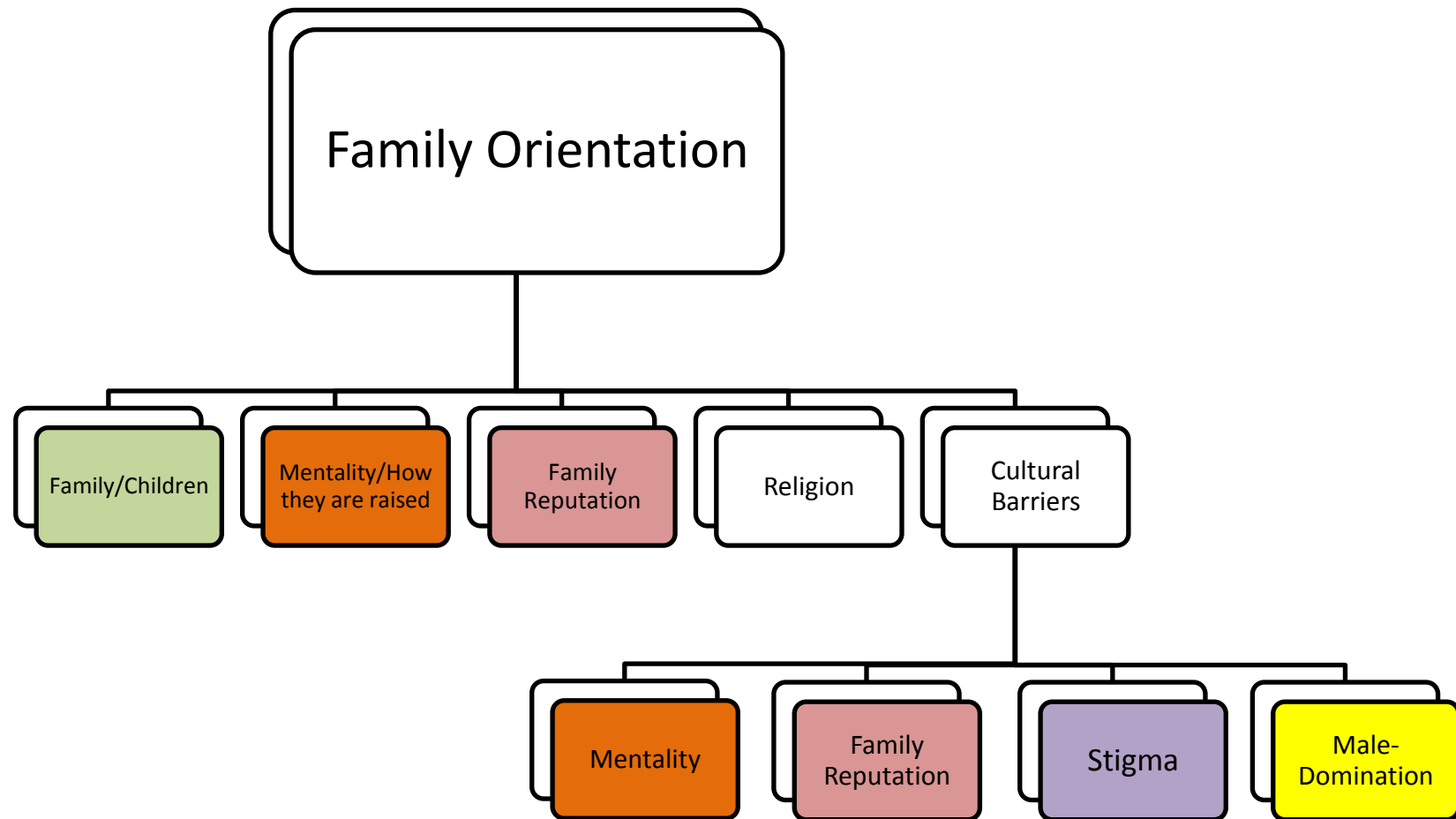


Figure 4 – Theme Family Orientation



Appendix C - Conceptual Patterns

Subcategory/Code Number of Participants [/]	Participant 1 Number of times code mentioned	Participant 2 Number of times code mentioned	Participant 3 Number of times code mentioned	Participant 4 Number of times code mentioned
Abuse				
Types of Abuse				
Verbal \\\	\\\	\		\\\\\\
Physical \\\	\	\	\	\\
Emotional \				\
Sexual \			\	
Reasons				
Children\\	\		\	\
Family Interfering\	\			
Mentality\\	\		\	\\
Help-seeking				
Influences in Help-seeking				
Women\\	\			\
Aware \\\		\	\\	\
Language\\		\	\	\
Referral\			\	
Length in Canada\\\	\	\	\	\
Barriers				
Children\\	\		\	\
Financial\\		\	\	
Stigma\		\		
Family reputation\\	\		\	\\
Fear\\	\		\	\
Lack of knowledge\\	\	\	\	\
Mentality\\	\		\	\\
What they seek				
Counsel\\	\	\\		\
Divorce information\\	\			\
Food bank\		\		
Shelter \		\		
Financial help\\		\	\	
Patriarchal Practice				
Family reputation\\	\		\	\\
Male-domination\\	\	\		\
Conservative\		\		
Control\			\	
Pride\\	\			\\
“Gherat”\				\
Stigma\		\		
Strict\				\
Mentality\\	\		\	\\
Inferior\				\
Power/authority\\		\		\

Family Orientation				
Family/children\\	\\		\\	\\
Family reputation\\	\\		\	\\
Religion\\		\\		\\
Cultural Barriers\				
Mentality \\	\\		\\	\\
Family reputation\\	\\		\	\\
Stigma\				\
Male-domination\\	\	\		\\

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