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**BLOODLINES: HONOUR KILLINGS IN THE POST-MIGRATION CONTEXT**

by

**Muzzammil Ismail Beelut, BA, University of Windsor, 2009**

**A Major Research Paper  
presented to Ryerson University**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Honour killing is an extreme form of violence in the family. This paper seeks to understand the reasons behind the honour killings. Since 2002, there have been 13 reported honour killings in Canada. A media analysis was conducted of 8 articles from the Toronto Star and the National Post to demonstrate how the media portrayed issues related to the murder of Aqsa Parvez, a 16 year old Muslim girl. Policy recommendations are offered as to how honour killings can be prevented from happening in Canada.

### **Key words:**

Honour killings; Canada; South Asian families; intergenerational conflict; media analysis.

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For months I have poured my heart and soul into these pages, now I hope that my words touch your heart and mind.

**To the victims of honour killings.  
With the hope that this MRP becomes a voice for the voiceless.**

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## PREFACE

On Friday December 14<sup>th</sup> 2007, I stood in front of the usual attendees at the Noor-ul-Islam Mosque in Windsor, Ontario to deliver my weekly sermon. As an Imam (spiritual leader) it was my responsibility to lead the prayers, conduct any marriage or funeral services and deliver the weekly sermon. Although I had stood in front of this crowd for the past six years delivering Friday sermons, the topic on this particular day weighed heavily on my heart. Only four days before, on December 10<sup>th</sup>, Aqsa Parvez, a 16 year old Muslim girl, had been allegedly killed by her father. This killing resonated in Canadian society and media as well as within the Muslim community.

Being a Canadian born Muslim, the killing of Aqsa Parvez, in my mind, became a depiction of a clash between parent and child. It was difficult for me to comprehend as to how a father could inflict bodily harm upon his own daughter. And why had no one come to the aid of this 16 year old? Where was the rest of her family when the killing took place? So many unanswered questions haunted me. Nevertheless, my Friday sermon consisted of explaining the differences of culture and religion and that Islam condemned the killing of innocent lives. In actuality, harsh verses were revealed in the Quran for the Arabs regarding their engagement with infanticide. It was a common practice amongst Arabs of the 7<sup>th</sup> century to bury their daughters alive as they saw them as an economic burden. I highlighted those verses from the Quran and emphasised the sacredness of a life. At the end of my sermon, I felt that I had done justice to Islam in disassociating it with honour killings but I felt a void in the disservice that I had done to Aqsa as this sermon should have been given before and not after her killing.

In April 2009, I was granted the opportunity to explore the subject of honour killings further as I was accepted to the Masters of Immigration and Settlement studies program at

Ryerson University. I chose honour killings as the subject of my Major Research Paper (MRP) with the hope that I could perhaps find some of the answers that I was desperately looking for as a Canadian-Muslim.

## INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Population fund (UNFPA, 2000) report, *Living Together, Worlds Apart: Men and Women in a Time of Change* estimated that “5000 women and girls are killed every year, across the world because of dishonour” (UNFPA, 2000 p.2). Gender-based violence that uses “honour” as a means of justification is prevalent in many countries such as Turkey, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Britain, Jordan, Egypt and Sweden (Reddy, 2008).

In Canada, there is an increasing focus by the government, academics and social practitioners on honour-related violence within ethnic minority communities; whereby the professed or alleged motivation for the violence revolves around a perceived violation of male or family “honour”. A recent high-profile case, the killing of Aqsa Parvez, garnered unprecedented media attention and caused much debate on the subject of how to prevent and punish such crimes (Hildebrandt, 2009). In England alone there are up to 12 documented honour killings that happen every year (BBC, 2009). If preventive rather than reactive measures are not taken the same volume of honour killings may replicate itself in Canada.

The rationale for the work in this MRP is to create an awareness and urgency in understanding and preventing honour killings in Canada. Given the complex and multi-dimensional nature of the topic, it is my hope that my MRP will provide a piece of the puzzle to aid understanding of some of the factors that influence the issue of honour killing.

This MRP is organized into three sections. Section One reviews the existing literature. It attempts to classify some of the sources available on the concept of honour, history of honour



killings, the anatomy of honour killings, intergenerational conflict in South Asian families and reasons attributed to honour killings. Likewise, it also surveys ideological constructs such as religion, patriarchy and multiculturalism which are also ascribed as enabling honour killings. Section Two provides an analysis of eight articles published in two Canadian newspapers, namely the Toronto Star and National Post from December 10, 2007 to December 17, 2007, the week after Aqsa Parvez was killed. Section Three presents policy recommendations for preventing honour killings in Canada in the future.

## **SECTION 1: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **SEARCH STRATEGY**

For the purpose of this study, a literature search of “Proquest”, “Scholar’s Portal”, “Google Scholar”, “Project Muse” and “Jstor” was conducted. The key words used included “Honour-crimes”, “honour killings”, “family violence”, “South Asian family” and “South Asian daughters”.

Given the limited literature found on honour killings in the Canadian context, I looked for literature on this topic in other Western countries with significant immigrant communities. I found that a substantial amount of literature dealt with immigrants in England, and that the literature included cases of victims from India, Pakistan, Turkey, Afghanistan and Kurdistan. Germany, Netherlands and Sweden also provided cases of honour killings amongst Turkish immigrants.

The articles included about honour killings in this MRP do not date more than ten years. This was not a conscious choice; rather there were very few articles which dealt with honour killings beyond this time frame. Chesler (2010) highlights that honour killings have accelerated significantly in a 20-year period between 1989 and 2009. This may mean that honour killings are

genuinely escalating or that honour killings are being more prominently reported and prosecuted, especially in the West, but also in the East. The expansion of the Internet may also account for wider reporting of these incidents (Chesler, 2010).

The focus on my literature review is on understanding the complexity behind the causes and motivations of honour killings and comprehending the role the perpetrators, culture, religion and society behind honour killings. The other dimensions of honour killings such as judicial and penal laws of countries of origin, immigration control, forced marriages, court cases of perpetrators, state of the family after an honour killing and honour suicides, amongst others, have not been included in this MRP.

I sought to facilitate the reader's understanding of honour killings based on a continuum; beginning with ideological constructs and factors which may provoke honour killings to understanding intergenerational conflicts within families and profiling victims and perpetrators and finally presenting policy recommendations to help prevent honour killings in the future.

## **HONOUR KILLINGS IN CANADA**

In 2002, the Canadian government informed the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) that "honour crimes, including killings, were extremely rare in Canada" (UNGA, 2002, p. 3). However, in 2009, Canada's revamped citizenship guide warned newcomers that:

Canada's openness and generosity do not extend to barbaric cultural practices that tolerate spousal abuse, 'honour killings,' female genital mutilation or other gender-based violence. Those guilty of these crimes are severely punished under Canada's criminal laws. (Minister of Public Works and Government Services Canada, 2009, p.9).

In 2010, at a news conference at the Punjabi Community Health Service centre Rona Ambrose, Minister responsible for the Status of Women, stated that "the government is taking gender-based violence very seriously" and called on women's groups and members of the immigrant community to do their part in tackling these "heinous abuses" (Carlson, 2010). As can

be seen from the above points honour killings have successfully made their way onto the Canadian government's agenda.

The exact number of honour killings in Canada is not known partially because there is no clear definition of what constitutes an honour killing. However, since 2002, the murders of 12 women were identified by the *Globe and Mail* as honour killings (Caplan, 2010). For example, in 1999, five year old Farah Khan was killed by her father and stepmother after the father claimed the child was not his, claiming this was deeply shaming and the killing was necessary to redeem his honour (Kari, 2004). In 2003, 17 year old Amandeep Singh Atwal was stabbed to death by her father, because she wanted to date a non-Sikh classmate (White & Mick, 2007). In 2006, 20 year old Khatera Sadiqi and her 23 year old fiancée, Feroz Mangal, were killed by her brother because her family did not approve of her choosing her own partner (Cobb, 2009). In 2007, Aqsa Parvez, 16, was strangled by her father and brother for refusing to wear a *hijab* (headscarf) (Wattie, 2007). In 2009, 22 year old Amandeep Kaur Dhillon, who worked for her in-laws at the family owned grocery store, was killed by her father in law when she threatened to leave his son (Warmington & Clarkson, 2009). On June 30, 2009, in Kingston Ontario, four females, aged 13, 17, 19 and 52, were found in an automobile at the bottom of a lock in the Rideau Canal system. The father, brother and mother of the three deceased young women in the car reportedly felt that the girls were becoming infused with Western ideals through the means of the older woman, who was the fourth victim (Gatehouse, 2009). In 2010, 19 year old, Bahar Ebrahimi was repeatedly stabbed by her mother Johra Kaleki, after spending the night elsewhere (Block, 2010).

## **HISTORY OF HONOUR KILLINGS**

Honour is a fluid concept which has been differently interpreted by societies, cultures and classes throughout history to encourage behaviour that is seen as beneficial to them (Brandon &

Hafez, 2008). In all societies, honour has both a private and a public aspect; it describes an individual's self-respect but also how a person sees his/her relative value in society. Honour also dictates the extent to which society accepts a person's self-worth and helps determine his status and material benefits accorded to him/her as a result (Brandon & Hafez, 2008).

Within most societies of the West, where individual freedom and rights are more valued, honour is synonymous with integrity, with a person's individual actions. However, within more communal cultures, honour is a collective term, referring not simply to the social behaviour of one person, but of the collective behaviour of a family (Brandon & Hafez, 2008). Within certain communities in collective cultures, an individual is expected to be responsible for the behaviour of other members of his or her family, tribe, community, faith or other form of social identity grouping. This licensing of collective social control, when viewed within the context of patriarchal structures of family and marriage, creates an intense form of oppression for women. Researchers such as Von Hagen (1961), Goldstein (2002), Prescott (2000) and Welchman and Hossain (2006) have mapped out the trajectory of honour killings. Before delving into an in-depth study of honour killings, it is advantageous to understand the origins of honour killings.

Goldstein (2002) reminds us that honour killings are a phenomenon which dates back to biblical times as the Old Testament prohibits against adultery and premarital sex as well as advocates for death sentences for violations of them in the books of Leviticus and Deuteronomy. The New Testament contains similar prohibitions and punishments. And, the Qur'an also calls for the death penalty for adulterers (the role of religion will be examined in a forthcoming section).

Likewise, under Roman law, a father held the power of life and death over his daughter, and upon marriage that power was transferred to the daughter's husband. Under Roman law,

around 230 B.C.E. female adultery was a felony and the state actively prosecuted family members and others for not taking action against adulterous female relatives (Goldstein, 2002). Aztec laws between 150 B.C.E. and 152 A.C.E. advocated for death sentences for female adultery by strangulation or stoning (Von Hagen, 1961). In Peru, between 1200 B.C.E. and 1532 A.C.E. the Incas punished adulterers by tying the lovers' hands and feet to a wall and leaving them to starve to death (Prescott, 2000).

In Europe, maxims of honour have long been associated with medieval codes of chivalry and nobility (Welchman & Hossain, 2006). Noble actions have been lauded through the concept of honour; duelling (between men formed an essential code of chivalry) which sometimes was predicated by a man's behaviour or favours towards a woman (Welchman & Hossain, 2006). Modern times have ushered in honour as being a link between the individual and the community. Honour in this context provides a moral framework for behaviour, norms and rules. It is through maintaining of this honour that individuals find a place in the community (Welchman & Hossain, 2006).

Interestingly, in works of fiction there is indication towards societal acceptance of violent male conduct towards promiscuous men and women. The Arabian folk tale of *A Thousand and One Nights* illustrates how King Shah-Zemon recuperated his health by killing his adulterous wife (Lane, 2007). Shakespeare's *Othello*, also carried messages of condemnation for adulterous behaviour, though in Desdemona's case false accusation led to the murdering husband's compensatory suicide (Shakespeare, 2004). In his novella, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, famous Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez writes about two brothers who kill the male seducer of their sister in a Columbian village (Marquez, 2003). These inclusions of killing in the

name of honour in literature infer that the phenomenon of honour killings was not something unheard of to the different writers in their respective eras.

## **THE ANATOMY OF AN HONOUR KILLING**

With the hope of better understanding the phenomenon of honour killings, this section examines the motivations behind honour killings and profiles of the victims and perpetrators.

### **Motivations**

Several motivational factors are perceived as contributing to honour killings. These include: challenging parental authority; becoming too “Western”; women having sex/relationships before marriage or suspicion of adultery; issues pertaining to arranged marriages and/or gossip about one’s actions in public.

- **Challenging Parental Authority**

Children in many societies who choose to challenge their parents’ norms and principles risk being disciplined or punished. In many collective communities, older members of the family are expected to control their children and parents who are “unsuccessful” in doing so may lose status in the community (Brandon & Hafez, 2008).

- **Becoming too “Western”**

Families who allow their children to assimilate into Western society and adopt Western values can be seen by their community as betraying their culture and origins. Women have been threatened or killed over issues such as refusing to cover their heads, wearing makeup, wearing Western clothes, dating, going to parties, coming home late and/or choosing friends the family disapproved of (Brandon & Hafez, 2008; Sen, 2006)

- **Women Having Sex/Relationships before Marriage or Suspicion of Adultery**

Girls or women have been killed if their virginity or sexual fidelity is questioned by their family or others. Women believed to have pre/extramarital relationships (even of a non-sexual kind) have been victims of honour killings (Touma-Sliman, 2006).

- **Issues Pertaining to Arranged Marriages**

Most collective cultures feature an element of arranged marriage. In certain cases, if the girl refuses an arranged marriage, marries against the families' wishes, leaves the family or marital home without permission she may become a victim of an honour killing. Likewise, honour related violence may occur if the woman asks for divorce or for custody of her children after divorce (Brandon & Hafez, 2008).

- **Gossip about One's Actions in Public**

In most cases, honour is damaged because of an action considered shameful becoming public knowledge. Rumours and gossip, even if untrue, can damage the status of an individual or the family, the consequences of which may lead to an honour killing (Brandon & Hafez, 2008).

## **Profiles of Victims**

By far most of the victims of honour killings are women. Men may also occasionally fall victim to honour killings but they are rarely killed by their own families, but by the relatives of a woman or girl who is believed to have been "dishonoured". Victims can either be married or single but generally reside with their immediate family or in-laws. Victims include daughters, sisters, wives and girlfriends. To a lesser degree mothers, aunts, nieces are also victims (Chesler, 2010).

Chesler's (2010) survey of worldwide trends in honour killings found that worldwide, more than half the victims were tortured before being killed. However, in North America, over

one-third of the victims were tortured before the killing. Torturous deaths in North America include: being strangled or bludgeoned to death; being stabbed or shot repeatedly; or being strangled or having the throat slashed.

### **Profiles of Perpetrators**

Perpetrators are generally men from the nuclear family (father, brother, husband). Women's involvement in honour killings has also been reported (Hoyek, Sidawi & Mrad, 2006). Most honour killings that have occurred in North America were carried out by individuals from Pakistan followed by people of Iraqi origin and involved Muslim families with a few Sikhs and fewer Hindu families perpetrating honour killings (Chesler, 2010).

Brandon and Hafez's (2008) study suggests that despite most honour-killings being carried out by first-generation immigrants, an increasing number also involve second-generation immigrants. Likewise, several honour killings have been carried out by relatively well established immigrants who would usually be regarded as "educated" and "well-integrated".

Most honour-killings are premeditated by one or more members of the victim's family (Brandon & Hafez, 2008). In some cases, an honour killing may be a formal collective decision, made by a council of family members, who not only decide whether a girl or woman's behaviour merits death, but may also plan how the murder will be committed and who will carry it out (Onal, 2008). Sometimes the youngest member of the family is encouraged to commit the killing with the hope that he will get the lightest sentence or will still be young when he is released from prison (Onal, 2008). Also in some cases, women are killed after being taken to their country of origin so that the family can escape facing criminal charges in their receiving countries (Brandon & Hafez, 2008).



## **FEATURES OF HONOUR KILLINGS**

Sen (2006) identifies certain features which define honour killings; these features in combination identify the particularity of honour killings. While reading this section it should be kept in mind that perpetrators of honour killings are generally men but women's involvement has also been reported (Hoyek, Sidawi & Mrad, 2006). The features are:

1. Gender relations that problematize and control women's behaviour, shaping and controlling women's sexuality in particular.
2. Collective decisions regarding punishment, or in upholding the action considered appropriate, for the transgression of these boundaries.
3. Premeditation.
4. The ability to reclaim honour through enforced compliance or killings.

## **HONOUR KILLINGS IN THE SOUTH ASIAN CONTEXT**

Cultural rules and values can shape the dynamics of honour and shame. As Lindisfarne (1998) notes, shame and honour are not only socially defined but attention should be given to those who have the power to define them; in this case, the patriarchal society defines honour and shame. Lindisfarne (1998) points out that in many cultures, male honour and shame can be related to control of women's sexuality and her body by men. Men can lose honour and be shamed in their societies by failure to control women in their network.

Similar to other patriarchal communities, in the South Asian patriarchal family structure, the eldest male in the family has the authority to control all women and the younger men (Dasgupta & Warriar, 1996). Each family member is a contributing part to a collective whole; failure to fulfill the expected role creates family instability, and for that reason, personal independence is discouraged. Dasgupta and Warriar (1996) stress that for historical reasons of

survival and security, families existed as cooperatives, resided together and worked collectively as farmers, in business or in a home industry. Within these collective families the obligation to the group came before individual self-interest. Individual freedom was not encouraged; rather, mutual interdependence was valued.

Hoyek, Sidawi and Mrad (2006) draw an interesting correlation between patriarchy and slavery. Slavery historically emerged with the establishment of private property correlated with the patriarchal order which made the man the father, the owner of everything with absolute authority over all the individuals of the family. As such, the wife and children were a natural extension of the property of the head. In the early stages of the patriarchal family, the father used to have the right to kill his wife and children just as he had the right to kill his slave (Hoyek, Sidawi and Mrad, 2006). Moreover, in some societies, the shame of the mother is transmitted to the children and a child may be disowned and disinherited by the family if he/she is thought to have been conceived illegitimately.

*Namus* (sexual honour) is a concept closely entwined with the honour of South Asian and Middle Eastern women. King (2008) and Sev'er (1999) have explained that codes of honour and shame for the woman are linked to a very basic level with virginity (considered being intact by the unruptured hymen) and are deeply intertwined with ideas of virtue and malignity. According to Sev'er (1999), the concept of *namus* presupposes physical and moral qualities women ought to have. It is intricately linked to the shame of women and her family. King (2008) highlights that women are expected to protect their *namus* for their entire lives as well as protect the *namus* of other women/girls that are related to them (i.e. their daughters and grand-daughters). *Namus* can be lost through evidence of or gossip-incited suspicion of sexual (or even flirtatious) activity

outside marriage. And disturbingly *namus* can only be restored by an honour killing (Sev'er, 1999).

The issue of virginity and the conduct of the unmarried woman retain importance in South Asian cultures. A woman might be forced to have an internal exam to determine her virginity before getting married (Hall, 2002). Where the hymen is ruptured it is taken as evidence that the woman or girl has been “dishonourable” (Begikhani, 2008). The requirement to bleed on the wedding night has over the years led to an increase in hymenoplasty (hymen reconstruction) within South Asian communities in western societies (Begikhani, 2008; Essen, 2010). Media reports in England, France, Germany, U.S. and Canada indicate the rise of hymenoplasty within South Asian and Arab communities for prices ranging from \$1500 to \$3400 (Heinrich 2008; Sciolino & Mekhennet, 2008). Many of the women who choose hymenoplasty explain that anyone from parents, brothers, fiancés and spouses can demand them to have a hymen examination conducted by a doctor (Essen, 2010). According to Essen (2010) the fear of not bleeding leads to threats or fears of violence which in turn can lead to severe psychological problems, including depression, despair, suicidal feelings and identity problems. It is clear from the literature that the concept of *namus* dictates that premarital sexual intercourse impugns the honour of the female but not the male and that the woman's honour is the property of her male relatives and that she is merely the vessel of this honour.

## **IDEOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTS BEHIND HONOUR KILLINGS**

This section describes three ideological constructions, which in the literature, are attributed to honour killings. The three ideological constructions analyzed here are: the role of religion, predicaments of patriarchy and the multicultural discourse.

## Role of Religion

Researchers such as Chesler (2010) and Vitoshka (2010) have highlighted that honour killings mostly occur in communities that follow Islam. To determine the role of Islam in honour killings, this section will consider the practices and religious teachings.

The goal of an honour killing in general is to preserve one's (someone other than the victim's) honour and punish the victim. Honour killings are often committed to deter "dishonourable" acts such as seeking divorce, adultery, premarital sexual relations or pregnancies or being the victim of a sexual assault or rape (Hellgren & Hobson, 2004; Hussain, 2006; Tripathi & Yadav, 2004). Perpetrators of honour killings, through negative reinforcement, promote marriage (vs. divorce), chastity (vs. premarital sexual relations), fidelity (vs. extramarital affairs), procreation within a union (vs. premarital pregnancies) and obedience to men (vs. equality between the genders) (Khalili, 2002).

Vitoshka (2010) emphasizes that a closer examination of the Qur'an showcases principles contrary to beliefs of perpetrators of honour killings. In regards to adultery and fornication, Islam preaches "(Go) not near fornication; surely it is an indecency and an evil way" (Qur'an, 17:32). "The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication, flog each of them with a hundred stripes" (Qur'an, 24:2). These verses reveal two important aspects of Islamic teachings. First, the Qur'an prescribes that wrongdoers should be punished but does not demand death. Second, it states that women and men should be equally penalized with "a hundred stripes" for the same offense. The two themes of the Qur'an that no punishment should result in death and equal punishment for men and women contradict the principles that Muslim perpetrators of honour killings follow; namely that "dishonour" and "offenses toward Islam" cannot be forgiven and can only be cleansed by death (Gonzalez, 2005).

Furthermore, the Qur'an teaches that those accused of wrongdoing should be punished only after strong evidence against them is presented. And one who produces false evidence against another will be punished. This is stated in the following verses: "And those who launch a charge against chaste women, and produce not four witnesses (to support their allegations), flog them with eighty stripes; and reject their evidence ever after: for such men are wicked transgressors" (Qur'an, 24:4). Madek (2005) has pointed out that there exist greater inconsistencies between the principles of Islam and the practice of honour killing. For example, the perpetrators of honour killings do not seek evidence of wrongdoing, before attacking the victim and that the "suspicion" of a dishonourable act is viewed as sufficient to justify their actions.

More importantly, Islam preaches against murder: "Never should a believer kill a believer" (Qur'an, 4:92) and "Take not life, which Allah hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law" (Qur'an, 6:151). These lines of the Quran make it clear that under Islam, murder must be preceded by legal deliberations. In light of these principles, honour killings, which involves murder for personal vendetta without legal consideration, are inconsistent with and even contradictory to Islam (Vitoshka, 2010). An honour killing in itself is an act of capital punishment, and thus, is contrary to religious prescriptions. Essentially, Islam strongly *supports the values* that honour killings aims to enforce *but* not the killing.

The existing literature dictates that religious beliefs play an important role in the modern practice of honour killing. However, as Khalili (2002) and Vitoshka (2010) have suggested, religious beliefs do not trigger honour killings rather they provide an excuse for engaging in it. Some of the values promoted by religions (modesty and chastity) are acted upon in the perpetration of an honour killing, while another set of values (legal deliberation and protection of life) promoted by the same religion are disregarded. This apparent inconsistency can be

explained in two ways: either the perpetrators act on misconceptions of what religions teach or there are factors other than faith motivating them (Vitoshka, 2010).

### **Predicaments of Patriarchy**

Because most victims are female, the second explanation offered by scholars for the practice of honour killing is gender-discrimination against women (Gatehouse, 2009, Goksel, 2006; Lindisfarne, 1994). Currently gender dynamics in certain Muslims countries like Afghanistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia reflect the powerful grip patriarchy as an ideology has on the society as whole. Scholars such as Araj (2000), Goksel (2006), Korteweg and Yurdakul (2009) and Lesnie (2000) have theorized as to how the realities of masculinity and femininity allowed for the creation of a system of social control composed of practices which include shame, scandal, gossip and, most importantly, honour killings.

Honour is constructed through dualistic notions of male honour and female shame, whereby masculinity is largely constructed in terms of female chastity and reputation and social conduct of female family members (Araj, 2000). Conceptions of honour are tied to male self-worth and social worth, but most closely in relation to reputations and sexual conduct of women in his family (Araj, 2000; Spierenburg, 1998). Men retain masculine self-worth not only through the regulation and disciplining of the behaviour of their female relatives, but also by protecting them from other men (Goksel, 2006; Meeto, 2007). Historically, protecting women has been linked to ideas of women as the property of their male relatives, which again results in attempts to control female behaviour, particularly female sexual autonomy (Goldstein, 2002; Tripathi 2004). Shame is redressed through punishment of the “deviant” female and the alleged shame caused by such actions can be “washed away” through the eradication of the source of the shame

namely the woman (Araji, 2000). Moreover, men who do not attempt to repair or renew the male family honour in this way are seen as powerless (Goksel, 2006).

Gonzalez (2000) argues that codes of honour serve to construct not only what it means to be a woman but also what it means to be a man, and hence are central to social meanings of gender. Honour codes are applied differently and unequally to men and women. For example, women who transgress honour codes are treated far more harshly than their male counterparts (Baker, 1999). Likewise, other authors Spierenburg (1998) and Hassan (1999) note that women are undoubtedly the primary victims of “crimes of honour” at the hands of largely male perpetrators.

### **Multicultural Discourse**

In contrast with the gender-based approach to the problem of honour killings, several academics have highlighted that honour killings are more specifically located within certain groups such as South Asians, Arabs and Turks (Baker, 1999; Chesler, 2010; Hellgren, 2008; Lesnie, 2000). This also has implications for immigrant receiving countries. Given the high volume of immigrants to Canada, it is important to analyze honour killings through the multicultural lens which according to Lesnie (2006) promotes acceptance of diversity but also facilitates communities in claiming that the problem is not as acute as it is. And even if there is a problem, it is being adequately managed within the community.

In Canada, multiculturalism was introduced during the premiership of Pierre Trudeau in the 1970s and 1980s with the aim promoting an integrated, tolerant and egalitarian society where the diversity of cultures is valued equally (Esses, 1996). Scholars such as Korteweg and Yurdakul (2009) and Reddy (2008) argue that multiculturalism pays more attention to the differences between groups than within them and that consequently power imbalances within

groups are left unquestioned. According to Meeto (2007) attempts to create equality and tolerance between groups may unwittingly serve to actively reinforce power hierarchies within groups, leaving already disempowered members further vulnerable to injustice in a “paradox of multicultural vulnerability” (p.192).

Given the current media and governmental focus on honour killings in Canada, it is unlikely that even the most conservative of community leaders or members would openly or directly advocate honour killings or claim that they have a right to continue such practices. On the other hand, the government and its agencies, such as the police, may hesitate to intervene for fear of accusations of racism. The result is that responsibility for addressing abuses such as honour killings is evaded by the government and enforcement personnel which results with the protection of women superseded by multicultural concerns (Korteweg & Yurdakul, 2009). Furthermore, the *laissez faire* attitude of the authorities may contribute to strengthening existing dominant patriarchal traditions (Hellgren, 2008).

## **INTERGENERATIONAL CONFLICT IN SOUTH ASIAN FAMILIES**

Honour killings have been reported regarding immigrant communities from across the world; however, for two reasons, this section will only focus on South Asian families. First, most of the honour killings known to have occurred in Canada in the past decade appear to have been executed by people of South Asian Origin. Secondly, there is a wider scope of literature available about intergenerational conflict about South Asian families than other immigrant communities.

South Asian groups have a long history of living in diverse societies and tend to adopt new values while retaining their cultural and social values, even when they do not fully integrate (Furnham & Sheikh, 1993; Netting, 2006). South Asian migration to Canada started towards the



end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; however, it was in the 1970s that an increasing number of south Asians moved to Canada (Buchignani & Indra, 1985). In 2006 there were 1,262,900 South Asians in Canada and they were the largest visibly racialized community (Census Canada, 2006).

However, South Asians are a very diverse group with respect to both ethnic origin and country of birth. According to Census Canada (2006), a majority of the foreign-born South Asians came from countries in the Indian subcontinent, such as India (48.8%), Pakistan (14.6%), Sri Lanka (11.7%) and Bangladesh (3.6%).

The process of negotiating cultural change is a difficult one. Migration causes tension between the traditions which immigrants would like to retain and those of Canadian culture (Talbani & Hasanali, 2000). This balancing of cultures results in individuals and families redefining their roles and identities within and outside the community. As with other immigrant families, South Asian families confront a host of structural constraints and conditions in their new environment in Canada which shape family arrangements, roles and orientations. These constraints and conditions may include language acquisition skills, unemployment, housing, culture shock and racism (Walton & Pratt, 2005). The cultural understandings, meanings and symbols that South Asians bring with them from their home societies are also critical in understanding immigrant family life (Walton & Pratt, 2005).

The overarching theme of conflict between first and second generation immigrants have been attributed in the literature to the clash that exists between North American and South Asian values. Existing literature (Deepak 2005; Hennink, Diamond & Cooper 1999; Merali, 2006) suggests that potential for conflict exists between South Asian immigrants to the Western world and their adolescent/adult children. Lalonde (2004) explains that the culture of the first generation is typically well grounded before arriving in a new society. The first generation has

experienced its heritage culture both socio-structurally (schools, language, media) and interpersonally (family, peers, partners), and their self-concept is well rooted in the culture of the country of origin. In contrast, the second generation experiences most of its heritage culture through their families. At the same time, much of their social structure and the majority of their peers belong to the new culture. Thus, children of immigrants are caught between two cultures: one of their parents and one of Canadian society.

### **Structural Values and Identities**

Research such as those by Aycan and Kanungo (1998) and Walton and Pratt (2005) have identified individualism and collectivism as two fundamental values which differentiate between Eastern and Western cultures. Individualism emphasizes the rights of the individual and the importance of individual goals while collectivism focuses on the rights and well-being of the groups that individuals belong to (Aycan & Kanungo, 1998). Individuals internalize these cultural values, which then affect the ways in which they relate to important others in their environment. For the first generation South Asian immigrants, the idea of collectivism lies at the core of the way they identify roles, gender and identities.

Also, existing literature such as Ho (2008) focused on how youth typically draw upon two key constructs: “ethnic identity” or “bi-cultural identity”. Ho (2008) describes ethnic identity as the part of a person’s overall identity that is linked directly to her/his ethno-racial roots and emerges through an in-depth internal exploration of the characteristics and practices people share with others of similar backgrounds. Typically, youth develop a strong ethnic identity when their experiences and interactions reflect positive perceptions of group membership. “Bi-cultural identity” emerges when youth maintain ties to a culture of origin, while simultaneously adhering to the norms of the majority culture (Ho, 2008). Perhaps, Roland (1988) explains it succinctly in

his analysis of the Indian self. He describes the three components of the Indian self. A large familial self that derives its identity from the family, a spiritual self, and a very small individual self that tries to have its needs met within the context of the family (Roland, 1988).

These structural values and identities are important in understanding the conflict dynamics between parents and teenagers in South Asian families.

## **TEENAGE GIRLS OF SOUTH ASIAN FAMILIES**

Adolescence is often considered as a difficult period of transition to adulthood. Singla (2005) points out that the teenage years are characteristically difficult for girls, due to social and cultural expectations of their female roles in society. Likewise, teenage South Asian girls who were born or grew up in Western societies may undergo conflict and encounter contradictions between heritage and receiving cultures (Singla, 2005). In the forthcoming sections, I will examine three junctures of conflict between South Asian parents and teenagers: Socialization, gender roles and arranged marriages.

### **Socialization**

In most societies, socialization plays the role of habituation and cultural acquisition. However, as Lalonde (2004) Hennink, Diamond and Cooper (1999) and Talbani and Hasanali (2000) observe that within the context of South Asian communities, socialization means (amongst other notions) instilling respect for authority and conformity to social roles through beliefs, rituals and customs. Socialization is a process of regulating behaviour and educating children into procedures for social interaction based on core cultural value (Foner, 1997). Within the Indian community, the parent's worth is measured by the education, financial stability and their children's adherence to Indian values. Thus, actions of the children are considered reflective of their parent's child rearing (Dugsin, 2001).

## Socializing Attire

Academics (such as Durham 200; Dwyer, 2000) have observed that South Asian parents monitor their daughter's attire especially in public spaces. In Dwyer's (2000) study the primary marker of a young South Asian girl's assumed propriety was her dress. South Asian teenagers explained how a whole constellation of meanings was attached to the wearing of either Indian clothes or Western clothes, such that Western clothes were inevitably associated with rebelliousness, active sexuality, and represented a threat to ethnic or religious purity (Dwyer, 2000).

Based on the statement of facts (2010) of the case of Aqsa Parvez, the *hijab* was a key point of disputation for her and her father. Writing about the *hijab* among South Asians in Britain, Dwyer (1999 p.5) argues that it is "a powerful and overdetermined marker of difference" and "an essentialized symbol of a traditional identity" associated with being a decent and chaste girl. According to Dwyer (1999), the wearing of headscarves is understood as an expression not of religion but of ethnic identity. For South Asian parents, having their daughters wear the *hijab* assert identification broadly with Islam as a universal religion beyond South Asia. Ajrouch (2004) highlights that girls who wear the *hijab* are held to a higher standard than girls who do not, by relatives and her community. In her study, all girls were the target for gossip; however, girls who wore the *hijab* symbolized the pinnacle of respect and obligation.

It is important to stress that in certain ethnic cultures such as South Asian and Middle Eastern, parents do not necessarily regard their children as adults when they are 18. On the contrary, the parents feel responsible for their children until they marry (Basit, 1998). Therefore, in the case of most Muslim girls, freedom from parental authority, in particular, is a consequence of marriage, rather than that of coming of age. The parents might make exceptions in the case of

unmarried sons who start to earn a living and begin to support the parents, but such allowances are never made for unmarried daughters, even if they are financially contributing members. Based on her study of South Asian Canadian teenagers, Ruby (2004) describes that girls who chose not to wear the *hijab* were looked at negatively by not only the men but also women and often felt community pressure to conform. Ironically, choosing to wear the *hijab* or not does not prevent one from being watched by her family and community.

### **Socializing Peers**

In many western countries the key concerns of immigrant South Asian parents were about their teenage daughters' activities outside the home such as going out, partying and dating. Based on studies done in England (Dwyer, 2000), Canada (Talbani & Hasanali, 2000) Scandanavia (Singla, 2005) the Netherlands and Germany (Korteweg & Yurdaku, 2009), South Asian teenagers were regulated in the type of socializing they were permitted to engage in.

Talbani and Hasanali's (2000) study illustrates that South Asian parents from Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin living in Canada were perceived to be very strict in regards to inter-gender relationships. Most South Asian girls would neither date nor have boyfriends. South Asian girls felt that individuals from other communities did not approach an Indian girl because they knew that she was not going to be allowed to go out. Parents would also restrict phone use and hang up if a boy called (Talbani and Hasanali, 2000).

Other literature such as Hennink, Diamond and Cooper's (1999) show that South Asian teenagers of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin in Britain were discouraged by their parents to socialize with girls from other ethnicities, out of the fear that "Western" girls may socialize with boys and influence their daughters. In addition, they pointed out that South Asian girls found it easier to relate to other South Asian girls because they would understand the social

restrictions placed on them and shared their religious beliefs and cultural traditions. Due to the parental disapproval of boyfriends, South Asian girls feared the possibility of being seen by other community members and being reported back to parents if they chose to date (Hennink, Diamond & Cooper, 1999). Parental disapproval and rejection, disgracing the family reputation or an immediate arranged marriage were some of the consequences identified for having a boyfriend without parental approval (Hennink, Diamond & Cooper, 1999).

### **Gender Roles**

Existing literature such as Aycan and Kanungo (1998), Dugsin (2001), Khan (2005), Singla (2005) and Walton and Pratt (2005) assert that gendered expectations of South Asian young women are based on the notion that they are guardians of cultural and religious integrity. Aycan and Kanungo (1998) explained that many South Asians female teenagers recognized a gendered parental expectation that, as future mothers, they should reproduce the parental culture i.e. speak their native language, dress a certain way and cook certain dishes. Others such as Khan (2005) stated that such expectations reinforced gender roles and emphasized the ways in which young women were expected to uphold a family's religious and cultural integrity. Based on Talbani and Hasanali's (2000) study conducted of South Asian girls in Canada, female gender roles of South Asian adolescents were maintained by their parents obliging them to stay within their home under the parents' scrutiny unless it was necessary to go out. When the girls did go out they were policed by their parents, male relatives (brothers or uncles) and expected to maintain and uphold their female gender roles.

### **Izzat (Collective Honour of the Family)**

The death of Aqsa Parvez was perceived to have been precipitated by several events; two of them being her choice of behaviour and attire. Much of the reporting of her attire and

behaviour at school was accomplished by her sisters who reported to their father (Agreed statement of facts, 2010). Aqsa's mother explained to the police officer why she believed her husband killed Aqsa. She quoted him as saying:

This is my insult. My community will say you have not been able to control your daughter. This is my insult. She is making me naked (Agreed statement of facts, 2010).

Various scholars (Dugsin, 2001; Hennink, Diamond & Cooper, 1999; Ruby, 2004; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000; Walton & Pratt, 2005) have elaborated on the concept of *izzat* or the collective honour of the family. Upholding *izzat* is important to the family as it is the young women who occupy a symbolic place as the guardian of family honour and integrity. The South Asian girl is viewed as the vessel by which the family maintains its honour; if her honour is jeopardized so too becomes the honour of the family (Dugsin, 2001).

Lalonde's (2004) study indicates that for some South Asian girls the issue of *izzat* was visible in the monitoring of their behaviour and their attire and how they were viewed in public spheres. While their attire was used by parents and others to monitor religious and ethnic purity, it simultaneously functioned to position young women as "typical South Asian girls" (Lalonde, 2004).

## **Gossip**

Awad (2002) illustrates how gossip is at the center of a family's code of honour and how detrimental it can be once it develops a snowball effect. She explains that once shame threatens the family's honour, it becomes a concern of the entire community and not just the family. Therefore, the family is pressured, through the continuation of gossip, to take the necessary steps to purify its honour which (the family believes) will restore the family's social standing in the neighbourhood and the community. From a structural functionalist perspective, gossip serves to unify the community and establish stability and order that are essential to the survival of the

family and society (Awad, 2002). Ginat (1979) further states that violence against women will only occur if their “illicit” sexual activities become public knowledge. Once the “illicit” sexual activities become public knowledge, the community will exert tremendous pressure on the family to correct the situation and to save face.

Studies of South Asian teenagers (Sundar, 2008; Talbani & Hasanali, 2000) assert that South Asian girls were especially concerned of how their community viewed them and if they became subject to gossip. Likewise, neighbours or family relations assumed the role of monitoring the behaviour of all young women. This influence was termed the “culture of the community” by one teenager in Sundar’s (2008) study and refers to the expectations which are imposed by the community on an individual’s behaviour.

Parents could face difficulties in finding a husband for their daughter if the community perceived that the daughter has been involved with boys. Dwyer (2000) highlights that young men (peers of the South Asian girls) often took on this role of policing as well. Brothers or cousins would comment on the girls’ attire, haircut, makeup and social networks. This policing of the male relatives appeared to be a way of maintaining their own adolescent masculine ethnic and religious identity (Dwyer, 2000).

### **Arranged Marriages**

Walton and Pratt (2005) highlight that marriages are exercised to preserve group solidarity, strengthen family relationships and keep the family’s economic resources within the community. Marriage is an important instrument of social control. According to Naidoo (2003), in most cases, educational and career goals of the girl are secondary or are important so long as they facilitate opportunities for the girl to get a better marriage proposal or support the economy of her family.



It is also important to revisit the structural values of individualism and collectivism and their relation to arranged marriages. Goodwin and Cramer (2000) assert that in individualist cultures, individuals choose their own relationship partners in accordance with their own individual desires, with a strong emphasis on love matches. In contrast, in collectivist cultures the group is more important, and obligations to the group often override personal preferences. Marriage is seen as a process of linking families, rather than just mere individuals and there is an emphasis on the fulfillment of broad social obligations (Goodwin & Cramer, 2000). Partners are introduced usually by family members on the basis of the economic position, family reputation, education, caste and religion. In collectivist societies, love is often subsequent to marriage, rather than being a precondition for it.

According to some studies such as Merali (2006) and Netting (2006) the rationale of South Asian parents for arranged marriages include maintaining the family's security and stability, permanency and spirituality. Netting's (2006) study indicates that South Asian parents employ a gamut of strategies in finding suitors for their daughters when the girls have reached a marriageable age. Sometimes an informal notification is made through family and friends networks or that the parents return to their native county to find a spouse or rely on friends and relatives there to help in the search. Newspaper and websites advertisements may be used to broaden the pool of candidates (Netting, 2006).

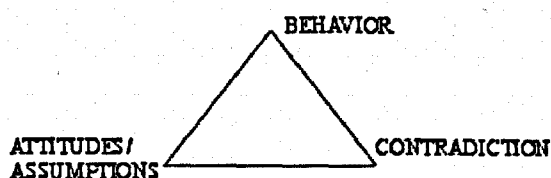
Several studies (Goodwin & Cramer, 2000; Merali, 2006; Netting, 2006; Talbani and Hasanali, 2000) have analyzed South Asian girls' concerns about arranged marriages. Primarily, girls expressed their resentment against the arranged marriage or an early marriage (Netting, 2006). If they viewed their parents' arranged marriage to be an unhappy one, they believed that this was a strong argument not to make the same mistake as them. Also, arranged marriages

often do not work if one of the spouses, who has become westernized, is paired with someone from their native country who they find is incompatible. Talbani and Hasanali's (2000) study of South Asian teenagers indicated the girls preferred getting married later than their elder sisters or cousins and talked about working or studying at a post secondary level; the girls also argued that if they were married early and did not finish their education they would inevitably be dependent on their husbands.

Unfortunately, adolescents who did not submit to an arranged marriage, in the face of parental pressure, faced gossip, shame, and guilt. Young people who married without their parents' blessings risked being cut off from the family physically and financially (Walton & Pratt, 2005). In contrast, some adolescent South Asians who were forced into arranged marriages had to adapt to dislocation and the strain of catering to their own culture and that of their spouse. Although rare, women who were married through arranged marriages sometimes experienced guilt, loss, self-mutilation, mourning abandonment of career and attempted suicides (Purkayastha, 2000).

### THE CONFLICT TRIANGLE

In the earlier sections, I addressed ideological constructs of honour killings and intergenerational conflict within South Asian families. Johan Galtung's Conflict Triangle (2004) is instrumental in offering a framework to further understand the intersectional nature of this topic and to summarize the literature in a cohesive manner. He describes three key aspects within a conflict: attitudes, behaviours and contradictions.



This framework, attitudes refer to assumptions and emotions that one party may have about the other. A common attitude in conflicts is one of superiority, dominance and refusal to take the other parties' views into account (Galtung, 2004). Applied to the honour killing discourse, the attitudes of the parents are in conflict with those of their teenage children. Where the parents harbour a conservative and collectivist attitude the children adopt a liberal, individualistic attitude.

Contradictions are the perceived incompatibility or clashing of goals between two or more parties. The contradiction is the root of the conflict and is the core issue that creates violent attitudes and behaviours (Galtung, 2004). A conflict of interests (both within oneself and between parties) can cause repression of feelings, leading to frustration, stress, and other violent outcomes. Within the honour killing discourse the contradiction between the two parties revolves around the concept of honour and its association with control. For some South Asian immigrant parents, honour is intertwined with elements of controlling their daughter's behaviour, public conduct and socialization whereas for the daughter honour might be associated with being autonomous in controlling and choosing their own behaviour, clothing, spouse, where they go and who they befriend.

Behaviours refer to the mental, verbal or physical expressions put forth in a conflict (Galtung, 2004). Violent behaviours include anything that reveals hatred or a lack of respect toward the opposing party which may come in the form of verbal insults, physical abuse or the outright denial of people's basic human rights (Galtung, 2004). Applied to the honour killing discussion, the behaviour of both parents and teenagers becomes apparent when teenagers challenge their parents' wishes or when parents verbally abuse, physically restrain, abuse or even kill their children.

## SECTION 2: ANALYSIS OF HONOUR KILLINGS IN THE CANADIAN MEDIA

This section examines the implications of the media's coverage of the killing of Aqsa Parvez, while taking into account how the Canadian media portrayed honour killings and Muslims. Samuel Huntington's theory of "Clash of Civilizations" will be used to better understand how the historical relationship between the Orient and Occident persists to inform the Western world's understanding of Islam and Muslims.

### SAMUEL HUNTINGTON'S CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS

The idea of Islam and Muslims representing a threat to Western civilization has been perpetuated by writings, such as in Samuel Huntington's article *A Clash of Civilizations?* which was later re-written as a book (Harb, 2008). According to Huntington (1993), in the post-Cold War era the main source of conflict will be between nations of different civilizations based on the cultural lines that separate each civilization from one another. Huntington separates the world into different civilizations based on cultural and religious differences (Harb, 2008). The Islamic civilizations are depicted as being the most threatening to the Western world. Huntington concludes that on both sides (Islam and the West) there appears to be a "Clash of Civilizations" which will lead to a new world order (Huntington, 1993).

It is important to note that when Huntington first published his article *A Clash of Civilizations?* in 1993, his work was criticized by the academic community for its inaccuracy (Harb, 2008). However, post-September 11, Samuel Huntington's book with the same title, without the question mark at the end, became a bestseller (Abrahamian, 2003). This change in opinion was mainly related to by the Western media's continuous attempt to frame the events of 9/11 as somehow confirming Samuel Huntington's previous assertion of a "Clash of Civilizations" along the lines of ethnic and religious differences. Huntington's thesis and other

similar types of literature have essentially re-divided and drawn borders around the Occidental and Oriental world (Harb, 2008).

Huntington's thesis on the "Clash of Civilizations" is problematic because the various civilizations that he outlines are not uniform bodies. This is especially the case in regards to the Muslim world which consists of vast differences in language, culture, and ethnicity (Harb, 2008).

## **APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF CANADIAN MEDIA**

In this section I have chosen to employ a media discourse analysis. There are several other types of critical discourse analysis, such as gender inequality discourse, political discourse and ethno-racial discourse each of which has been applied to various disciplines with their own dimensions of study and methodologies. I have chosen to apply media discourse analysis to this MRP because it enables researchers to unfold the language the Canadian print media uses to reveal the nuance and subtleties that send a particular point of view to the public about an issue (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). In discourse analysis the text is the data, and the approach is therefore not about exploring "the" content or meaning of the text. Rather, it is about explaining how certain things came to be said or done, and what has enabled and/or constrained what can be spoken or written in a particular context (Cheek, 2004).

The following section also adopts the Agenda Setting Theory. Theorists Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw (1972) created the Agenda-Setting Theory based on the belief that mass media tells the public not what to think but what to think about. According to McCombs and Shaw (1972), the media sets the public agenda by determining, through information and position of coverage, how much importance to attach to an issue. Two basic assumptions underline most research on agenda sitting: firstly, the press and media do not reflect reality; they filter and shape it. Secondly, the media focuses on certain issues which lead the public to perceive those issues as

more important than other issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Lippmann (1922) argued that people do not have the time to see for themselves all of reality. The news media and other media outlets provide the public with pictures in their heads to make up a reality instead (Lippmann, 1922). Therefore, the media are in a powerful position to influence audience's perceptions about any event, and even prevent the audience from thinking about an event at all.

The objects of analysis for this section are print media articles that have been selected from two Canadian major national newspapers, mainly *The Toronto Star* and *The National Post*. Due to time restraints, I have chosen to focus only on these two particular newspapers in order to demonstrate the causes which are attributed to honour killings by these newspapers. Eight articles from the two newspapers were gathered for analysis; specifically each newspaper's coverage of Aqsa Parvez's killing between December 10, 2007 and December 18, 2007. The articles (see appendix) were downloaded from each paper's online archive.

MacLean's Magazine: Case Study of Media-Propagated Islamophobia (Awan, Ahmed, Mithoowani, Simard & Skeikh, 2007) provides an interesting analysis of how Muslims are depicted in the media. The authors make the claim that many of the articles that have been published about Islam and Muslims carry some specific features such as : (1) promoting Islamophobia and fear of Muslims, (2) representing Muslims as violent people who are prone to engage in violence and are incapable of living peacefully in their host societies, (3) casting suspicion on Muslims at large as potential radicals (4) and representing the presence and growth of Muslims in Western societies as a threat to the Western values of democracy, freedom, and human rights. Using the above features, I will analyse if/how the media has framed their discourse around Muslims and honour killings.

## RESULTS OF THE MEDIA ANALYSIS

Aqsa Parvez was a 16 year old girl who became a victim of an alleged honour killing in Mississauga, Ontario. Her father, Muhammad Parvez is accused of strangling her, then calling police to turn himself in. Reports from the media indicate that she was killed after she refused to wear the *hijab* (headscarf) after she had declared her desire to dress like other Western girls (Wilkes, 2007). Following Aqsa's death, the *Toronto Star* and the *National Post* began running stories on the harms of Islam and Muslims in Canada. Some reports also suggested that Islam held "barbaric" practices and that the killing was testament to that (The meaning of Aqsa Parvez, 2007; Kay, 2007b). Presented next is my analysis of media on the role of the father, the *hijab* and Islam and how they were connected and codified to the killing of Aqsa Parvez.

### Role of Father

On December 10, 2007, the police responded to Muhammad Parvez's call where he said that he had "...just killed his daughter." When officers arrived at his home, they found Aqsa Parvez suffering from life-threatening injuries (Wilkes, 2007, p. A1). Early reports of Aqsa's death in the *Toronto Star* demonstrate the discourse which is built around her father. Articles (Alcoba, 2007; Henry & Mitchell, 2007; Kay, 2007a; Wattie, 2007; Wilkes, 2007) gave undue attention to the religious devotion and background of the father. Wattie (2007b, p. A11) and Wilkes (2007, p. A1) describe the father as being a "devout" Muslim. However, the articles do not clarify why his religious devotion is important or how it is related to him killing his daughter. It is taken for granted that the reader will make the connection between his Islamic devotion and the killing.

Several articles from the *Toronto Star* and the *National Post* also noted Pakistan as the country of origin of Muhammad Parvez (Alcoba, 2007; Henry & Mitchell, 2007; Kay, 2007a).

This attention to the country of origin of the father creates a binary between Canadian citizens and the “other”. It also gives the impression that Muslims are violent people who are incapable of living peacefully in their receiving societies. Fatah and Hassan (2007) from the *National Post* highlight that “Radical Muslim men consider themselves ultimately responsible for the conduct of the womenfolk.” These authors continue that “this outlook is rooted in a medieval ethos that treats women as nonpersons, unable to decide for themselves what they should wear, where they must go and what they must accomplish in life” (Fatah & Hassan, 2007, p. A26). Statements such as these perpetuate the false assumption that some Muslim men whether born in Canada or not are potential radicals and are adamant on “controlling” women. Furthermore, such statements cast suspicion on Muslims at large and poise the Muslim population as a threat to women’s rights.

### **The Hijab**

Most of the debate in the two newspapers revolved around the discussion that Aqsa was killed because she refused to wear the *hijab*. The *hijab* was presented as the catalyst to Aqsa’s death. The *hijab* is framed as being a symbol of restraint and imprisonment by the *Toronto Star*. Citing one of Aqsa’s friends who explained that “Aqsa started to take off her *hijab* on the bus en route to school and put it back on in the afternoons; she felt liberated to reveal her hair” (Henry & Mitchell, 2007, p. A1). The *Toronto Star* further noted that Aqsa “just wanted to dress like us (her friends), just like a normal person” (Wilkes, 2007, p. A1). In addition, the *National Post* blatantly deems that the *hijab* is a “Muslim symbol of sexual modesty” and “marks those wearing it as chattel, leashed to their fathers and brothers as surely as if they were wearing a dog collar” (Kay, 2007a, p. A24). These articles imply that in certain circumstances Muslim women are forced to wear the *hijab* but neglects to address the other side of the issue where Muslim women choose to wear the *hijab* not only as a sign of modesty but as a sense of Muslim identity,



pride, belonging and empowerment (Khan, 2009). Depending on the societies and cultures which Muslim women come from they may choose to live, study, and work anywhere they deem fit. There is no Islamic law that coerces them to be “leashed to their fathers and brothers” because of their *hijab*.

One of the conventional ways that the media depicts Muslims in Western societies is that they do not espouse Western values of freedom and women’s rights (Awan et al., 2007). The *National Post* highlights the dichotomy between Islam and the West, suggesting that one is incompatible with the other. Citing one of Aqsa’s friends as saying “last year, she wore like the Islamic stuff and everything, the hijab and this year she’s all Western. She just wanted to look like everyone else” (Wattie, 2007b, p. A11). This article perpetuates the existing fear that the actions, behaviours and traditions of Muslims in Canada are irreconcilable with the Canadian values of freedom and human rights. Based on this article, the *hijab* is an agency by which Muslims are different and contrary with the Canadian environment that they live in. Perhaps more boldly than other writers of the *National Post*, Fatah and Hassan (2007) engage their readership with what they think is the issue of the *hijab*:

The *hijab* in particular has become a thorny issue among Muslim families. It has been elevated as a sort of “sixth pillar of Islam” among militant sects. Young teenage girls are often lectured over the virtues of the *hijab* by their family members. Once they hit puberty, compliance is deemed a non-negotiable religious requirement (Fatah & Hassan, 2007, p. A26).

Fatah and Hassan generalize their portrayal of girls wearing the *hijab* by casting suspicion on Muslims at large as potential extremists and radicals. The presentation of an element of Muslims (militant sects) as being representative of Muslims at large is a misrepresentation. Many Muslims who are not part of any militant sects still choose to adopt the *hijab* without being forced by anyone. It is an overstatement to claim that “compliance is deemed a non-negotiable”.

## Islam

The media's negative portrayal of Islam has played a major role in the revival of xenophobia and the fear of a supposed "enemy from within" Canada. Islam has often been depicted as a stagnant barrier which cements new binaries between "us" and "them" and therefore constructs divisions between the "civilized" and "uncivilized". These types of categories seek to only further embellish claims of a "clash of civilizations" between the West and Islam.

Because Aqsa and her parents were Muslims and they came from a predominantly Muslim country, the media made a link between the killing and Islam. The *National Post* makes its position clear that it fears the "loathsome and barbaric practice of Muslim "honour killings" is making its way from South Asia and the Middle East to Canada" (The Meaning of Aqsa Parvez, 2007, p. A26). Likewise, the article asserts that it is the duty of "Western societies to closely scrutinize the toxic cultural practices of unassimilated Muslims in Europe and elsewhere" (The Meaning of Aqsa Parvez, 2007, p. A26). Moreover, the *National Post* warns its readers that the killing is a "natural tendency to see it as an indicator that Canadian Muslims are about to follow the radicalized path of militant, unassimilated co-religionists in Paris, London and Stockholm" (The Meaning of Aqsa Parvez, 2007, p. A26). This article highlights certain points about the relationship between Islam and the West. First, it suggests that honour killings are solely a Muslim/Islamic phenomenon, ignoring that honour killings occur in communities that follow the other religions in the world namely Christianity and Sikhism (Vitoshka, 2010). Second, it alludes to the notion that any "unassimilated Muslim" may carry certain "toxic cultural practices" which may pervert Canadian society. Thirdly, the isolated incident of the killing by one individual is portrayed as being a precursor to militant Islam in Canada. This article from the *National Post*

serves as a good example for promoting Islamophobia and Muslims as a threat to Western values of freedom and human rights.

A more provocative article of the *National Post* delves into the issue of female autonomy within Islam:

In most of South Asia and the Middle East (the Islamic world), humans are viewed not primarily as individuals, but as agents of a family, tribe, clan or sect. This fundamental difference in outlook explains much of what we find barbaric about traditional Muslim cultural practices. Honour killings -- to take a newsworthy example -- strike Westerners as a particularly horrific species of murder. But that's because we think of people as individuals. If you instead see a woman primarily as a low-status breeding agent of her patriarch's clan, everything changes. By taking up with an unapproved male, she is nullifying whatever value she once had as a human (Kay, 2007b, p. A18).

This article proposes that Islam does not consider women as autonomous agents but rather dependants on their male relatives which has been discussed in the previous section on *hijab*. It also suggests that Muslims practices are barbaric but are justified in the minds of Muslims because they consider themselves part of a "family, tribe, clan or sect." Islamically, being part of a specific family or clan does not justify any violence towards any member of that family. Rather Islam encourages one to take care and safeguard the life of any and every component of the family/tribe. Islam preaches against murder: "Never should a believer kill a believer;" "Take not life, which Allah hath made sacred" (The Qur'an, 4:92 and 6:151). In light of the sacredness of life, honour killings are inconsistent and contradictory to Islam.

## **REFLECTIONS ON CANADIAN MEDIA**

The account of Aqsa's death as a case of unsuccessful multiculturalism and integration is the latest in a long line of media sensationalization over the plight of Muslims exemplified in cases such as: the Sharia Law Debate in Ontario which raged throughout 2004 and 2005; The controversy with Elections Canada when women sought to exercise their right to vote while wearing the *niqab* (face veil) (Haque, 2010). In addition, there were the arrests in 2006 under

Canada's Anti-Terrorism Act of "the Toronto 18", who were all Canadian-Muslim men and boys (Molloy, 2008).

This section of the MRP supports that Western media continues to play a major role in shaping the views of the average Canadian citizen about Muslims. The Western media's negative depiction of Muslims has in essence allowed the othering of Muslims and has cast them as barbaric, archaic and uncivilized. It is only when one makes a direct link between the media and its negative effect on public opinion that one can combat the roots of racism and discrimination in Canadian society (Harb, 2008). Many of the articles published in the *Toronto Star* and the *National Post* have attempted to affirm Samuel Huntington's past assertions of a "Clash of Civilizations" between the West and Islam.

This media analysis hopes to demonstrate the degree of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism existent in the articles both published in the *Toronto Star* and the *National Post*. This begs the question as to why the Muslim community is targeted in the media in this way. This question yields several answers. First, Muslims living in Canada are still seen as foreigners of the Western state regardless of how long they have lived as legal residents or whether they are Canadian citizens by birth. The construction of the "other" in society is essential in the creation of the ideal "Canadian" identity. The media's negative portrayal of Muslims has played a major role in the revival of xenophobia and the fear of a supposed "other" in not only Canada, but many other Western countries (Harb, 2008). Second, Islamophobia and anti-Muslim racism in the mainstream media has often been defended under the principle of freedom of speech, however, it should also be remembered that there are limits to the rights of any citizen, including the right to free speech and expression in the media, especially when it promotes hate about a specific religious or ethnic community in society (Harb, 2008).

In brief, the media's recognition of the Muslim community as part of Canadian society would dispel the creation of binaries such as "us" and "them" "Muslim" and "non-Muslims" would facilitate the discourse of integration and acceptance.

## **SECTION 3: CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

On June 16 2010, more than two years after Aqsa's death, her father and brother, Muhammad and Waqas Parvez, were sentenced to life in prison with no chance of parole for 18 years (O'Toole, 2010). Honour killings cause a triple tragedy; the girls lie in the cemetery, the men lie in prison, and those remaining at home lie without both. In the end, honour killings cause girls and women to lose their chance at life, a chance to grow up and a chance to achieve their dreams. And that is the greatest shame of all.

There is much to be done in Canada (and across the world) if we envision an end to honour killings. Honour killings have to be tackled on multiple fronts to create a safer atmosphere. At the basic level, people in and out of the community must expose the dangerous reality surrounding shame and honour killings and challenge the patriarchal society by breaking the walls of silence. The "strong man" has to be redefined as one who is not afraid to let his daughters lead their own lives; a man whose image and reputation is too great to be troubled by rumours concerning his female relatives' behaviour; and a man who defines himself as honourable by his actions of preserving and protecting the lives of his close ones rather than endangering them (Brandon & Hafez, 2008). The opponents of honour killings from outside the society must work in tandem with the people within the community in combating these crimes as those within already have the required access and credibility to engage in a discourse with the community. Only when such coalitions are constructed, will honour-based violence against women end.

## **Limitations**

There are certain limitations to this MRP which need to be acknowledged. First, there were articles written in Urdu, Arabic and Turkish related to honour killings which I did not use due to language and time restraints. Second, because honour killings are a fairly new phenomenon to Canada, academic resources discussing Canadian content were sparse. Third, honour killings happen in various communities around the world; however my MRP only focused on South Asians. Fourth, other stakeholder viewpoints such as attempted honour killing victims and perpetrators were not included. Only three themes (role of father, hijab and Islam) were analyzed in regard to the papers despite other factors being present such as failed integration and lack of immigrant services. Finally, although several other Canadian newspapers were available, only two were chosen to conduct a media discourse analysis due to time and scope restraints.

## **Recommendations**

There is no magic formula to prevent honour killings. However, it is important that immigration, law enforcement, policy makers and religious authorities must all be included in education, prevention and prosecution efforts in the matter of honour killings. The literature provides many recommendations to address the issue of honour killings. Based on the work of Brandon and Hafez (2008), Nammi (2006), Sev'er (1999), and Welden (2010), the following recommendations are offered.

This section is categorized into recommendations for five key stakeholders in the discourse of honour killings: The family, clerics, the government, law enforcement and the media.

## Reforms within the Family

Reforms need to begin from the basic level of educating children and staff in schools.

Awareness and education for school staff, faculty and students could broaden understanding of cultural traditions and norms. The alleged teasing of Aqsa in her school was reported as precipitating her decision to begin removing her *hijab* (Welden, 2010). School personnel could be trained in recognizing warning signs of girls who may be at risk of honour killings such as a history of violence within the family, constant surveillance by parents or relatives, and restricting girls' movement, choices of friends and clothing (Nammi, 2006). Furthermore, reports of forced marriages or sudden travel to the "home" country should be taken seriously by school counsellors. To prevent honour-based violence from being passed on to new generations, children must be taught that sexual inequality and that violence against women is wrong. Schools can work with immigrant, refugee and women's groups to raise awareness of issues and of the assistance available to those at risk (Brandon & Hafez, 2008).

Short term goals for immigrant men should include exposing them to Canadian, Islamic and other religious values and laws regarding gender equality and making them aware of the consequences of honour killings in Canada. Long term goals for men should comprise of making them dissociate conceptualizations of honour away from women's bodies and lives, and instead, associating "cowardice" and "dishonour" to violence against women and girls (Sev'er, 1999). Efforts should also be made to make fathers (or male figures) realize that what they see on TV regarding lack of discipline, excessive interaction with the opposite gender, and overindulgence with self-image are exaggerated and is not realistically what happens in Canadian schools.

Furthermore, encouraging women to learn occupational skills and helping them build relationships with people from outside their family can give them economic independence while



also improving their overall confidence (Nammi, 2006). However, help groups should not seek to impose their ideologies on immigrant women but rather work within existing community structures and empower women through training and education.

On the whole, the government should find ways to draw families into programs that can provide concrete services such as tutoring or activities with their teenage daughters in hope of better understanding some of the changes that can take place once in Canada. Events that might draw parents in could include speakers from the South Asian community on topics like parenting, identity formation and teenagehood (Deepak, 2005). Families experiencing conflict must be made aware that conflicts are normal given the stresses associated with the process of migration but know that resources are available within and outside the community to address the issue. Settlement workers can consider that parenting styles are shaped in part through experiences from back home and that these experiences might vary considerably according to country, origin, religion, class and caste background (Deepak, 2005).

### **Reforms within the Mosque**

Imams (Muslim Clerics) are in an invaluable position to reach individuals and families. Many of the imams come from the same country or speak the same language as the immigrant families in their congregation. Likewise, imams hold khutbas (Friday sermons) which can result in crowds of anywhere from 300-500 people or more. Imams should initiate khutbas to proactively address the issue of honour killings before they happen rather than after. In the past, imams have focussed on disassociating Islam with honour killings but they should take proactive steps in helping the community from incurring other ones. Moreover, high profile imams can use their influence on TV, radio or internet to speak against honour killings.

Collaborations can be formed between the Canadian Government and Muslim organizations such as the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) and Muslim clerical organizations such as the Canadian Council of Imams and the Canadian Council of Muslim Theologians in creating awareness in Canadian-Muslim communities about honour killings. Also, the government working in collaboration with Muslim organizations will facilitate bringing the issue of honour killings to the platform of yearly Islamic conferences like Reviving the Islamic Spirit (RIS) and Journey of Faith which attracts tens of thousands of individuals and families.

### **Reforms within the Government**

All three levels of the government: federal, provincial and municipal should be actively involved in preventing honour killings as this phenomenon does not discriminate between place of residence, age group or social class. Honour killings are an issue of violence against women. Violence against women affects Canadian families of different backgrounds all over the country.

Short term goals of the government should include issuing clear warnings to Muslim, Sikh, and Hindu immigrants and citizens that perpetrators, accomplices and enablers of honour killings will all be prosecuted in Canada. Likewise, a crucial step would be that the government produce print and electronic guides about the facts of honour killings for police officers, social workers, education and health professionals. To help possible victims of honour killings, a helpline would be instrumental in offering advice and assistance. Also, establishing shelters for battered girls and women with multilingual staff would give victims a much needed place of shelter.

Long term goals may include a unified government strategy to approach honour-based violence to harmonize action by the police, the health services, local authorities, social services and central government. Government agencies also need to agree on a definition of honour-based violence. A fundamental step in the prevention of honour killings would be to identify and

document such crimes and offences; no action has been undertaken at governmental level in this direction. The government should aspire to produce short films aimed at raising awareness of honour-based violence and forced marriage within the South Asian community. These films could be shown to community leaders and support workers (Brandon & Hafez, 2008). Likewise, preventative measures can be taken by the government such as advising women who are being sponsored to come to Canada to attend a training session in their country of origin to educate them about their rights in Canada, Canadian culture and values and gender equality (Papp, 2010). Information regarding resources and help centres in various regions in Canada could also be provided. Finally, victims of honour crimes require a long-term investment of support and rehabilitation. A successful program should include: Long-term counselling, training, skill building, confidence and self-esteem building (Nammi, 2006).

### **Reforms within Law Enforcement**

Law enforcement agencies play a crucial role in preventing honour killings. In many cases, the police are the only resource of help the victims have. Law enforcement agencies should not fear accusations of racism when investigating cases of honour killings. In England, the police have had to reassess their approach to honour killings following the murder of Banaz Mahmod, a Kurdish woman who had unsuccessfully appealed to the police to protect her from her family (Brandon & Hafez, 2008). Police officers should be trained in treating all potential victims with the utmost sensitivity and seriousness and never to make assumptions based on perceptions of cultural difference (Nammi, 2006).

Law enforcement agencies should be alert that (similar to other situations of violence in the family) families set on enacting an “honour” murder will try to exploit police and other services to carry out their crime. They may, for example, register a person who has fled the risk of murder

as a missing person or accuse them of committing a crime in order to use the police as accomplices to track down a family member for the purposes of murder (Nammi, 2006). When investigating a homicide believed to be an honour killing, the police and prosecution services must be aware that the family is likely to have colluded in the killing. In such cases, a family member or associate may not give support or cooperate with an investigation of cause of death. Moreover, the Canadian government and police should not seek to deal with such issues through intermediaries who, they believe, can manage the community on behalf of the state. In many cases this policy has strengthened the influence of conservative men who are likely to support traditional ideas of honour and patriarchy and who are reluctant to condemn violence against women (Brandon & Hafez, 2008).

In England, the Home Office (a government department for immigration and passports, drugs policy, crime, counter-terrorism and police) has launched a new trial system called “Third Party Reporting” which allows victims of domestic violence to report incidents to community organizations rather than directly to the police. It has reportedly helped women who did not trust the police or who were afraid to be seen going into a police station (Brandon & Hafez, 2008). A similar model could be adopted in Canada. Lastly, the equivalent of a federal witness protection program for the intended targets of honour killings should be created including the provision of new identities and histories; England and Turkey have already established such programs.

### **Reforms in the Media**

The media holds the power to influence the masses and public opinion. If this influence is used wisely the media could be used to inform, educate and break down “cultures” of silence. The media making utopian demands of “gender equality” or destructive criticisms of the state’s failure to safeguard human rights or seeing honour killings as a fundamental flaw in Islam is

detrimental to the cause of eliminating honour killings (Sev'er, 1999). It is crucial for the all parties involved to work together to find a solution to the dilemma of honour killings. Alienating one group will only prove to be counterproductive to resolving the issue. Furthermore, the media should recognize the Muslim community as part of Canadian society and discontinue creating binaries such as "us" and "them" "Muslim" and "non-Muslims". The media should produce educational programming and commercials about honour killings in Urdu, Hindi and Arabic and broadcast them on multicultural stations to create awareness of available services and rights of women.

## Appendix

| Author                            | Title  | Newspaper     | Date              |
|-----------------------------------|--|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. Chris Wattie                   | Teenage girl in hospital over clothes; Refused to wear hijab, allegedly choked by father   | Toronto Star  | December 11, 2007 |
| 2. Jim Wilkes                     | Religion, resistance, tragedy; Mississauga father charged in grievous attack on girl; classmates say she argued with family over hijab | Toronto Star  | December 11, 2007 |
| 3. Editorial                      | The Meaning of Aqsa Parvez   | National Post | December 12, 2007 |
| 4. Michele Henry and Bob Mitchell | 'She wanted to follow her own rules'; Friends say slain Mississauga teenager suffered abuse in struggles with her family               | Toronto Star  | December 12, 2007 |
| 5. Tarek Fatah and Farzana Hassan | The Deadly Face of Muslim Extremism  | National Post | December 12, 2007 |
| 6. Barbara Kay                    | How Canada let Aqsa down   | National Post | December 13, 2007 |
| 7. Natalie Alcoba                 | Aqsa's last days; Father, teenager had tried to reconcile, friends say   | National Post | December 15, 2007 |
| 8. Jonathan Kay                   | The True Enemy: Human Tribalism  | National Post | December 18, 2007 |

1. **Wattie, C. (2007b, December 11). Teenage girl in hospital over clothes; Refused to wear hijab, allegedly choked by father :[All But Toronto Edition]. *National Post*, p. A11. Retrieved August 24, 2010, from Canadian Newsstand Core.**

A 16-year-old girl is in critical condition after being choked by a man believed to be her father, apparently after a dispute with her family over her refusal to wear the hijab, the Islamic headscarf worn by some Muslim women.

Peel Regional Police arrested a 57-year-old man yesterday morning after receiving a 911 call from a suburban home in Mississauga, Ont., from a man saying he had killed his daughter. When police and paramedics arrived at the house they found a 16 year old lying on the floor without any vital signs, police said.

Constable J.P. Valade, a spokesman for Peel police, would not release the names of either the victim or the man arrested and would not give any details about what transpired inside the large, two- storey home in a well-to-do subdivision.

"We are not getting into the details of her injuries at this time," he said. "We aren't getting into any details about this case. This investigation is really in its infancy: Officers are still canvassing the neighbourhood and talking to family members."

However, early police reports indicated the teenager had been choked and that the attacker was her father.

The girl was rushed to Credit Valley Hospital and later transferred to the Hospital for Sick Children, where she was listed in critical condition last night with life-threatening injuries. Her condition is so grave that police have not yet charged the man arrested at the scene until they know whether he will be charged with murder or attempted murder. He was scheduled to appear in Brampton court today.

Friends of the teenager, a Grade 11 student at nearby Applewood Heights high school, identified her as Aqsa Parvez and said they were shocked by the attack on the outgoing, likeable girl, but said she had been threatened by her strictly religious family before.

"She got threatened by her father and her brother," said Dominiquia Holmes-Thompson, who had known Aqsa since they both started high school together.

"He said that if she leaves, he would kill her."

Ebonie Mitchell, 16, another friend of the victim, said the conflict with her father over wearing Islamic dress came to a head at the beginning of this school year. "She just wanted to dress like we do," she said.

"Last year, she wore like the Islamic stuff and everything, the hijab, and this year she's all western. She just wanted to look like everyone else. And I guess her dad had a problem with that."

Ms. Mitchell said her friend had left home once before, in September, for about two weeks. She returned home, but the fights with her family over what she wore just got worse.

Ms. Holmes-Thompson, 16, said her friend had been arguing with her father for more than a year over the restrictions he imposed on her, including demanding that she wear the hijab at all times. "She wanted to go out with her friends, hang out and just be like a normal person," she said. "But he was always trying to control her.... He wouldn't let her go out or do anything."

The stricken girl's friends said the fights with her father got so bad that she had left the family home to live with friends about a week ago. "She was going back, but just to get her stuff," said friend Krista Garbutt. "She was scared to go home, but she had to get her clothes and stuff."

Neighbours said as many as 11 people lived in the home, which was sealed off by crime scene tape and surrounded by police cars yesterday, all members of an extended Pakistani family. Const. Valade confirmed that there were other people in the home when the teenager was attacked.

"I didn't really know any of them," said one woman, who would not give her name. "There were a lot of them living in that house, always coming and going. They didn't talk to me, maybe just to say hello once in a while. That's all."

The home where the teen was attacked is the listed address of Muhammad Parvez, a Mississauga cab driver. "He was Muslim and very devout, very observant," said one of his fellow drivers at Mississauga's Blue and White Taxi, who did not want his name used. "He was always stopping to take breaks and pray: three, four times a day."

His eldest son, also named Muhammad, also worked as a cab driver and lived in the family home with his wife and at least one child, the driver said.

Several people inside the home were questioned by police before being allowed to leave.

Neighbours said the family moved in just over a year ago.



2. Wilkes, J. (2007, December 11). Religion, resistance, tragedy; Mississauga father charged in grievous attack on girl; classmates say she argued with family over hijab :[MET Edition]. *Toronto Star*, p. A1. Retrieved August 24, 2010, from Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies.

Friends suspect a clash of cultures led to an attack in a Mississauga home yesterday that has left a 16-year-old girl clinging to life and her father facing an attempted murder charge.

A source said the teen was strangled and is not expected to survive.

School chums of Aqsa Parvez, a Grade 11 student at Applewood Heights Secondary School, say the teen had been arguing with her devout Muslim family for months over her desire to shun the hijab, a traditional shoulder-length head scarf.

Pal Ebonie Mitchell, 16, and other friends said Aqsa still wore the hijab to school last year, but rebelled against dressing in it this fall.

They said she would leave home wearing the traditional garment and loose clothing, but would often change into tighter garments at school.

She would change back for the bus trip home.

"Sometimes she even changed her whole outfit in the washroom at school," Mitchell said.

Peel Region police went to the family's Longhorn Trail home about 8 a.m. yesterday after a man called police, said Const. J.P. Valade.

Paramedics rushed Parvez to a Mississauga hospital after finding a faint pulse.

She was transferred in grave condition to a hospital in Toronto.

She is being kept alive on life support as family members decide whether to donate her organs for transplant, the source said.

Neighbours described the family as very private and said several members from three generations have lived in the two-storey home, near Hurontario St. and Eglinton Ave., for just over two years.

"I was shocked," said Fatima Domingos, a mother of two daughters. "I have a 20 year old and a 14 year old and I couldn't imagine ever coming across something like that.

"It's sad. I hope she makes it. It's close to Christmas. At any time of the year this is a tragedy."

Neighbours said the father drives for Mississauga's Blue and White Taxi. A company official declined to comment.

The teen was known to her classmates and Facebook friends as Axa. She posted several pictures of herself on the website in colourful clothes and accessories.

At Aqsa's high school, friends gathered in groups, struggling to come to grips with what happened and lamenting how she had quarrelled with her father to the point that she recently moved out to live with a friend.

"She said she was always scared of her dad, she was always scared of her brother ... and she's not scared of nobody," said classmate Ashley Garbutt, 16.

"She didn't want to go home ... to the point where she actually wanted to go to shelters."

Friends said the root of her problems was a desire to blend in with friends at school, to wear the fashionable clothes she liked to buy on trips to Toronto's garment district, where she went with friends just last month.

"She liked fashion," said Mitchell. "We went to different stores; she was shopping; she bought lots of clothes."

"She loved clothes, she loved shopping and she loved taking pictures of herself," classmate Dominiquia Holmes-Thompson, 16, said outside the school as friends sobbed at the news.

"She just wanted to show her beauty. She just wanted freedom, freedom from her parents."

"She just wanted to dress like us, just like a normal person," said Holmes-Thompson.

"She was a very kind person, she was really nice; everybody loved her."

Friend Shianne Phillips, 16, said she last spoke with Aqsa on Friday.

"She was crying and she was like 'I'm really scared to go home. I don't know what I'm going to do.' And that was it," Phillips said.

Muhammad Parvez, 57, is to appear in a Brampton court today where he is expected to be formally charged.

The area has had other troubles lately. Last month, about two blocks away from where the girl was found, police investigated an apparent murder-suicide.

Maria Del Carmen Villaman de los Santos, 51, was found dead at 25 Trailwood Dr. on Nov. 29. Her husband, 60, was taken to hospital.

Peel Police had expected to charge him with the slaying of his wife, but the man died two days later.

**3. The meaning of Aqsa Parvez :[National Edition]. (2007, December 12). National Post,p. A26. Retrieved September 8, 2010, from Canadian Newsstand Core.**

Whenever a girl dies at the tender age of 16, it's a tragedy. But the death of Mississauga, Ont., teenager Aqsa Parvez, many fear, may represent something more: a sign that the loathsome and

barbaric practice of Muslim "honour killings" is making its way from South Asia and the Middle East to Canada.

Ms. Parvez's body was found in her home by paramedics on Monday morning. According to police, her father had called them earlier in the day to say he'd killed her. Friends of the dead girl told journalists that Ms. Parvez's relationship with her father was antagonistic. He wanted her to wear a hijab. Instead, she wore the latest garish teen styles -- sometimes switching from one outfit to the other in between home and school.

It is important to emphasize that nothing has been proven in regards to Ms. Parvez's death. Even if her father did confess to the crime during a call to police, as alleged, the killing may have been an accident -- or the result of some unknown dispute entirely unconnected to religion and culture. And even if the dispute was over Ms. Parvez's Western-style demeanour, there is no evidence that this was an "honour killing" of the type we read about from overseas -- that is to say, a premeditated assassination plotted and perpetrated by father and son to avenge a renegade daughter who "disgraces" the family name by violating the patriarch's edicts.

Since 9/11, Western societies have begun to closely scrutinize the toxic cultural practices of unassimilated Muslims in Europe and elsewhere. These practices include not only honour killings, but also anti-Semitism, support for terrorism, misogyny, forced veilings and forced marriages. Several high-profile conservative columnists -- some of whom appear on these pages -- have been particularly vigorous about highlighting these pathologies. And so when a young Muslim girl gets killed by her father, there is a natural tendency to see it as an indicator that Canadian Muslims are about to follow the radicalized path of militant, unassimilated co-religionists in Paris, London and Stockholm.

In truth, however, Canada's Muslim community is moderate by world standards. The sight of a woman in a full burka is an extraordinary rarity outside of a few small urban pockets. And such horrors as that allegedly visited upon Ms. Parvez remain almost unheard of. Moreover, for all our elites' overwrought emphasis on Canada's "multicultural" character, the concept of cultural relativism has not advanced so far that it is taken to excuse domestic abuse, let alone murder (though no doubt our letter writers can dig up a few troubling counter-examples).

This may change. But for the moment, we should not read too much into this family tragedy. Canada is no Europe, where immigrant communities are left to fester within impoverished ghettos in perpetuity -- with their imported violent and backward practices passed on from one

generation to the next. Thanks to economic opportunity and a lack of class structure, assimilation typically takes just two generations in Canada.

As the case of Ms. Parvez shows, that assimilation process can be so rapid and wrenching that a parent can be driven to perform the ultimate evil against a child he doesn't recognize anymore. But it is rare enough that we may at least view it as an isolated criminal act, not part of a larger epidemic.

4. Henry, M., & Mitchell, B. (2007, December 12). 'She wanted to follow her own rules'; Friends say slain Mississauga teenager suffered abuse in struggles with her family :[METEdition]. *Toronto Star*, p. A1. Retrieved August 24, 2010, from Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies.

She wanted to be like any other teenage girl.

Aqsa Parvez, 16, who died Monday night in hospital after being attacked in her Mississauga home, wanted to hang out with friends instead of obeying her 5 p.m. curfew. She wanted to listen to rap, hip hop and R & B, which her parents didn't permit.

Vivacious and outgoing, Parvez wanted to dress like a Western woman in tight-fitting clothes and show off her long, dark hair by removing her hijab.

She wanted to be "free" and independent of her family's devout Muslim beliefs.

But that was a problem.

This culture clash, her friends said yesterday, led to abuse. While she didn't often come to school with bruises, she said she had been hit on the arms and across the face, her friends said, and that her parents kept her under strict guard.

"She told me many times that her dad had threatened her," her friend, Dominiquia Holmes-Thompson, 16, said yesterday. "She was serious."

Muhammad Parvez, 57, is to appear in a Brampton court today, accused of killing his daughter, the youngest of eight children. Peel homicide detectives haven't revealed whether the driver for the Blue & White Taxi company would be charged with first- or second-degree murder.

The victim's brother, Waqas Parvez, 26, who was arrested on a charge of obstructing police, appeared briefly in court yesterday and was remanded in custody.

Aqsa Parvez struggled academically but was focused on doing better, said Peel District School Board officials.

She didn't cry or let her feelings show in daily life but wasn't shy when it came to talking to friends about her troubles.

"She would tell us how her dad would always yell at her and how he wanted her to be someone else," said Natalie Rance, 14.

"Her dad wanted her to be a person who followed the religion. But she wanted to follow her own rules, wear her own clothes. But her dad wouldn't let her do that."

Friends of the teen huddled outside Applewood Heights Secondary School yesterday morning, crying, embracing and trying to come to terms with a death they called shocking.

Early yesterday, school officials told students about the tragedy, then set up a book of condolences on a velvet-covered memorial table strewn with flowers and pictures of the slain teen. Grief counsellors were on hand.

The flag at the school, located on Bloor St. at Tomken Rd. in Mississauga, was at half-mast yesterday and would continue that way until her funeral, yet to be arranged, school officials said. The Grade 11 student clung to life for several hours on life support in a Toronto hospital, after a man called 911 around 7 55 a.m. Monday, telling emergency officials he just killed his daughter. Peel police refuse to disclose how Parvez, who was found barely alive in her bedroom, died. One source said she was strangled, another said she was beaten.

Holmes-Thompson said the last time she spoke to her friend was around 8 p.m. Sunday and Parvez ended the conversation by saying "I love you."

Friends of the slain girl said Parvez's brother picked her up Monday morning from a bus stop, where she was waiting to go to school, and told her she'd better come home to get a change of clothes.

Parvez, who was staying temporarily at a friend's house, left home about two weeks earlier, when her domestic situation escalated - for the second time in three months.

In September, friends said, Parvez, whose family immigrated to Canada from Pakistan, started to take off her hijab on the bus en route to school and put it back on in the afternoons. She felt liberated to reveal her hair this year because an older sister who would spy on her at school and tell their father if she misbehaved had graduated from Applewood in the spring.

When Parvez's home life turned violent this fall, she fled to a shelter, returning home only after receiving a letter from her family. It described how her parents couldn't eat or sleep while she was away and allegedly noted she didn't have to wear her hijab any more if she didn't want to. Wendy Horton, executive director of Etobicoke's Youth Without Shelter, said that while she's shocked by the level of violence in this situation, she isn't surprised by its root cause.

Parents who want their children to remain faithful to old world ways are often at odds with kids growing up in Western society.

"It creates a lot of family tension," Horton said. "And youth finally end up staying with their friends."

After a few weeks at home, Parvez's situation turned dangerous once again and friends helped her find another place to stay earlier this month.

A Peel school board spokesperson said school staff had been aware of conflicts within the family but nobody had any inkling the troubles would lead to a deadly end.

Board spokesperson Sylvia Link said something would have been done if anybody knew the teen had been threatened or had reason to believe she was in any danger.

"That's part of what grief counsellors are helping students and staff deal with - a sense of incredible guilt, that somehow they let her down," she said. "Counsellors are telling them the person responsible for this violent crime is the person who committed this violence. Anything they did was based on their understanding of the situation."

"There's nothing more important to a teacher than the safety of their students."

Parvez, who loved to dance and snap pictures of herself, will be sorely missed, her friends said.

"She wanted to show her beauty but her dad wouldn't let her," Rance said, before breaking down.

"I can't believe it. I'm so sad."

**5. Fatah, T., and Hassan, F. (2007, December 12). The deadly face of Muslim extremism :[National Edition]. *National Post*, p. A26. Retrieved August 24, 2010, from Canadian Newsstand Core.**

The tragic death of a Mississauga, Ont., teenage girl -- allegedly at the hands of her own traditionally minded Muslim father -- has sent shock waves across the world. Canadians are justified in raising concerns as to whether this is a sign of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in their own backyard.

Aqsa Parvez, a sprightly 16-year-old, beloved of her friends and peers at Applewood Heights Secondary School, was only trying to be herself, was only wishing for a normal adolescence amid Canada's rich cultural mosaic. Her father has now been charged with murder, and his son with obstruction, while a young life has been snuffed out -- likely in the name of honour and Islam.

Radical Muslim men consider themselves ultimately responsible for the conduct of the womenfolk. This outlook is rooted in a medieval ethos that treats women as nonpersons, unable

to decide for themselves what they should wear, where they must go and what they must accomplish in life. If their conduct is seen as contravening this austere religious outlook, they are invariably subjected to abuse.

The hijab in particular has become a thorny issue among Muslim families. It has been elevated as a sort of "sixth pillar of Islam" among militant sects. Young teenage girls are often lectured over the virtues of the hijab by their family members. Once they hit puberty, compliance is deemed a non-negotiable religious requirement.

Yet none of this is actually mandated by the Koran. The Koran, while speaking generally of modesty in dress and demeanour, falls short of specifying the details of that modesty. Scripture also makes allowances for non-compliance of religious edicts if the environment is not conducive to their observance.

The Koran exhorts compassion upon parents, caretakers and guardians of young girls. Yet some families instead exhibit a strict conformity to doctrine and dogma, which in turn leads to violence, bigotry and intolerance of alternative understandings of faith.

There is much discussion in Canadian society about the religious freedoms of those who choose to wear the hijab. We hear relatively little about the oppression of young girls who make the opposite choice. Seldom is their oppression from within their own community, or even their own family, cast as a human rights issue.

If convicted, Aqsa's father and brother must be handed the strictest penalty available under the law. As for the imams and clergy of Canada's mosques, who constantly berate young women for not wearing the hijab or snub them for "violating Islam," they need to reflect on the consequences of their sermons.

Consider, as an example, the Montreal mosque that recently posted on its Web site a warning to the effect that if young girls took off their hijab, they could end up getting raped and having "illegitimate children." Other proffered risks included "Stresses, insecurity and suspicion in the minds of husbands" and "instigating young people to deviate towards the path of lust."

As if the threat of rape and the fear of illegitimate children were not enough, these pre-teen girls were told that if they took off their hijab, they would cease to be Muslims: "By removing your hijab, you have destroyed your faith. Islam means submission to Allah in all our actions." Little wonder then, that Canadian girls walk away from sports tournaments rather than remove their hijabs.

Muslims need to stand up to this sort of emotional and religious blackmail by imams who spread the competing agendas of Saudi Arabia and Iran into Canada. Young Aqsa Pervez's death cannot be reversed. But in her memory, we can at least challenge those whose message leads to rage and madness.

6. Kay, B. (2007a, December 13). How Canada let Aqsa down :[National Edition]. *National Post*, p.A24. Retrieved August 24, 2010, from Canadian Newsstand Core.

We have this week two news items of tragedies involving girl victims. Both will serve to reinforce the belief of many Canadians -- count me in -- that the alliance of feminism with multiculturalism has created a two-tier sisterhood.

The top tier, Western women, have achieved full equality rights. Any and all male aggression against a top-tier woman triggers a public outcry and a million lit candles. The second-tier women -- those from other cultures -- are not so fortunate. Feminists exploit multiculturalism to justify their moral abandonment of the women who most need them: girl victims of dysfunctional or socially unevolved cultures.

We begin in Australia, and the trial results of a 2006 rape of a 10-year-old aboriginal girl by a group of nine aboriginal men and adolescents. District Court Judge Sarah Bradley gave all of them probation or suspended sentences -- no jail time and no criminal records. Bradley concluded that the victim "was not forced and she probably agreed to have sex with all of you." This girl had been a sexual pawn since the age of seven. She is the kind of human wreckage that should have inspired amongst anguished feminists a mass demonstration with candles, white ribbons and demands for life sentences for her attackers.

But the judge was a woman, the girl and her attackers from a minority culture, creating the perfect ideological storm.

How could any woman get it so wrong? It's like this: Indoctrinated in multicultural feminism, Judge Bradley is a moral and cultural relativist. Any sexual aggression against her own daughter would be anathema, but the cultural values of the Other are sacrosanct, and must be respected. Thus, that judge didn't see a 10-year-old girl. She didn't see an individual. She saw aboriginal Others engaged in behaviours particular to their culture, and she assumed it would be wrong to impose her standards on them. Believe it or not, I am sure she thought she was being sensitive to their "difference."



Back to Canada and, if appearances turn out to be reality, Canada's first honour killing. Sixteen-year-old Mississauga teenager Aqsa Parvez died on Tuesday of wounds suffered in an attack on her on Monday -- allegedly by her father. (A brother is also charged with the crime of obstruction.) Friends of Aqsa painted a picture of a young girl eager to integrate into Canadian society, in ongoing conflict with her conservative Pakistani father who insisted she wear the hijab, the Muslim symbol of sexual modesty.

Multiculturalists would have us believe that the hijab is merely a religious symbol, like the Sikh kirpan or the Christian cross, freely embraced by the girls wearing them. It isn't, as many Muslim commentators, including Tarek Fatah and Farzana Hassan in these pages yesterday, have frequently explained. The hijab is rather a public sign of supervised sexual modesty, and marks those wearing it as chattel, leashed to their fathers and brothers as surely as if they were wearing a dog collar.

But you'll never hear a feminist murmur a word of complaint about these girls' lack of autonomy, for the same reasons the judge in Australia couldn't imagine that an aboriginal girl should be treated with the dignity and respect her own daughter would take for granted.

I have argued before in these pages that the hijab, however benign-seeming, is still one end of a female-submissive spectrum that ends in the burka, a garment virtually all Canadians find antithetical to our values. If public schools, which are supposedly secular, had banned hijabs as France did, along with all other religious paraphernalia, in order to create a level social Canadian playing field, Aqsa would have had Canada on her side.

Aqsa's father in turn would have had to accept the fact that his family lived in a country where women are not forced by any man to wear uniforms that define them as property or symbols of their family's "honour." And she might be alive today.

How many thousands of other Aqsas hate the hijab but wear it without complaint because they fear their fathers' and brothers' wrath? How many girls in minority cultures are sexually mutilated or degraded without intervention or censure?

Feminists and multiculturalists would rather not go there: Where the suffering of girls in other cultures is concerned, our feminists and multiculturalists adhere to the policy of "don't ask, don't tell."

7. Alcoba, N. (2007, December 15). Aqsa's last days; Father, teenager had tried to reconcile, friends say :[National Edition]. *National Post*, p. A1. Retrieved August 24, 2010, from Canadian Newsstand Core.

The night before Aqsa Parvez died, she danced to Indian music under the loving gaze of a Muslim family she had adopted as her own.

The rebellious teenager did not see eye to eye with her parents, so she moved in with a Mississauga family, and last Sunday happily took part in a birthday celebration for the youngest of six Tahir daughters. Everyone complimented Aqsa on her outfit --a pink skirt she had borrowed from one of the sisters, Amal Tahir, and her own matching pink top. "Tell Amal to teach me a couple of steps," the mother, Lubna, recalled Aqsa asking.

"What I saw in that kid was that she was just asking for acceptance," Lubna Tahir said. "She wanted to be like a young celebrity. Want to do everything, be in everyone's eye. Want to be popular. Want to be loved one." Police say that the next morning, on a visit back to her family's Mississauga home to pick up clothes, 16-year-old Aqsa was strangled to death by her father, 57. She will be buried today.

Friends from Aqsa's high school said the girl had been fighting with her family about her refusal to wear a hijab and other traditional Islamic clothes. They say she "wanted to dress normally," so she would take off the head scarf at school and make sure to put it back on before she went home. The suggestion that her death was the tragic end to repeated culture clashes between a traditional Muslim family and their rebellious Westernized daughter has generated a fierce debate. Canadian Imams have denounced the murder as un-Islamic, but underscored the importance of a hijab by saying that children who shunned it could make some parents feel like failures. Other observers say the discussion should centre around domestic violence, which affects all communities.

Muhammad Parvez, a taxi driver who immigrated from Rawalpindi, Pakistan, prior to his family making the move about seven years ago, remains in jail on a charge of murder. Police said a man called 911 on Monday morning to say he had killed his daughter.

Aqsa died in hospital several hours later. Waqas Parvez, who picked his sister up at a bus stop that morning and took her home, is charged with obstructing police. He was released on \$10,000 bail yesterday.

Mr. Parvez was licensed as a sole taxi operator, which meant he owned his own cab but paid dues to a dispatch brokerage.

He worked for a short period of time for Golden Taxi, before moving to rival Blue & White Taxi. As an independent operator, there was little contact between Mr. Parvez and other cab drivers or dispatch company officials. Several fellow cab drivers and officials at both companies say they know next to nothing about the man or his family.

The Tahirs describe Aqsa as a girl who embraced her faith by praying five times a day, like a good Muslim, while also trying to emulate the "gangsta" style she admired in rap videos. She knew who she wanted to be one day -- a famous fashion designer -- but struggled, like most teens, to fit in. Aqsa's three brothers and four older sisters were more reserved than she, which made her sometimes feel misunderstood.

The Tahirs say that days after she moved in with them, Mr. and Ms. Parvez came over, and both families had a two hour meeting with Aqsa.

Her mother cried. Mr. Parvez calmly implored his daughter in Punjabi to tell him why she left and what he could do to bring her home. Aqsa barely spoke, except to say that she "just wanted change," according to Ms. Tahir. Privately Aqsa told her that she wanted "to get more out of life".

Mr. Parvez appeared to be relieved that his daughter was safe, said Ms. Tahir, and not alone on the street. He was content to see Aqsa living in a household that resembled his own, said Ms. Tahir, and told her to stay as long as she needed to. Aqsa asked if she could bring items from her house back, and he said they would arrange that "together."

"That's how he left," said Ms. Tahir, an immigration and paralegal consultant who immigrated from Pakistan 10 years ago.

But Aqsa, it seemed, was still searching for independence.

A few days after that first meeting, over coffee in Tim Hortons, Aqsa told her father that she wanted to live on her own, she wanted to go to school in the mornings and work in the evenings.

Mr. Parvez offered to let her take over the basement. Aqsa said she would think about it.

"She was satisfied, she was relaxed that somehow her parents understood that this is what she wanted to do, and they didn't push her to come home," said Ms. Tahir, who wanted to be an impartial third party to broker peace.

She pressed Aqsa many times to tell her why she had run away. The girl claimed repeatedly that she had never been abused. When one Imam suggested at a press conference this week that boy issues may have been behind Aqsa's family troubles, the Tahir women, who were in the audience, raised their voices in protest.

Aqsa did not have a boyfriend, said Ms. Tahir, who expressed dismay at the "rumours" in the press, including speculation that it was conflict over wearing the hijab that triggered the alleged murder.

The Tahirs did not know of any dispute over Aqsa wearing a hijab and said that the older Parvez sisters did not always wear the head scarf.

Aqsa's Applewood Heights Secondary School friends said she started removing her hijab in September, which was also when she ran away from home the first time and to a women's shelter.

Amal Tahir said Aqsa still periodically wore the hijab, and sometimes other students picked on her.

"They didn't accept her as easily as they did when she changed her appearance. I told her, if someone doesn't like you for the way you are inside, the way you dress won't influence them," said Amal, who knew Aqsa through her older sister, Irim.

Aqsa sparred with her father about skipping classes, admitted Amal, but she never thought the girl feared Mr. Parvez.

In the two weeks they lived in the same house, Amal and Aqsa bonded -- and the older girl learned that Aqsa liked to call the shots.

"She was a dominant personality," Amal said. She wanted to be the centre of attention, loved posing for pictures, gossiping about boys and experimenting with her appearance. "Typical teen stuff," Ms. Tahir said.

Privately, Aqsa appeared to be lonely. She was her own best friend, and Amal overheard her talking to herself often. "I talked with her a lot during these two weeks because I completely felt this is my responsibility," Ms. Tahir said. "And I felt so bad when things had happened this way. I kind of felt guilty, maybe I could have done something different. And then I felt peace. She must be more happy with God, but this is not the way it should be."

CASES FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE

- Rajinder Singh Atwal stabbed his 17-year-old daughter, Amandeep, 17 times after he discovered she was dating a boy he disapproved of. Atwal was convicted of second-degree murder in British Columbia in March, 2005. He automatically received a life sentence of 25 years in prison.

-A devout Muslim's strict religious beliefs drove him to murder his favourite daughter when he found her "secret" boyfriend in her bedroom, a jury in the U.K. heard in February, 2002, the Manchester Evening News reported. Faqir Mohammed, a father of 10 children, stabbed the 24-year-old student in the head after finding the man when he came home unexpectedly. His original target was the boyfriend, student Bilal Amin, but he escaped by jumping from the bedroom window. The father chased him, but when his daughter tried to stop him, he took hold of her and stabbed her repeatedly, reports stated. "According to the law it was not right, but according to religion it was right," he told detectives.

-Hina Saleem, 21, was found buried in the backyard of her family's home in Italy. Four men, including her father and uncle, were accused of premeditated murder and hiding the body, lawyer Carlo Bonardi was quoted as saying in an Associated Press story in August, 2006.

Ms. Saleem's mother, Bushra Begun Saleem, told AP her daughter was disobedient -- often out late without saying where she was or when she was coming home. She also said she did not forgive her husband for his alleged participation in the killing.

-A Kurdish immigrant in Sweden, who killed his daughter because he did not like her modern way of life, pleaded guilty to the murder in March, 2002. Rahmi Sahindal said he had not planned the killing but lost his temper when he came across his daughter, Fadime, while she was paying a secret visit to her mother and sisters in January. He gunned her down at point-blank range before their eyes. Fadime, 26, had fled the family home to escape from her father and other male relatives who did not want her to mix freely in Swedish society. Sahindal was trying to arrange a marriage for her in Turkey and threatened her when he found out she had been dating a Swedish man.

8. Kay, J. (2007b, December 18). The true enemy: human tribalism :[National Edition]. *National Post*, p. A18. Retrieved August 24, 2010, from Canadian Newsstand Core.

The clash of civilizations we're living through is widely seen as a battle between Islam and Christendom. I'm convinced it's more basic than that. The reason Iraq and Afghanistan remain

unsettled battlefields isn't that our two civilizations can't agree on the nature of God. It's because we can't agree on the nature of man.

In the West, we take it for granted that human beings are autonomous individuals. We decide for ourselves how we dress, where we work, whom we marry. Our political system is an atomized democracy, in which everyone is expected to vote according to their own idiosyncratic values and interests. Our pop music and movies are about misunderstood loners. The ethos of individual empowerment fuels daytime talk shows.

Individualism has become so fundamental to the Western world view that most of us cannot imagine any other way of conceiving human existence. But in fact, there are billions of people on Earth -- including most of the world's Muslims -- that view our obsession with individualism as positively bizarre.

In most of South Asia and the Middle East, humans are viewed not primarily as individuals, but as agents of a family, tribe, clan or sect. As Rutgers scholar Robin Fox wrote in a brilliant essay - excerpted in last month's issue of Harper's magazine -- this explains why so many Arabs marry their cousins. In tribal societies, your blood relations are the only people you can trust.

This fundamental difference in outlook explains much of what we find barbaric about traditional Muslim cultural practices. Honour killings -- to take a newsworthy example -- strike Westerners as a particularly horrific species of murder. But that's because we think of people as individuals. If you instead see a woman primarily as a low-status breeding agent of her patriarch's clan, everything changes. By taking up with an unapproved male, she is nullifying whatever value she once had as a human. In fact, her life has negative value in the sense that her shameful lifestyle is an ongoing humiliation to the men expected to enforce discipline within the clan's ranks.

An intractably tribal outlook also makes Western-style democracy impossible -- which explains why nation-building in Afghanistan and Iraq has become such a thankless slog.

The reason many of us post-9/11 hawks had such high hopes for these campaigns is that we shared George W. Bush's sunny claim that "Freedom is universal. Freedom is etched in everybody's soul." It turns out that's not true. As Fox notes, freedom and individualism are relatively recent development in human history. Tribalism, on the other hand, is a deeply rooted instinct that has been "etched" on our evolutionary psychology since simian days. Even in Western societies, you can still see it rise to the surface when tensions flare (a point Paul Haggis made with exquisite artistry in his Oscar- award winning film Crash).

Democracy requires consensus-building and shared values. But in tribal societies, politics is viewed as a battle of all-against-all, in which the strongest tribe openly appropriates the state apparatus to enrich itself at everyone else's expense.

In this regard, Saddam Hussein was the ultimate tribal leader. Not only did he restrict his inner circle to Sunnis, but they were Sunnis from his own narrow Tikriti sub-clan. The idea of creating a "representative" government that includes Kurds and Shiites with their own independent power bases would have struck him as completely insane. So would the idea of handing over power to another tribe merely because its leaders chalked up more votes in an election. During most of human history, letting another tribe lord over yours meant yielding the power to pillage your granaries and rape your women. (In parts of Africa, it still does.)

This explains why the United States and NATO have gotten nowhere with grand national political projects in Iraq and Afghanistan, which are both intensely tribal societies. Instead, progress has come at the micro level -- with military commanders sitting down with individual tribal patriarchs and, essentially, bribing them with guns and money. In the West, we call that corruption. In tribal societies, it's politics.

Is there something about Islam that serves to lock in mankind's inherently tribal instincts? Perhaps. The word Islam translates to "submission." And empirically speaking, there seems to be something within the faith that discourages individualism and the democratic freedoms associated with it.

On the other hand, the non-Muslim nations of sub-Saharan Africa are every bit as tribalized as the Muslim nations of North Africa and Asia. And for all the media focus on Aqsa Parvez, several of Canada's first honour murders actually were performed by Sikhs. In any case, the successful integration of hundreds of thousands of Muslims into Canadian society shows that, after a generation or two, at least, the faith hardly prevents immigrants from coming around to our democratic, individualistic ways.

As for foreign entanglements, it's worth noting Fox's warning that our own Western march to individualism took centuries -- a grinding process in which we moved "from tribalism, through empire, feudalism, mercantile capitalism and the industrial revolution ... shrugging off communism and fascism along the way."

In Iraq and Afghanistan, we are essentially asking the locals to cram all of this into a few years. We shouldn't be surprised if it takes a little longer.

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